



UK Research  
and Innovation

# Supporting all young people through UK informal STEM learning

A Think Piece for funders and policy-makers



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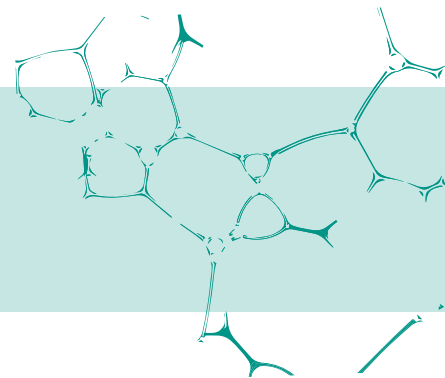
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# 1. Executive summary

This Think Piece was commissioned by UKRI as part of its review of youth engagement with research and innovation, to share reflections and ideas to help support funders and policy-makers who are interested in the issues of diversity and inclusion in relation to informal science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning provision in the UK. The Think Piece specifically foregrounds issues of equity and social justice in relation to young people and minoritised<sup>1</sup> communities, and uses this lens to consider the following questions:

- To what extent does informal STEM learning currently challenge social injustices and support the equity, diversity and inclusion of young people?
- How is this evident within the aims, practices, evaluation, outcomes and impact of informal STEM learning?
- How might informal STEM learning better support equity and social justice among minoritised and excluded young people and communities?

## Key points

The UK's informal STEM learning sector is diverse, heterogeneous and largely disconnected, with subsectors often working in parallel silos. As a result, the sector is a complex terrain, difficult for funders, professionals and learners to navigate. To date, there has been relatively limited opportunity, resource and infrastructure to support professional development related to equity issues. There has also been relatively little centralised activity or coordination between subsectors and limited opportunities for sharing practice and building professional capacity to meaningfully engage with issues of social justice.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Funders might look to international contexts with more centralised coordination and capacity-building initiatives to consider whether there might be scope and value for similar, joined up, equity-focused resources in the UK.

<sup>1</sup> We use the term 'minoritised' as a shorthand for individuals and communities who are minoritised by dominant culture/society. Using 'minoritised' rather than 'minority' puts the emphasis on the systemic issues and structures that are failing to sufficiently recognise, support and value some people. People can be minoritised within a particular society depending on their race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic background, dis/ability, sexuality and other social axes.

Research conducted for this Think Piece indicated that currently, both within the UK and internationally, the aims of informal STEM learning are largely driven by industry, the economy and concerns with the STEM 'pipeline'. That is, informal STEM learning is largely used as a vehicle to improve young people's STEM skills and increase the supply of potential future STEM workers. Informal STEM learning initiatives tend to be driven less by the interests and needs of young people and minoritised communities and are less likely to use STEM as a vehicle for active citizenship, social mobility and social action. Yet, evidence suggests that initiatives driven by these aims hold greater social justice potential.

**Recommendation 2:**

Funders and policy-makers might usefully reflect on how informal STEM learning practitioners might be supported to ground their work within a social justice agenda.

**Recommendation 3:**

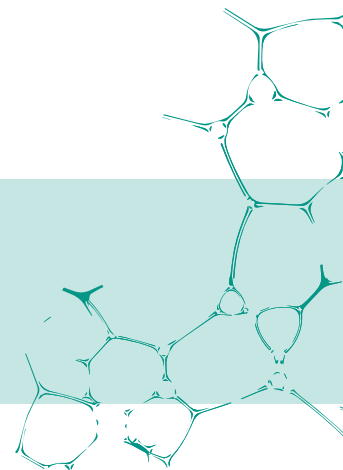
Funders might usefully consider how informal STEM learning funding could better explicitly value and foster social justice aims and outcomes.

**Recommendation 4:** Reflective tools, such as the Equity Compass, may provide a useful starting point for funders, policy-makers and informal STEM learning practitioners who want to adopt a social justice approach and track their progress.

Within the UK's informal STEM learning sector there is relatively little capacity and resource to support research-practice knowledge exchange and innovation in delivery and evaluation. Much research and evaluation focus on identifying short-term and/or simplistic outcomes. Evidence suggests that research-practice partnership (RPP) approaches can support sustainable, innovative and impactful change, and can build valuable capacity within both research and practice communities.

