



Opportunity for interested undergraduate students to participate in virtual exchange with students in Yemen

The ‘Qisasna’ (‘Our Stories’ in Arabic) program will engage American and Yemeni students in 1) online dialogue sessions to learn about each other’s cultures and discuss issues of mutual interest, and 2) collaboration to produce international podcasts related to shared challenges and opportunities—all through virtual exchange. No previous podcasting experience is necessary, as podcast training will be provided. Students will gain valuable skills in cross-cultural engagement and dialogue as well as international podcast production, and become part of a program alumni network with access to additional U.S. Department of State-sponsored opportunities. There is no fee to participate in the program.

Requirements to participate:

1. Be currently enrolled as a university undergraduate.
2. Commit to attending 3 online dialogue sessions with Yemeni students and completing an 8-hr self-paced online podcast skills training by mid-semester.
3. Commit to attending 1 final online dialogue session and to working with fellow American and Yemeni students to complete a short podcast, and related tasks, by the end of each semester (each student group will determine its own schedule for meeting to produce podcasts).

Qisasna is implemented by Amideast and is supported by the J. Christopher Stevens Virtual Exchange Initiative (JCSVEI). [JCSVEI](#) is a U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs program administered by the Aspen Institute. The International Center for Religion & Diplomacy (ICRD) is a partner of Amideast.

Benefits for students who *complete* the program include:

- Successful participants who attend the dialogues and complete their team’s podcast episode receive a digital badge that can be shared on resumes or posted on LinkedIn profiles.
- Participants acquire hands-on media skills in podcasting from professional podcasters through their training materials and online mentoring sessions.
- Participants gain skills in cross-cultural communication, teamwork, and project implementation.
- Participants gain skills in using Microsoft Teams, a professional communication tool used by many organizations, corporations, and even educational institutions, across cultures, time zones, and “departments.”
- Participants co-create a podcast episode that will be broadcasted for international audiences.
- Participants build new connections and friendships.

- Participants join program alumni networks and become eligible for involvement in continued alumni activities of the Stevens Initiative and the US Department of State, such as the following:
 1. Alumni may continue to use the podcast resources and communication tools on the Qisasna Programs Team channel.
 2. The JCSVEI invites Qisasna alumni to engage in the Initiative's alumni activities which may include online events, virtual webinars, and even small grant follow-up opportunities.
 3. Qisasna alumni are invited to join Localized, an independent online mentoring and professional development platform, used by educational institutions, organizations, and companies around the world such as the Stevens Initiative and AMIDEAST.
 4. Alumni may be invited to have their stories featured on the JCSVEI website.
 5. Alumni are invited to join the US Department of State International Exchange network which provides lifetime, free access to annual alumni grant fund opportunities, online events, research databases, and other resources.
 6. Alumni are eligible for special consideration for internship and networking opportunities with the International Center for Religion & Diplomacy.