

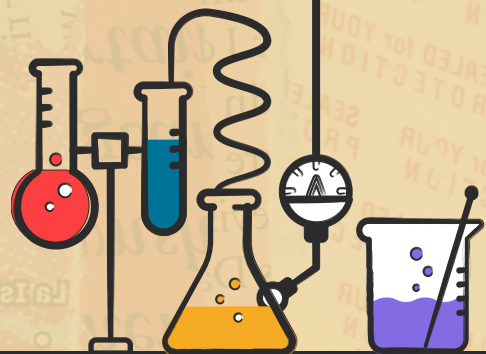
Testing for the Future:

The **FCYO** 2023
Annual Report



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A Letter From Our Executive Director

Hello FCYO Fam, and Happy 2024!

This July will mark my 10th year on staff at the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing, and wow, have we come a long way! When I joined the team in 2014, we were a team of three with a budget of \$2 million leading one grantmaking initiative with 15 organizations. Still recovering from the fallout of the 2008 recession, much of our focus at that time was on simply carving out space for youth organizing to gain full recognition as the powerful vehicle for social change that we knew it to be.

The political climate was different then as well. While we faced ongoing struggles for racial, gender, and economic justice, we had yet to fully comprehend the size and scope of the challenges to come. We had not experienced the Trump presidency and the full extremist sweep of our highest political offices, we did not anticipate a global pandemic would exact massive consequences across all aspects of our lives, and we did not know we were about to enter a period of profound geopolitical gravity in which the imperial core itself would begin to shake.

Today, as we head into an important election year, the challenges our communities face are of historic proportions. Many of the questions in front of us are existential - with each of our actions, we contribute to either the expansion or contraction of possibility. Each day seems a decisive moment.

It can be overwhelming, yes. But looked at another way, it is extraordinary. Never before have conditions been so loaded with potential for transformation. These are fertile opportunities for experimentation, and young people are ready to lead.

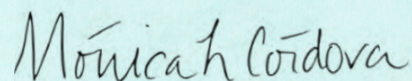
When I look back on my 10 years on staff and even more on the Advisory Board, I see that all along, FCYO has been preparing for this moment.

Today, we are stronger than ever with a team of 12 incredibly talented and passionate staff members, a \$12 million budget, and four strategic grantmaking cohorts that are building the capacity of and moving resources to nearly 100 organizations nationwide. We have created a real home for organizers and organizations to be vulnerable when the work is heartbreaking, question when strategies are ineffective, and experiment when the moment calls for new approaches to make our vision a reality. The scale of our responsibilities have multiplied - but so has our capacity to meet them. I couldn't be prouder of our team, our community, and our shared work.

As we enter this year, we look forward to the transformative possibilities ahead through the lens of a movement scientist. We know winning is a science, and we also know we are here to win. That's why FCYO intentionally adapted our approach over the last few years to create a live organizing laboratory of movement scientists committed to building a new world. The Power to Win Framework grounds our methodology and guides each and every hypothesis and experiment conducted by the collective movement scientists in FCYO's network. We are determined to curate an environment of experimentation and discovery, offering organizations in our cohorts the ability to dream, test, fail, and adapt over and over until we win.

As you read the following updates, please know our partnership with many of you created the conditions for the field to thrive in new and exciting ways, and we will continue to need you by our side. This moment calls on all of us - youth organizing groups, intergenerational organizations, capacity-building partners, philanthropic co-conspirators, and a clear-eyed FCYO staff - to step into the science of building enduring power. We are all testing for the future.

With rigor, joy, love, and power,



Mónica Córdoba

Testing

1, 2, 3...

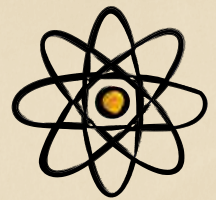
If freedom is our vision, then youth organizing is our science

Our youth-led and intergenerational partner organizations = living laboratories

Our test = winning

Our variable = power

And our people? You guessed it...movement scientists



What sets FCYO science apart?

Each power building experiment is built from and guided by the past.

As movement scientists, we call on centuries of learning from past social movements.

We are deeply committed to the practice of ongoing study to inform future work.

Our movement laboratories work in present and future tense.

They are responsive to the conditions of today and designed to push at the limits of what is possible tomorrow.

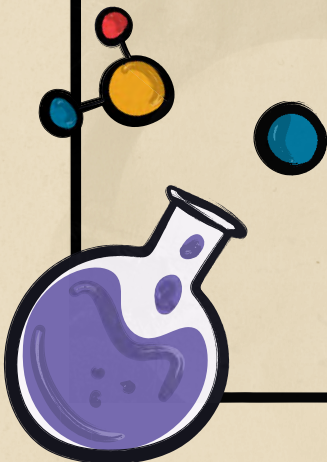
Our movement laboratory is anything but sterile.

We do not scan for crisp lab coats; we scan for committed hearts and active hands.

We do not shut down when there's a crack in the test tube; we look for the lessons in the error.

Our science is collective.

We do not believe that one individual test - nor one individual organization - can or will unlock our fullest potential. Transformative change requires we operate in synchrony, collectively building toward a shared long-term vision.



And We're Live!

The Power to Win Framework is Here

This time last year, we teased y'all with a glimpse of the Power to Win Framework. In 2023, we officially cut the ribbon as we debuted the Framework live and in living color!

Our entire aim with the Power to Win Framework was to put forward a living document that would lay the groundwork for revitalizing the field's formidable power building capacities and realize its full potential to usher in and sustain a new world. With this in mind, we unveiled the Framework through a four-part webinar series from May-August where leading practitioners from the FCYO community - those whose work the Framework reflects - took center stage. Sharing firsthand the tangible benefits of applying the Power to Win Framework to their work, organizers and funders alike anchored the sessions in compelling stories of hard-won lessons, current struggles, and visions for the future. Across the conversations, we heard again and again how essential both vulnerability and unwavering rigor are as we work to build the power our communities need to reshape society in their interest.



