



**Chicago Sister Cities International
a part of WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO**

**Request for Proposals:
Evaluating the STEAMuseum
A Stevens Initiative Project**

Deadline for Proposals: July 22, 2016

The Stevens Initiative

The Aspen Institute Stevens Initiative is a public-private partnership designed to connect youth in the United States and the Middle East and North Africa through virtual exchanges as a lasting tribute to the legacy of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. By fostering structured online engagements between young people in secondary through post-secondary education, the Stevens Initiative aims to increase mutual understanding and equip a generation of globally minded youth with the skills and tools they need to succeed in the 21st century.

The STEAMuseum

The STEAMuseum is one of ten projects funded in the first wave of virtual exchange programs by The Stevens Initiative. Students from sister cities Chicago, Illinois and Casablanca, Morocco will work together virtually to create a series of digital exhibits that will ultimately lead to the development of a virtual, global museum. "STEAM" is an approach to science learning that encompasses science, technology, engineering, art and math; it offers a language and a practice that crosses cultures and provides common ground.

The STEAMuseum will be piloted during the academic year 2016 - 2017. Three classes of high school students in Chicago will partner with three classes in Casablanca. They will work together using software platforms developed by Digital Youth Network (DYN), one of the partners on the project. Students will interact asynchronously on a weekly basis and synchronously once a month using a video-conferencing tool. The curriculum will take approximately 24 weeks to complete and will comprise a series of activities around getting to know one another, creating and collecting digital artifacts, and working together to create a virtual exhibit. The first exhibit will focus on a recent major dinosaur discovery in Morocco, *Spinosaurus*, that has been making headlines around the world.

Chicago Sister Cities International's major partners on this project include: the Neighborhoods Association IDMAJ, a youth organization in Casablanca; the Digital Youth Network at DePaul University; and the Center for Arabic Language and Culture based at Lindblom Math and Science Academy.

Project Goals:

The purpose of the STEAMuseum is to generate a project and challenge that students can work on together as a way to get to know one another, practice collaboration, and in the process develop a new kind of cultural digital space that engages their generation. Specifically, the project aims to:

1. Build positive relationships between students and teachers from Arabic speaking countries and the United States
2. Improve participants' understanding, appreciation and empathy for one another's lives and cultures by fostering constructive dialogue and collaborating on a shared project
3. Expand students' skills, interest in and comfort working with digital media
4. Increase students' knowledge about and interest in STEAM subjects, i.e., Science, Technology, Engineering and Art.
5. Practice and become more comfortable communicating in multiple languages and learn strategies for overcoming communication challenges

Evaluation:

This is a new project. The intent is to pilot, assess and revise it so that it can be repeated indefinitely in the coming years. Chicago Sister Cities International is seeking an experienced evaluator to develop and implement an evaluation plan which includes a well conceived methodological approach, recommended instruments, process for data collection and analysis, and a final written report of the findings. While the project goals provide a framework for evaluation, the Aspen Institute is particularly interested in understanding the following outcomes (as appropriate to specific projects):

- Participant satisfaction with the program and exchange experience;
- Participant learning, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills and changes in understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and qualitative learning (mutual understanding, etc.);
- Participant behavior, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others;
- Institutional changes, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Because the curriculum is being developed and implemented for the first time, teachers will be exchanging feedback and sharing their experiences with one another and the STEAMuseum team so that course corrections can be built into the development process. In other words, informal assessment by the participants will be an integral part of the development process so that the final product—both the curriculum and the STEAMuseum—can evolve with ongoing input. Proposals should consider how to take advantage of and guide these initial assessments. Teachers will have an opportunity to spend a week together in Casablanca in January 2017 to review the first semester experience and make adjustments to the program and curriculum as needed, so this would be a good target for early data collection.

Last, one of the defining characteristics of this project and all the projects funded by the Stevens Initiative is the virtual nature of the exchange. The primary participants in this exchange—both students

and teachers—will be located remotely from one another, in Chicago and Casablanca. This fact will need to figure importantly in the evaluation plan.

Budget:

There is a limited budget for evaluation which should not exceed \$20,000. Project staff in Casablanca, however, can be made available to assist with data collection or other modest assessment services as needed and do not need to figure into proposers' costs.

Proposals:

Interested individuals and/or firms should submit a letter of intent describing their interest in this project and examples of relevant work. In addition, all submissions should include the following:

- Background of respondent including a current CV
- Description of methodological approach
- Description of proposed process and steps
- List of deliverables
- Schedule
- Itemized fees

Proposals should be sent to Lisa Roberts, the Project Director, at lcroberts11@gmail.com by July 22 at 5:00 pm.

Timeline:

June 27:	RFP issued
July 22:	Proposals due
Week of Aug. 1:	Short list of respondents invited to interview
Aug. 8:	Awardee selected
End Sept.:	Program launches
January:	School break; teachers meet in Casablanca to review project, develop course corrections and plan/prepare for second semester
End April:	Program ends
June 15:	Final report due

Any questions about this RFP can be directed to Lisa Roberts at lcroberts11@gmail.com.