20 YEARS OF YOUTH POWER

The 2020 National Youth Organizing Field Scan

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FCYO AT 20

FUNDERS' COLLABORATIVE ON YOUTH ORGANIZING

funders' collaborative on youth organizing

Founded in 2000, the **Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO)** is a dynamic collective of funders motivated by social justice and youth organizing practitioners dedicated to advancing youth organizing as a strategy for youth development and social change. FCYO's mission is to bring funders and youth organizers together to ensure that young people have the resources, capacities and infrastructure they need to advance a more just and democratic society.

Our work is grounded in our close relationships with the youth organizing field and a commitment to meaningful partnerships between funders and youth organizers and organized around five goals:

- Move resources to grassroots youth organizing groups on the forefront of social justice to help them seize strategic opportunities and address critical needs.
- Increase capacity of youth organizing groups to build meaningful power and cultivate the strategic leadership and holistic development of young people.
- Connect youth organizing groups across issues and geography to share tools and lessons, increase alignment and sharpen strategies for building power.
- Organize funders to learn from one another, align funding strategies and expand resources for youth organizing.
- Build knowledge among funders, organizers, and the general public about the impact of youth organizing on broader movement building work and individual youth development.

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TO OUR COMMUNITY

In early 2020, FCYO laid out an ambitious plan to celebrate our 20th anniversary. Imagining an exciting series of events, we couldn't wait to bring the field together to acknowledge the extraordinary growth of youth organizing over the last two decades and articulate a bold vision for the role of young people in social justice movements to come. Little did we know that a global pandemic and a racial justice uprising would soon upend our world and mandate some major adjustments to our plans.

While we quickly shifted our focus to support young people dealing with the concurrent crises of 2020, we were pleased to continue our work with our research partners on the 2020 National Youth Organizing Field Scan series. Over the last twenty years, FCYO has published periodic field scans that have primarily served to highlight the key issues, opportunities, and challenges facing youth organizing at a given moment. While this series does capture some of the particularity of this historic moment in time, we decided to use our anniversary year to take a step back and take a bird's-eye view at the evolution of youth organizing over the last twenty years.

Over the last two decades, we have been privileged to support and work alongside young people organizing to address many of the most pressing issues of our time. Building on the long history of young people as the leading edge of social movements, we have seen the growth of a dynamic youth organizing field across the United States. We have witnessed young people play leading roles in mass movements including the immigrant rights movement, the Movement for Black Lives, and the climate justice movement. We have seen young people win critical victories for their communities including dramatic changes in school discipline and safety, closure of youth prisons, and new policy measures to support healthier communities. We have watched young leaders grow up and take on key leadership roles - sometimes in the same organizations they grew up in, sometimes as elected officials, and often as the unrecognized community leaders that are the true backbone of our movements.

We are awed and humbled by the powerful organizing of young people. And, as we listen to young leaders from across the country, we heed their words that more is needed if we are truly to address the crises we face in this moment. We are at a pivotal juncture. Our world can either move toward greater justice and equality or we can move toward repression, fear, and division. We believe that young people, especially young people of color, low-income young people, young women, and queer and trans young people can play an essential role in building the multigenerational movements we need to create a more just world. But, as young leaders continue to remind us, this will require a new level of strategy, alignment, and power.

With that in mind, we hope this series will serve as a useful resource for youth organizers, funders, and other allies as we seek to learn from our history in order to prepare for our future. We are grateful for the tremendous work of our research team as well as all the youth organizers who took the time to participate in this project. We are moved by the strength of our community, and we look forward to the future as we continue our work to support a new generation of young leaders at the forefront of powerful movements for justice and true democracy.

In solidarity,

Eric Braxton & Mónica Córdova
Co-Executive Directors
The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Since its inception 20 years ago, the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) has served to connect youth organizing practitioners, funders, and stakeholders to a wide range of resources designed to strengthen the field of youth organizing. As part of its major contributions, FCYO routinely publishes scans of the youth organizing field. FCYO Field Scans provide a wide-angled view of the youth organizing field at a particular moment in time, contextualized in the field's history and accompanied by a forecast of where the field's contributions might lead in coming years. Previous field scans were published in 2004, 2010, and 2013.

This year, the 2020 National Youth Organizing Field Scan comprises a series of four reports that together offer an in-depth look into a field that has grown significantly over the last two decades. This report – the largest and most comprehensive of the four – shares findings across several data sources and concludes by bringing FCYO leaders and researchers into conversation about the state of the youth organizing field. Its contents include discussions about the ways in which youth organizing groups navigate complex social and political landscapes to address pressing issues as well as the field's spectrum of engagement models, budgets, and staffing, all of which are important indicators of the field's growth and viability. Collectively, this report offers an understanding of how far the field has come in the past 20 years and a vision of where it is headed.