**Recommendation 5:** Funders and policy-makers might usefully explore how to support and grow capacity for research-practice partnerships to help build capacity and develop high-quality evidence-based and evidence-informed practice.

## 2. The UK informal STEM learning sector



The UK's informal science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning sector is diverse, heterogeneous and largely disconnected, with subsectors often working in parallel silos, with some areas having high levels of overlap and congestion and other areas experiencing gaps<sup>2</sup>.

In many ways, this breadth is part of its strength, providing a wide range of experiences and offers across STEM areas and geographic regions. However, this diversity also presents challenges: there are gaps in provision (for example, the sector often does not engage those who might want or need it most), provision is often not in forms that are most useful or appropriate for minoritised communities, and there has been little attempt to better join up provision into coherent longer-term pathways that might better support young people's trajectories over time.

There is also a lack of infrastructure for supporting capacity-building and strategic partnership and learning across the sector. Although there have been some attempts at this, such as the bringing together of STEM organisations by the National Forum for Public Engagement in STEM<sup>3</sup>. There are also networks and associations that support specific subsectors (for example, UK Science Festivals Network, The UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres, The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums). However, dialogue across and between these remains limited.

While these challenges are not unique to the UK, it is notable that the presence of a central body can support capacity-building, knowledge exchange and innovation. One example is The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education<sup>4</sup> in the US who run an annual conference for projects funded under National Science Foundation's Advancing Informal STEM Learning (NSF-AISL) programme that attracts several hundred delegates.

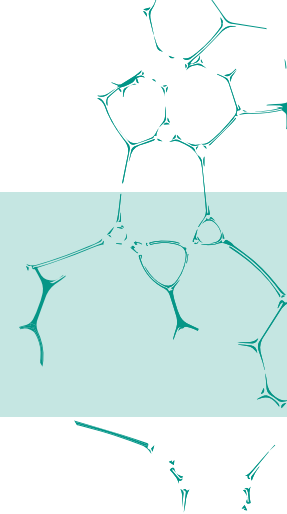
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2 <https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/reports/uk-stem-education-landscape>

3 <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/nccpe-projects-and-services/nccpe-projects/national-forum-public-engagement-stem>

4 <https://www.informalscience.org>





### 3. Taking an equity perspective

There is ample evidence in the UK and globally that STEM *is not an equal playing field for everyone*. Data show that those who study STEM subjects in higher education and who tend to engage with informal STEM learning vary by socioeconomic status, gender, ethnic background and dis/ability.

It is also widely recognised that informal STEM learning has a limited reach and is failing to support young people from minoritised communities who are traditionally under-represented in STEM and who might benefit the most from its offer.

We believe that approaching this work from an equity perspective is crucial in any efforts to work with young people, to ensure that activities supported by funders meaningfully engage all young people and particularly those from minoritised groups who have traditionally been excluded and/or underrepresented in STEM education. In taking an equity perspective, we draw on our wider ongoing work focused on the issues of equity in formal and informal science, and STEM education.

*An 'equity' perspective recognises that people have different needs and face different challenges, and thus require differential support according to their needs.* An 'equality' perspective, on the other hand, would advocate treating everyone the same, such as providing the same level of support for all, irrespective of needs and starting points.

To consider equity issues, we apply the Equity Compass (see Figure 1), a tool developed within our Youth Equity and STEM project<sup>5</sup> that prompts a consideration of multiple dimensions of equity:

- Challenging the status quo: whose priorities matter, how dominant power relations are being transformed and the extent to which resources are being redistributed to better support those from less privileged, minoritised communities
- Working with and valuing minoritised communities: working in participatory ways (with people, rather than for them and delivering content to them), and adopting an asset-based approach, recognising and valuing broad knowledge, identities and experiences
- Embedding equity throughout programmes and organisations
- Extending equity: supporting longer term experiences and outcomes focusing on outcomes for wider community/society.