Our goal has never been just to share information - our goal is to build a movement. And the Power to Win Framework is truly bringing the momentum.

Session 1

Power: Theory and Practice

Speakers: Fahd Ahmed ([DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving](#)), Kalia Harris ([Virginia Student Power Network](#)), Viri Hernandez ([Poder in Action](#)), Phoebe Dolan ([Maine Youth Power](#))

Session 3

We Make the Road by Walking

Speakers: Jaqueline Gutierrez ([Poder SF](#)), Kit Lee ([CAAAY](#)), Muhammad Sankari ([Arab American Action Network](#)), Maya Sheppard ([Hearing Youth Voices](#))

Session 2

The Road Less Traveled

Speakers: Mónica Córdova (FCYO), Rapheal Randall (FCYO), Jennifer Maldonado (FCYO), Krystal Portalatin, James Lopez ([Power U - Center for Social Change](#))

Session 4

The Path to Power

Speakers: Mónica Córdova (FCYO), Joy Lehumanani Enomoto ([Hawai'i Peace and Justice](#)), Jonathan Bix ([For The Many](#)), Shukri Abdirhaman ([Maine Youth Power](#))



Building Movement Scientists: FCYO's 2023 Capacity Building Programs



While we're generally a nerdy bunch, most folks in the FCYO community didn't come into this work with the explicit goal of mastering the scientific method. Yet today, if you poke your head into any of the GenPower Labs or the Youth Organizing for Climate Action and Racial Equity initiative [YO-CARE], you probably won't go more than a few minutes without hearing the language of experimentation. Observing, assessing, questioning, hypothesizing, testing, synthesizing, evaluating. This is the bread and butter of casting a new mold for a youth organizing field capable of producing transformative results - a field that holds the power to win. In the coming pages, you'll hear more about what each Lab has been up to in the past year and the trailblazing work of the YO-CARE initiative. You'll hear about how through these cohorts, groups have coalesced around a shared analysis of our conditions, a sharp long-term vision, and a crystal clear understanding of the work we need to do to get there. And you'll also hear a bit about the work still to come!



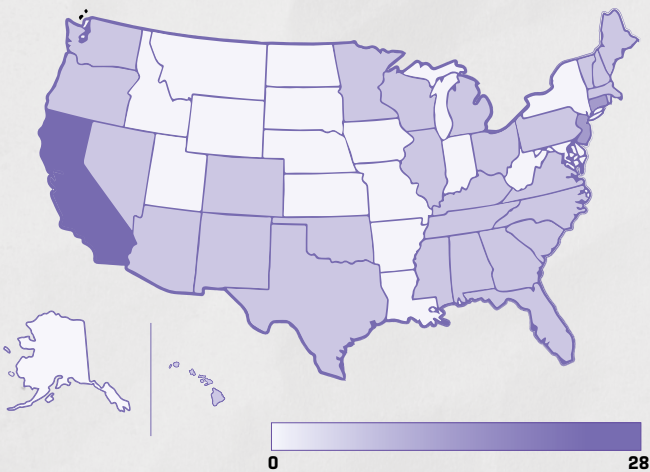
Snapshot: Our 2023 Youth Organizing Partners



Before we dig into the heart of the program, we want to offer an overview of the remarkable community we’ve built this past year. We don’t want to give everything away because the 2025 National Youth Organizing Landscape Scan is on the horizon. But we can’t help but flex a bit about the incredible youth organizing groups we have the absolute privilege of calling our community.

This information reflects the organizations in FCYO’s OWL, LUL, P4P, and YO-CARE cohorts provided by groups in their applications to the cohort and onboarding surveys. It should be understood as a point-in-time reflection.

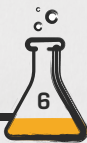
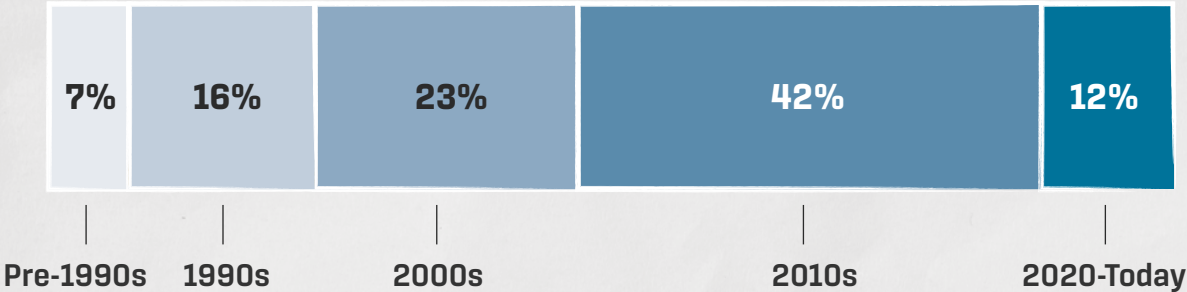
Location



REGION	STATES	% OF ORGS
Mid-Atlantic	DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA	13%
Midwest	IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MO, MN, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI	14%
Mountains	CO, ID, MT, NV, UT, WY	2%
New England	CT, RI, ME, MA, NH, VT	14%
Southeast	AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV	15%
Southwest	AZ, NM, OK, TX	14%
Pacific	CA, AK, HI, OR, WA	26%

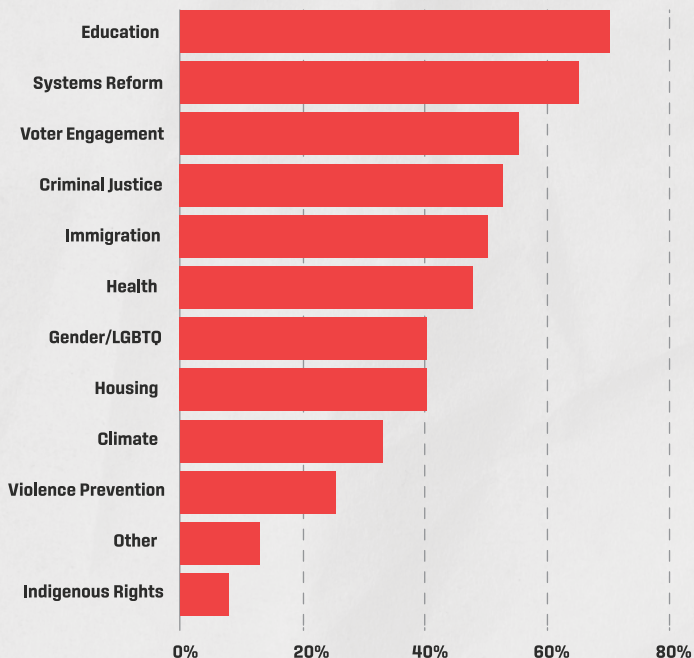
Year Founded

[Percentage of groups]