Accompanying this report are *Poised to Lead*, a quick and accessible snapshot of the youth organizing field in this moment; *Investing in the Power of Young People: 20 Years of Philanthropic Support for Youth Organizing*, a funder scan that highlights the maturity of the field of foundations supporting this work; and a third, yet-to-be-titled report offering a deeper look at youth organizing to improve the health of our nation.

Data from this report were collected through a year-long, mixed methods scan of the field of youth organizing, including a survey completed by 312 youth organizing groups as well as interviews and focus groups with 59 youth organizing leaders across 38 organizations. The survey was administered and analyzed by Dr. Veronica Terriquez with support from Jonathan Sanchez. Interviews and focus group data were collected and analyzed by the Research Hub for Youth Organizing at CU Boulder and led by Dr. Siomara Valladares and Dr. Michelle Renée Valladares with support from Matt Garcia, Kate Baca, and Dr. Ben Kirshner. Interviews with funders were collected and analyzed by Dr. Seema Shah at Comm|Veda Consulting. This report is a collaboration between FCYO and the University of Colorado Boulder; the analyses and writing in this report was led by the Research Hub in consultation with FCYO staff.

As a research team, we wish to acknowledge that it is impossible to determine how much of the increase in survey responses from groups over the years is the result of an actual increase in the number of organizations that exist in 2020 versus changes in data collection methodology or the growing credibility and networking power of FCYO as an organization. The idea that more organizations exist in more states and in better communication is backed up by interview and focus group data. Importantly, each field scan was methodologically different and led by different research teams. When we make comparisons across scans from different years, we make the best comparisons we can, but these comparisons are not perfect.

As authors, we are profoundly inspired and indebted to the youth organizing leaders who took precious time away from their organizing to respond to the survey and participate in our conversations. We humbly hope that we accurately convey the same level of urgency, commitment, and dedication demonstrated by youth leaders throughout this year.

INTRODUCTION

As we write this report, activism among young people of color is driving dramatic social change across the United States. Some is highly visible, as in the mass demonstrations of last summer calling for an end to police violence and justice for Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many other Black victims. Much of it, however, is behind the scenes, as youth organizers continue the slow and patient work of building relationships in communities and developing young people as leaders for this moment and for the future to come. Youth-led justice movements have responded to a continued onslaught of civil and human rights abuses, with 2020 catalyzing a new generation of activists. Such a significant year makes it especially important to consider the state of youth organizing as a whole, to examine the field's reach and celebrate wins, and to identify challenges facing the field as it moves forward.

Drawing on data from a national survey completed by 312 youth organizing groups, interviews and focus groups with youth organizers, and a review of published studies, the 2020 National Youth Organizing Field Scan shows a maturing youth organizing field poised to shape the next decade of progressive and human rights struggles in the United States.

> *Overall, the work of youth organizers is growing in size and power. Youth organizers are developing innovative strategies for building power across intersecting communities and issues. They are leading public movements for racial justice, immigrant rights, climate justice, gun control, and economic reform, among many others. The youth organizing field is maturing by engaging in the long-term work of building an active and engaged base of young people in low-income and working-class communities of color, developing a new generation of civic and political leaders, advancing the development and well-being of themselves and their communities, and working to expand their capacity and resources.*

We ground this report in a description of how the youth organizing field is making sense of the unique political moment of 2019-2020 – the time across which our data was collected. The current generation of youth organizers is more racially and ethnically diverse than any other generation: 39% of Millennials and 48% of Generation Z identify as people of color.[1] Amidst significant demographic shifts, youth organizers are also coming of age and into power in a moment of intersecting and predictable crises defined by unprecedented political polarization.[2] Data collection began in 2019 at which time there were continued national protests and direct actions against ICE's separation and detention of immigrant families, fueled by images of children and adults jailed in makeshift cages by the US government. By March of 2019, youth in the United States joined millions of young people around the world in a global strike for climate justice. The Black Lives Matter movement mobilized in immediate response to the March 13, 2020 murder of Breonna Taylor in Louisville and the May 25, 2020 murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by armed

police. These protests led to a national call for racial reckoning, including a specific policy call from young leaders of color to divest in police and invest in supportive resources like counseling and health care in communities and schools.

Our data shows that young people organizing for social justice have the potential to exercise leadership within the context of these multiple economic, health, education, and racial crises toward a more just and equitable society.