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5 <https://yestem.org/>

The Equity Compass can be applied to specific sectors or activities. To date, our team have developed the following:

- Equity Compass for informal STEM learning<sup>6</sup>
- Equity Compass – Teacher Edition<sup>7</sup>
- Equity Compass – School Leaders and Governors Edition<sup>8</sup>
- Equity Compass – STEM Ambassadors Edition<sup>9</sup>
- Equity Compass – Funders Edition<sup>10</sup>

In this report we include the Guiding questions for funders as an Appendix.

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6 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-YESTEM-Insight-1-Equity-Compass-for-ISL-updated-Sept-2021.pdf>

7 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Equity-Compass-Teacher-Edition.pdf>

8 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-YESTEM-Insight-Equity-Compass-School-Leaders-and-Governors-Edition.pdf>

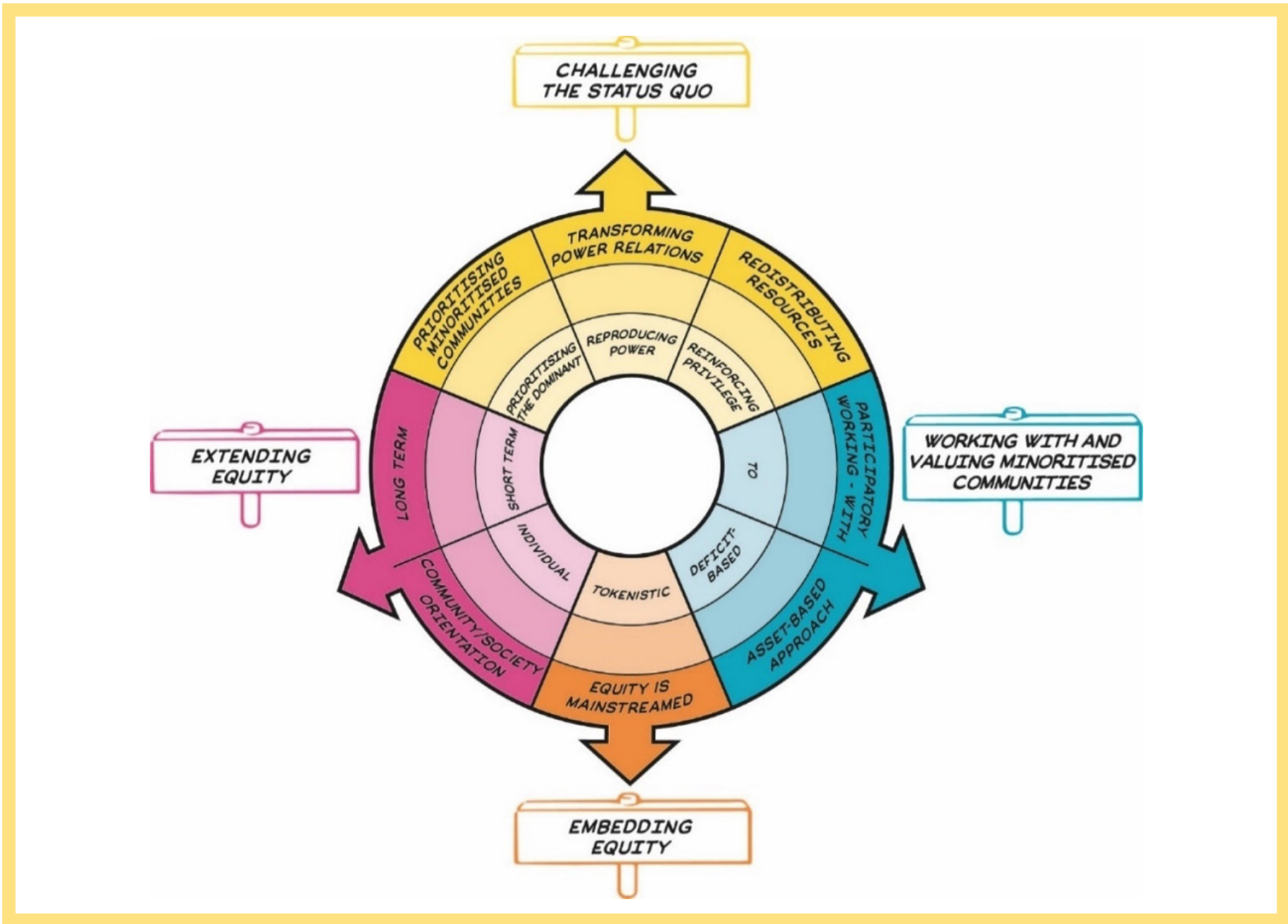
9 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-YESTEM-Insight-Equity-Compass-STEM-Ambassadors-Edition.pdf>

