

What elements of your informal STEM program have shown the greatest promise for producing long-term outcomes for girls and young women? How do you know?

The Scope of the Project



Challenge

Informal STEM programs for middle and high school-aged girls know very little about their mid-and long-term impact on program participants

Goals

To develop an action agenda to better understand the mid- and long-term impacts of informal STEM programs for girls, and methods and approaches for measuring them.

To lay the foundation for future research and demonstration projects.

Foci



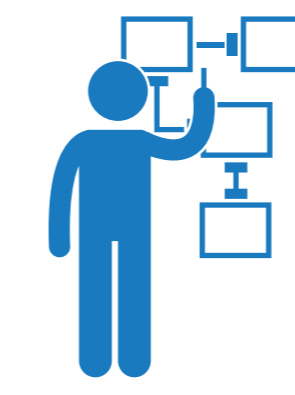
STEM Programs

Focusing on Middle and High School Aged Girls

Science Rich Cultural Institutions

Museums, Science Centers, Zoos, Aquaria, and Botanical Gardens

Key Activities to Date



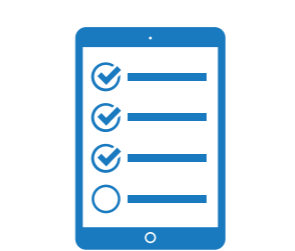
Core Planning Meeting 1

- Got to know each other, the work we do, and the goals of this project
- Discussed current research on STEM programs for girls and young women
- Reviewed some of the components of the action agenda (logic model, critical juncture model)
- Made plans for the social media campaign
- Drafted research questions



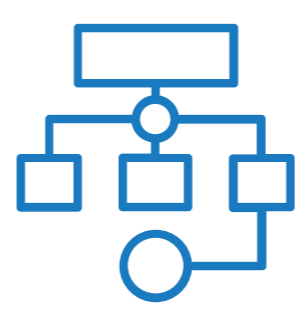
Social Media Engagement

- Established Twitter, Facebook and web presence
- Conducted Titter chat
 - Participants: 72
 - Impressions during chat: 1,696,904
 - Tweets during chat: 424



