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Anita Krishnamurthi to Lead new Collective for Youth Empowerment in STEM & Society at the Afterschool Alliance

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance is partnering with Anita Krishnamurthi to launch a new initiative that brings together the Alliance’s strong history of supporting afterschool STEM learning and its more recent work to empower youth. The “Collective for Youth Empowerment in STEM & Society (CYESS)” will work with allies in afterschool and other out-of-school-time programs to amplify youth voices and perspectives. The aim is to help communities and policymakers more deeply engage youth as they develop and implement initiatives, agendas, and policies at the local, state, and federal levels.

Krishnamurthi, who previously worked at the Alliance as Vice President for STEM Policy, has returned after a 5-year absence during which she lived and worked in the United Kingdom, holding senior positions at the University of Cambridge and Wellcome Trust. She now holds the newly created position of President, CYESS while also serving as the Alliance’s Senior Vice President for STEM and Youth Engagement. She will work with allies to increase opportunities for youth to demonstrate leadership and take civic action, while continuing to support the Alliance’s mission as the country’s leading advocacy group working to give all students in the United States access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

“We are absolutely delighted to have [Anita Krishnamurthi](#) back at the Afterschool Alliance and know that her unmatched experience and expertise will make our [youth engagement](#) and [STEM work](#) even more successful,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “As we rebuild the afterschool field after the dislocation and harm done by the pandemic, we need Anita’s skills, energy, and creativity more than ever. Afterschool programs are uniquely positioned to help students re-engage, build their leadership and civic engagement skills, and prepare them for the STEM-related jobs that drive our economy in years to come.”

“So many of the solutions to our country’s greatest problems are rooted in science,” Krishnamurthi said. “Afterschool programs provide the kind of hands-on STEM experiences that engage students, while giving them opportunities to gain the leadership skills they will need in college and careers. With this new CYESS initiative, we want to bring together people already using afterschool and other out-of-school-time spaces to actively engage young people in tackling problems that impact all our futures. We will learn from current initiatives to scale existing programs and pilot new approaches. To do this, we need to build capacity and opportunities among the afterschool leaders and programs that support young people and help spread lessons learned and promising practices. We welcome new partners and funders to join us in this effort.”

Nearly 3 out of 4 afterschool students, or 5,740,836 U.S. kids, having STEM opportunities in their afterschool programs, according to [STEM Learning in Afterschool on the Rise, But Barriers and Inequities Exist](#), released by the Afterschool Alliance in August of 2021. Nearly 2 million children participated in

summer STEM camps in 2019. Parents reporting that their child’s afterschool program offers STEM learning opportunities increased from 69% in 2014 to 73% in 2020. But there is more work to do; the study, based on a household survey conducted by Edge Research, found that students from low-income families are much less likely to be getting technology/engineering and computer science in afterschool than students from higher-income families.

“This is an opportune time to layer civic engagement on STEM learning in afterschool,” Krishnamurthi added. “Society faces no shortage of existential crises, and young people must have a seat at the table as key stakeholders not only in the future, but now. When they are engaged, young people bring powerful new voices and perspectives that influence and shape crucial conversations and drive solutions. Afterschool programs provide safe and supportive environments for young people to discover and engage with STEM differently than during the school day, while gaining confidence and sharing their ideas.”

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.