

Multi-site public engagement with science - SynBio

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Abstract

The aim of this project is to foster activities in science museums through which public audiences can engage with scientists and engineers in conversations about synthetic biology. Conversations between researchers and public audiences will focus not only on what synthetic biology is and how research in the field is carried out, but also on the potential products, outcomes, and implications for society of this work. Researchers and publics will explore personal and societal values and priorities as well as research outcomes so that both groups can learn from each other. In the first year of the project, engagement activities will be tested at eight pilot sites across the U.S. and in the second year the project team will develop a kit of materials that will be distributed to 200 sites to support widespread public engagement with synthetic biology across the U.S.

While it involves public engagement, the project is really aimed at raising the capacity of science museums and scientists to engage the public in multi-directional conversations about the societal implications of a developing technology with potentially profound implications.

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Building a community of practice for PES

The MSPES-SynBio project brings together several large networks of researchers and informal educators to build a community of practice around public engagement with science.

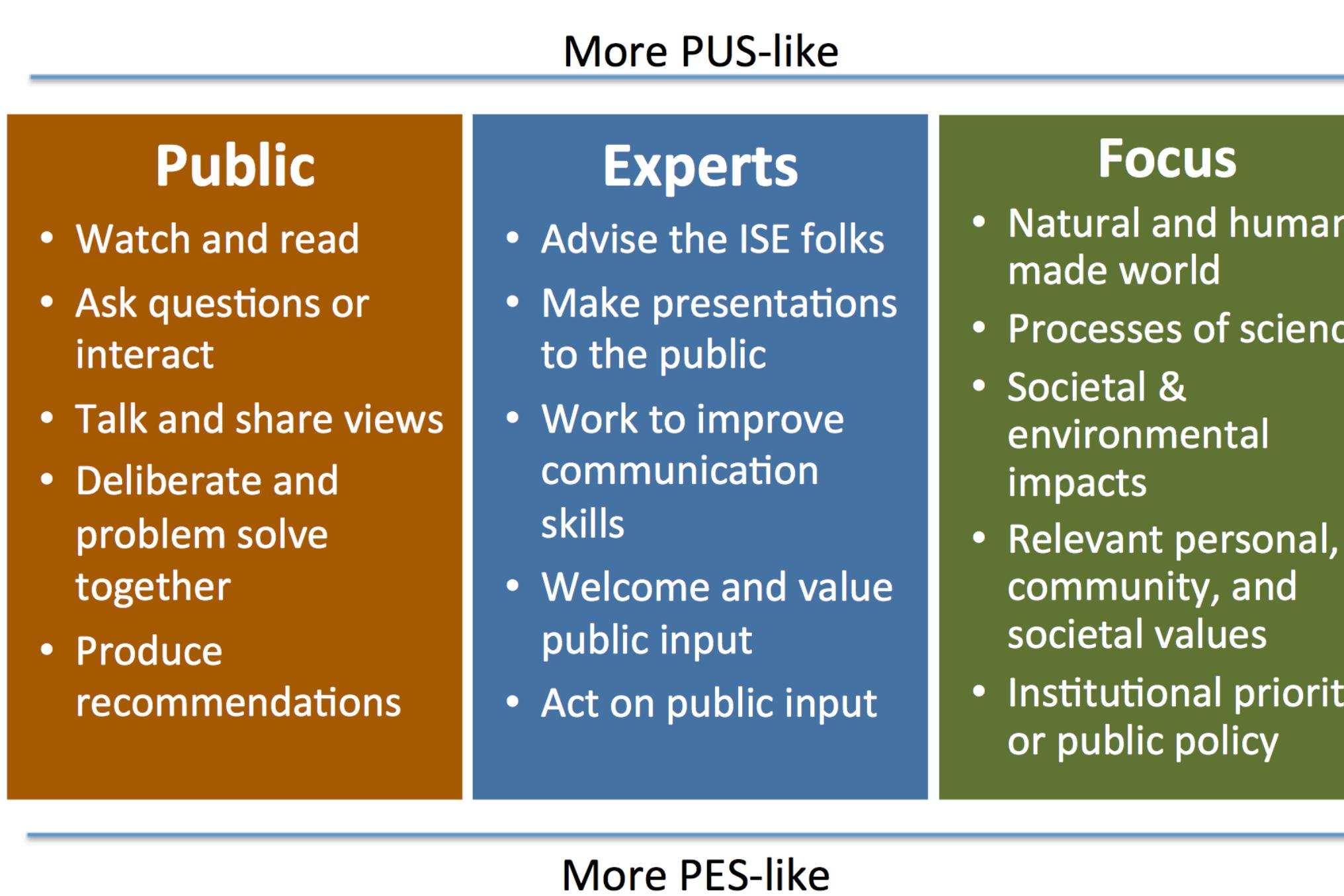


- Sciencenter, Ithaca
- NY Hall of Science
- Mus of Life & Science
- Science Museum of Minn
- Pacific Science Center
- Chabot Space & Sci Cntr
- Arizona Science Center
- Museum of Science
- The Franklin Institute
- Oregon Mus of Sci & Ind
- Arizona Science Center
- Children's Mus of Houston

