

Acclaimed STEM Ecosystems Founder Jan Morrison is Special Guest on Let's Talk STEM with Dr. Calvin Mackie Podcast

Morrison Established STEM Learning Ecosystems After Realizing that STEM Educational Programs Needed to be More Effective and Reach Broader Audiences

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[VIDEO PODCAST](#)

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Jan Morrison, Founder and CEO of the Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM, said on the new Let's Talk STEM with Dr. Calvin Mackie podcast that she established STEM Learning Ecosystems after it was clear that educational programs teaching science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) needed to be more effective.

“

The culture has supported STEM being White and being racially biased, and if we don't say that out loud, then we are lying to ourselves. The question is how is that community deepened...”

Jan Morrison

“It became evident really fast that programs were not being as effective as they could be,” Morrison told Dr. Mackie. “There wasn't an infrastructure to grab it, to leverage it, to support it, to love it, to make sure that the children and the families and the communities were connected and to make sure business and industry were connected...for everybody to understand what it was going to take to create STEM jobs and opportunity.”

Morrison's answer was STEM Learning Ecosystems. It is a Global Community of Practice with extensive sharing of resources and expertise among leaders from education, business and industry, non-profits, philanthropy and others. The 94 communities selected from across the world compose a global partnership demonstrating that cross-sector collaborations can deliver rigorous, effective preK-16 instruction in STEM learning.

Her appearance on the Let's Talk STEM with Dr. Calvin Mackie podcast marked a watershed moment: a conversation with two of the world's leading advocates for STEM education. While

Morrison is credited with building collaboration from various sectors into enhanced STEM learning and opportunities, Dr. Mackie is acclaimed for taking STEM education directly into under-resourced communities by activating schools, churches and community centers and engaging parents, corporate volunteers and college students.

In one engaging exchange, Dr. Mackie said, "We're having too many conversations about what kids are missing in school" and not enough discussion on what can be done to supplement their learning and fill the void.

"You're a hundred percent, right,"

Morrison responded. "And we forget that. We talk about school as an institution, a square room, where they walk into and they say 'Hi' to their teachers. That's all fine. But your point is so well taken. What can we do? The great outdoors? What does being out of doors in New Orleans allow for you? It's an amazing opportunity for kids."

Dr. Mackie and Morrison spoke at length about STEM ecosystems, including addressing the role that social-emotional learning plays and should play in STEM education.

"STEM is not a matter of just the technology, the tools and the mechanics side. STEM is about problem solving. If you bring a human being to problem solving, you're immediately talking about social and emotional learning whether the problems are their own or their community's problems," Morrison said. "The reality is that solving problems is the heart of STEM, so it's absolutely a natural match to bring in the whole research community and practice community of social, emotional learning."

Discussion also centered around a post-COVID world and the impact the pandemic is having on education.

"The thing that most worries me about COVID is the kid's ability and time to play, to tinker, to have unguided, not two-dimensional screens, but not playing games, but actually working on something that they build in which they go from nothing to something," Morrison said. "Last year, when we started to talk about learning loss, Calvin, I lost it! I couldn't handle it! I kept saying, 'Those children didn't just stop being that whole year.' They didn't have a learning loss. It



may have been different, but they gained, they learned and learned all kinds of things."

Morrison also noted the need for more equity, opportunity and access to STEM education, calling for a culture shift.

"The culture has supported STEM being White and being racially biased, and if we don't say that out loud, then we are lying to ourselves," Morrison said. "The question is how is that community deepened and how do we understand the cultural nature that has to be there? It doesn't come from just enabling the ecosystems to hire more, but it comes from also listening and operating differently and asking different sets of questions."

An archive of Let's Talk STEM with Dr. Calvin Mackie podcasts can be found [HERE](#).

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ABOUT STEM GLOBAL ACTION

In 2013, Dr. Calvin Mackie founded STEM NOLA, a New Orleans-based, non-profit committed to expanding STEM education, particularly in communities of color. His goal is to make STEM education available in ALL communities. In July 2021, Dr. Mackie launched STEM Global Action, a campaign and network of affiliates that pursues STEM education for children, parents and communities. His initiatives have impacted more than 100,000 students, 20,000 families and 5,000 schools across the U.S., and in five countries. The STEM Global Action (www.stemglobalaction.com) website includes:

STEM Global Action Today (<https://stemglobalaction.com/stem-global-action-today/>), a newsletter with comprehensive articles on some of the most important issues related to STEM, and takes readers into the lives of STEM educators and their extraordinary students, who will be the STEM leaders of tomorrow.

STEM Global Action Data Center (<https://stemglobalaction.com/stem-data-center/>), a one-stop resource library for studies, reports, video presentations and news coverage about STEM.

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