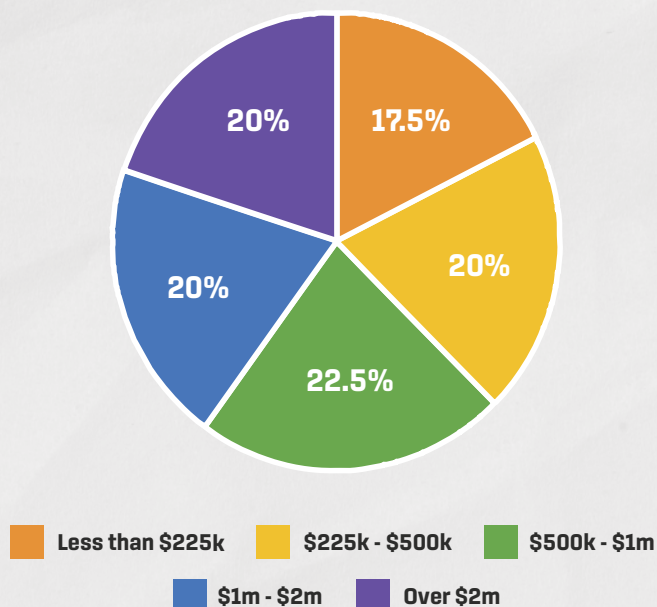


Snapshot: Our 2023 Youth Organizing Partners

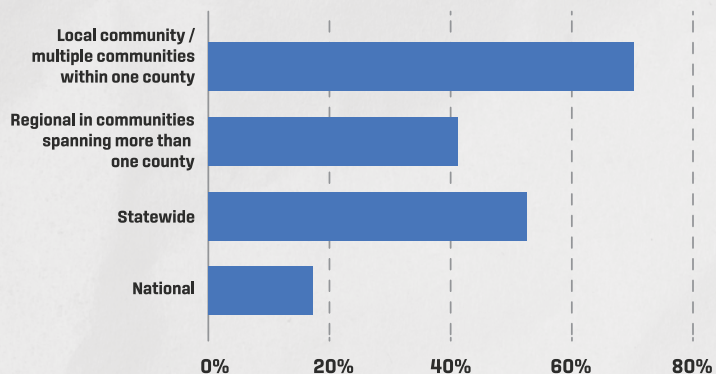
Primary Issue Focus



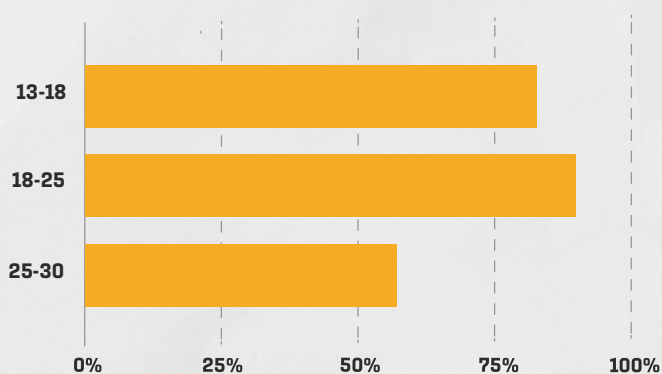
Budget



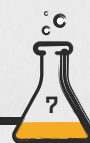
Regional Focus



Age of Youth Members

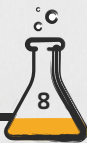
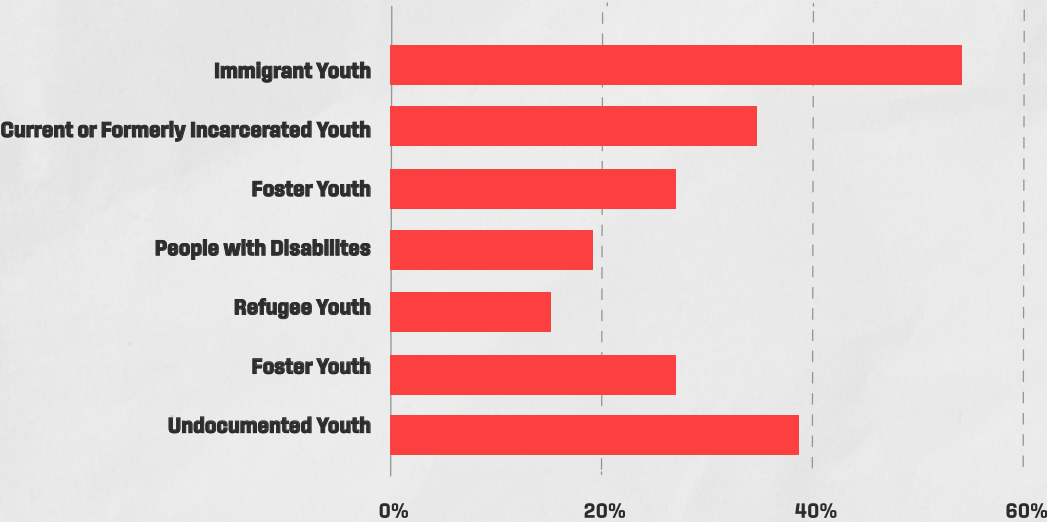
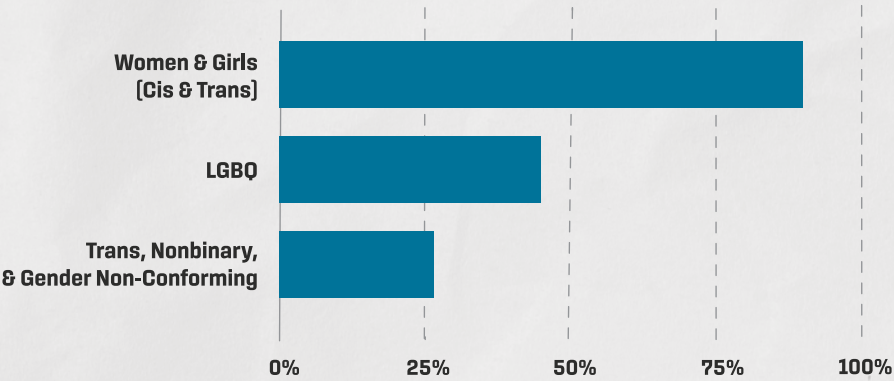
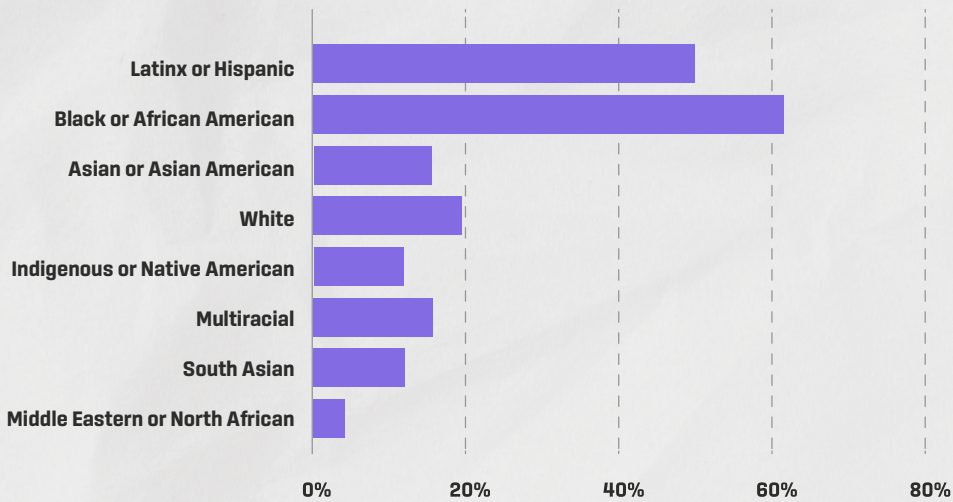


*With the exception of Location, Year Founded, and Budget, all charts reflect questions in which groups were asked to select all that apply.

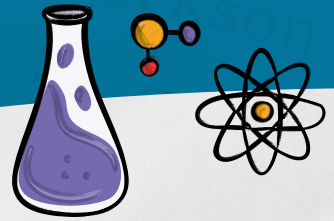


Snapshot: Our 2023 Youth Organizing Partners

Membership Demographics



The GenPower Labs



Organizing to Win Lab: The Assessment Power-Up

At FCYO, we believe that assessment is a real game-changer for youth organizers' power building approaches. That's why we launched a second **Organizing to Win Lab [OWL]** this past year for a brand new cohort of 25 youth organizing groups - a majority of whom were new to the FCYO community. Over 10 months, the OWL 2 cohort came together in a learning community focused on the building blocks of political education and organizational assessment, including 12 virtual sessions co-facilitated by OWL 1 alums, revamped tools and provocative readings, and lots of time for folks to connect. As part of the program, groups experimented with applying the Power to Win Framework to their work via three organizational assessment tools focused on three key questions:

- Do we, as organizing staff and board members, understand the root causes impacting our constituencies, and how aligned or misaligned is our understanding?
- Do we, as a staff and, by extension, our membership, understand power and what kind of power we are attempting to contest for in our terrain?
- Are we building campaigns that serve a long-term agenda toward structural change, and with whom do we need to build to create that sort of change?

As OWL 2 wraps up, our focus shifts to reflection - we're looking back at what happened, identifying what supported groups to grow and what got in the way, and making decisions about what that means for our work as we look forward to OWL 3 [coming this Spring!]. A few things you can trust: there will be rigorous study, there will be vulnerable assessment, and there will be lots of space for collective joy!



