

# Sustainability

## Promoting Sustainable Decision Making in Informal Education (DRL #0917595)

### Project Goals

#### The major goals of the Sustainability project were to:

- 1) Promote sustainable decision-making.
- 2) Promote sustainable practices for developing, designing, and fabricating exhibits.

### Project Duration

September 2009—April 2015

### Target Audiences

#### Public Audience

- Focus on families with middle and high school aged youth
- Residents of the Portland metro area (Clackamas, Washington, and Multnomah counties)
- Underserved audience: parents who prefer to speak Spanish and their families

#### Professional Audience

- Exhibit developers, designers, and fabricators in non-profit and for-profit sectors
- Secondary audiences include museum administrators and others working in ISE organizations

### Project Partners

- City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
- Coalition for a Livable Future
- Metro Regional Government
- Portland Community College
- Verde

### Our approach to connecting with diverse audiences

- Bilingual co-development process is culturally inclusive and fully bilingual (English-Spanish).
- Partners understand Portland's demographics and have experience developing programs and events for diverse audiences, including the Hispanic community.
- Development team includes bilingual staff, advisors, and volunteers, representing a variety of backgrounds, nationalities, and perspectives.
- Deliverables, based on research, were chosen to best meet the needs of our diverse audiences.



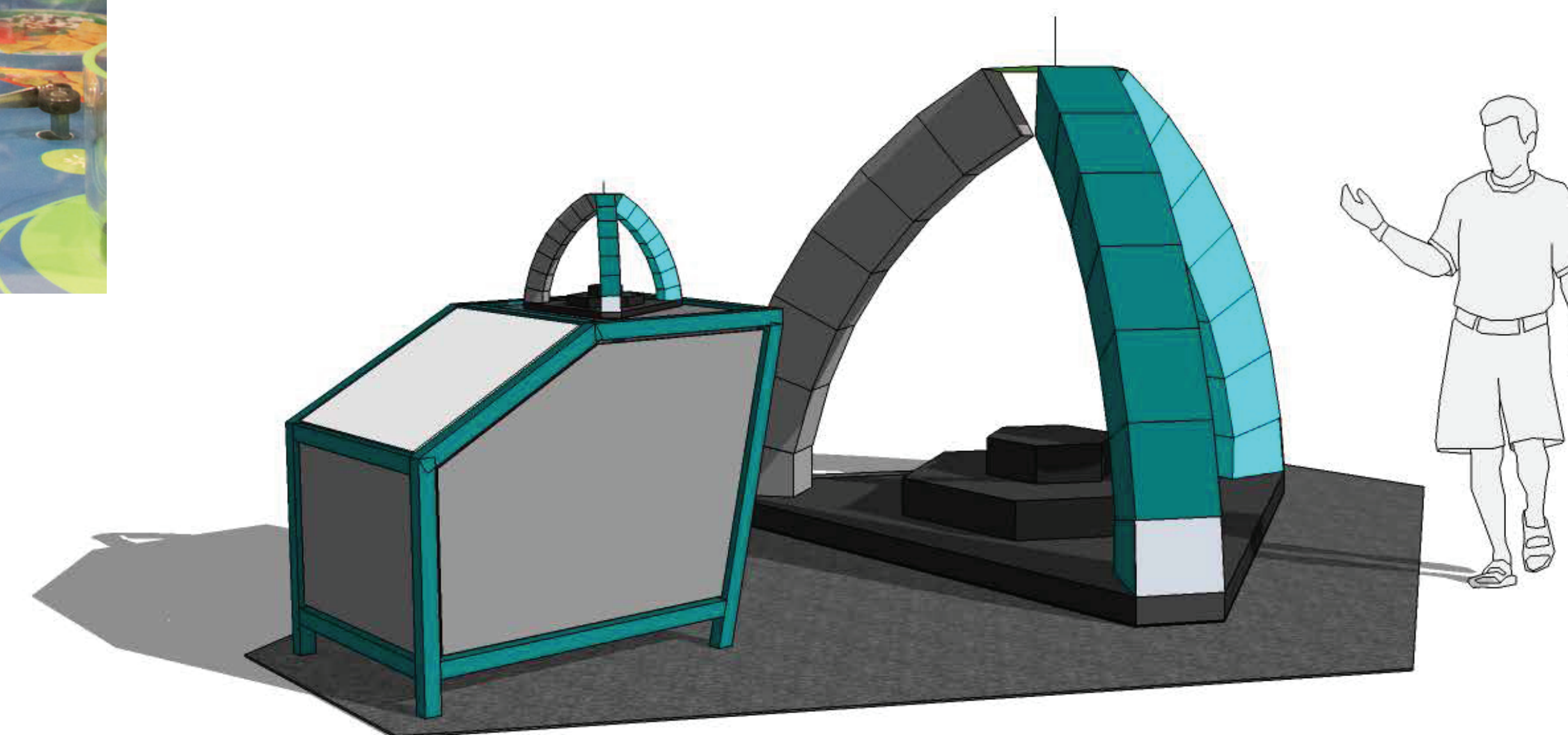
### Project Deliverables

- A 1,500 square foot bilingual (Spanish/English) exhibition, *Clever Together/Juntos somos ingeniosos*, designed to engage the public in developing an understanding of the skills needed for sustainable decision-making in their everyday lives
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) outreach campaign that uses “access points” outside of the museum to encourage people to engage with sustainability-related stories and activities via phone or computer (*Local Voices, Clever Choices/Nuestras voces, nuestras decisiones* campaign: English at [omsi.edu/choices](http://omsi.edu/choices) and Spanish at [omsi.edu/decisiones](http://omsi.edu/decisiones))
- Eight bilingual (Spanish/English) museum events about sustainable living
- Workshops for museum professionals held at OMSI, Children's Museum of Houston, The Franklin Institute, Miami Science Museum, and Science Museum of Minnesota focused on sustainable exhibit development and fabrication (*ExhibitSEED* Workshops)
- A set of documented practices and guidelines, tools, and resources for sustainable exhibit development, design, and fabrication that may become an industry standard (*ExhibitSEED.org*)

