



Bridging Gaps for Positive Youth Development

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PROMOTING OFFLINE DIGITAL STEM EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN GHANA: YBF PARTNERS PhET SIMULATIONS (University of Colorado, USA)

For a world that continues to witness the growing digital divide, because of poor infrastructure, and the resultant widening educational inequalities gap, embracing offline digital technologies for teaching and learning must be prioritised, particularly for under resourced or deprived communities.

Youth Bridge Foundation (YBF) through our work with teachers have also identified the need to train teachers in the use of digital educational resources.

YBF subsequently initiated a conversation with PhET Interactive Simulations (PhET) of the University of Colorado, USA, creators of free interactive math and science simulations to train instructors and members of the STEM Bridge Teachers Volunteer Corps under the Tullow Oil funded 'Educate to Innovate with STEM' project in the Western Region of Ghana. The Foundation also sought to adopt PhET's tested and proven offline STEM resources for teaching Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics.

In consonance with SDG17 anchored on global partnerships for sustainable development, YBF and PhET subsequently through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) forged partnership to make available PhET's offline digital STEM resources for the Foundation's STEM Bridge Teachers Volunteer Corps.

The PhET offline digital resources provide fun, free, interactive, research-based science and mathematics simulations that use interactivity, visual mental models, and real-world connections that can be flexibly used in many educational situations.

Currently, YBF Project Coordinator, Dorothy Abokuma Mensah and Mr. Richard Boni, a member of the YBF STEM Bridge Teachers Volunteer Corps, are the only Ghanaians part of a selected number of STEM educators in Africa and Latin America, on the 2022 PhET Fellowship Program.

The competitive program is 18-month in duration and includes 80+ hours of professional learning (May - October 2022) and 70+ hours of PhET-coached independent professional leadership practice (November 2022 - October 2023).

The training among other benefits will enable participating educators to;

- Adapt offline digital learning platforms and tools to teach aside traditional methods
- Bridge gaps for high and low achiever students

In cascading the benefits of the Fellowship Program, it is planned that the Fellows, Dorothy and Richard, will train the STEM Bridge Teachers Volunteer Corps in the Western Region with potential scaling up plans across Ghana, as additional in-service professional development for Science and Mathematics teachers.

The Youth Bridge Foundation commends the Government of Ghana, under the Ministry of Education for the recent adaptations and developments in digital resources for teaching and learning in the country. We call on the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, as well as all stakeholders in the education ecosystem to lend their support to the adoption of offline digital educational resources and its related capacity building programmes, as an alternative for rural communities.

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