“Being a part of the OWL 2 cohort has helped us make organizational development shifts. OWL helped us move from making plans that stay on the shelf to creating a living document that continues to be useful to our work. We focused on revamping our ladder of engagement, we took advantage of coaching and sought support from peers we met in the cohort. We also brought the conversations of the cohort into our staff development and leadership development processes. We used our participation in the cohort to learn about assessment making and to sharpen our analysis of racial capitalism.”

- Alex Goldenberg, Interim Executive Director, **Southside Together Organizing for Power**



Level Up Lab: Testing Toward Transformation

The Level Up Lab (LUL) was never designed to be a place for folks content with the status quo. Instead, LUL is a space for those hungry for experimentation and collective transformation - for a level-up!

In 2023, the 18 awesome youth organizing groups comprising the LUL cohort kicked off their second year together by building the skills and analysis to develop grounded - and testable - hypotheses to amp up their power building work. Their work included political education sessions that presented the South African Anti-Apartheid movement through the lens of the Power to Win Framework, practical skill building sessions on base building and leadership development, and resiliency practices to cultivate the social-emotional skills to weather the challenges of this work. In the second half of the year, the LUL cohort took the organizational assessments they completed in their first year and developed hypotheses about how to make shifts in four areas: base building practices to increase the size of their base, leadership development practices to increase member leadership and retention, leadership development cohort programs, and methods of distributive leadership across their member leaders. As we move into 2024, the groups are now knee-deep in praxis.

