

## IEARN-USA LAUNCHES PARTNERSHIP WITH EXCHANGE ORGANIZATIONS

*IEARN-USA offering teachers an opportunity to continue to enhance their study abroad experiences through online collaborative projects*

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**New York--**The International Education and Resource Network (iEARN-USA) is joining with national exchange organizations to bring global learning and interaction into classrooms throughout the United States. The partnership enables any US teacher who has participated in a partner youth exchange program to engage with classrooms in 115 countries worldwide using online collaborative projects, resources and tools.

Program partners include: ASSE, ASPECT, AYUSA, CIEE, ICYE/VEI, Nacel Open Door, PIE, World Learning/EIL and YFU. Over recent decades, exchange organizations have sent abroad hundreds of thousands of young people, many of whom now are teaching in communities throughout the country. These exchange organizations have enabled US educators to gain international perspectives while traveling abroad, living with host families, learning new languages and building understanding. The goal of this partnership is to encourage and motivate teachers to take their exchange experiences one step further and connect with classrooms around the world – through “virtual exchanges”.

A 2005 report released by CSIET, Council on Standards for International Educational Travel, provides substantial evidence that **ten times as many foreign students come to the United States as American students travel abroad**, with over 20,000 exchange students traveling inbound, compared to a little over 2,000 American students traveling outbound. In addition, a recent study by National Geographic and Roper Public Affairs tell us that “American youth aged 18-24... still display a disturbing lack of basic geographic knowledge... [Despite, for example] the near constant news coverage since the war in Iraq started in March 2003, six in 10 cannot find Iraq on a map of the Middle East.”

These striking numbers can be dramatically improved by integrating global interaction and virtual exchanges in history, science, social studies and all other curriculum areas through online collaborative project work. “Through the Internet, students and teachers have the opportunity to go beyond international simulations and engage directly with students in other countries,” said iEARN-USA Executive Director, Ed Gragert. “Teachers who have been exchange students are uniquely qualified to enable their students gain knowledge about global issues and the ability to work with other cultures. These are important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.”

John Hishmeh, Executive Director of CSIET said, “Enhancing learning opportunities for exchange student alumni who have become educators themselves, will provide future generations of exchange students the same life-changing experiences. Youth exchange programs provide seminal experience for young minds at a time in their lives when they believe anything is possible.”

iEARN is offering eligible alumni and returnees of these exchange organizations a free Teacher Membership, and they should register at: <http://amity.iearn.org/exchangememberadd.lasso> by August 15, 2006. iEARN has pioneered online collaborative education around the world since 1988 for the purpose of enhancing learning and connecting youth to make a difference in the world. iEARN-USA’s mission is to enable young people worldwide, working in collaboration and dialogue, to make meaningful contribution to the health and

welfare of the planet and its people. Together with exchange organizations, collaborative learning provides teachers with the means to maintain international awareness and understanding.

iEARN-USA was awarded the 2003 Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education and is a 2004 Tech Museum Laureate winner for “technology benefiting humanity.” Please visit [www.iearn.org](http://www.iearn.org) and [www.us.iearn.org](http://www.us.iearn.org) or e-mail: [exchanges@us.iearn.org](mailto:exchanges@us.iearn.org)

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