

Press release
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Stronger together in times of crisis: Expansive initiative for STEM education in Latin America

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Siemens Stiftung has joined regional partners on a project for teachers and students in Latin America that develops digital and analogue education materials on STEM subjects such as science, technology, sustainability, climate change, health, and digitalization. The initiative runs from January 2021 to December 2021 and is supported by Siemens AG, Siemens Caring Hands e. V., and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

According to UNESCO, around 160 million students in Latin America alone have been affected by school closures caused by COVID-19. But how can teachers conduct successful lessons during a pandemic when they are not sitting in classrooms with their students? Even connecting from home through a computer, tablet, or smartphone does not reach all students. Siemens Stiftung's network of Latin American partners has recognized an urgent need to act quickly with newly-conceptualized, combined educational content and formats in addition to solutions for digital educational offerings. This led to the January 2021 launch of the education initiative "STEM Education for Innovation" in seven Latin American countries.

"Education is the foundation for a stable and future-oriented international community, an idea embodied by the Siemens Stiftung education initiative. The initiative is determined to reach as many Latin American schoolchildren as possible during a difficult time. These efforts are an excellent fit for our culture and education work in the region," said German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Siemens Stiftung is working with 12 local partner institutions in Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador on developing and adapting analogue, digital, and blended educational content and methods in STEM fields including science, technology, sustainability, climate change, health and digitalization. The materials are designed for use in the classroom and in extracurricular contexts.

"STEM education is one of Siemens Stiftung's core areas of expertise," says Dr. Nina Smidt, Managing Director and Board Spokesperson of Siemens Stiftung. "For ten years, the foundation has worked with partners in Latin America on future-proofing education and making it freely accessible for all. With the 'STEM Education for Innovation' initiative, we are joining our network partners in strengthening education in Latin America – now and in the future."

Blended learning concepts, which combine offline and online education formats, are an important part of the initiative and are being implemented in teacher certification and advanced training programs. Students will gain access to resources including online courses on technology education with innovative software for product design, interactive climate change maps for several regions of Latin America, and videos and podcasts on health and hygiene.

The materials will be completed by December 2021 and will be adapted to fit local contexts, reinforcing public education efforts and becoming part of teaching certification and advanced training programs at Latin American universities. The materials will also be added to Siemens Stiftung's existing education portals, CREA – Centro Recursos Educativos Abiertos – and the Media Portal where they will be accessible digitally and free of charge. With the new learning materials, the

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initiative seeks to reach millions of students and their teachers in Latin America. Judith Wiese is a member of the Managing Board and Chief Human Resources Officer at Siemens AG and a member of the Siemens Stiftung Board of Trustees. She says: "For us, the Relief Fund is an anchor that allows us to create impactful programs for helping during times of crisis. I am therefore even more delighted about the engagement of Siemens AG and the generous donations of our employees, which will also go toward this incredible education project in Latin America."

The initiative has received crucial backing from the COVID-19 Relief Fund of the Siemens Caring Hands e. V. association, which will go toward creating and expanding the 14 complimentary Initiative STEM Education for Innovation projects. These projects have the potential to create a shining example for the entire continent, adds Siemens Caring Hands e. V. board member Dr. Stephan Frucht: "In the coronavirus pandemic, access to digital learning materials has become particularly important. Now is the time to support innovative learning methods that provide all children and adolescents, now and in the future, with the opportunity of quality education. Siemens Caring Hands supports this project because it sets the right tone for STEM education in Latin America."

About Siemens Caring Hands e. V.

Siemens Caring Hands e. V. is a charitable association that was founded at the initiative of Siemens AG in 2001. The association is especially active in providing support in major emergencies and pursues charitable and non-profit purposes. These include the promotion of assistance for disaster victims, support for fire / disaster / civil protection and the promotion of the public health system. At the initiative of Siemens AG, a COVID-19 relief fund was set up under the auspices of the association in March 2020 to provide support, without red tape, to relief organizations and medical facilities as well as to individuals impacted by the COVID-19 crisis worldwide. The amount donated by Siemens employees was matched by Siemens AG. The collected funds are used for specific, charitable COVID-19 relief projects worldwide.

About Siemens Stiftung

As a nonprofit foundation, Siemens Stiftung promotes sustainable social development, which is crucially dependent on access to basic services, high-quality education, and an understanding of culture. The foundation's international project work supports people in taking the initiative to responsibly address current challenges. Siemens Stiftung has worked closely with Latin American education ministries, universities, and STEM education projects for ten years in developing and implementing solutions and programs. Technological and social innovation plays a central role. Siemens Stiftung's actions are impact-oriented and conducted in a transparent manner.

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