YOUTHMAPPERS HAS CREATED AN ACADEMY TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR OPEN HUMANITARIAN MAPPING

University Students Will Strengthen Their Mapping Proficiency With This Online Platform

WASHINGTON, DC — The *YouthMappers Academy* is a new online learning platform for members of the YouthMappers rapidly growing network's 264 university chapters in 58 countries. The *Academy* will strengthen YouthMappers students' knowledge and proficiency to work with the ecosystem of OpenStreetMap software and tools and the social and organizational skills related to creating open spatial data for humanitarian and development needs. In line with our motto that "We don't just build maps. We build mappers," the curriculum focuses on building capacity and excellence. Course materials encourage YouthMappers to engage more confidently in open mapping communities and seek to stimulate critical thinking around research and mapping activities, leading to higher quality outputs. The added opportunity to earn micro-credentials will enhance YouthMappers' job marketability by providing formal recognition of proficiency and achievement in targeted geospatial techniques and concepts.

The *Academy's* introductory series consists of six courses. These courses will guide participants to better understand the OpenStreetMap (OSM) community of communities, its infrastructure, develop core mapping and image interpretation skills, reinforce organizational and project management techniques, and train YouthMappers on contributing to and maintaining chapter sustainability. The course topics are as follows:
- Course 1: The OSM Ecosystem
- Course 2: Mapping with iD Editor
- Course 3: Imagery Interpretation
- Course 4: The OpenStreetMap Data Model
- Course 5: The Tasking Manager
- Course 6: Chapter Management

Students will earn 'tech points' in each of the interactive courses through participation and knowledge checks. The 'tech points' earned determine successful completion of the course and allow participants to claim individual micro-credentials, called "badges" for each course completed. The badges associated with the *YouthMappers Academy* are awarded through the **American Geographical Society's** Geo-Badges program. Geobadges is a geography-centric micro-credentialing program to acknowledge participants' personal, professional, and academic development in a variety of core areas. Each badge also aligns with the skills and proficiencies outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor's **Geospatial Technology Competency Model** (GTCM) and the National Geographic's **National Geography Standards.** The YouthMappers

network and the creation of the YouthMappers Academy are funded by the **U.S. Agency for International Development's GeoCenter**.

Details for each course are as follows:

Course 1: The OSM Ecosystem

This course details the origins of the OpenStreetMap project, the infrastructure, the community, and how YouthMappers fits into this ecosystem (as a community among the OpenStreetMap communities). We will also examine the ethical considerations of mapping in OpenStreetMap and the best communications practices for members of the community.

Course 2: Mapping with iD Editor

This course will cover the mechanics and best practices of adding map features to OpenStreetMap using the web-based (online) iD Editor. Although iD is the most basic map editor for OpenStreetMap, it is extremely powerful, and it takes time, patience, and lots of practice to become a confident and proficient mapper. This course will teach participants how to: navigate the iD editor; create new points, lines, and areas in OSM; edit existing OSM features; save data correctly in OSM.

Course 3: Imagery Interpretation

Image interpretation is the act of identifying objects within an image and determining their significance, and tracing features from satellite imagery is one of the most common ways in which mappers contribute to OpenStreetMap. Imagery allows remote mappers to contribute to global tasks when a crisis arises, and even allows locally based field mappers to "lay the groundwork" before organizing fieldwork campaigns to collect specific, detailed tags. In this course, participants will learn about the sources of imagery available for tracing in OSM and guidelines on how to interpret various features in these images.

Course 4: The OSM Data Model

A model is an abstract, simplified representation of reality. From a geographer's perspective, a map is a model of the physical world around us. This module explains the components of a geospatial data model and how the OpenStreetMap Data Model differs and aligns with this. Participants will learn to distinguish features in the OSM data model using the tagging system and how it is employed for symbology and querying.

Course 5: The Tasking Manager

You can edit anywhere at any time in OSM, but when a large group of people is focused on mapping the same geographical area, they can run into trouble with duplicate edits and overlapping features. To ensure optimal coverage of the study area and minimal overlap, we use a web based platform called the OSM Tasking Manager. This course is a tutorial on finding and contributing to relevant OSM tasks, locking, editing, and

releasing a particular tile, and appropriately commenting on and tagging your contributions.

Course 6: Chapter Management
Organizing and managing a YouthMappers chapter takes training and practice. This course will prepare you for success by illustrating the "soft skills" (i.e. social, emotional, planning, etc.) needed to help a team develop and keep members engaged. Participants will explore facilitating meaningful engagement with projects and how to keep their peers and collaborators motivated. They'll also learn what it takes to organize a successful Mapathon and explore different communication options to keep the team and community engaged.

YouthMappers' vision is to "cultivate a generation of young people to develop leadership ability and create resilient communities around the world" through mapping. The launch of the *YouthMappers Academy* furthers that vision and accommodates the rapidly growing network's demand for a standardized high quality on-boarding curriculum. This micro-credentialed training developed specifically for YouthMappers by academic experts at accredited institutions of higher education provides marketable skill development, critical thinking, community awareness, and professional development. Participants will gain additional recognition of their skills as they graduate and enter the workforce.

About YouthMappers: [YouthMappers](#) is an international network of 264 university-student-led campus chapters in 58 countries. The network uses public geospatial technologies to identify and directly address development challenges worldwide. YouthMappers' organizing institutions are Texas Tech University, The George Washington University, West Virginia University, and Arizona State University. The United States Agency for International Development generously supports YouthMappers through a grant from the U.S. Global Development Lab's GeoCenter.

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