For Inclusive Informal STEM Learning Opportunities for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder (YEAR 1)

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### Objectives

1. Increase inclusion of ASD individuals in Informal Science Education in science museum environments by supporting staff development.
2. Understand the professional development required to support the integration of inclusive STEM learning activities in museums.
3. Understand how to support ASD individual’s skill development, confidence, and motivation needed to engage in STEM activities.

### Activities

**SARRC FAMILY RESEARCH:**

Pre-Visit questionnaire data from 75+ families who attend science museums with a child with ASD to explore the supports and challenges of their museum experiences. Initial analysis data and trends are being identified to inform this project and a wider understanding.

**Community of Practice and Incubators:**

Monthly video meetings of the core team support reflexive practice on individual and organizational learning and changes, provide important data about institutional and individual change. SARRC staff is providing ongoing learning about ASD and inclusion, while ILI is monitoring participation and engagement, guide the reflective practice, and explore which elements of the training and aspects of their delivery are most crucial for effective PD and organizational culture change.

**National Inventory:**

Project includes the development of a national inventory – a searchable database collating information from 4 museums from the largest 2 metro regions in each state on the ways museums are currently communicating about their offerings for the ASD community online.

**On-Site:**

Each museums receives customized SARRC training in their home institutions for one half day each week over 12 months. The imbedded SARRC expert is developing organizational trainings with each project team to expand knowledge at the organizational level.

### Accessibility vs. Inclusivity

One of our primary foci in this project is the development of spaces that not only meet the ACCESSIBILITY needs of all potential participants but also support the INCLUSION of all potential participants.

Accessibility: improve ability to enter and tolerate.

Inclusivity: equal access to resources.

Inclusivity differs from accessibility in that it doesn’t necessarily address an individual’s need or problem, but instead provides a range of tools and features that the individual can select from in their given environment.

### Inclusion

Inclusion is the process and practice of improving the terms for individuals and groups to participate in educational, economic, social, political, and cultural life. Providing individuals and groups at a disadvantage the access, opportunity, and resources needed to participate fully and to have a standard of living that is considered a norm for the society, community, or institution they are a participant of. Inclusion continues to evolve within our local and global community, and is not a destination.

### Next Steps

Implement Big Goal Idea.

**The Second Phase**

This project lays the groundwork for an evidenced-based, self-sustaining, institutional change model that, through future research, will be scaled up. This will provide the larger ISE community access to inclusive tools and resources for decades to come. We will be seeking additional national partners for the next phase.

Where are you on the inclusive spectrum? What’s your next step?

**Partners**

And of course… Several Members of the Autism Spectrum Community

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