Fostering Community Engagement in Environmental Education Using NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence

Misty Klotz (KBS - MAEOE)
Ellen Koehler (MSUE Tollgate Farm and Education Center)
Bora Simmons (National Project for Excellence in EE)
Michigan Partners

Guidelines for Excellence

Guidelines Trainers’ Bureau Map

www.naaee.com

www.maeoe.com
How to Interact With Us

All audio lines are muted. Click “chat” on the toolbar.

Send a message to the whole group, or just to panelists using the dropdown menu at the bottom of the chat box.
Please type your questions into the chat box. We’ll collect them and ask the speakers as many as we can!
If you have any technical problems, please message Ashley in the chat.
Introducing our Speakers...

Misty Klotz  
W. K. Kellogg  
Biological Station

Bora Simmons  
National Project for Excellence in  
Environmental Education

Ellen Koehler  
MSU Extension Tollgate  
Farm and Education Center
Fostering collaborations and taking our work more fully into communities.
Webinar Objectives

Become familiar with the Community Engagement Guidelines and how they can be used to improve the quality of our practice

Identify tools for fostering community engagement strategies in your work
Overview of the National Project for Excellence in Environmental Education

Introduction to Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence

Questions and discussion throughout
Thanks in advance for your questions!
A bit of background of the National Project for Excellence and the Guidelines for Excellence series.
Primary Sponsors

ee360

U.S. EPA Office of Environmental Education

This webinar was developed under Assistant Agreement No. NT-83695801-0 awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It has not been formally reviewed by EPA. The views expressed are solely those of Bora Simmons and EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.
Other Partners

• U.S. Forest Service
• U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
• State and Provincial EE Associations
• Organizational partners – such as Keep America Beautiful, Project Learning Tree, Arbor Day Foundation, Project WILD, Project WET
An initiative of NAAEE
Promoting excellence in environmental education
Six Primary Products

• Materials Guidelines
• K-12 EE Guidelines
• Professional Development
• Nonformal Programs
• Early Childhood
• Community Engagement
Our Collective Wisdom

- Developed *Guidelines* through a public participatory process
- Engaging educators in a deep discussion about quality environmental education practice
- Building EE as a profession
- Promoting Excellence
Community Engagement Guidelines

They’re all about:

Working with communities
These guidelines focus on:

- environment
- community well-being
- sustainability
- resilience
These guidelines provide suggestions for supporting:

- inclusive working environments
- social equity
- effective partnerships
- collaborative coalition building
- community capacity & resilience
What is community?

Please type your ideas in the chat.
What communities do you belong to?

Jambord link
Breakout rooms

Do you see any community connections?
Definitions of Community

1. A group of people living in the same place
2. A group of people having a particular characteristic in common
3. A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.
In the Community Engagement Guidelines, we focused on:

1. Neighborhoods, towns, cities, and other geographically based communities
2. May also be useful for working with communities of interest, identity, culture, or belief
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound Environmental Education Principles
3. Collaborative and Inclusive
4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building and Civic Action
5. A Long-Term Investment in Change
Key Characteristics

Collaborative and Inclusive

Environmental education works in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

Guideline 3.1 Build coalitions and partnerships strategically

By working with diverse partners and coalitions who share your interests, concerns, and goals, environmental educators strengthen their connections with the community and the effectiveness of their efforts.

Indicators:
- Identify existing coalitions and partnerships and develop strategies to work with them.
- Identify potential partners with complementary concerns and goals to your environmental education aims.
- Work with partners to identify how the strengths, networks, and contributions of the two complement each other in working toward shared goals, while also addressing differences.
- When appropriate, jointly develop an agreement that defines the purpose and roles of the partnership.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for partners.
Key Characteristic

Collaborative and Inclusive

3

Environmental education works in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

Guideline 3.1 Build coalitions and partnerships strategically

By working with diverse partners and coalitions who share your interests, concerns, and goals, environmental educators strengthen their connections with the community and the effectiveness of their efforts.

Indicators:
- Identify existing coalitions and partnerships and develop strategies to work with them.
- Identify potential partners with complementary concerns and goals to your environmental education aims.
- Work with partners to identify how the strengths, networks, and contributions of members could complement each other in working toward shared goals, while also accomplishing individual aims.
- When appropriate, jointly develop an agreement that defines the purpose and shared commitment of the partnership.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for partners.
Key Characteristic

Collaborative and Inclusive

Environmental education works in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

Guideline 3.1 Build coalitions and partnerships strategically

By working with diverse partners and coalitions who share your interests, concerns, and goals, environmental educators strengthen their connections with the community and the effectiveness of their efforts.

