



## High-Quality STEM Education for All: It Takes a Village

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Over the last few years we've seen a marked increase in the attention to STEM education, especially at the federal level. President Obama and Secretary Duncan have worked to bring STEM to the forefront of the nation's education dialogue as a necessary focus for a successful and competitive future workforce and economic development. They have encouraged growth in STEM learning opportunities with their branded programmatic initiatives like Educate to Innovate and Investing in Innovation. While these national campaigns have shed a much-needed light on the importance of cultivating and spreading STEM education everywhere, it will take many cross-sector partnerships and commitment of multiple players to move from light-shedding into actual implementations of STEM learning opportunities for America's 150 million K-16 students.

Champions of this work understand how providing highly engaging STEM learning opportunities for youth can increase their future options and success in STEM careers. Moreover, a [recent U.S. News post](#) featured U.S. Congressman Michael Honda (CA-15), Silicon Valley's representative, and his introduction of the STEM Education Innovation Act of 2011 in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill would create an Office of STEM Education in the Department of Education, support state consortia on STEM education to shape best practices, and provide grant funding to organizations to develop educational technology innovations that will unleash the power of STEM education—building partnerships across sectors to support STEM learning.

The need for high-quality learning opportunities is prevalent everywhere—especially in Representative Honda's district. Technology and media companies in Silicon Valley consistently need an educated workforce with strong cognitive capacities and digital skills, such as digital collaboration and critical thinking. They need contributors who have both technical skills and advanced knowledge of science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and design. And they need creative thinkers who can help develop new ideas and invent solutions to future challenges.

In response to this challenge, the World Wide Workshop has recently expanded its efforts into Silicon Valley to create high-quality, engaging STEM learning opportunities for youth who live in the back yards of the tech giants. With generous support from the Knight Foundation and Google, and in partnership with the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, the World Wide Workshop is implementing its flagship program, Globaloria (the first and largest social learning network, where students develop STEM knowledge, digital literacies, and global citizenship skills through designing and programming educational webgames).

In addition to its programs in West Virginia, Florida, Texas, and [New York](#), the World Wide Workshop is now active in several schools and Boys & Girls Clubs in San Jose and Silicon Valley. Over the next two years, the program will expand to serve 3,000 students in the region, and the partnerships that the World Wide Workshop has formed with public schools, private and corporate foundations, and community partners will make it possible to give these learners access to high-quality STEM education.

At an upcoming STEM Salon with Change the Equation, a CEO-led nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing the business community to improve the quality of STEM education in the United States, Representative Honda, along with Chris Roe of the CA STEM Learning Network, will continue to champion this cause and discuss how public-private partnerships are necessary to for creating and influencing opportunities for STEM learning. The World Wide Workshop is cheering its California STEM partners on as they sharing the vital message of how leaders and organizations—from national to local levels, and across sectors—must come together to reshape the future of STEM learning to secure America's place in the global economy.

This article can be found at: <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/stem-education/2012/03/19/high-quality-stem-education-for-all-it-takes-a-village>