

The Social and Emotional Learning Challenge

PREPARING YOUTH TO THRIVE: PROMISING PRACTICES IN SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SEL MATTERS

Growing research shows youth increasingly need non-academic skills to succeed in today's world. Social and emotional skills—such as grit, resilience, and empathy—have been proven to help young people lead healthy, fulfilling lives, but many youth, especially the most vulnerable, lack exposure to experiences that foster this development.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2014, the **Susan Crown Exchange** and the **David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality** set out to explore the practices that best support youth in cultivating social and emotional skills in informal learning environments, such as after-school, summer, or enrichment programs. From a pool of 250 applicants, eight high-quality programs in seven cities were selected as partners in an **SEL Challenge**. While they differ in offerings, all programs serve vulnerable teens and make social and emotional learning an intentional part of their curriculum.

WHAT WE FOUND

Using interviews, site visits, evaluations, and a learning community model, the study has proven that a set of staff practices and key youth experiences can promote meaningful growth in six different skill areas for youth: **emotion management, empathy, teamwork, responsibility, initiative, and problem solving.**

WHAT'S NEXT

These findings will be detailed in our upcoming **field guide** to provide support for any informal learning program interested in replicating similar practices. We'll also be launching an online learning community where you can explore how to adapt and remix the best SEL practices in any learning environment. To learn more, contact us at info@scefdn.org or visit us at scefdn.org to sign up for our newsletter. Together, we can help more youth lead the healthy and successful lives they deserve to lead. *Stay tuned for the launch!*

SEL CHALLENGE PARTNERS

Susan Crown Exchange (SCE) is a Chicago-based foundation invested in shaping an ecosystem of anytime, anywhere learning to prepare youth to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing and highly-connected world.

The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Weikart Center) is an organization focused on improving the quality of services available from expanded learning systems and settings. It is based in Ypsilanti, MI.

Programs:

- AHA! (Attitude, Harmony, Achievement) – Santa Barbara, CA
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, WI
- The Possibility Project—New York, NY
- Philadelphia Wooden Boat Factory—Philadelphia, PA
- Voyageur Outward Bound School—St. Paul, MN
- Wyman Center— St. Louis, MO
- Youth on Board and YWCA Boston—Boston, MA