

# TECHBRIDGEWORLD NEWSLETTER *Spring '09*



[www.TechBridgeWorld.org](http://www.TechBridgeWorld.org)

## iSTEP 209: Tanzania



The iSTEP 209 team is now halfway into the internship! The iSTEP (innovative Student Technology ExPerience) internship was launched on May 25. Five of the eight interns are in

Dar es Salaam, two are in Pittsburgh, and one is in Doha. The iSTEP team is working on three research projects in collaboration with the University Computing Centre, Ltd. (UCC) in Tanzania. Prior to the internship launch, the students took our iSTEP mini course, for which they completed important assignments designed to prepare them



for their work this summer. TechBridgeWorld and iSTEP advisors came to speak at the class sessions and attended student presentations.

We are grateful to Eric Beda (UCC), the iSTEP advisors, our local partners, and the many others who helped the iSTEP 209 team! For more information on iSTEP 209, please visit [www.techbridgeworld.org/istep209](http://www.techbridgeworld.org/istep209).

Stay up to date with the iSTEP 209 team's progress by visiting their blog, Twitter, and Facebook sites.

[isteptanzania.wordpress.com/](http://isteptanzania.wordpress.com/)

[twitter.com/iSTEP\\_Tanzania](http://twitter.com/iSTEP_Tanzania)

[www.facebook.com/iSTEPtanzania](http://www.facebook.com/iSTEPtanzania)



## Great Turnout at ICTD 2009 Conference!

TechBridgeWorld successfully organized the 3rd International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD 2009), held at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar on April 17-19. 346 guests from around the world participated in the conference's presentations, posters, workshops, demos, and panels. An additional 200 guests from the area attended keynote speakers **Bill Gates** and **Carlos Braga's** presentations.



TechBridgeWorld student representative **Ayorkor Mills-Tettey's** paper was one of 19 submissions selected for oral presentation.

Her paper, *Improving Child Literacy in Africa: Experiments with an Automated Reading Tutor*, which is associated with TechBridgeWorld's Project Kané, won the Honorable Mention Award in the Student Paper category.



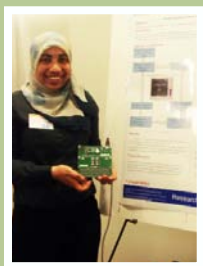
**Ameer Abdulsalam, Noura El-Moughny, Imran Fanaswala, and Wael Ghazzawi** ran our Braille Tutor demo at the conference, featuring the tutor's multi-language capabilities and educational games.

We thank everyone, especially our colleagues at Carnegie Mellon University

in Qatar, who made the conference a success! Materials from the conference will be available at the end of the summer at [www.ictd2009.org](http://www.ictd2009.org).

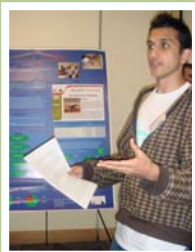


## Student Research at MoM 2009



**Amal El-Ghazaly, Pengfei Li, Saurabh Sanghvi, and Wennie Tabib** presented their research with TechBridgeWorld on May 6 at the 14th annual Meeting of the Minds at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh. Amal and Peng presented their research on the Braille Tutor; Saurabh presented his research on Education e-Village; and Wennie presented her research on assistive education for the aurally impaired.

Congratulations to Saurabh, who won the IBM Innovation for Good Award and a Lockheed Martin ECE Award for his work on the Education e-Village project. We thank all of the students for their contributions to TechBridgeWorld!



## Congratulations Graduates!

Congratulations to TechBridgeWorld staff and students who graduated from Carnegie Mellon this spring:

**Sarah Belousov**, TechBridgeWorld Project Manager, M.S. in Public Policy and Management

**Jessica Thurston**, TechBridgeWorld Administrative Intern, B.H.A. in Urban Design and Professional Writing

**Hatem Alismail**, iSTEP 2009 Technical Lead for Literacy Games project, B.S. in Computer Science;

**Emily Clise**, iSTEP 2009 Report, Logistics, and Media Coordinator, B.S. in Political Science and B.A. in International Relations

**Daniel Nuffer**, iSTEP 2009 Technical Lead for Social Worker Applications project, B.S. in Computer Science.

## NCWIT Workshop @ Google

TechBridgeWorld Founder and Director **M. Bernardine Dias** was invited to speak at the National Council on Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Workshop at Google Headquarters. Bernardine and TechBridgeWorld Project Manager **Sarah Belousov** traveled to California on May 12-14, 2009 where Bernardine gave a presentation about TechBridgeWorld to 200 attendees, highlighting the Braille Tutor as an example project.

Bernardine and Sarah also enjoyed meeting with alumni from the San Francisco area during the trip. If you would like to meet with members of the TechBridgeWorld team who may be traveling to your town in the next year, please e-mail [info@techbridgeworld.org](mailto:info@techbridgeworld.org).

## Assistive Technology Update

Spring semester has been a busy one for the Assistive Technology team in Qatar and Pittsburgh! Our Assistive Technology project is funded by the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) National Priorities Research Program (NPRP). Apart from furthering research on the Braille Tutor, the team started exploring enhancements to the DeSIGN Tutor, an interactive software application for deaf students that provides guided practice for communication using American Sign Language (ASL). Furthermore, the team in Qatar met with the Qatar Cultural Center for the Deaf to learn more about deaf culture in Qatar and to gain ideas for DeSIGN. The team also had a couple of important demos, one for the QNRF NPRP Sponsor Site Visit and another for the ICTD 2009 Conference. The team also created a report which surveys the different types of assistive technologies available to blind and deaf communities around the world.

## Alumni Corner

**Obaid Khawaja** graduated from Carnegie Mellon's Information Networking Institute in 2005 and participated in TechBridgeWorld's V-Unit independent study program in Spring 2005. Inspired by the TechBridgeWorld team and deeply affected by the impact of the December 2004 Asia tsunami, Obaid's V-Unit project focused on emulating the Pacific Tsunami Warning System for warning citizens with a clearly defined evacuation plan, while aiming to bring down implementation and maintenance costs. Furthermore, his project gave consideration to adapting the plan to suit local needs. Obaid explained, "TechBridgeWorld was the ideal vehicle for furthering [my] goals of creating a comprehensive proposal for an Early Warning Tsunami System for the developing world." He presented his project on the proposed system at the end of his V-Unit program.



Since 2005, Obaid has been busy working on interesting problems of a different nature at Microsoft and Amazon. In July, he will move back to his native Pakistan to pursue opportunities to make a difference in the lives of his country's people. Obaid is currently brainstorming ideas about helping one of the largest groups of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) brought on by the brutal internal conflict and strife. Obaid is interested in addressing challenges related to education, health, and basic human needs, which have been exacerbated by the global economic situation and regional security climate.

If you have any questions for Obaid, or want to get involved with TechBridgeWorld alumni, please e-mail [info@techbridgeworld.org](mailto:info@techbridgeworld.org).

### Thank you for your continued interest in TechBridgeWorld projects!

If you would like to learn more about any of our activities or be added to one of our e-mail lists, please contact us.

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