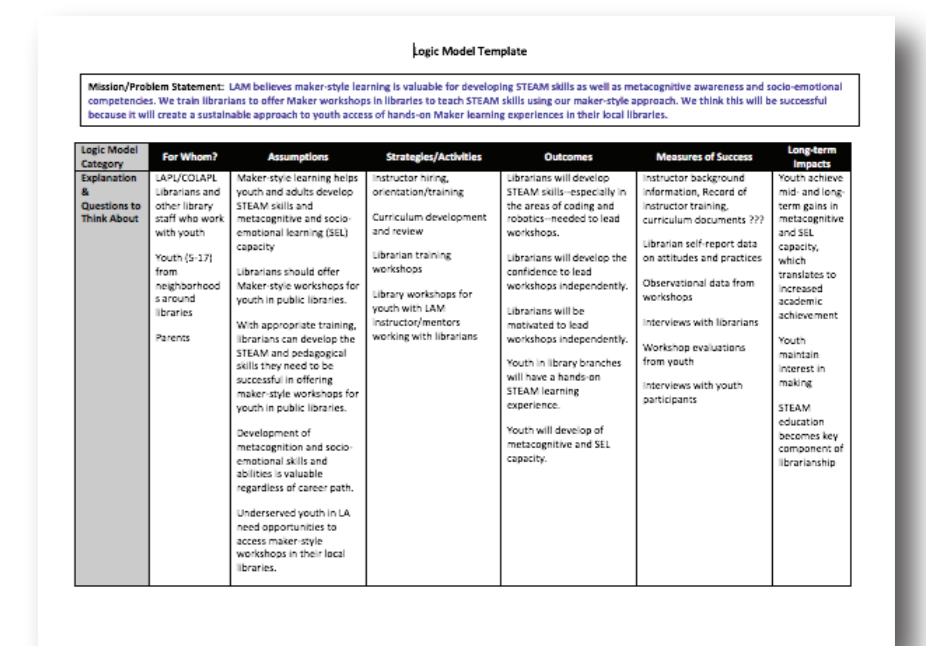
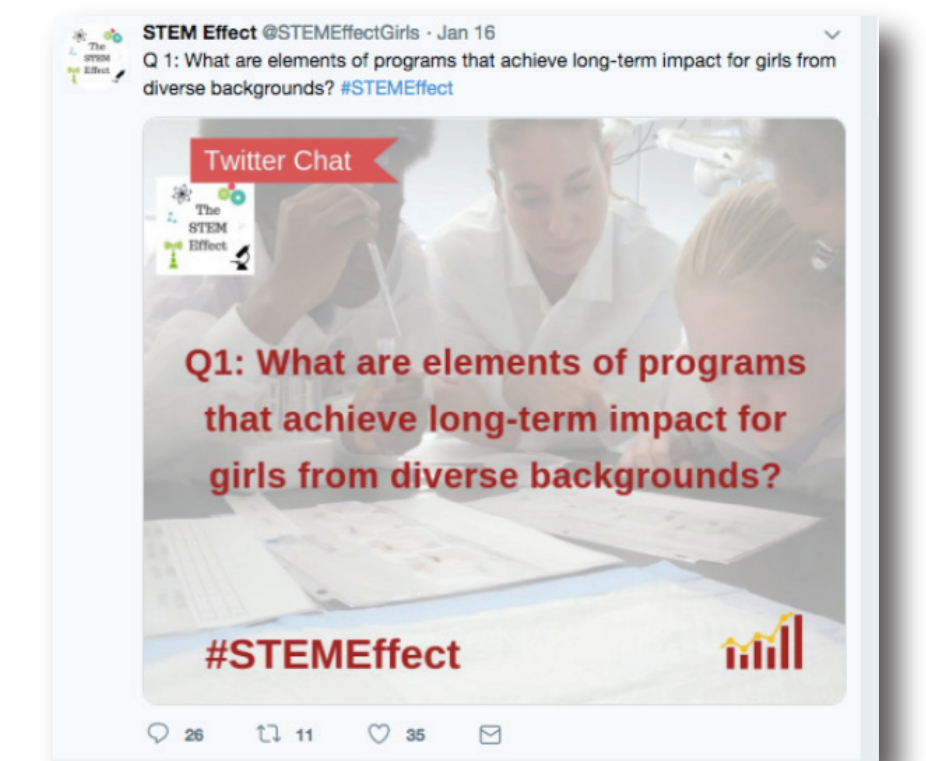
Web searches, Interviews, literature & logic model collection

- Collected and analyzed a sample of logic models
- CPG members conducted interviews with cultural organizations
- Ongoing review of literature



Core Planning Group meeting 2

- Project staff and CPG members shared and synthesized information gathered since last meeting
- Learned about current approaches to assess long-term outcomes of STEM programs for girls
- Formed action groups to plan and carry out next steps



The Action Agenda

Logic Model(s)

One or more logic models that identify medium and long-term outcomes of STEM programs for girls

Critical Junctures Model(s)

Develop a model that identifies critical junctures on the pathway to STEM education and careers for diverse middle school girls and young women along with inputs that can support women in passing through these junctures based on existing research

Research Questions

Identify key research priorities and questions for assessing mid and long-term outcomes

Action Steps

Plans for future projects



Emerging Themes Disconnects & Challenges

- Differing understandings of commonly used terms such as "mentorship" or "STEM Identity"
- The practitioner/researcher gap—different levels of comfort with time in gray areas
- Cultural bias in informal education against too many rigid outcomes (too school like/reduces enjoyment)
- External expectations vs realistic outcomes
- Capacity challenges for tracking participants long term
- Staff turnover



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