



**Developing a Strategic Plan for Global Professional Development for Educators
Written by Samantha Case, MAP Fellow, TGR Foundation**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I helped to reframe and outline the key areas in need of development for the Global Institute, a center of excellence that will broaden the TGR Foundation's reach after 25 years of STEM education programming. The Global Institute will be a force for change in the international education space that includes a network of TGR Foundation staff, teachers, and educators working to implement interdisciplinary inquiry- and project-based learning. As a MAP Fellow, I contributed high-level analysis of the many programs offered by the TGR Foundation to guide the strategic planning process for the Global Institute.

CHALLENGE:

The TGR Foundation has a multitude of programs including after-school learning; week-long camps; summer programming; college access support; scholarships, mentorship, and internships for college students; teacher training; and a large library of content for teachers, students, and families to use for learning STEM outside of the classroom. All of these programs contribute to a solid educational experience that inspires students to pursue their passions and equips them with the tools to persevere.

Working with my mentor, Michelle Kim, we needed to develop a strategy for how to present the domestic and international teacher training and content library in a coherent vision. The goal of my MAP fellowship was to have a strategic plan for the Global Institute (working title) that would house all of the professional development for teachers that the TGR Foundation creates and disseminates. The main offerings of this Global Institute include a 1, 3, or 5-day seminar on interdisciplinary inquiry-based learning (STEM Studio); mentoring by TGR Foundation staff; a digital platform for networking with other teachers across the globe; a library of lesson plans, science videos, and other content to help teachers.

The audience for this strategic plan is two-fold: (1) TGR Foundation staff who will be implementing the plan and (2) potential CSR and funding partners who will want to know the future of the programs they elect to fund. This made the project definition somewhat challenging - presenting to two audiences required a "how do we make this work, logistically, on the ground?" version and a "visionary" version.

APPROACH:

First, I conducted informational interviews with teachers and educational administrators to understand the professional development landscape that exists today. This helped me determine what questions to ask Michelle and the TGR Foundation staff about their work.

Next, I interviewed TGR Foundation staff about the many programs they administer and came up with a rough framework for who their audience is, what services they provide, the theory of change for this effort, and how to follow up on the strategic planning effort to continuously improve the program.



MAP FELLOWSHIP

When I started, I thought my main task would be building evaluation surveys for students and teachers. However, I ended up contributing most to the organization of the information at a high level and finding areas that needed improvement or further assessment.

OPPORTUNITY:

I presented a draft of my final recommendations to the TGR Foundation staff on November 30 and will update a final version by January. The recommendation document lays out the existing infrastructure of the Global Institute and poses questions for the gaps in the long-term (>5 years) implementation. Since the STEM Studio (1, 3, or 5-day training) has been around for only 2 years, the TGR Foundation staff had a lot to think about with regards to how they will train trainers to teach their STEM Studio curriculum, what comes after the first STEM Studio training, and how to evaluate the success of the teachers in the program (and their students).

The goal is for TGR Foundation staff to prioritize the questions to be answered in the first year and then to update the document dynamically as they answer those questions, circumstances change, or they meet milestones. Examples of document update checkpoints could include a certain number of teachers in a cohort, a round of responses to a survey about training, or a global pandemic. At a minimum, the document should be updated every 2 years with the cycle of their other program assessments.

RESULTS & FUTURE PLAN:

As is true of many things in 2020, this project and fellowship turned out very different from what Michelle and I expected. The document I created for the TGR Foundation is very high level and asks nearly as many questions as it answers. My hope is that this document will continue to live on with the growth of the Global Institute.

I learned along the way that some of the suggestions I came up with were exactly in concert with the TGR Foundation's plans for the Global Institute. The questions I had about teacher evaluation to evaluate the program's effectiveness were posed to an external consultant. The questions I had about growth models were answered with my first meetings with TGR Foundation staff. It felt good to know I was on the right track and frustrating to know I wasn't coming up with anything new on those fronts.

I think my biggest contribution was to ask guiding questions on how to choose partners in a region and what teacher engagement and evaluation look like beyond the training. These prompted the most discussion from TGR Foundation staff during the presentation of my first draft (other than the discussion of the name "Global Institute") and I think are important ones to answer for the growth and development of the program.

I will hand over the reins of this strategic planning document to the TGR Foundation staff in January and they will have to figure out how to implement it in their day-to-day work. The TGR Foundation staff I have worked with have been energetic and full of ideas so I am confident they will make progress on developing this program with Michelle's guidance going forward.

Learn more about the TGR Foundation at tgrfoundation.org.