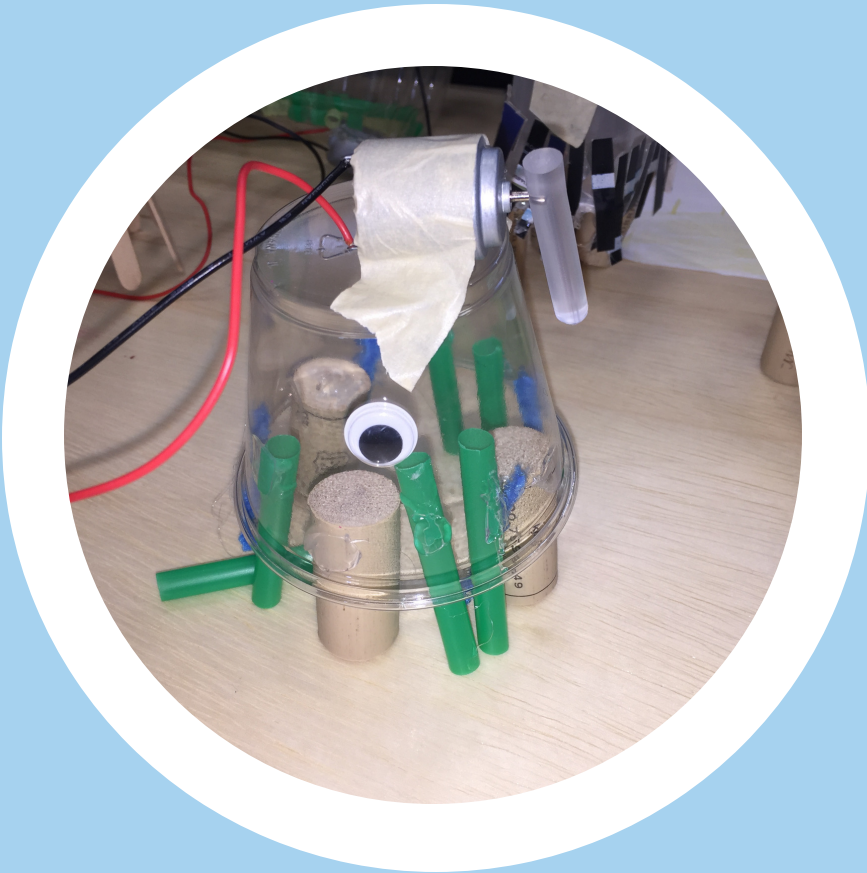


Community Science Workshop Network

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

BUILDING THE FUTURE



Community
Science
Workshop
Network

|| HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE ||

GET TO KNOW US || P.2

BUILDING THE FUTURE || P.3

**PURPOSE DRIVEN-HISTORY
& BACKGROUND || P.4**

**FACTORS IMPACTING
STRATEGIC ACTIONS || P.5**

**GOALS & MEASURING
PROGRESS || P.6**

PLANNING PROCESS || P.7

APPENDIX || P.8

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|| GET TO KNOW US ||

MISSION STATEMENT

To serve as an advocate and resource for member Workshops, providing equitable access to opportunities for California's underserved youth to Tinker, Make, and explore the natural and human-made world through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

WHAT WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT

- 1 | Children and youth walk into workshops, defining and developing success on their own terms.
- 2 | Children and youth collaborate across a spectrum of diversity, including diversity in terms of language, nationality, sex, age, system-involvement, and disability.
- 3 | Staff members are "radically loyal" to the cause for accessible, empowering STEM and tinkering opportunities.
- 4 | Staff members are talented science-based, youth-development professionals who maintain flexibility and fluidity in their youth-centered work.

RESILIENT CHILDREN & YOUTH

The children and youth who participate in the CSWs are significantly impacted by several risk factors, including the following:

- || Homelessness
- || Food scarcity
- || Gangs
- || Under-resourced schools
- || Low-income neighborhoods
- || Minimal transportation
- || Dual status homes
- || Involvement in the juvenile court
- || Involvement in the foster care system



|| BUILDING THE FUTURE ||

Constructing The Next Phase

All nonprofit community-based organizations move through a life course or organizational development process; the earliest phase is focused on the practical actions needed for meeting the immediate vision of the organization. For the Community Science Workshop Network (CSWN), moving from the sole priority of getting services to children and youth into the next phase means prioritizing both service delivery *and* the long-term sustainability of those services.