Through it all, the LUL cohort has shown amazing dedication to the process. They're really together in camaraderie, uplifting one another and giving crucial feedback as they navigate bold risks in their organizations. They've also become key collaborators in sharpening FCYO's own methods, bringing fresh ideas and constructive feedback to help us make sure the timelines, content, and focus areas match the cohort's needs. As we dive into the upcoming year, we can't wait to witness the lessons these experiments bring for the groups directly involved and for all of us on the transformative journey toward building the power to win.



“Participating in the Level Up Lab, our organization sharpened our practice in movement building and thrived under the guidance and support of the mentors and cohort members. We created a strong and strategic political education series for our rural base that would not have been possible without the knowledge and space for experimentation that FCYO provided.”

-Phoebe Dolan, Co-Director, Maine Youth Power



Praxis for Power Lab: Collective Design + Collective Practice = Collective Power

When building capacity across a whole field, we must go beyond establishing shared analysis. We have to engage in shared practice. And as any good scientist knows, robust practice requires robust design. This was the key idea driving the first year of the **Praxis for Power Lab** [P4P]. It's why we asked eight highly advanced youth organizing groups to dedicate their time to helping us co-design a program that could propel a collective experiment in making shared practice shifts.

And we're off! In 2023, P4P's spotlight shifted to putting ideas into action. Guided by the Power to Win Framework, organizers collectively determined the youth organizing field's most pivotal growth edges. From there, they came together (over many, many hours of deliberation) to land on a hypothesis that could serve as a blueprint for advancing their organizations' work and positioning the broader youth organizing sector to be a leading edge in a movement for structural transformation. This year, they're testing that hypothesis with place-based and class-based power building experiments that emphasize transformative leadership development and strategic and tactical alliances.

The cohort's all-in commitment to individual and collective work, shared clarity on the hypothesis, and deep investment in one another have created an extraordinary learning space. From structured sessions to casual chats, groups are diving into critical conversations ranging from leadership ladders to hiring to what it means to gain or exert leadership in alliances. Looking ahead, the next year promises many opportunities for the cohort to reflect, assess, and synthesize their learnings, ultimately producing a transformative series of practice-driven insights to be shared with the youth organizing field.



FCYO has long championed a welcome balance of pointed political education, principled struggle, planning, and experimentation that has greatly benefited the evolution of Oakland Kids First. FCYO has always been a fruitful learning space for me, but this past year, I was able to bring additional staff into this community and watch the gears begin to turn for them anew. Though I had tried to be a suitable messenger for the emerging insights I was having, there is no replacement for sitting in a circle with organizers from around the country as they question, critique, and challenge your organizing strategy. There is no adequate simulation for breaking bread with comrades, commiserating over past failures, and culling shared wisdom. And perhaps most importantly, there is no replacing the sharing of hope and radical visions of the future that can anchor our collective imaginations."

- Lukas Brekke-Miesner, Executive Director of **Oakland Kids First** and FCYO Advisory Board Member

Spring Convening:

***"Who's building power? We're building power!
What kinda power? The power to win!"***

Last Spring, the Level Up Lab and Praxis for Power Lab cohorts came together in sunny Miami for a four-day convening. Our biggest goal with the Spring convening was to cultivate folks' sense of being together in this work - to understand their experiments as connected and interdependent. We kicked off with a super thought-provoking panel hosted by GenPower Labs participants Power U - Center for Social Change and Engage Miami and local groups Miami Workers Center and WeCount where organizers rooted us in the historic struggles and current organizing landscape of the region. Over the next few days, LUL and P4P groups really dove into the practice of principled struggle - listening deeply, synthesizing what they heard, and offering grounded and rigorous feedback. Again and again, we returned to the Power to Win Framework to reflect on our work and dig deeper into the capacities we need to grow to realize our long-term vision.



We got deep, ate well, danced, and as we closed our time together, we brought our voices together to make sure the world knows: *"Who's building power? We're building power! What kinda power? The power to win!"*

Fall Convening:

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains!" - Assata Shakur

The California skies may have been cloudy during our Fall convening, but nothing was going to stop the absolute fire of bringing together all three GenPower Labs cohorts for the first time! With such an incredible - and large - community of organizers all in one space, our goal with this convening was to bridge a need for spaciousness and organic connection with our shared purpose. The opening session on Palestine led by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center struck a beautiful balance, offering us real-time insight into the urgent crisis unfolding in Gaza and the role of U.S. imperialism while inviting folks to map out the regional issues and response efforts underway in the U.S. - in other words, to expand what's possible through finding our shared approach. Over the next few days, from world cafes to facilitated sessions, from coaching to after-hours chats, the cohorts dove into their ongoing work, with OWL deepening their assessments, LUL contending with the challenges of their hypotheses, and P4P grappling with the role of leadership development and strategic and tactical alliances.



We drilled down, and we scaled up. We surfaced questions, and we struggled for unity. And we wrapped up our time together clearer in focus and more resilient in community, closing with Assata Shakur's timeless call to action: *"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains!"*

Youth Organizing for Climate Action and Racial Equity



Organizing to Win Lab: The Assessment Power-Up

Where the frontlines of climate and racial justice intersect, you will always find youth organizers. Whether grappling with deep-rooted structural inequities or engaging in urgent work to avert looming disaster, their work is crucial to our collective ability to achieve a world where all communities thrive. That's why, going into the Youth Organizing for Climate Action and Racial Equity initiative (YO-CARE), FCYO knew we had a unique opportunity to make a real impact...and 18 months to do it.

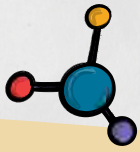


And wow, did the 40 groups that joined the inaugural YO-CARE cohort show up to roll with us in this experiment.

Building on FCYO's proven capacity-building methods - political education, peer learning, dynamic in-person gatherings - we took YO-CARE as an opportunity to test out new elements like one-on-one organizational coaching and standard setting on organizing basics, including base building, leadership development, and campaign development. But we also balanced the rigor with joy, camaraderie, and vulnerability throughout our time together, making sure groups felt FCYO's commitment at both individual and organizational levels. When we first launched YO-CARE, many folks faced tough questions in their work, like how to grow a base in stressed and overstretched communities, successfully transition from virtual to in-person work, and combat burnout with creative staff and membership development programs. Together, we created a warm and honest space where groups assessed their organization's work using a shared framework, found collective resilience in the face of heaviness, and swapped lessons to guide them through the challenges and opportunities ahead. We mean it when we say the cohort's commitment was something special: sessions had an 85% attendance rate, 22 groups received coaching from The Organizing Center, 33 groups participated in peer learning exchanges, and 38 groups attended the convening.