Indicators:
- Identify existing coalitions and partnerships and develop strategies to work with them.
- Identify potential partners with complementary concerns and goals to your environmental education aims.
- Work with partners to identify how the strengths, networks, and contributions of members could complement each other in working toward shared goals, while also accomplishing individual aims.
- When appropriate, jointly develop an agreement that defines the purpose and shared commitment of the partnership.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for partners.
Aqua Pura Fotonovela – Comics Connect a Community with Water

A fotonovela is a comic book-style story illustrated with photos. The fotonovela has long been used as a community empowerment tool. The engaging format helps keeping communication barriers, from the challenges of multiple languages used in multicultural neighborhoods to literacy challenges in marginalized communities.

The creation of the Aqua Pura fotonovela was participatory, with students from the community designing various storyboards voted by community members. In the final story, Carlos y de Agua Limpio (Carlos and Clear Water), teenager Carlos helps his family by chores while educating them on proper waste disposal, how to keep water clean, and tap water safety.

With community members as actors and using local filming, printing, and distribution resources, Carlos’s story proved to be a popular and engaging educational tool. Over 3,000 copies of Carlos y de Agua Limpio were distributed to interested community members.

For more information on the Aqua Pura Fotonovela project, visit: see http://sustainability.ucana.edu/aguapura.html.
Did You Know?

Community Engagement: Is It Right for Your Project?

All projects are not alike, and not every endeavor will benefit from extensive community engagement. Community engagement should be authentic, matching the form of engagement to the actual role the community will play. See Resource #5, page 94, Designing Civic Engagement, for help determining your goals, which may range from simply informing participants (one-way communication), to consulting or involving participants, all the way to full partnerships.

Projects are especially likely to benefit from more comprehensive, collaborative engagement if one or more of the following factors apply:

- **Complexity**: The topic you are addressing is difficult to understand, values-based, or controversial.

  *Successful participation will help the community understand issues better, and will allow the project to benefit from an array of perspectives.*

- **Size and Diversity of Stakeholder Group**: Your project will impact a large or diverse group. A stakeholder is anyone who can affect, or who will be affected by, your project.

  *More interactive types of engagement are helpful if you are still in the process of defining the stakeholder group, or if you know there is a wide array of stakeholders.*

- **Balance of Power**: There is a pre-existing imbalance of resources or decision-making authority among stakeholders.

  *This may also influence the type of engagement that is most suitable.*
Ten Great Resources for Community Engagement

Throughout, Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence refers to websites, organizations, and publications you can use to explore unfamiliar topics, approaches, and practices. Some of these resources rise to the top as so broadly helpful that they belong in everyone’s library or bookmarks folder. Here’s a top ten.

Everyday Democracy
www.everyday-democracy.org
Everyday Democracy’s programs and services help create communities that work better for everyone because all voices are included in public problem solving, and help strengthen our democracy. Everyday Democracy offers community assistance and training to support a process of “dialogue to change.” Its website features many case studies and a variety of tools and techniques.

National Audubon Society’s Diversity and the Conservation Movement
Developed in partnership with National Audubon Society, NAAEE, Toyota TogetherGreen, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and EE Capacity, Diversity and the Conservation Movement offers context, case studies, and tools to inform dialogue and strengthening diversity and inclusion in conservation.


National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)
www.ncdd.org
NCDD represents dialogue and deliberation practitioners and scholars from a wide variety of fields. NCDD hosts conferences, creates educational materials, and facilitates online and in-person professional networking. NCDD’s online resource center offers thousands of resources for dialogue, deliberation, and public engagement. Here you can find descriptions and links to books, articles, case studies, evaluation tools, videos, organizations, and foundations.

National Extension Water Outreach Education
http://fy.uwex.edu/wateroutreach/
This website features extensive resources, research, and practical tools, including “Water Outreach Education,” which encourages the use of best education practices to plan an effective natural resources outreach strategy, and “Changing Public Behavior,” which offers tools to increase involvement using target audience information.

North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE), eEPRO
http://naaee.org/eeapro
This online resource for environmental education professional development offers resources, research, and listings of webinars, workshops, and other learning opportunities. eEPRO is an online forum for special-interest discussions.
Supporting Resources

Resource #1

Community Well-Being, Sustainability and Resilience

Purpose: Provides insights into using systems-based concepts such as community well-being, sustainability, and resilience to align environmental education with broader community concerns, capacities, partners, and alliances.

Community well-being is about the happiness and health of the community in which we live. Our sense of well-being is affected by our physical and mental health, the relationships between us, the natural and built environments in which we live, the economy, and our ability to have a say in the decisions that matter to us.

Community well-being is about how all these things come together to support us to live happy, healthy and meaningful lives.

—City of Darwin, Community Wellbeing Plan

Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.
Scenario

You live in a medium sized community in an area known for recreation and agriculture. In addition to working in agriculture and tourism, many commute to a nearby urban area. The region has been faced with an increasing number of flooding events due to climate change.
Imagine that you are thinking about becoming involved in finding community-based solutions to the flooding.