10 <https://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-YESTEM-Insight-Equity-Compass-Funders-Edition.pdf>



## 4. Critical appraisal of informal STEM learning

The UK's informal STEM learning sector includes a diverse range of formats and approaches, which include designed spaces (for example, science and discovery centres, zoos and aquaria, science museums, planetaria, makerspaces), community spaces (for example, STEM clubs, community organisations, STEM networks), events (for example, science festivals, pop up cafés, hackathons), other forms of public engagement (for example, talks, industry visits, ambassadors, experts in residence, competitions), support schemes (for example, mentoring, placements, bursaries/awards) and everyday engagement with STEM (for example, TV, media, websites, social media, books, magazines).



**Figure 1: The Equity Compass**

We reviewed over 150 academic publications, reports and websites that described informal STEM learning activities and programmes. A broad range of organised informal STEM learning activities were included, but 'everyday' forms of informal STEM learning, such as reading books and watching TV, were excluded.

We began by identifying the aims (the 'why'), then explored the key practices and principles associated with specific aims (the 'what' and the 'how') and considered the approaches to evidencing the outcomes and impact of informal STEM learning. A thorough, systematic review was beyond the scope of this work.

## Aims of informal STEM learning

The aims of informal STEM learning are often complex, multiple and overlapping. The aims can also be interpreted and negotiated differently by different actors in an organisation (for example, the CEO’s stated aims might differ from the aims of practitioners on the floor). The aims might not always necessarily match the practice, or the outcomes that are measured and reported.

We identified five main aims of informal STEM learning that we interpreted as falling into two main camps. The mapping of aims, guided by the equity perspective, produced a framework presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Aims of informal STEM learning**

Priorities	Aims
■ Prioritising the STEM pipeline	<b>Increasing the STEM pipeline</b> Encouraging more young people into STEM education and STEM careers
	<b>Broadening/diversifying the STEM pipeline</b> Encouraging young people from underrepresented groups into STEM education and STEM careers
■ Prioritising young people and society	<b>Supporting STEM literacy and civic engagement</b> Supporting widespread public STEM understanding and appreciation of STEM as part of culture to enable everyday STEM understanding and engagement
	<b>Supporting social justice and social change</b> Supporting minoritised young people’s meaningful connection with STEM, broadening/changing what and who counts as STEM, supporting STEM agency (young people using STEM in their lives), and taking action towards social justice
	<b>Supporting personal development and well-being</b> Using STEM as a tool to support wider personal and social outcomes, for example, wellbeing, confidence, problem-solving, communication, teamwork

## Prioritising the STEM pipeline

This appears to be the most prevalent aim across the sector and is guided by a concern that not enough people are choosing STEM careers and that there is a lack of diversity among the people who do. Considering an equity perspective, aiming to prioritise the STEM pipeline would be regarded as less equitable, as it is driven by the 'dominant' actors (such as industry and the economy). Activities focused on prioritising the STEM pipeline are often delivered and/or supported by industry, for whom sufficient supply of future workforce is a key concern.

## Prioritising young people and society

This seems less prevalent within the informal STEM learning sector, but evidence would suggest that activities focusing on this aim hold stronger potential for engaging minoritised young people with STEM. Considering an equity perspective, the aim of prioritising young people and society would be regarded as more equitable. Activities in this category tend to be more responsive to the needs of the young people, as evident in the focus on interests and issues of young people. Some activities also focus on how STEM might benefit wider society, for example, in terms of local pollution or global warming. Activities focused on prioritising young people and society are frequently delivered in settings such as clubs and community organisations.