The goal of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's (OMSI) *Sustainability* project was to promote sustainable decision making by building skills that allow participants to weigh the tradeoffs of their choices and choose more sustainable practices.

The project team used a positive, story-based approach to engage the target public audience of English- and Spanish-speaking families in the Portland metropolitan area. The public audience deliverables focused on people and places in and around Portland and highlighted simple choices available to everyone.

The project's professional audience deliverables build upon the groundbreaking work already done at OMSI in the area of sustainable exhibit development, design, and fabrication.



[www.exhibitSEED.org](http://www.exhibitSEED.org)



Local Voices,  
Clever Choices



### Connections we hope to make with PIs

- Connect with other projects that are serving bilingual/multilingual audiences
- Connect with other projects using mobile technologies to reach audiences outside of the museum
- Connect with projects encouraging participants to take action after leaving the museum
- Connect with professionals interested in using and expanding the ExhibitSEED resources

### Project Challenges

- Defining the practical meanings of the three pillars of sustainability (society, economy, and environment) for ourselves and our audiences
- Addressing pre-conceived notions about sustainability as just being “green”
- Building capacity for bilingual events and outreach
- Developing an effective call to action for the community-embedded outreach campaign
- Maintaining the integrity of sustainability with respect to project team decisions

### Remedial & Summative Evaluation Key Findings

- **Exhibition:** The idea that sustainability was about the environment, economy, and society was a difficult message to convey.
- **Outreach Campaign:** Cell phones did not prove to be an effective way to reach people outside of the museum. Partnering with local organizations and using digital media (email, Facebook, etc.) was more effective and less expensive.
- **ExhibitSEED Professional Resources:** There is a lot of interest in improving the sustainability of exhibit development and fabrication. While some work has been done around the environmental impacts of exhibitions, there is less understanding of how to identify and weigh the social impacts of exhibits.
- **Reaching Hispanic Audiences:** Our outreach campaign was able to engage our target numbers for reaching Spanish-speaking adults. This was probably because we partnered with organizations that serve local Hispanic communities to identify Spanish-speaking storytellers and promote the campaign. The museum had a harder time attracting Hispanic families to the exhibition and events.

### Project Team

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**OMSI**  
Everyday Encounters with Science