



ISTG Newsletter



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Chicago-based Nonprofit Tackles Scientific Literacy Both at Home and Abroad

Who: The Innovative Science and Technology Group (ISTG)

What: Founded in 2006, ISTG is a Chicago-based non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization committed to the promotion of scientific educational development in urban communities within the US and in Africa. ISTG has a number of programs aimed at helping it achieve its goals including Project AFARA, Project UJAMAA, and Project Africa Tomorrow.

Project AFARA is ISTG's flagship program. Launched in 2009, hundreds of students from various cities in the US (including Chicago, New York, Detroit, Lawndale) and Africa (including Stellenbosch, Bamako, and Ado-Ekiti) participated in science and technology programs created and implemented by ISTG.

Why Important: A well-established fact is that there is a serious underrepresentation in the United States of African-Americans and Latinos in fields pertaining to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Similarly, African nations strive to develop their overall technological and scientific infrastructure in order to fully participate on the world stage. This is critical since success in the 21st century is more reliant on a basic understanding of science and technology, perhaps more than any other time in human history. In the last few years, ISTG has worked on addressing a slice of this grand problem through the development of novel science and technology educational programs that span two continents.

(Moussa Traore, ISTG Executive Director) "When we work with schools, we try to make sure that our projects complement and support their instruction. We also work hard to ensure our programs remain academically rigorous in order to challenge students to think locally as well as globally and expose them to different cultures. A key difference between our programs and others that address STEM education is that ours has an international component. Automatically, we believe this adds a very culturally enriching dynamic."

(Dr. Olufemi Dosunmu, ISTG Senior Consultant) "We like to believe that we have made a measurable impact these past few years with our programs. From gathering the feedback from student participants and schools, we certainly believe that we have positively contributed to their experience with science and technology as well as promoting students' academic growth and achievement. However, we know that the problem is big and that we have a long way to go to make America more competitive in science and technology."

(Dr. Kimani C. Toussaint, ISTG Senior Consultant) "The connection between STEM issues here and Africa may not be apparent to most. Globally, Africans are just as underrepresented as African-Americans and Latinos here in the States when it comes to international discussions on science and technology, whether it be about innovative cancer therapies or nanotechnology. Thus, we think that these communities can both learn from and help each other. We think that this is another unique approach to the problem that ISTG is taking."

For more information, please contact Mr. Moussa Traore at traore@istg-africatomorrow.com

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