

EXPANDING ACCESS AND INCLUSION IN STEM THROUGH CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT BY LINDA KEKELIS, PHD AND KARA SAMMT, PHD.

As part of the STEM Next Opportunity Fund's Family Engagement Project, this case study features examples of informal STEM programs, like those of Techbridge Girls and Code Next, to showcase the importance of culturally responsive, inclusive STEM and computer science programs.

Research shows that families are critical to the encouragement and navigation support of STEM learning for youth. Culturally responsive family engagement is especially important for program providers to consider in that it maximizes the strength and potential of all communities, most notably the populations most underrepresented in STEM fields. Culturally responsive programs respect cultural differences of families across race, language, geography, religion and nationality.

Techbridge Girls has deployed programming that includes events for girls to showcase their STEM work to families and resources for families to use together in the home. By partnering with the Somali Youth and Family Club, SYFC, they were also able to expand their programming in a meaningful way to a Greater Seattle community home to refugees and immigrant families from East Africa.

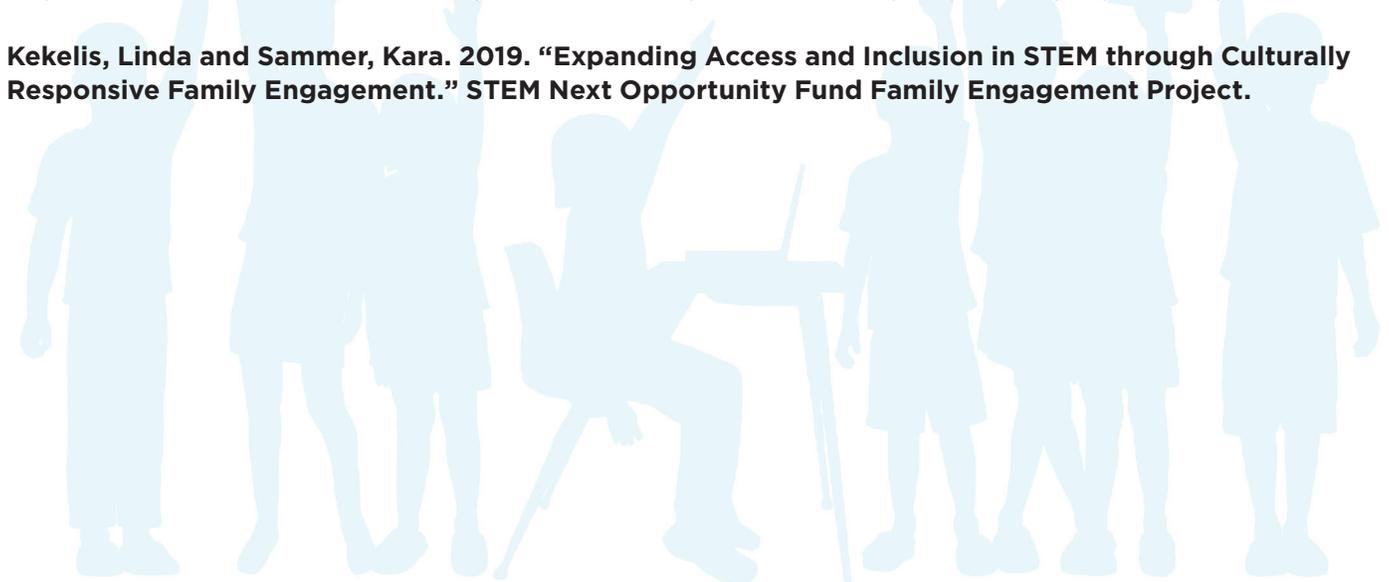
The mutually beneficial relationship between Techbridge and SYFC allowed both organizations to develop a shared vision and better serve the community by leveraging each organizations expertise in recruitment and content delivery. The relationship has allowed both organizations to best meet funder expectations as well.

Code Next's social capital building through tech learning experiences in Black and Latino communities is featured in this case study. Code Next has leveraged research-based design tools like the MIT **Family Creative Learning** workshop to introduce families to computer science.

Design work is facilitated in ways that make sense to the communities being served and outreach for Code Next's programming is completed in ways that align with a community's preferred means of communication. This means that the timing, method and language of the outreach is appropriate for the target population.

Listening to the families served about works best for them was a consistent lesson learned, as both organizations look to learn and iterate their programs and outreach. The case study also concludes with next steps field leaders can consider taking in their work to provide culturally responsive programming.

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Thanks to generous support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Our Neighborhood*, is a compilation of stories and research from the family engagement field. It is intended to be a living repository and guide for STEM Learning Ecosystems and other communities interested in cultivating strong community partnerships to prepare the next generation.

This annotated bibliography was compiled by TIES for *Our Neighborhood*.