For the CSWN, the past years were characterized by this early stage, a “mom and pop” approach, where small and minimal operational infrastructure was deemed appropriate. The minimal infrastructure worked at that time because of the small scale of services as well as the presence of major funders who understood the CSWN vision and start-up needs. The transition into the next phase will positively impact its mission and the Community Science Workshops (CSWs) that it supports. The positive impact includes continued rich programming, robust support for the staff members, and internal systems for the long-term sustainability of growing services to reach more children and youth.

Additionally, the CSWN Board of Directors, today, reflects best-practices in Board development and the internal processes of the CSWN are ready for equal refinement. That is, the Board is comprised of professionals in STEM and tinkering without conflicts of interest with the operations of CSWs. At the January 2018 Board capacity-building retreat, the Board built specific Committees and Teams to carry forward the CSWN into its next phase.

The Hub

For 2018 and beyond, the CSWN is moving into a phase that positions the Network as the central hub for supporting the important work being accomplished at CSWs, developing more CSWs, and *championing the cause* for accessible STEM and tinkering opportunities for children and youth facing systemic risk factors. Attention to each of these hub responsibilities can be distributed in the following way:

- || 60% support for existing CSWs
- || 35% develop new CSWs
- || 5% draw investments in *the cause*

In order to support existing CSWs, a menu of technical support services can create clarity about what types of support are provided from the Hub and which activities the individual CSWs head independently.

In order to develop new CSWs, partnerships with school districts, universities, and cities can ensure access to STEM and tinkering by embedding CSWs into established spaces. Formal agreements with each new CSW can ensure transparency about the role of the CSWN in launching and supporting self-sufficiency plans; that is, all new CSWs must be created with the intention of sustainability and empowered ownership.

Advancing *the cause* for equitable access, which has always been part of the workshop approach, includes participation in regional and national events. The workshop approach is already circumscribed by nostalgia for the warmth and effectiveness of the CSW programming; children, youth, parents, educators, and staff confirm this. But formal advocacy for accessible STEM and tinkering programs with children and youth who are historically marginalized requires the cultivation of collective action activities and partnerships. The CSWN already has a track record of participation in annual events (e.g. NOMCON, Cross Roads, and STEAM Symposium). This engagement must continue and can be increasingly effective by using of the mini-Communications Plan.

The Strategic Plan

Moving into the next phase requires a mind shift in the organizational processes, infrastructure, and partnerships. In the section on Strategic Plan Goals and Intended Outcomes, this mind shift is implicitly and explicitly embedded across the next three-years of the Strategic Planning actions. While all organizations move through life course stages, not all are ready for the natural flow of change. The current CSWN Executive Director, staff team, and Board are ready for the future.

|| PURPOSE-DRIVEN HISTORY & BACKGROUND ||

What We're Known For

The CSWN is the hub for 22 CSWs taking place in diverse, regularly scheduled locations such as established [centers](#), [schools](#), and [libraries](#). The CSWs engage children 6- to 12-years old as well as their parents, high school mentors who work in the CSWs, and teachers and administrators. The CSWN served as The Hub, and together with the CSWs, champions accessible STEM and tinkering opportunities in **several setting styles**, including the following:

- || community brick-and-mortar centers
- || mobile labs
- || embedded workshops at schools
- || mobile set-ups at libraries

The CSWs deliver services through several **financial approaches**, including the following:

- || no-cost
- || fee-for-service
- || school field trips
- || contracts with school campuses
- || PD trainings with educators

The Workshop Approach

The workshop tradition is defined by its focus on using diverse materials and tools that are most often reclaimed, re-used, and recycled. This emphasis on engaging with an assorted collection of tools and materials at the CSWs aligns with the core value of the children and youth innovating and gaining exposure to new experiences not likely to be accessed outside of the CSW space.

Benefits to The Workshop Approach

Founded in 2010 by a professional network of creative educators, the CSWN consistently prioritizes the workshop approach in order to enmesh children, parents, youth, and educators in the benefits of diverse **learning styles** that unfold at the workshops, including the following:

- || direct instruction
- || lateral peer mentoring
- || self-guided time
- || individually-driven interests
- || organically developed collaborations

The quality of relationships and dynamic learning activities correlate to what the research literature articulates as positive youth development outcomes and protective factors against risks in the children's lives (e.g. homelessness, food scarcity, violence, etc.). The "engaged learning" that is taking place inside workshops is focused on prioritizing the learning styles. That is, the newly emerging "makerspaces" can often rely heavily on pre-ordered curriculum and material kits, pre-constructed components, and computerized technologies while also removing peer mentoring and individually-driven interests. The grassroots experience in the full process of material manipulation and experimentation is the foundation of the CSW engage learning opportunities. The grassroots approach of workshops also keeps costs low since many materials are recycled and tools are not often high-tech.

