

Programs and Initiatives: An Insider's View



ECOSYSTEMS CAN LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS IN A COMMUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT, ALIGN AND SCALE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES FOR ALL LEARNERS.

Ecosystems in the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice learn from one another in countless ways. In a conversation series, Pressing Topics, three ecosystem leaders share their best thinking around leveraging partners in the design and scaling of programs and initiatives.

Saskia Traill, senior vice president of ExpandedED Schools, says that philanthropic partner, the [Pinkerton Foundation](#) helped the NYC STEM Network to build on existing resources and partnerships to best serve the community. “We are really lucky to have so many committed cultural institutions in New York City,” says Traill. “Questions from funding partners helped us connect all the great work already going on. This led to the creation of initiatives like the [Educators Academy](#) that supports aligned STEM learning.”

ADDING DIVERSE VOICES TO THE INITIAL INITIATIVE DESIGN ENSURES PROGRAMMING MEETS ACTUAL COMMUNITY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES US TO LOOK FOR LANGUAGE THAT MAKES STEM ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL.

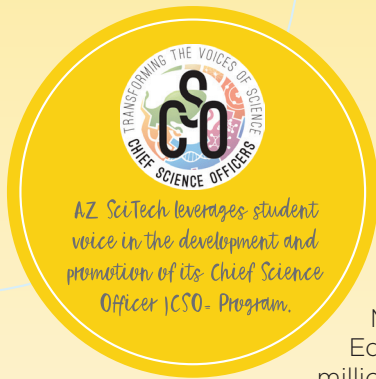


Community listening sessions to inform programs are critical. “San Diego is a pretty large region, in order to ensure we were meeting community needs, the Ecosystem decided to focus on one neighborhood at a time,” says Kris Mooney, director of education, Fleet Science Center, San Diego. “[52 Weeks of Science](#), an initiative promoting a science activity every week, leveraging the assets of the Barrio Logan neighborhood, was born from those sessions.”

Kansas City STEM Alliance, AZ SciTech, First 2 Network (West Virginia) and Symbiosis (British Columbia) all echo the importance of listening sessions with inclusive representation in their own regional work as well.



Student voice has been key in the development of HSTA.



LEVERAGING THE RIGHT PARTNERS CAN EXPAND YOUR ABILITY TO SCALE EXISTING AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS EXPONENTIALLY.

Jeremy Babendure of Arizona SciTech is convening partners to create more centralized messaging to better distribute information about existing programs in the different communities throughout the ecosystem.

Meanwhile, the NYC STEM Network has developed a partnership with the Department of Education's STEM Office to establish a centralized communications vehicle that can reach one million students in 32 school districts.

BUILDING TRUST AMONG PARTNERS TO INCREASE THE ABILITY TO SHARE RESOURCES FOR PROGRAMMING IS IMPORTANT.

Ecosystems like East Syracuse Minoa, Kansas City STEM Alliance and the New Jersey Pathways Network have been able to leverage the international STEM Learning Ecosystems initiative to build trust among local stakeholders and encourage greater collaboration to align and expand programs.

"Getting partners to share their events, resources, etc. takes trust," says Ann Zimmerman of KC STEM. "We inspire groups to work together by telling stories of success from the larger Community of Practice. KC STEM gets partners in a room to map out the landscape of who is doing what and why - we work together to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. Members build partnerships in those meetings to align their programs so young people get an appropriate continuum of exposure to STEM."

KNOW YOUR ASSETS, LISTEN TO INDUSTRY, COMMUNICATE THE VALUE, INVITE PARTNERS IN AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE - IN THAT ORDER.

"Program duplication isn't necessarily a bad thing," says Traill of NYC STEM Network. "In our neighborhood listening sessions, we received some pushback that forced us to question why duplication was such a concern. In upper- and middle-class communities, there is a lot of redundancy in programming and availability of resources. The bigger conversation should be alignment."

PANELISTS

Saskia Traill, PhD, Senior Vice President of ExpandedED Schools; NYC STEM Network

Catherine Morton, Ed.D., Assistant Director, Health Sciences Technology Academy, HSTA; First 2 Network (West Virginia)

Jeremy Babendure, PhD, Executive Director, AZ SciTech

Kris Mooney, Director of Education, Fleet Science Center, San Diego STEM Ecosystem

NYC STEM Education Network
New York, NY



First2 Network
West Virginia



A FULL RECORDING OF THE WEBINAR IS AVAILABLE AT:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQhEnlhw6KI>

STEM Learning Ecosystem Discussion Series - Pressing Topics

The Programs and Initiatives Conversation is the first in a series of webinar-based discussions designed to meet the needs of local and regional Ecosystem leaders have identified. Topics of high interest were identified through a survey distributed to Ecosystem leaders. Panelists were selected based on self-assessed expertise and data from the Ecosystems Indicator Tool (EIT).

OTHER WEBINAR TOPICS IN THIS SERIES INCLUDE:

- Communications
- Organization and Governance Structures
- Business Connections
- Fundraising