This summer, 100 social studies and STEM teachers from the United States and Canada will travel to Germany as fellows of the Transatlantic Outreach Program (TOP).

The Transatlantic Outreach Program helps social studies and STEM teachers in the United States and Canada teach about contemporary Germany so that young people are exposed to a nuanced and balanced view of this important international partner. Based at the Goethe-Institut in Washington, DC, the TOP team promotes education, dialogue, and experience on topics such as the German school system, German and EU politics, sustainability projects, and corporate social responsibility, as well as culture, history, and geography.

As a central part of their mission, TOP organizes study tours to Germany, providing teachers with first-hand knowledge of the country. To ensure that study tour participants learn about current topics relevant to their curricula, the TOP team has planned exciting activities and new meetings for this summer’s tours. For example, five groups of social studies teachers will be taking an in-depth look at the situation of refugees in Germany as well as exploring the nuances of Germany’s apprenticeship system. One group of STEM teachers will see for themselves what progress has been made in the German Energy Transition as well as explore what career and technical education (CTE) looks like in the German context. After they return, participants lead professional development sessions and create original instructional units, which in turn result in new teaching materials based on current events. Since 2002, nearly 1,400 educators have traveled to Germany as TOP Fellows.

In addition to the study tours, TOP creates and distributes teaching materials addressing topics on current-day Germany that are designed for use in social studies and STEM classes. TOP also supports hundreds of professional development workshops each year across the United States and Canada to help teachers learn more about Germany and incorporate TOP’s instructional materials into their lessons.

TOP is a public/private partnership of the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Goethe-Institut, Deutsche Bank, Robert Bosch Stiftung, and the Siemens Corporation.

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