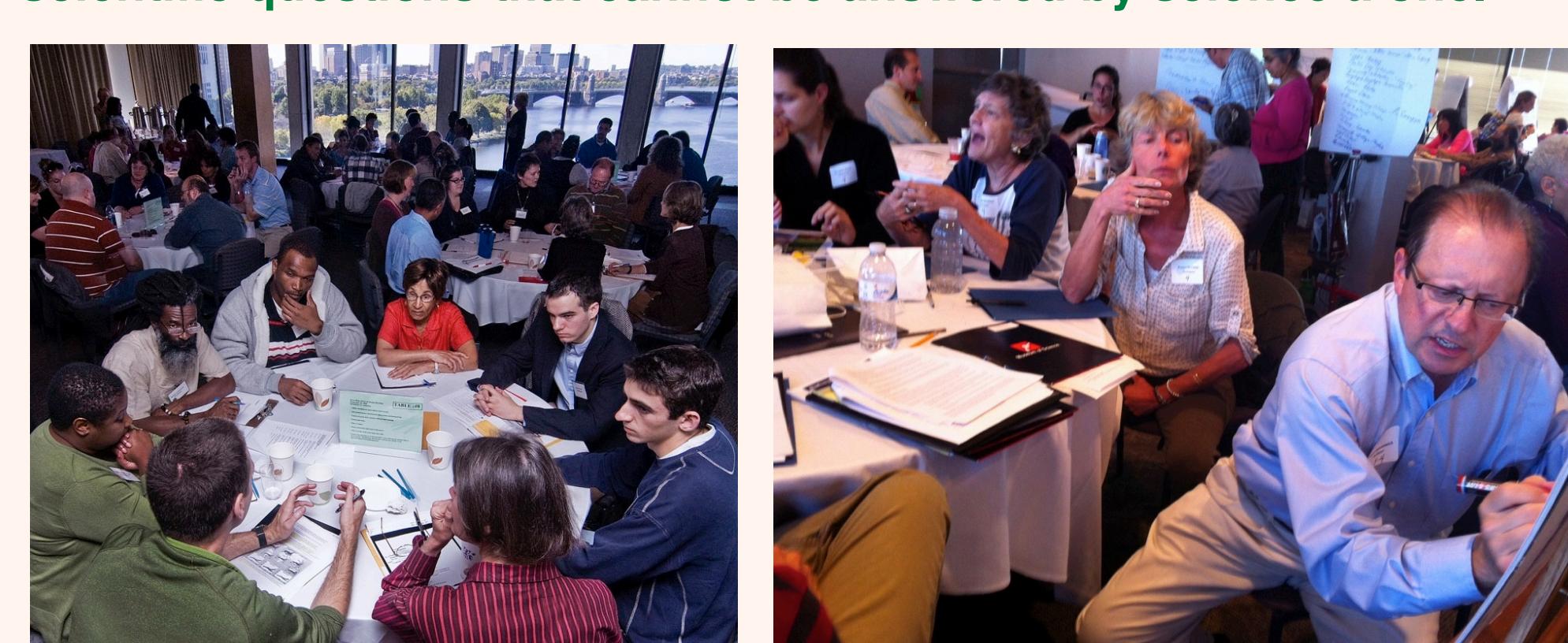
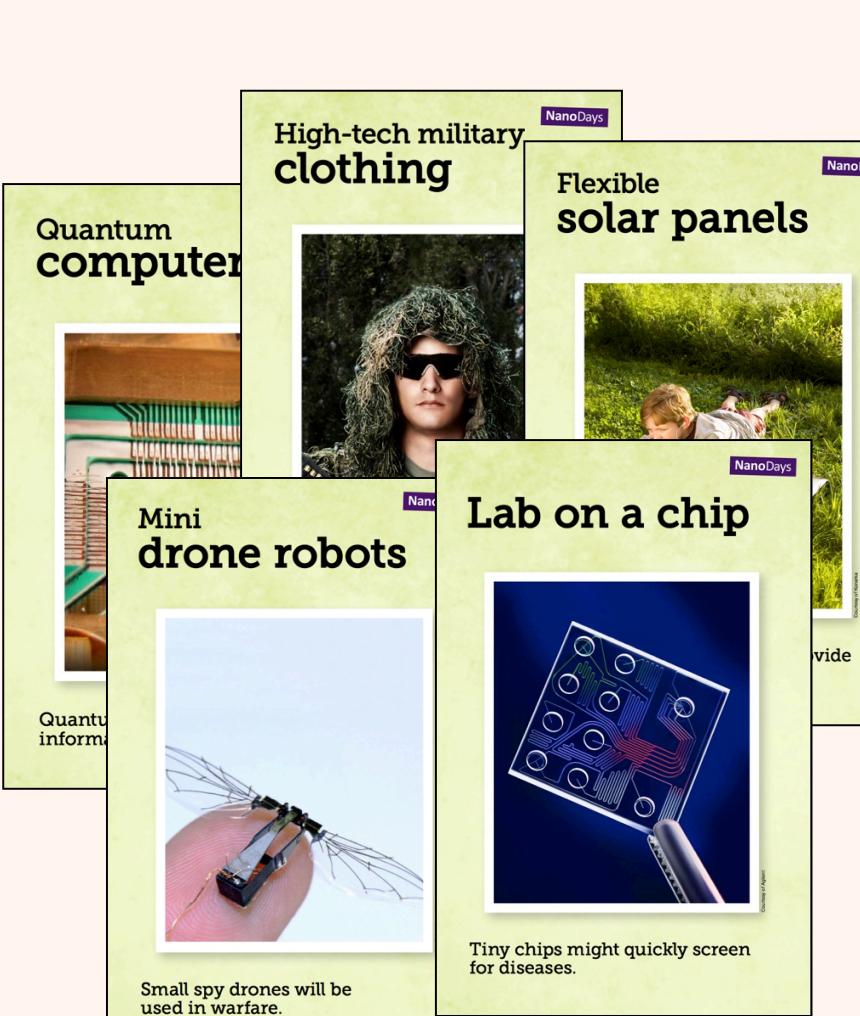
MSPES is aimed at moving from public understanding of science in informal education to public engagement with science

PES in terms of informal science education refers to activities, events, or interactions characterized by mutual learning—not one-way transmission from experts to publics—among people of varied backgrounds, scientific expertise, and life experiences who articulate and discuss their perspectives, ideas, knowledge, and values (McCallie et al, 2009).

