

Teachers Without Borders Provides Tools to Improve Global Teaching Capacity



Teachers Without Borders and Cisco have been working together since 2003 to develop online solutions that promote innovation, collaboration, and professional development opportunities to improve the impact and effectiveness of teachers around the world.

Challenge

- Limited teacher training opportunities and lack of global teaching standards
- Limited access to educational content
- Ineffectiveness of earthquake readiness programs in schools
- Limited accessibility, availability, and sustainability of world-class platforms

Solution

- Professional courses and global certification program
- Free, customizable learning resources
- Bottom-up emergency education program teaching earthquake science
- Online platform for content delivery, community development, and collaboration

From an Impulse to an Organization

Teachers Without Borders (TWB) founder and president Fred Mednick credits Cisco with helping him transform “an impulse into an organization” by providing guidance through the Cisco® Leadership Fellows program, a Cisco product grant, and US\$2.5 million in cash grants from both Cisco and the Cisco Foundation that enabled him to build a robust and scalable organization around demand-driven needs and solutions that can be applied across geographic regions and cultures.

The partnership between Cisco and Teachers Without Borders began in 2003, when the Cisco Foundation provided a grant to help increase the number of teachers who could benefit from the Teachers Without Borders Certificate of Teaching Mastery (CTM) program through the development of an online delivery platform. The CTM consists of five courses that are designed to help participants improve their teaching skills and capabilities. Cisco also supported the launch of the free, Web 2.0 TWB Toolset, which encourages teachers to network with each other, share learning resources, and build communities of practice around common goals and interests.

Since 2007, Cisco and Teachers Without Borders have been working together in support of a Clinton Global Initiative commitment that aims to promote socioeconomic development in sub-Saharan Africa, primarily through the establishment of locally managed community centers.

In 2008, Teachers Without Borders began supporting Cisco’s Connecting Sichuan program by accelerating the professional development of teachers in the region using multilingual, video-based learning materials; and improving classroom emergency readiness. TWB is now replicating the program in Haiti.

Cisco has also helped TWB build its Emergency Education program and the Millennium Development Ambassadors (MDA) program, in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The MDA program is now reaching every state in Nigeria and is supported by a radio show reaching 1.4 million listeners each week.

Impact and Future Plans

Teachers Without Borders is currently reaching schools and teachers in 183 countries. More than 5,600 teachers have completed the Certificate of Teaching Mastery program, reaching 350,000+ students. Dozens of Community Teaching and Learning Centers have been established worldwide, where local educators can gather and support each other to make a vital contribution to their communities.

More than 70 schools in China are currently participating in the Teachers Without Borders Emergency Education program, which was supported by a Cisco Connected Sichuan grant and focuses on earthquake science and natural disasters. Approximately 104,000 teachers in China will participate in professional development programs in 2010 and 2011.

TWB is taking bold steps to promote the accessibility and adaptability of learning resources through the TWB Toolset and Open Educational Resource partnerships, innovate in the field of community-based participatory education using mobile technologies, and adopt a proactive approach to emergency education (focusing on earthquake science and inquiry methods) so that schools in vulnerable earthquake zones have access to the critical resources and safety information they need, adapted to local languages, geology, and culture.

Teachers Without Borders is evolving from a grant-based revenue structure to diversified strands, including unobstructed licensing, public campaigns, contracts, and new public-private partnerships that will help ensure their ability to scale and sustain their solutions.

For More Information

To learn more about Teachers Without Borders, please visit www.teacherswithoutborders.org.

To learn more about Cisco, please visit www.cisco.com/go/csr.