These lessons are front and center as we wrap up the design for the officially renewed YO-CARE 2 [big ups to our funder partners for supporting us to continue in this work]! YO-CARE 2 will be a two-year, two-phase capacity-building program for a smaller subset of organizations [primarily alums from YO-CARE and OWL 1 & 2] who are strong in their organizing practice and eager to try out new methods to ramp up their power building. Stay tuned: YO-CARE 2 will launch this Spring at FCYO's next all-cohort mega-convening!





“ Our organization is really invested in developing disciplined youth organizers, not just activists. Up until our participation in YO-CARE, our campaigns have been largely reactionary and highly focused on specific youth-led demands. For our new climate justice committee, we have worked with youth from the ground up in developing both their understanding of climate justice and environmental racism, but also their skill building in preparing to launch a campaign of their own. This was a new challenge for our organization.”

- Joy Lehuanani Enomoto, Executive Director, Hawai'i Peace and Justice



Atlanta Convening: FCYO's Best Dance Party to Date!?!

We wrapped up the YO-CARE cohort with a June convening that united 63 people across 38 organizations in Atlanta for three days of connection, reflection, and alignment building. To kick us off, cohort member Sustainable Georgia Futures grounded us in our host city with a powerful learning tour on climate gentrification, vividly illustrating the interconnectedness of climate change, structural racism, urban development, and sustainability. Back at the convening space, groups grappled with their power building efforts in a very lively Power to Win session and connected with their YO-CARE journey via customized yearbooks for each organization that showcased their work throughout the program and included reflective prompts. Amid all the rigor, there was much joy to be found in our time together, including tie-dying, bingo, and what has been hailed as FCYO's best dance party to date. All in all, the convening wrapped up this powerhouse pilot cohort with high energy, abundant gratitude, and palpable excitement about what's next.



Bolder Risks, Bigger Rewards: Funder Organizing and Fundraising in 2023



Just as threats to our communities and planet grow, so too does the resolve of youth organizers to meet these challenges. They are unbowed in their vision.

And we know they need - and deserve - resources far beyond what's currently available to them.

But we also know they need resources that serve a shared strategy - funding that reflects clear and grounded alignment between funders and organizers about where we're going and what it's going to take to get there. That's why we've been jazzed to see philanthropy stepping into the science of power building this year like never before - learning, testing, and experimenting with the forward-thinking resourcing strategies that push beyond the usual into the terrain of transformation.

At FCYO, our funder community and organizing partners [who are quite familiar with experimentation at this point!] have long been encouraging us to take bolder leadership in the social justice funder landscape - to lean into bigger risk in service of bigger rewards. And throughout 2023, we've been busy doing just that. Below we provide a window into the ins and outs of FCYO's work this year to level up our own fundraising and funder organizing efforts - to realize the full potential of this exciting philanthropic moment.

Growing Community, Seeding Alignment: Funder Briefings, Workshops, and Conferences - Oh My!

Bringing Funders into the YO-CARE Fold at the Atlanta Funder Briefing

Last Spring, we hosted a virtual briefing that invited funders to meet those youth organizers working at the intersection of climate justice and racial justice and join in the work of the YO-CARE cohort. The energy and love YO-CARE groups expressed at the briefing about their time in the cohort was palpable and carried us to an incredible in-person briefing the next month at the Atlanta YO-CARE convening. In collaboration with Funders for Justice, we hosted a two-day learning experience around the intersections of climate, gentrification, and policing including a tour with organizers from Stop Cop City, a panel on organizing in the South, a guided walk led by our YO-CARE partners around climate and gentrification, and sessions oriented toward building community and visioning what is possible when funders engage in shared strategy.



FCYO on the Scene: CHANGE Unity Summit, NFG Convening, and More

We know philanthropy is in the midst of a pivotal moment in its orientation toward organizing and power building, and in 2023, we truly prioritized as many touch points as possible. Our team rolled deep at the Neighborhood Funders Group gathering in May, reconnecting with friends and creating lots of buzz on the heels of the Power to Win Framework launch. In addition, we partnered with the Cricket Island Foundation to present at Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. Elsewhere, Mónica took the stage to align the broader philanthropic landscape around the critical need to resource youth organizing, including presenting at the Aspen Institute's Opportunity Youth Forum and moderating a panel at the Youth Transition Funders Group. Finally, we formalized two long-standing partnerships, officially becoming members of the Neighborhood Funders Group and Funders for Justice. In each of these spaces, we took on the lens of co-learner, co-strategist, and co-conspirator as we sought out those rich conversations so unique to in-person time together.

We were also excited to reconvene in person with the Change Philanthropy community this Fall at the 2023 Unity Summit. Beyond an opportunity to showcase some new FCYO swag, we were particularly hyped to host our session "Building the Power to Win!" and to breathe life into the Power to Win Framework with some real-time experimentation. As most of you know, you can always rely on FCYO to show up with something different than what most might expect in a funder space. In the case of our Unity Summit session, we joined with organizers from Oakland Kids First, Virginia Student Power Network, and Power California to invite funders to learn about their journeys with the Power to Win Framework. But obviously, that wasn't all!

Following the panel, we put funders to the test, immersing them in a live application of the Framework that included using limited resources to build a robust power building strategy that could weather outside forces and achieve a long-term vision for change. Elsewhere, FCYO staff joined a breakout session to discuss strategies for social justice philanthropy to act in solidarity with Palestine, ultimately joining a community that would support the launch of the Funders for a Ceasefire Now open letter signed by FCYO. Between hosting our session, attending plenaries, and chatting well into the evening with friends old and new, our experience at the Unity Summit definitely left us with a reinvigorated commitment to leveraging philanthropy as a meaningful accomplice to power building.