## Principles and practices of informal STEM learning

Principles and practices used within specific programmes are *often difficult to identify* in publicly available sources. While the specific activity might be spelt out (the 'what', such as an activity being an afterschool club or a talk), the principles are more difficult to identify (the 'how' and what the value or stance is).

*From an equity perspective, considering the 'how' is crucial.* It is not an activity or a type of programme *per se* that makes a difference to the potential of a programme, so much as the underpinning values and how the programme is organised and carried out. For example, two STEM clubs might involve similar science content but have very different principles and approaches in terms of how they are run. While one could reflect a more prototypical approach (for example, focusing on developing specific in-demand STEM skills and encouraging young people to pursue STEM subjects at school), the other could be based on participatory principles, focusing on supporting the needs of young people from the local community (for example, developing activities based on young people's interests and supporting them to use STEM to improve their lives and the well-being of people around them).

Furthermore, popular forms of informal STEM learning are often *based on 'common sense' ideas, rather than being conceptually informed and based on research evidence*. A study carried out for the Wellcome Trust has previously reported that there tends to be low engagement with research among informal STEM learning practitioners in the UK<sup>11</sup>.

An example of how equity can be considered in practice is the set of Core Equitable Practices<sup>12</sup>, developed within our Youth Equity and STEM project.

11 Falk et al. (2012), Analysing the UK science education community: The contribution of informal providers (see: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/usdu2vtm/items>)

12 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021-YESTEM-Insight-2-Core-Equitable-Practices.pdf>

## Outcomes and impact of informal STEM learning

We considered the evidence of impact available for informal STEM learning programmes and activities. To what extent are the activities successful, for whom and how do we know this?

### Current evaluation and practice sharing in informal STEM learning

The literature has previously identified a gap in robust evidence<sup>13</sup>, especially when it comes to the longer-term impact of informal STEM learning activities. While many evaluation reports for specific programmes are publicly available, the focus is predominantly on reporting short-term outcomes from specific programmes, or, in some cases, evidence is reported for overall programmes encompassing a range of different activities, making it difficult to determine how certain activities lead to specific outcomes and which activities are more effective in achieving the aims.

There has been little evidence-synthesis to date. This is particularly the case in the UK, with more work having been done in other countries such as the US. There is limited understanding about the cumulative impact of informal STEM learning activities. Furthermore, informal STEM learning activities are not always evaluated as this is seen as at odds with their free-choice and leisurely nature. Similar concerns have been raised in other informal sectors, such as youth work, which has been working toward alternative ways to evidence impact<sup>14</sup>.

While there are various outcome frameworks in popular use, there seems to be a lack of a coherent outcomes model that would allow a level of synthesis. There have been efforts towards a more coherent approach<sup>15</sup>. There is also a gap in terms of capturing equitable outcomes. The recently developed Equitable Youth Outcomes Model<sup>16</sup> offers one possibility of orientating towards planning for, and evaluating, outcomes with a greater equitable potential.

### Considering the long-term impact of informal STEM learning

There has been relatively little work on the long-term impact of informal STEM learning; there is little evidence on how participation in such activities makes a difference for young people in the longer term. While the ambition to document and evidence the long-term successes of informal STEM learning continue to be a desirable aim for many organisations and funders, there are some crucial points that need to be considered.

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- 13 Allen & Peterman (2019), Evaluating informal STEM education: Issues and challenges in context (see: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/ev.20354>); Falk et al. (2012), Analysing the UK science education community: The contribution of informal providers (see: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/usdu2vtm/items>); National Audit Office (2018), Delivering STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills for the economy (see: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Delivering-STEM-Science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-skills-for-the-economy.pdf>)
- 14 Doherty & de St Croix (2019), The everyday and the remarkable: Valuing and evaluating youth work (see: <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/valuing-and-evaluating-youth-work/>)
- 15 Friedman et al. (2008), Framework for evaluating impacts of informal science education projects (see: [https://www.informalscience.org/sites/default/files/Eval\\_Framework.pdf](https://www.informalscience.org/sites/default/files/Eval_Framework.pdf))
- 16 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-YESTEM-Insight-3.1-Equitable-Youth-Outcomes-Model.pdf>

Young people's lives are complex and shaped by a myriad of influences such as their families, where they grew up, teachers, friends and their outside of school experiences, all of which informal STEM learning might be a part of. It is therefore incredibly difficult to untangle how a particular educational or professional trajectory was shaped by a particular event. Furthermore, there is a potential risk of over-claiming causality, such as suggesting, for example, that participation in a specific science-related programme leads to a young person studying physics in higher education. Examples from the longitudinal ASPIRES study<sup>17</sup> that has tracked young people from the age of 10 for nearly a decade, illustrates this complexity, providing examples of where a supportive teacher or even 'luck' made a difference to young people's trajectories.