How would you get started?

Please type your ideas in the chat.
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered

Anchor environmental aims within the context of community interests, issues, and capacities. Put the community at the heart of environmental education.

3. Collaborative and Inclusive
4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action
5. A Long-Term Investment in Change
Understanding the Interconnecting Systems

- Social equity
- Economic prosperity

- Community well-being
- Sustainability
- Resilience

- Environmental sustainability
- Cultural vitality
Getting to Know the Community

✔ What do you already know about the community?
✔ What are the community’s assets?
✔ What do you need to know that you don’t know?
Linking Goals and Capacities

- How do environmental issues impact the community?
- Which groups, individuals, and efforts already address environmental issues, sustainability, and community well-being?
- Who are the potential allies who can help build bridges among groups?
- How can your EE efforts contribute to addressing community concerns?
Reaching Beyond Usual Partners

✔ What are existing areas of community concern (health, physical fitness, economic development, religion, youth development)?
✔ What service organizations have roots in the community?
✔ Who needs to be involved?
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered

2. Based on Sound EE Principles

Engage communities in ways that rely on established principles and practices of the field.

3. Collaborative and Inclusive

4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action

5. A Long-Term Investment in Change
What do you need to know about the issue or concern to develop your educational strategy?
Poll # 1: Which of these are important when designing a community-based educational strategy?

a) Complexity of the issue or concern
b) Political sensitivity of the issue or concern
c) Potential community impacts
d) What you want to achieve through education
e) Audience
f) All of the above
Matching EE Strategies to Your Goals

Do you want to:

✔ Convey information
✔ Build understanding
✔ Improve skills
✔ Enable sustainable actions
Matching EE Strategies to Your Goals

Do you want to:

✔ Convey information [e.g., posters, brochures, website]

✔ Build understanding [e.g., workshop, presentation, environmental monitoring]

✔ Improve skills [e.g., mentoring, technical training, opportunity to practice skills]

✔ Enable sustainable actions [e.g., training for organizational effectiveness, mediation, learning networks, joint fact finding]
What is Civic Engagement?

Please type in the chat room.
Civic Engagement is any individual or group actively addressing issues of public concern.
What do you need to know about the issue or concern to develop your civic engagement strategy?
Poll #2: Which of these are important when designing a civic engagement strategy?

a) Complexity of the issue
b) Political sensitivity of the issue
c) Potential community impacts
d) What you want to achieve through civic engagement?
e) Audience
f) All of the above
Civic Engagement Goals

Inform  Involve  Collaborate  Empower
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound EE Principles

3. Collaborative and Inclusive

Work in collaborative and inclusive relationships, partnerships, and coalitions.

5. A Long-Term Investment in Change
Collaborative and Inclusive

✔ Build coalitions and partnerships strategically
✔ Value and incorporate equity and inclusion
✔ Plan and implement collaboratively
✔ Learn from and resolve conflict
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound EE Principles
3. Collaborative and Inclusive

4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action

Support capacity building for ongoing civic engagement in community life, contributing to long-term community well-being, sustainability, and resilience.
Capacity Building and Civic Action

✔ Integrate EE with complementary communication, education, and social change approaches
✔ Build capacity for effective learning, decision-making, and action
✔ Move toward civic action
How does the community engagement work you are doing in Extension illustrate capacity building?

Please place your examples in the chat.
Key Characteristics

1. Community Centered
2. Based on Sound EE Principles
3. Collaborative and Inclusive
4. Oriented Toward Capacity Building & Civic Action

5. A Long-Term Investment in Change

Creating change is typically a long-term initiative, requiring a commitment to relationship building and an ongoing and evolving process of engagement.
You and your partners probably don’t know everything...

Invest in your own training
Incorporate learning, improvement, and adaptations by building in assessment, evaluation, reflection, and feedback mechanisms into program planning and implementation.
Plan for long-term support and viability
Embrace change and celebrate progress!
Community Engagement: Guidelines for Excellence
Questions?

Excuse me! I have a question!!

[Image of a squirrel with its paws raised]
NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence

NAAEE eeLEARN

https://naaee.org/eeapro/learning/eelearn
Find additional resource at eePRO. [https://naaee.org/eeopro/join-eeopro](https://naaee.org/eeopro/join-eeopro)
What is easy for you to do?  Where is your growing edge?

Hope to see you next time!
Final Thoughts

“Whatever community organization, whether it’s a women's organization, or fighting for racial justice … you will get satisfaction out of doing something to give back to the community that you never get in any other way.”

- Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Thank you for joining us!

Misty Klotz  
W. K. Kellogg Biological Station  
klotzmis@msu.edu

Bora Simmons  
North American Association of Environmental Educators  
borasimmons@gmail.com

Ellen Koehler  
MSU Extension Tollgate Farm and Education Center  
koehle43@msu.edu