SEEDING THE FUTURE WITH CHANGEMAKERS: FOOD JUSTICE AMBASSADORS

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Goals and Purpose
- Broaden participation in the sciences
- Re-engage youth who may have decided that science is not for them
- Cultivate a youth-empowered pathway for STEM career exploration
- Create youth change makers who use their scientific skills for social justice
- Design and implement a near-peer mentoring program with alumni
- Develop youth leadership
- Train 60 Food Justice Ambassadors who will train 600-800 middle school youth and establish 14 new large scale urban hydroponic farms across the cities of Boston, Waltham, and Springfield

Improving Youth STEM Interest through Iterative Design and Research

Goals and Expected Outcomes for Youth
- More likely to be engaged, to take more initiative, to remain attentive longer, and to concentrate at higher levels, and become greater agents of social change, enhanced interest in science
- By “centering a social justice lens in STEM learning” we “increase authentic engagement and motivation to pursue STEM careers” (Madden et al., 2017).
- Youth report they are more likely to persist in solving problems (Zhang & Barnett, 2014)
- At least two years, and generally three years, to re-opt into STEM
- Establish a Food Justice strand at the Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Conference

Learning Experiences for Youth
- Design and build hydroponic systems
- Learn to design systems and teach middle school youth to use them
- Learn the science of hydroponics and design new systems
- Conduct Geospatial Analysis of where to establish markets or distribute produce and identify food insecurity areas
- Learn to build and code automatic monitoring systems using open-source computing to support in caring for their systems
- Contribute to an urban cookbook and conduct foodscapes of their neighborhoods

References:

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