## Rethinking the 'what works' agenda

The 'what works' agenda is based on the principle that decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence and where evidence is unavailable, professionals should use high quality, quantitative methods to identify 'what works'<sup>18</sup>. This approach is commonly adopted by funders across different sectors, including education. While its starting premise of adopting evidence-based practice is difficult to argue with, there are some important limitations of this approach that need to be considered, particularly when taking an equity perspective.

The 'what works' agenda typically involves a review of current best practice, identifying what aspects of existing practices have been effective in achieving particular outcomes. A focus that is limited to existing work can curb the opportunities to develop new and innovative ways of working.

The 'what works' agenda has been criticised for applying an unreflective medical model to education, prioritising evidence from randomised controlled trials (RCTs). Critics have argued that the 'what works' agenda is often narrowly focused in terms of research questions and methods deemed most suitable to identifying best practice, such as by privileging quantitative studies over qualitative work and over-simplifying complex phenomena<sup>19</sup>.

For example, with RCTs focusing on the effectiveness of a particular practice or intervention as a whole, it is difficult to gain insight into contextual differences or experiences of minoritised young people. In their paper reviewing RCT as a 'gold standard' methodology in the 'what works' agenda, Hanley and colleagues (2016) conclude that, "It is time for the bluntness of the 'what works' agenda to evolve into one that also establishes who it works for, through what means, and in what circumstances" (p. 296)<sup>20</sup>.

17 <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/departments/education-practice-and-society/aspires-research>

18 <https://whatworks.blog.gov.uk/about-the-what-works-network>

19 Hanley et al. (2016), Reassessing RCTs as the 'gold standard': Synergy not separatism in evaluation designs (see: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1743727X.2016.1138457>).  
Smeyers & Depaepe (2006), Educational research: Why 'what works' doesn't work (see: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4020-5308-5>);  
Farnsworth & Solomon (2013), Reframing educational research: Resisting the 'what works' agenda (see: <https://www.routledge.com/Reframing-Educational-Research-Resisting-the-what-works-agenda/Farnsworth-Solomon/p/book/9780415529174>);  
Atkinson (2004), The what works debate: Keeping a human perspective (see: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0264550504045900>)

20 Hanley et al. (2016), Reassessing RCTs as the 'gold standard': Synergy not separatism in evaluation designs (see: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1743727X.2016.1138457>).

## Supporting equitable outcomes and impact of informal STEM learning:

### Research-practice partnerships

Collaborations between academic research teams and practitioners have become more common within broader education and social research in the UK (for example, ESRC's emphasis on collaboration<sup>21</sup>, AHRC-led Connected Communities project<sup>22</sup> and 'partnership working'<sup>23</sup>).

A research-practice partnership (RPP) is a specific form of such a collaboration between academic research teams and practitioners, which follows the principles of:

- long-term engagement
- focus on problems of practice
- commitment to a mutually beneficial relationship between research and practice
- the use of intentional strategies to foster partnership
- production of original analyses.

It is important to note that the guiding principles of RPPs are not necessarily present in some of the UK interpretations of partnership/collaborative working. Often, partnerships tend to be more 'one-way' (for example, sharing, dissemination) rather than co-designing through the partnership. The RPP model is more than just 'knowledge exchange': it encompasses the more fundamental consideration of power relations.

RPPs focus on research that responds to and supports the needs of practice, and support practice that is evidence-based. RPPs contribute to a rich evidence base through robustly conceived, executed and reported practice. They have been shown to effectively support the production of higher quality evidence-based practice and build capacity in the sector<sup>24</sup>.