Workshops Advance Educational Equity

Brining this rich educational opportunity to children, youth, parents, and educators also encompasses work to advance educational equity. The children and youth who participate in the CSWs are the next generation of leaders, but the risk factors that they navigate can derail the most brilliant of their minds and hearts. The CSWs prioritize collaborations with rural, under-resourced schools, isolated and economically dire regions, and neighborhoods vulnerable to gangs and system-involvement. Coupled with the rich educational workshop process, the children and youth get daily reprieve, positive youth development, and mentoring from their time at the CSWs.

|| FACTORS IMPACTING STRATEGIC ACTIONS ||

These five sectors influence Strategic Planning for the CSWN. The reach, operations, cross-sector partnerships, and funding opportunities for the CSWN and the CSWs must contend with several challenges and opportunities across the five sectors. While the factors are not isolated silos, they each have nuances which are discussed separately. In combination with the mini-Communications Plan, use the factors outlined below to drive creative approaches for advancing the success of the CSWN.

Use these factors for refining programs, seeking funding, and staying relevant.

<p style="text-align: center;">Sector 1 Educational Equity</p> <p>Social, political, and economic inequities direct many parts of children’s lives. For example, the zip code for which a child is born into influences the quality of education that the child receives.</p> <p>Issues surrounding children and youth who face educational barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile justice and foster care system involvement • Low-income neighborhoods • Homelessness and food scarcity • Gangs 	<p>Potential Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community organizations with youth leadership and advocacy programming ▪ Educational equity research and advocacy centers
<p style="text-align: center;">Sector 2 K-12 Education</p> <p>Many K-12 school libraries are reimagining their services in a world with digital books and children who desire more screen time. With their traditional library spaces, many schools are opting for mobile or embedded “makerspaces.”</p> <p>Issues surrounding libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter schools wanting to champion workshop learning • Rural schools desiring mobile or embedded workshops • Alternative schools seeking innovative positive youth development opportunities 	<p>Potential Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School districts ▪ Librarian associations ▪ Education associations
<p style="text-align: center;">Sector 3 Higher Education Spaces</p> <p>Even colleges and their libraries are moving into reimagining the uses of their spaces. Emerging research shows that college libraries that include cafes, tutoring centers, and activities like tinkering increase the likelihood of student retention.</p> <p>Issues surrounding colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries seek innovative learning for college students and children living nearby • Colleges seeking innovations for college retention • Credentialing, youth development, and recreations programs benefit from hands-on PD 	<p>Potential Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community college districts ▪ College systems ▪ Librarian associations ▪ Programs housed at colleges
<p style="text-align: center;">Sector 4 California & National Politics</p> <p>Afterschool and out-of-school programming is taken-for-granted by many Californians. Even the California and federal legislatures historically underfund such programs.</p> <p>Issues surrounding advocacy leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy groups lead legislative changes for financing afterschool programs and PD • Public awareness campaigns and voting recommendations are strategically engaged • Promoting research findings that link positive youth development to multi-sector benefits is important (e.g. public safety, financial savings, and academic success) 	<p>Potential Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Afterschool advocacy centers ▪ Afterschool programs with STEM priorities ▪ Foundations focused on afterschool funding
<p style="text-align: center;">Sector 5 Science Field</p> <p>Historically underrepresented scientists have much to offer the children and high school mentors who are growing up in the CSWs.</p> <p>Issues surrounding science equity efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local research centers and universities seek partnerships for advancing diversity • Local science professionals and associations champion youth programs that diversify • Journalists and bloggers desire important stories about diversifying the STEM pipeline 	<p>Potential Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ STEM associations ▪ STEM minority associations ▪ Local science clubs and meet-up groups ▪ College STEM departments and student associations

|| GOALS & MEASURING PROGRESS ||

The Strategic Plan Goals are attainable through an explicit set of action steps. These action steps are presented as Intended Outcomes below and in the comprehensive measurement matrix located in the Appendix. Tracking the CSWN's fulfillment of the Strategic Plan across the next three-years is one way to measure, concretely, which strategies are accomplished each year and which are on the docket for the coming year.

Strategic Planning Goal 1.

In the following table, the first Strategic Planning Goal is accompanied by four Intended Outcomes. The CSWN knows if the first goal is met once the intended outcomes are accomplished. For Intended Outcome B, building an internal communications plan includes creating an established technical support menu that all CSWs understand are the benefits that they receive from the CSWN; this small step creates greater transparency and calibrates expectations for the long-term as more CSWs are launched.