FCYO in Print: "Building Political Power When Everything Is at Stake"

This Fall, we were thrilled to receive an invitation to contribute to the Stanford Social Innovation Review's special edition **Philanthropy and Power**. In their article entitled **"Building Political Power When Everything Is at Stake"**, Mónica joined together with Lisa Owens, President of the **Hyams Foundation**, to face the mandate of this historic moment head-on and put forward a vision for resourcing our people to build the sort of power that can usher in lasting structural transformation. With their gaze trained forward, Mónica and Lisa used this article as an opportunity to grapple with the critical questions facing our sector, including:

- What is at stake, and for whom?
- What constitutes true political power?
- How do movement groups organize for political power?
- What can progressive funders do differently to meet our charge?

We invite all in the FCYO community to take this article launch as an opportunity to elevate the work of progressive, aligned funders who are prioritizing funding power building. Put on your organizer hat and knock on the [figurative] doors of your coworkers, friends, allies, and stakeholders to share this article and start a conversation!

Let us move from performing our values about justice and equity toward embracing discomfort, curiosity, and risk. That is where the real transformation happens."

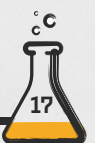
- Mónica Córdova & Lisa Owens, **"Building Political Power When Everything Is at Stake"**



Partnerships for Power: Deepening Our Regional Collaborations

Strengthening the Scaffolding of California Youth Organizing

FCYO has long been connected to California's game-changing youth organizing scene, including in partnership with dozens of youth organizing groups and with the dynamic philanthropic ecosystem supporting them. As both a historic hub and a current site for emergent approaches to youth organizing, our West Coast collaborations are an important area of FCYO's funder organizing work. This past year, this work included co-hosting a briefing for the **California Youth Media Network** with **The California Endowment** and supporting the work of the newly launched California Youth Organizing Funders Collaborative, whose goal is to increase and coordinate resources going to youth organizing across the state, including supporting youth organizing groups themselves in diversifying their funding streams. As we celebrate the substantial strides we've made in collaboration with organizers and their funder allies in California, we're looking forward to expanding our work to strengthen regional infrastructure networks for youth organizers across the country.



Powering Up Youth Organizing in Southeast Michigan

For those who don't know, one of the ways FCYO most directly supports our funder community is through our Funder Advisory work. This includes supporting projects ranging from guiding the development of a locally grounded grantmaking strategy for a new youth organizing funder to surveying the landscape of youth organizing at the intersections of culture, power, and place to support sharper grantmaking strategies. This past year, we were thrilled to continue in our funder advisory work with our partners at the **Skillman Foundation** in their effort to develop a multi year grantmaking strategy to strengthen youth organizing as a key lever for education justice in Detroit and across Michigan. In partnership with a local Youth Organizing Advisory Council, we created **Power and Potential: Youth Organizing in Southeast Michigan**, a regional landscape scan including insights from interviews and surveys with organizers and funders, case studies, and grounded recommendations for resourcing a stronger regional youth organizing field. This Fall, FCYO and Skillman staff joined together with a Youth Power Strategy Working Group composed of Michigan youth organizers and funders for a three-day learning tour in New York City, where we engaged directly with folks who have undertaken similar regional field-building efforts in order to learn from their experiences. The Strategy Working Group is now hard at work crafting a collaborative grantmaking strategy that we know is poised to not only infuse essential resources but also offer real strategic support, reinforcing the region's youth organizing field's ability to build and wield meaningful power. Definitely stay tuned - big things are on the horizon in Southeast Michigan.



Building a Community of Learning and Doing: The Resourcing to Win Framework

We knew that as soon as we released the Power to Win Framework, there'd be an exponential increase in mentions of power building in our conversations with our funder partners. That was part of the goal! But we also know that while the Power to Win Framework offers incredible guidance for understanding what makes for transformative power building in youth organizing, its target audience is the youth organizing field, not funders. That's why we began the grounded research phase this summer for a funder-facing complement to the Power to Win Framework that we're calling Resourcing to Win. Our goal with Resourcing to Win is to provide funders with a clear vision for where we're trying to go, to develop a real and shared understanding of power building, organizing, and the role of young people, to build watertight alignment around a strategic approach to resourcing, and to provide the support aligned funders need to organize both horizontally and upwards within philanthropy.



Building a Community of Learning and Doing: The Resourcing to Win Framework [cont'd]

Naturally, our first step in the process was to speak with funder partners to learn more about the current landscape of resourcing power building - including folks' current practices and their resource needs and growth edges. Through our conversations, we completed ten interviews and three focus groups, engaging over 25 institutions. We've talked to Presidents, Program Officers, and Associates - folks giving locally and nationally, from those with average grants of \$15k to those with endowments in the billions. While we're rounding the corner on surfacing themes, we're learning so much about the landscape of youth organizing philanthropy. This includes insights such as:

- How a foundation's proximity to organizers - either on foundation staff or boards, or in shared community with - yields a greater understanding of power building and stronger strategies
- How philanthropic staff capitalize on movement moments to catalyze change across their institutions
- How silos persist despite growing conversations about strategic alignment
- How an institution's age and size impacts its willingness to take risks and be the first to do something different
- And how funders committed to youth-led power building make sense of their role and seek support and solidarity from like-minded peers in the sector

Moving forward, we're continuing to digest what we hear while engaging critical questions to guide the development and release of the Resourcing to Win Framework in 2024. But you know that for FCYO, a Framework isn't enough - with theory has to come action. So, for all funders committed to building sectoral alignment around resourcing youth-led and intergenerational power building, most definitely stay on the lookout because the Resourcing to Win Praxis Community is coming your way!



Our Anchor: FCYO's Advisory Board

FCYO's experimental approach is not only driven by staff and the organizing groups we work with but also grounded by an Advisory Board that trusts our power building process. Composed of philanthropic leaders and organizing practitioners, the FCYO Advisory Board sharpens our strategies, champions our successes, and supports the organization's sustainability.