RPPs offer a productive approach to knowledge generation and the improvement of practice. Most examples of RPPs in the informal STEM learning sector are currently in the US, where there has been support from the dedicated NSF-AISL funding stream. In the UK, a recent funding stream supporting RPPs was the Science Learning+ programme funded by NSF, Wellcome Trust and ESRC. The projects are still ongoing but have to date shown promising outcomes in terms of benefits of collaborations between researchers and practitioners.

In comparison with the 'what works' approach discussed previously, the RPP approach enables deeper understanding of *what works, for whom, and in what situations*. It is focused on adapting insights to the specific sectors and specific local conditions in question. The RPP approach is thus more flexible than 'what works' approaches; it might be a better fit for developing innovative practice, likely to be important for broad and diverse sectors such as informal STEM learning.

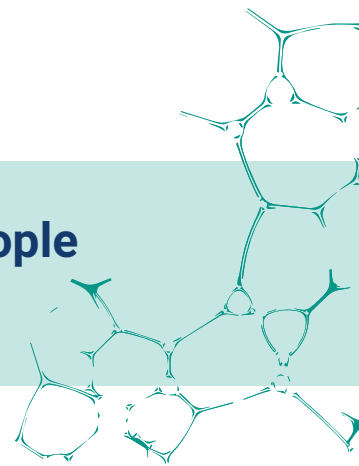
21 <https://esrc.ukri.org/collaboration/guidance-for-collaboration>

22 <https://connected-communities.org>

23 <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AHRC-Partnership-Guide.pdf>

24 Coburn & Penuel (2016), Research-practice partnerships in education: Outcomes, dynamics, and open questions (see: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X16631750>); Penuel & Fishman (2012), Large scale science education intervention research we can use (see: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/tea.21001>)

## 5. Recommendations for Supporting all young people through UK informal STEM learning



Based on the research and evidence presented in this report, we make the following five recommendations.

**Recommendation 1:** Funders might look to international contexts with more centralised coordination and capacity-building initiatives to consider whether there might be scope and value for similar, joined up, equity-focused resources in the UK.

- A good example is The Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education in the US, who share and disseminate informal STEM learning practice, tools, evaluation methods and facilitate the sharing of new insights for policy and practice across the different subsectors.
- There is scope for funders to further support the translation and sharing of international informal STEM learning evidence to the UK's policy and practice sector.

**Recommendation 2:** Funders and policy-makers might usefully reflect on how informal STEM learning practitioners might be supported to ground their work within a social justice agenda.

- A light-touch audit of funders' current portfolios might be beneficial to identify ways in which different programmes could be supported to engage with and embed equity issues. For example, the funders could ask partners within their informal STEM learning portfolio to more clearly articulate their aims, particularly in relation to equity, and how these will be achieved.
- Funders might wish to review current training opportunities for informal STEM learning practitioners to engage with equity issues and support further professional development.
- Funders could consider ways to enhance participatory practice ensuring that young people, especially those from minoritised communities, are included in consultation and decision-making processes in ways that support their agency and voice, and further inform funding strategies focused on young people.



**Recommendation 3:** Funders might usefully consider how informal STEM learning funding could better explicitly value and foster social justice aims and outcomes.

- Consideration should be given to thinking more broadly about the evidence and measures of success of informal STEM learning, expanding what success looks like.
- Funders might consider how better evaluation and monitoring processes could be supported within the informal STEM learning sector, such as through overseeing data collection and sharing. An interesting example to collecting evidence is the Arts Council's Impact & Insight Toolkit<sup>25</sup> which could usefully inform the informal STEM learning sector.
- Tools such as the Equitable Youth Outcomes Model<sup>26</sup> might be useful for organisations developing equitable practice and wanting to focus on how they can support minoritised young people and communities through informal STEM learning.

**Recommendation 4:** Reflective tools, such as the Equity Compass, may provide a useful starting point for funders, policy-makers and informal STEM learning practitioners who want to adopt a social justice approach and track their progress.

- Funders, policy-makers and informal STEM learning professionals might wish to apply the Equity Compass to consider their own internal practices, their funding programmes and how they support informal STEM learning. For example, they could encourage partners within their informal STEM learning portfolio to use the Equity Compass to plan and reflect on their practice, including how they think about and evidence outcomes and impact.