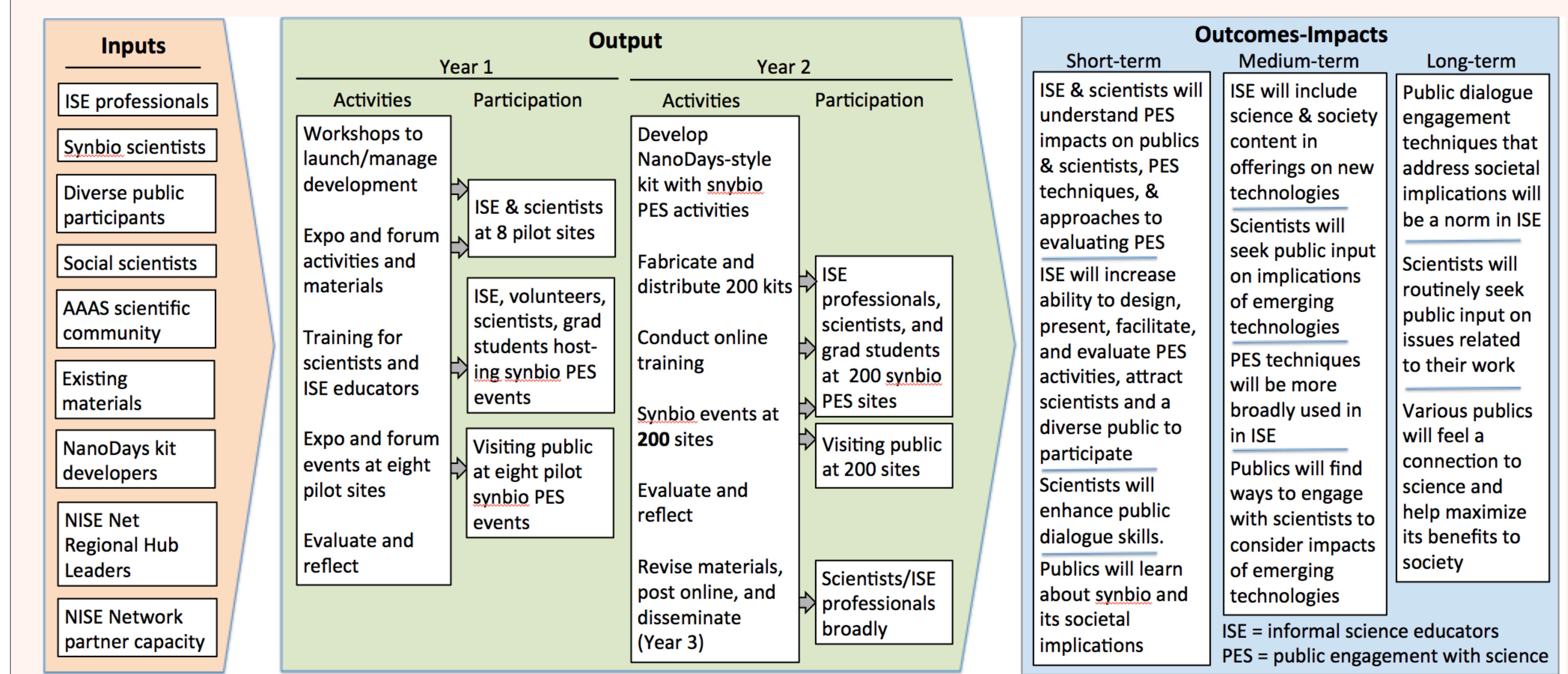
Dimensions of PUS to PES



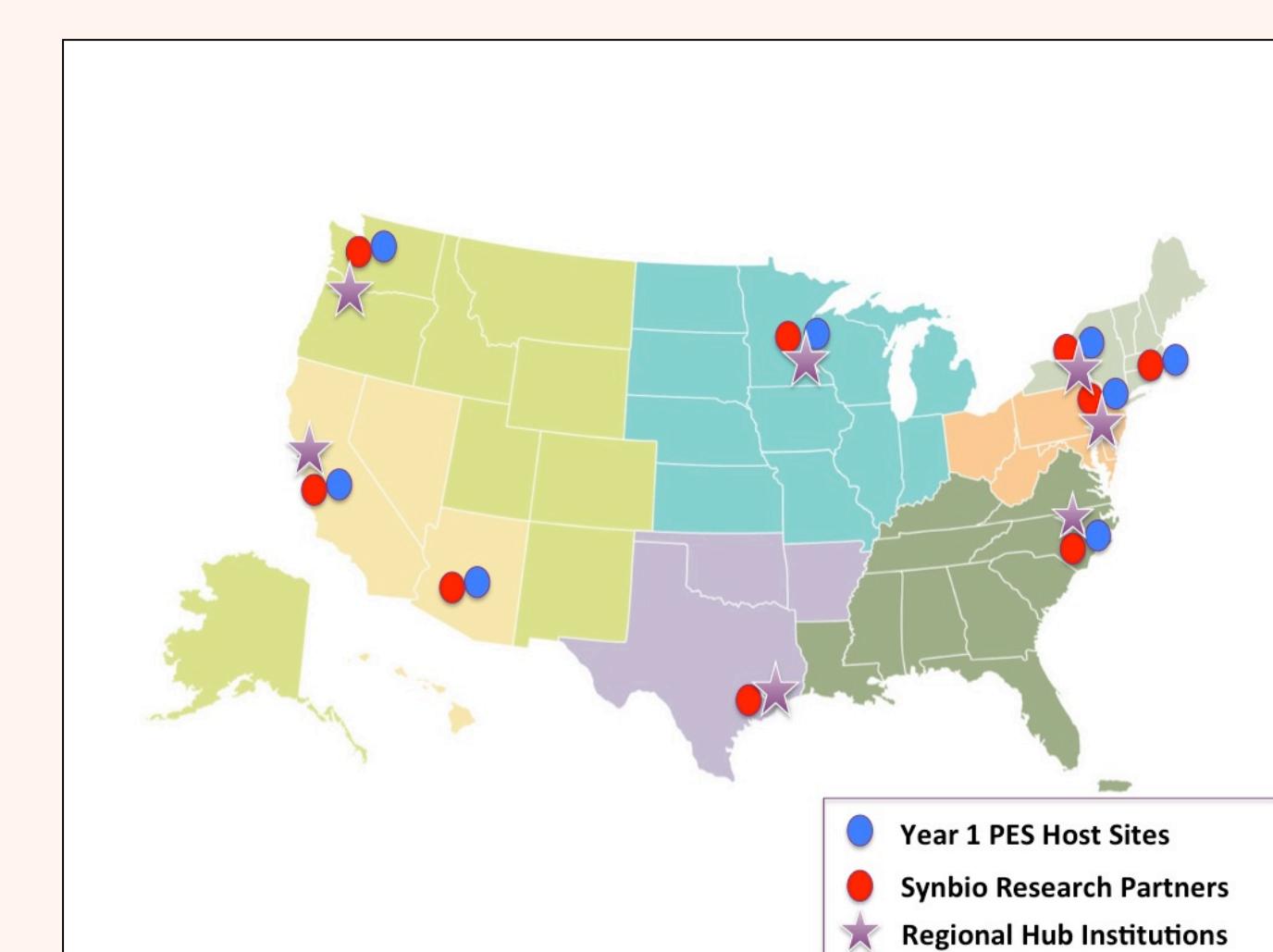
Two examples drawn from nanoscale informal science education:



Logic Model



Engagement events at pilot sites in 2015 and 200 sites in 2016



Museums matched with scientists for 2015 pilot activities followed by the distribution of a kit using NISE Net infrastructure to reach 200 locations.



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