Strategic Plan Goal	Intended Outcomes
Goal 1. Advance the role that the CSWN plays as The Hub for the network of CSWs.	→ A.) Fulfill the external mini-Communication Plan.
	→ B.) Fulfill the internal communications plan to maintain and nourish the network of diverse CSWs.
	→ C.) Supply technical support to the CSWs.
	→ D.) Launch and develop the sustainability of new CSWs.

Strategic Planning Goal 2.

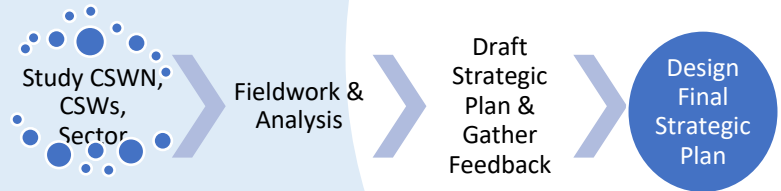
In the following table, the second Strategic Planning Goal is accompanied by seven Intended Outcomes. This second goal represents long-term sustainability actions that are not programmatic in nature.

Strategic Plan Goal	Intended Outcomes
Goal 2. Advance the role that the CSWN plays in the cause for accessible STEM and tinkering opportunities for children and youth facing systemic risk factors.	→ A.) Identify a series of partnerships for formal, collective action collaborations to advance <i>the cause</i> .
	→ B.) Engage stakeholders in championing the workshop-based approach.
	→ C.) Articulate the academic, positive youth development, and community benefits made by CSWs for children. (Part of the External Communications Plan)
	→ D.) Articulate the academic, positive youth development, and community benefits made by CSWs for high school mentors. (Part of the External Communications Plan)
	→ E.) Develop residual and passive income strategies.
	→ F.) Hire a full-time Executive Director for the CSWN.
	→ G.) Partner with a Communications specialist for a robust communications plan.

II PLANNING PROCESS II

The Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Planning process included several steps. These are communicated in the diagram below. The process remained focused on advancing the mission of the CSWN so that it may continue to champion the important work of the CSWs. This focus was maintained by engaging diverse voices who work in, on, and with the CSWN.



44
Voices

These voices helped to carve-out clarity on the strengths of the CSWN and how to launch into the next phase of the CSWN's important mission.

The 44 persons who participated in interviews, focus groups, and surveys shared their ideas, ambitions, and hopes for the CSWN. We honor that privacy by remaining vague in terms of the sex, age, and geography of participants.



13 high school mentors



12 children



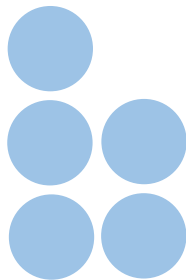
7 teachers



5 staff members



7 board members



5 geographic locations

Key Terms

1 | Fieldwork

The actual project activities undertaken to hear from diverse voices who work in, on, and with the CSWN included carrying-out face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Additionally, fieldwork means going into the actual workshop spaces to observe and understand the uniqueness of each location.

2 | Stakeholders

Those who have a stake in the success of the CSWN include children, youth, parents, educators, CSWN staff, CSW staff, and the CSWN Board. Voices from all of these groups are reflected in this Strategic Plan.

3 | Technical Support

Broadly, technical support refers to coaching, solution-building, and providing resources so that the recipient can improve, refine, and ultimately succeed. As the hub, the CSWN provides technical support to CSWs.

4 | The Hub

As the hub organization, the CSWN models and supports the implementation of best-practices in fund development, program management, curricular innovations, and human resources for the benefit of staff and high school mentors.

5 | Cause

The widespread support for accessible STEM and tinkering opportunities is "The Cause." Supporting the cause includes effectively communicating with powerholders through collective actions with partners in appropriate sectors.

II APPENDIX II

All Appendices are private, viewable only to the CSWN staff and Board. The Appendix materials are designed to be used to carry forward the Strategic Plan.

For additional tools for the CSWN and the CSWs, we encourage the use of free and membership-based tools designed for community-based organizations, including the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">Source 1 Anchoring Success</p> <p>Sign-up here for the Bad Ass Tool of the Week, a free service for community-based organizations and nonprofit professionals. All tools are developed for practical solutions to organizational infrastructure and program evaluation activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cost</p> <p>Free</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Source 2 CalNonprofit</p> <p>Sign-up here for the newsletter and materials provided by the California Association of Nonprofits (AKA CalNonprofit), a statewide network of nonprofit organizations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cost</p> <p>Free and Membership based</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Source 3 BoardSource</p> <p>Sign-up here for the newsletter and materials provided by BoardSource, a national organization that supports the effectiveness of nonprofit Boards.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cost</p> <p>Free and Membership based, determined by organizational budget</p>