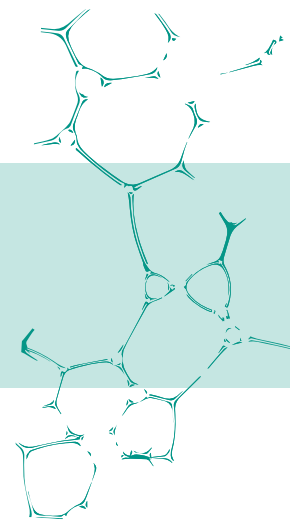
**Recommendation 5:** Funders and policy-makers might usefully explore how to support and grow capacity for research-practice partnerships to help build capacity and develop high-quality evidence-based and evidence-informed practice.

- Value could be added by considering how existing initiatives might benefit from partnerships with research to support professional development and learning towards more inclusive, equitable practice. These partnerships could help increase dialogue and understanding, benefiting both research and practice, and could help support the translation of research evidence into practice.

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25 <https://impactandinsight.co.uk>

26 <http://yestem.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-YESTEM-Insight-3.1-Equitable-Youth Outcomes-Model.pdf>



## 6. Conclusion

There is considerable untapped potential within the UK's informal STEM learning sector for supporting young people from minoritised and excluded communities. By foregrounding issues of equity and social justice, funders and policy-makers can play an important role in helping to build capacity and creating a more equitable, evidence-based, innovative, better-connected and more research informed sector that could make a positive difference in the lives of young people and communities.

## Appendix: Guiding questions for funders

The Guiding Questions, below, provide reflection points for funders to consider (i) how they and their organisations can develop equitable ways of working and (ii) how they can support equitable practice among the individuals and organisations that they fund.

Equity area <sup>27</sup>	Equity Dimension	Guiding Questions
Challenging the status quo	Transforming power relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Who has power in strategy and decision-making? To what extent are minoritised communities involved in making decisions about priorities and/or who/what gets funded?</li> <li>■ To what extent does your strategy, ways of working and portfolio of investments actively recognise and challenge social injustices?</li> <li>■ How are issues of privilege approached? To what extent are colleagues and those who are funded by your organisation supported to recognise, understand and challenge issues of privilege?</li> </ul>
	Prioritising minoritised communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Whose agenda is driving who and what gets funded? To what extent is your work driven by the priorities and needs of dominant players (for example, the economy) or those of minoritised communities?</li> </ul>
	Redistributing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What measures are in place to ensure that resources and support are focused on minoritised communities rather than more privileged groups?</li> <li>■ How do you know that minoritised communities are being supported in gaining equitable outcomes as a result of your strategy and/or funding?</li> </ul>

27 The Equity areas and Equity dimensions are taken from the Equity Compass tool presented earlier in the report (see Figure 1).

Equity area <sup>27</sup>	Equity Dimension	Guiding Questions
Working with and valuing minoritised communities	Participatory working – with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How are you involving participants (and especially those from minoritised communities) in developing your strategy and funding initiatives?</li> <li>■ How are you supporting and encouraging those in your organisation and funding recipients to adopt participatory practices?</li> </ul>
	Assets-based approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How are you meaningfully valuing and being informed by diverse forms of knowledge and experience? Are minoritised communities seen as 'lacking' or as sources of expertise?</li> <li>■ How are you encouraging and supporting colleagues and those you fund to take assets-based approaches?</li> </ul>
Embedding Equity	Equity is mainstreamed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How is equity meaningfully embedded throughout your strategy and funding? Is it everyone's responsibility, or not?</li> <li>■ Do you provide equity training to all staff and external collaborators? How is equity embedded in peer review?</li> <li>■ How is equitable practice audited and reported both in your own work and that of the people/ organisations you fund?</li> </ul>
Extending Equity	Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How does your strategy and funding support long-term outcomes and change, especially for those from minoritised communities?</li> </ul>
	Community/ Society orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How are your strategy and funding prioritising collective (community, society) equitable outcomes, not just individual outcomes?</li> </ul>