

## **THE ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT RECEIVES GRANT FROM THE ASPEN INSTITUTE STEVENS INITIATIVE TO FOSTER VIRTUAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EGYPT AND THE UNITED STATES**

**Cairo, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017** – The Stevens Initiative today announced the award of a **1.5-** year grant to the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT), one of 13 new grants funded through an international competition to use online, collaborative learning to increase cross-cultural understanding and equip young people with the skills needed to thrive in a 21st century economy.

The AASTMT will offer secondary school students and their teachers the opportunity to engage in a cross-cultural media literacy program. Through digital storytelling training and media literacy, the program will encourage students to challenge stereotypes and misrepresentation, and engage in dialogue that can lead to positive and collective change.

The AASTMT is among the second cohort of virtual exchange programs to be funded by the Stevens Initiative, an international effort to build career and global competence skills for young people in the United States and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) by growing and enhancing the field of virtual exchange: online, international, and collaborative learning. The Initiative honors the legacy of Ambassador Chris Stevens, who devoted his life to building bridges between people from different cultures.

The program aspires to reinforce engagement and cultural exchange among Egyptian and American secondary school students.. The program will also equip the students with more skills when dealing with the media in addition to boosting their ability to produce media materials and upload them online. The program will also raise students' awareness about the ubiquity of fake news and hate speech and prepare them to stand against them as phenomena that threaten cross-cultural understanding. Critical thinking and creativity are among the main pillars that shape the program.

This project will reach **900 high school students; 450 from Egyptian public schools in Cairo and 450 from Los Angeles schools, California, in the United States.**

“There is no doubt that the Steven Initiative’s grant to the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport will help raise awareness and augment the knowledge of teachers and secondary school students in Egypt about Media and Information Literacy. This knowledge will help them become critical when dealing with media content and most importantly empower them to act against fake news and hate speech common in the post-truth age,” said Professor Ismail Abdel Ghafar Ismail Farag, President of the AASTMT.

The Initiative's second grant competition was open to US and MENA educational institutions and non-profit organizations. It prioritized virtual exchange projects that focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); projects that are rooted in project-based learning; projects that support the education of refugees across the MENA region; and projects that propose in-person exchange to complement the virtual learning experience.

The other Stevens Initiative grantees announced today are:

- Al-Quds University
- An-Najah National University
- Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport
- Arizona State University
- Ball State University
- Institute of International Education
- IREX
- Johns Hopkins University
- Karam Foundation
- Sister Cities International
- University of Nebraska – Lincoln
- WGBH Educational Foundation
- William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) as a regional institute was established in March 1970 upon a decree issued from the Arab League's Council meeting with the Academy's headquarters in Egypt. The AASTMT started its activity in Alexandria in 1972. The main headquarters of the AASTMT is in Alexandria with branches in different governorates of Egypt. The Academy has also branches in some Arab states, i.e. Syria, Sudan and Saudi Arabia. The AASTMT has students from African and Arab counties, males and females. The Academy offers BSC, BA and Master degree in engineering, maritime transport, pharmacy as well as logistics. It further offers the same degrees in mass communication and law. Housed at the Aspen Institute, the Stevens Initiative is a collaboration between the family of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, the U.S. Department of State, the Bezos Family Foundation, the governments of the United Arab Emirates and Morocco, and Microsoft, Twitter, Vidyio, and LRNG. Visit us at [www.stevensinitiative.org](http://www.stevensinitiative.org).

### **More Information**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, professional and private exchanges, as well as public-

private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. Visit [eca.state.gov](http://eca.state.gov).

The Bezos Family Foundation supports rigorous, inspired learning environments for young people, from birth through high school, to put their education into action. Through investments in research, public awareness, systems building and programs, the foundation works to elevate the field of education and improve life outcomes for all children.

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, CO; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit [www.aspeninstitute.org](http://www.aspeninstitute.org).

