# Update for The National Forum from ASDC, October 2019

ASDC – The UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres

The 2019 ASDC National Conference will this year be coming to London on November 20 - 21st, hosted by the Science Museum. This year the Conference Theme is 'Vision 2030'.

We will be exploring how through our large network, which involves over 20 million people in STEM each year in person, we can instigate large strategic changes to make the world a better place. The conference will focus on two key themes: Climate and sustainability, and how we support and drive national change, and secondly Equity and Inclusion, and making a fairer society. Speakers include Professor Sir Mark Walport, Google Deepmind, Ian Blatchford and others, plus vibrant discussion tables, lightning talks, brilliant exhibitors and a lively evening event. If Forum members would like to host a discussion table to share knowledge or ask the delegates something, please ask me.

STEM and Social justice issues are still at the top of ASDC’s agenda, along with environment and climate issues. Many science centres are also in the middle of exciting capital projects, including twelve centres with capital investment from the Inspiring Science Fund, with an investment of £20 million from UKRI and £10 million from Wellcome, with the aim of reaching more widely.

We are delighted to be working again through our strategic partnership with STFC for Explore Your Universe 4, with eight centres and their community partners to pioneer new approaches to make their organisations more inclusive, and to build relationships and share approaches that last. The training academy was in June and centres are now working with their community partners.

Over the summer we also trained 15 centres for our new ‘Science Capital in Practice’ national programme, in partnership with the Science Museum. These 15 centres are now exploring and piloting new approaches for our sector to become more inclusive and relevant to all communities.

We are also delighted to be working again with the UK Space Agency to run Phase 2 of Destination Space, with 13 science centres. This phase focusses on sharing with families and children the latest developments in UK Spaceports in Scotland, Cornwall and North Wales, new satellites, the ExoMars mission in 2 years, and the UK role in The Webb Telescope. We are also running a new programme to engage and involve rural and remote communities close to the spaceports in Scotland, Cornwall and North Wales.

This follows on from Phase 1 of Destination Space where we trained and equipped staff in 20 STEM engagement organisations to deliver the Tim Peake-focussed programmes. 914,646 children and adults took part, including 80,201 people who met and spoke with a space scientist or engineer and 152,348 school students brought by teachers for curriculum-linked space workshops. 2.1 million people visited our exhibitions.

In addition, with the UK Space Agency we trained and equipped centres to run a big celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Moon Landing in July in their communities, with tens of thousands of people involved. As part of this we created a collaborative Moon Portal [www.Moon50.uk](http://www.Moon50.uk) to collate all these events, so STEM, arts and other providers could share events and resources through this national resource, and reuse for future landings. Over a hundred big were listed (see past events) and it was also linked to the BBC website, the Guardian and other sites for the public.

Many of our science centres are still delivering our earlier National Strategic Programmes across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These include ASDC’s national environment programme ‘Operation Earth’ in partnership with NERC, where we trained 11 science centres who together reached 201,442 people in one year with the very latest in environmental science.

Likewise, ‘The Secret World of Gases’ was created in partnership with the Royal Society of Chemistry, and involved 106,261 participants and experiments and activities continue nationally.

Each of these programmes has the strategic goal of advancing the field by pooling the very best ideas and knowledge world-wide for a specific content area, and then training centres nationally so families and schools across the UK can participate in the best. This methodology also develops sector-wide communities of practice and to share knowledge and ideas. Many more of our STEM initiatives are on our website [www.sciencecentres.org.uk](http://www.sciencecentres.org.uk).