

SENCER-ISE

Supported by NSF DRL #1001795

PROJECT OVERVIEW

On Sunday afternoon, March 6, 2011, over fifty educators from the formal higher education and informal science education worlds gathered at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, New Jersey to engage in two days of discussion about how both communities could work together to advance STEM learning through the broad focus of civic engagement. The invitational SENCER-ISE Conference was funded by grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Noyce Foundation. The informal science educators who attended SENCER-ISE came primarily from science and natural history museums, science centers, science media and communication outlets, and science organizations such as the National Geographic Society and the Association of Science-Technology Centers. The world of formal science higher education was represented by faculty who are involved with the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement's signature program SENCER (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities). The participants came from 19 states and the District of Columbia and also from Canada, Chile, and Israel.



CONFERENCE GOALS

Professionals in higher education (HE) and informal science education (ISE) gathered to explore how formal-informal partnerships grounded in civic engagement may strengthen the work of both informal and formal science education. Conference goals included:

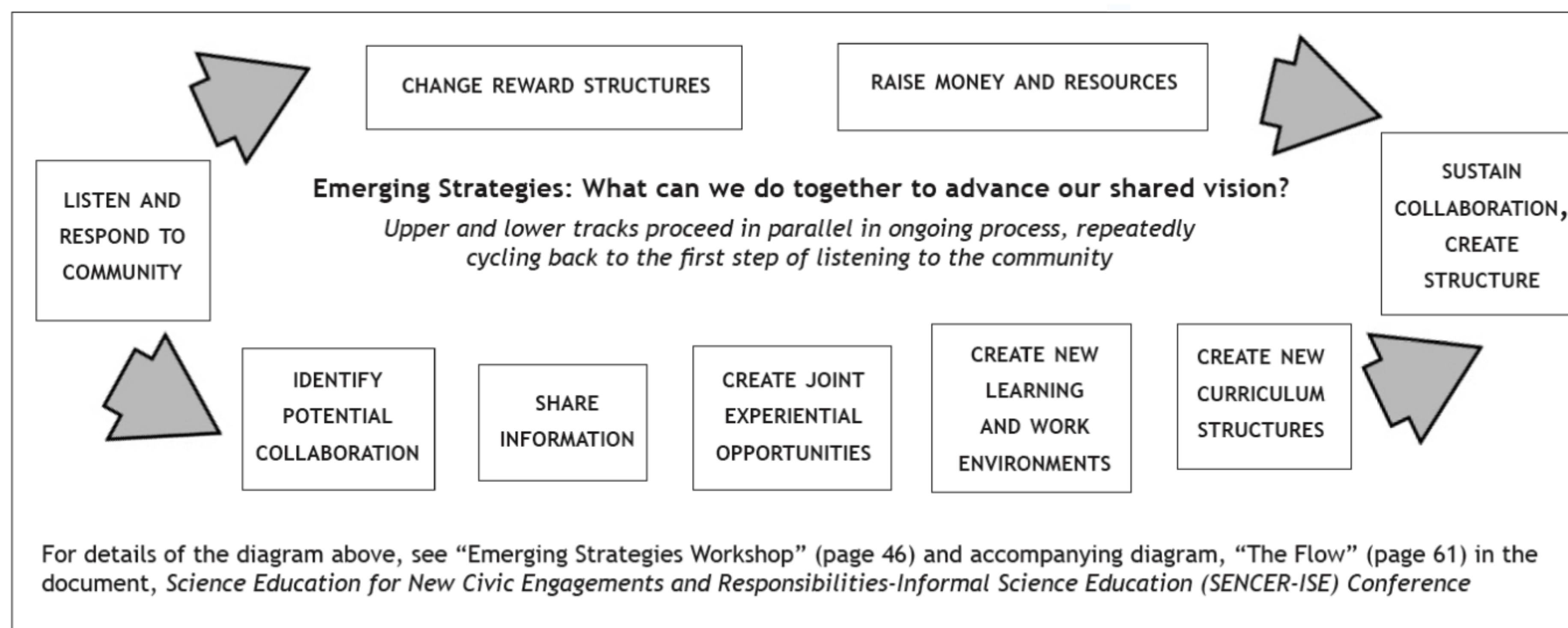
- Sharing approaches and outcomes each community employs to implement the civic engagement approach to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning;
- Mapping possible collaborations between formal and informal science educators that have the potential to transform each community's approach to STEM learning;
- Examining how civic responsibility and engagement activities are related to issues of infrastructure, policy, and learning.



APPROACH AND

EMERGING STRATEGIES

Potential strategies to address these obstacles and build a foundation for ongoing collaborative work include development of resources and joint approaches and structures to initiate, advance, and sustain the work, as outlined in the figure to the right.



IMPACT (FINDINGS AND DOCUMENTATION)

The conference evaluation findings, based on interviews with randomly-selected participants from both sectors and prepared by Randi Korn and Associates, Inc., is encouraging in that "findings show that there is much consensus between the two sectors when considering how best to collaborate around civic engagement in science." Collaborative steps are being taken by some participants. The SENCER-ISE conference "successfully achieved its two main goals of bringing ISE and SENCER professionals together to discuss civic engagement in science and inspiring ideas for collaboration between them." The evaluation report also offers suggestions that address perceived obstacles and opportunities for collaboration between the two sectors, as interviewees had many ideas to contribute. We are happy to share copies of the evaluation report from Randi Korn and Associates and the Conference Proceedings and Executive Summary prepared by Catherine McEver. They are all available online at <http://www.ncsce.net/Initiatives/SENCERISE.cfm>.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND DELIVERABLES

To encourage connections and maintain communication, the SENCER-ISE team created:

- A virtual 'Passport to Networking,' a password-protected site that allows partners to learn more about the interests and expertise of conference participants.
- A LinkedIn group.
- A webpage on the NCSCE site (www.ncsce.net) that contains full versions of the conference documentation and evaluation, as well as contact information for project staff.



REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIMARY AUDIENCES

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Tom Wood, George Mason University
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CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Emlyn Koster, Liberty Science Center
Lynn Luckow, Craigslist Foundation

CONFERENCE GUESTS

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Mercedes Talley, W.M. Keck Foundation

SENCER-ISE TEAM

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