



WORLD SMARTS
STEM CHALLENGE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WORLD SMARTS STEM CHALLENGE CONNECTS 10TH AND 11TH GRADE STUDENTS IN GHANA AND THE US THROUGH AN INNOVATION COMPETITION

ACCRA, GHANA, April 8, 2016 – IREX announces the launch of the World Smarts STEM Challenge, a virtual exchange initiative that pairs high schools in the US and Ghana in a competition for the best STEM solution to pressing global problems. A special launch event and information session will be hosted by IREX on Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 4 p.m. at the African Regent Hotel, Accra. To attend, please email worldsmarts@irex.org by April 20, 2016.

The First Annual IREX World Smarts STEM Challenge, made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, is a competition that pairs 10th and 11th grade teachers and students from Ghana and the Washington, DC area to work together in gender-balanced, collaborative international teams to compete with their peers by creating innovative STEM-based solutions to global problems affecting their local communities. The 2016 challenges ask students to create solutions for either i) mitigating hazardous waste and pollution or ii) increasing renewable energy sources in their communities.

The purpose of the World Smarts STEM Challenge is to develop and increase the number of secondary school students who go on to successfully major in STEM fields in higher education in the US and Ghana while at the same time building their skills in global collaboration and understanding. According to IREX Senior Vice President Joyce Warner, "There's a real need and opportunity to support more young people to choose STEM careers. The World Smarts STEM Challenge is intended to ignite students' passion for STEM subjects. It's unique in that it fuses standards-aligned, applied learning for both the US and Ghana with the opportunity for students to work alongside students on the other side of the world on global issues affecting us all."

IREX is currently accepting applications from high school teachers in Ghana. Each school's teacher representative will need to assemble a gender-balanced team of eight students from the 10th and/or 11th grade. If selected, that team will be paired with a team in the Washington, DC area to create a bi-national team of no more than 16 students.

The program provides significant professional development for teacher team leaders through a structured framework for the three-month virtual competition, in-person and virtual professional development training, teaching resources, technology support, and coaching from IREX throughout the competition period.

Semi-finalist teams will compete in the World Smarts STEM Challenge Contest and Showcase in Washington, DC. The winning team will receive the chance to make their solution become a reality.

Teachers must apply by May 24, 2016 to be considered for participation. To download the application, visit www.irex.org/worldsmarts.

There will be an information session and launch event at the African Regent Hotel on April 21, 2016 at 4 p.m. To attend, email worldsmarts@irex.org by April 20, 2016.

IREX is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to building a more just, prosperous, and inclusive world by empowering youth, cultivating leaders, strengthening institutions, and extending access to quality education and information. www.irex.org