

Boston Youth Environmental Network Annual Meeting Notes from Breakout Sessions – 2-9-11

Below are the notes from the 4 breakout groups that met during the BYEN annual meeting. These groups were organized to reflect the areas of focus for BYEN:

1. Environmental Youth Employment
2. Out of School Time
3. Evaluation & Measurement
4. K-12 Environmental Education

Environmental Youth Employment

Creating the K-16 Teen Jobs Pathway

- Linking in school curriculum to job experience and everything in between
- Developing connections through BYEN to continue on pathway
- Stay with an organization through HS, provide academic support, organizing skills, college scholarship opps etc.
- Environmental education provides hard and soft skills. Hard Skills Examples – Horticulture, climate change curriculum, watershed curriculum etc. Soft Skills Examples – Job preparation, park visitors services etc.
- Think about the 18-24 “gap” and youth to adult outcomes
- Connection to community and state colleges, businesses in trade apprentice programs can help colleges know what is needed. “Mass Green Institute” Worcester State, North Shore CC Stockbridge, UNH
- BYEN as a clearing house for next step jobs
- FAIR: pathway jobs

Network Help – What We Need

- Database: #s of youth employed, impact on local economy, profiles of students and where they are/impact of their job, survey for teens as they age (evaluation)
- Holistic vision, not silo-ed work of environmental jobs
- Organize politically->@for jobs and policy->better jobs and a real path
- Visit each other’s organizations
- Information sharing for funding, raising # together
- Professional development for youth workers

Next Steps

- Systematic database/network of employers, Green Jobs Network/Mass Green Jobs Coalition
- Helping kids without academic skills go further in science
- Environmental curriculum for 6 weeks ->Recycling, climate change etc.

Out of School Time

What do you want from the network- what can it do that you or your org can not do alone?

- EDC- has grants looking for partners
- Boston College- NSF grants- looking for partners
 - Working on Mobile apps and programs
- The network should be a referral service for programs- there are groups out there looking for outdoor programs. The network should be the avenue to connect groups to the right people.
- Connect groups they have kids but don't know what to do with them outside and don't want to recreate the wheel-
 - Offer these orgs training on what to do with kids outside and how to do it
- Help with funding
 - BYEN should look at the New England Ocean Network collaborative- they do collective fundraising-
- Alignment of out of school programs with schools –so can connect as out of school programs that still offer value to kids and school and teachers
- Marketing for programs- who are part of the network
 - The program is endorsed
 - The program get more leverage and coverage of services
- Help local groups connect with each other and have stronger programming and marketing together- like minded orgs-
 - -Ex- One group has kids looking for outdoor gardening program- connect with existing community garden program
- Share participant lists
- People who might be willing to meet again to discuss (We received cards from these people, not sure if this is everyone)
- Stephanie Radner- Weather Observer and WINS Program Coordinator sradner@bluehill.org
- Carole McCauley Outreach coordinator Marine Science Center (part of the NE Ocean Network Collaborative) c.mccauley@neu.edu
- Anjoli Fry Teacher Naturalist BNC afry@massaudubon.org
- Dave Madan Founder and Director the MOVE dave@getoutma.org
- Jacqueline Maloney Kendall Institute mommaj38@gmail.com

Evaluation & Measurement

Under the context of “Evaluation”, what can we do as a network that individual organizations can’t.

- Share common tools
- Share common pools of data that multiple organizations contribute to growing at both. Break out pools of data so orgs can look at their own programs and citywide or multiple program pools of data. Have sets of data that include 10-15 organization
- Facilitate cross organization sharing of data
- Share best practices in evaluation
- Create “standardized” youth measurement instruments
- Define as a group what we want to evaluate/measure, have the network coordinate this
- Ask “How can the information best demonstrate the impact?”
- ID the core outcomes and use eval to show results
- Increase our network wide competitiveness for government funding
- Look at Federal universal measurement instruments as a strategy for standardization
- Create a common tool that is scaled, select the tool, coordinate use within the network
- Think of using the 4 themes on the cover of Getting Out Gets Results as an organizing strategy for a network wide approach to evaluation. Build resources, measurement instruments and data under those headings.
- Build all of this in such a way that organizations can draw on the resources to design their own evaluation plan for grants and fundraising
- Student assessment and demographics as “data modules”
- Evaluation that looks at 1. Geographical coverage of EE services in Boston 2. % of engaged organizations in networking
- Evaluation that tells us how to connect youth to the next step on the pathway, what are the referral opportunities?
- Evaluation that tracks kids after they leave any one organization. (Facebook as a tracking strategy). Gather the stories/qualitative data. Younger kids read the stories of their Peers. Create youth focus groups to gather the stories. BYEN offers workshops on how to do this.
- Ability to tack the information, follow kids that have been in the program for a while.
- Build “alumni” pages to track graduates and be able to ask follow up questions. (American Camping Association as a model)
- Build platforms with shared or common tools and allow organizations to self select on using those tools.

How can BYEN help your evaluation efforts?

- Assistance interpreting information that we have
- ID other potential network partners
- It adds and independent element of external evaluation that is hard for us to do ourselves.
- Help us to share how we compare to other programs
- Creates and external way to “judge” our outcomes
- Data and information for funding and political promotion

K-12 Environmental Education

Under the context of “K-12 Environmental Education”, what can we do as a network that individual organizations can’t.

- Help us with money, programs and transportation
- Mobilize large #s for political action for EE and larger issues
- Identify sites for education and EE programming
- Identify schools in need of service – institutionalize this within the district
- Create larger and more robust pools of resources for member organizations to tap into
- Generate data on effective programming
- Identify the programmatic gaps and overlap
- Create a rubric for effective programs for the district. Create frameworks for organizations and the district to work together
- Reach out to more teachers for events
- Website postings to organize teachers and organizations
- Recruit HS teachers, encouragement from district to participate in programs
- PDP/PD on field experiences for teachers, build site exposure for teachers, build EE exposure for teachers
- Access to retired teachers – volunteer and paid for EE sites
- Analysis of meeting standards using EE and integration, what is happening?
- MCAS for ES?
- Strategically align with reform movement, incorporate student voice, policy identification and advocacy is key to EE success
- Social science and EE integration
- More direction from BPS as to what they need, language, training opps for EE staff, kit language and information, put FAQ on BYEN website

How can BYEN help?

- Hold teacher trainings at out sites. Use our sites for visits and field experiences for teachers
- Read Boston, connections to literacy and literature, looking for EE organizations to work with
- Info on how other programs align to standards
- BYEN Facebook – connections to all BYEN members, talk to non-traditional social networks and see if there is existing technology that could be applied
- Layered support
- HS science support – combine forces to support
- Better sharing of BPS needs