In 2023, we added two new organizing practitioners to the Advisory Board, elected three new Steering Committee members, and launched our Funder Organizing and Program Committees. The Board approved our FY24 budget, helped us map philanthropy, and provided insight on critical issues impacting the field of youth organizing. With the launch of the Power to Win Framework, we provided engaging sessions at our Board meeting to grapple with the concepts and discuss philanthropy's role in building a more just and sustainable world. We also celebrated! At our in-person meeting in August, we honored the Edward W. Hazen Foundation and Lori Bezahler's contributions to the FCYO community.

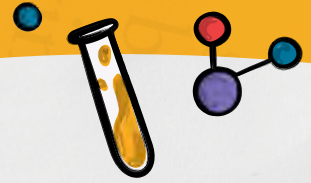
In 2024, we are eager for new members to join and contribute their insights to our strategic plan!

Coming together with the FCYO Advisory Board is always one of the highlights of the year. FCYO creates a unique space where funders and organizers are able to share space, learn from each other and develop a deeper understanding of each other's work. Learning about the honest successes, tests and lessons of other funders and organizers has sharpened The Skillman Foundation's strategy to be more aligned with the field."

- Lindsey Barrett, Groundbuilding Partnership Manager, The Skillman Foundation



Strengthening Those Core Muscles: FCYO's Organizational Development Work in 2023



After years of seeding and cultivating a sound and sustainable organization, FCYO continued to blossom in 2023. We're now working with more youth organizing groups than ever before and continuing to expand our funder community. In the previous sections, you caught a glimpse of our programmatic deep dives into assessment and experimentation, all aimed at fine-tuning our field and funder-facing efforts. But we know that our impact is only as powerful as our organization. That's why this past year, we dedicated that same energy to strengthening our team, sharpening our work, streamlining our operations, and shaping our long-term vision - to ensure we are as vibrant, responsive, and strong as we can be for the exciting work ahead.

Staff Retreats

Bringing people together is in FCYO's DNA - and that most certainly extends to our team as well. In 2023, FCYO held two in-person staff retreats designed to build unity, reaffirm our culture and practices, and level up our individual and collective capacities. While our January retreat focused on building alignment and shared analysis among our newly expanded staff, our August meeting was dedicated to bringing our full team into the Strategic Planning process, including assessing our conditions and identifying our driving questions in the process. At both retreats, we called on all kinds of tools, from fishbowls to puppet shows, to lift up new ideas and get us to new understandings (and obviously had some solid time built in for play). The camaraderie and energy of our collective is so palpable when we are together, and we really do carry these moments with us as we return home and resume our virtual work.



Meaningful Evaluation

At FCYO, we're very clear that if we ask our cohorts to conduct routine assessments of their work, our practices better mirror that standard. That's why we've built out a rigorous evaluation process that helps us measure our work against our goals and assess when, where, and how we show up most strongly - and where our growth edges are. This year's process involved organizational evaluation and work planning in the Spring, individual and team evaluations in the Fall, and individual development plans at the close of the calendar year. Rigorous? Yes. Important? Also yes! But it's not just about personal growth or organizational outcomes - it's a collective investment in each other's development, reinforcing our bonds and reminding us that our interdependence makes us stronger.

Political Development

It's far easier to navigate challenges when you're looking in the same direction and working from the same map. Honoring the value of a unified approach, FCYO embarked on a transformative political development journey in 2023 to foster a shared analysis among our staff. The process involved team members connecting their personal backgrounds to the broader historical and economic forces that shaped them, exploring articles tackling universal questions faced by political workers, and applying these insights to real scenarios within FCYO. Never satisfied with the banking model of learning, we experimented with creative modalities like pecha-kucha presentations and funny skits that promoted vulnerability and meaningful engagement across the staff. By the end of the journey, we noticed a real leap in our shared ability to collaboratively and effectively address the central challenges of our work. Ever a nerdy crew, FCYO staff immediately jumped into the application of our learnings into real-time scenarios and, as always, remain hungry for continued development.



Streamlining Our Operations

Any effective laboratory needs the right equipment, including clear policies and processes for its use [it's science!]. FCYO took big strides this past year in expanding and streamlining our operations to match our growing organization, revamping many of our organization's systems and processes to meet new needs. The focus was on fortifying our organizational foundation - experimenting with new personnel policies and operations processes and introducing new platforms like Google Workspace, ClickUp, and Salesforce coupled with [very patient] hands-on training from our Operations and Admin Team. In addition, our Finance Team played a crucial role in streamlining budget processes guided by their participation in a Financial Resilience program sponsored by our Ford BUILD grant that included in-person training, facilitated workshops, peer learning sessions, and one-on-one coaching. We're really grateful to have the super sharp, systems-oriented folks on our team who help us remain a well-run and adaptable shop.



Shaping Our Long Term Vision

Over the past few years, FCYO launched some truly transformative programming. From the Youth Power Lab to the GenPower Labs, the Power to Win Framework, to YO-CARE, we have been truly living and breathing the goals in our Theory of Change. Today, we are a capacity builder, a funder, a network, a research shop, and a place for collective learning, and each of our programs has been an essential stepping stone in our broader strategy for building power. But as we look toward our 25th (!) anniversary in 2025, we know we've only scratched the surface of what's possible for FCYO as an organization. And given that we're always lifting the need for organizers to assess their work against current time, place, and conditions as they build their long-term agenda....well, we know we've got to do the same.

That's why FCYO has set out on a new strategic planning journey. As part of the process, we're grappling with bold questions, assessing the current state of the field, and considering the most strategic role for FCYO in advancing a movement that holds the power to win. Naturally, we're calling on our core values of joy, rigor, and vulnerability as we work to land a new North Star [our long-term vision for society] and build the compass to guide our organization along the way [a strategic blueprint for our work].

We'll continue this work over the next six months with a public debut planned for 2025 [as part of a very jazzy lineup of events that year!]. Stay tuned for more updates along the way!



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