And, of course, 2020 was defined by the COVID-19 pandemic. Low-income people and people of color are disproportionately infected and killed by the virus. Similarly, the economic recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating inequalities. Young people in this study discuss unemployment, lack of health care, food and housing insecurity, the disappearance of childcare, and inadequate access to the computers and Wi-Fi needed to participate in home learning as some of the many COVID-related concerns overwhelming their communities. At the same time, we witnessed a polarized national election with record voter turnout and a white supremacist-fueled siege on the US Capitol.

The size and scope of the crises of this era are only matched by the will of the youth organizing field. Our data shows that young people organizing for social justice have the potential to exercise leadership within the context of these multiple economic, health, education, and racial crises toward a more just and equitable society. We arrive at this conclusion not only through an analysis of this moment but by examining the full arc of youth organizing over the last quarter of a century. We begin this report with a historical reflection of youth organizing from 1995-2019 in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, we provide a portrait of the youth organizing field in 2020, including the demographics, size, and geographic reach of the field. In Chapter 3, we explore the field's vision for the future of youth organizing and strategies for realizing this vision.

DEFINING YOUTH ORGANIZING

The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing offers the following definition of youth organizing:

Grounded in racial, gender, and economic justice, youth organizing is the process of engaging young people in building power for systemic change while supporting their individual and collective development.

While youth organizing can take many forms, the field is guided by four key goals:

Engage youth most impacted by injustice and systemic oppression

- Center the lived experiences of injustice and oppression
- Include and celebrate diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds
- Create youth-affirming environments

Support the leadership and holistic development of young people

- Offer young people meaningful opportunities for leadership and decision making
- Support the development of concrete leadership and organizing skills
- Promote healthy social emotional and identity development
- Develop critical consciousness of sociopolitical conditions

Strengthen intergenerational and intersectional movements

- Recognize young people as part of multiple communities and constituencies
- Address the overlapping issues impacting young people and their communities
- Value youth leadership and youth/adult partnerships
- Support young people in catalyzing intergenerational movements
- Create pathways for lifelong civic engagement and social justice leadership

Shift power dynamics to create systemic change

- Develop strategy by analyzing issues and assessing political conditions
- Build power through base building, strategic alliances, and shifting public narratives
- Engage young people in collective action to advance policy and influence decision makers
- Achieve systemic changes at the local, state, and national level that benefit whole communities

CHAPTER 1:

FROM EMPOWERMENT TO POWER-BUILDING: A RECENT HISTORY OF YOUTH ORGANIZING IN THE UNITED STATES

The leadership of young people of color in social change in the United States has deep historical roots. From the rise of labor organizing, women's suffrage, and the abolition of slavery in the 19th Century, to the Civil Rights Movement, American Indian Movement, Chicano Rights Movements, Asian-American Movements, and feminist movements of the 20th century, young people have pushed and sustained progressive social change. The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st saw this youth leadership transform into a surge of youth organizing and activism across issues of criminal justice, public transportation, immigrant rights, affirmative action, and school funding.

Although US-based youth organizing has its roots in this deep historical arc, its resurgence in the 1990s brought a newfound political consciousness and activism among youth of color and trans and queer youth.[3] In California, propositions aimed at ending affirmative action, targeting immigrants, and further criminalizing youth of color motivated masses of young people to develop their political analysis, join together, and engage the public sphere. Around the same time, high school students in cities such as New York and Philadelphia called attention to inequities in education and the persistent racialization of unequal funding for public schools. Young leaders, sometimes independently and sometimes with adult allies, organized groups such as Asian and Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership and Youth Together in Oakland, the Philadelphia Student Union in Philadelphia, and Southwest Organizing Project in Albuquerque that centered the experiences of youth and fought back against the multiple impacts of the long-standing bipartisan "war on drugs." The founding of FCYO in 2000 signaled the beginning of a shift from regional activism to an effort to grow a new field that could nurture grassroots social justice organizations and center the values and interests of youth of color, low-income youth, girls, and queer and trans youth.

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The past twenty years were a complex era for youth organizing characterized by difficult questions and conflicting interests. Just as youth organizers built dense networks and sought to create sustainable movement-building strategies, they had to contend with a neoliberal political economy that forced tough choices about strategy and funding. In this ongoing context,

youth organizers routinely faced dilemmas over how to sustain their organizations: should they accept funding from private philanthropy – funding that enables them to pay organizers, rent meeting spaces, and exchange ideas with other youth activists – even if it could mean becoming constrained by a funder's agenda? Moreover, as increasing numbers of youth of color organized to challenge and dismantle zero tolerance discipline policies and police in schools, new predicaments emerged: should organizing groups agree to implement restorative justice programs when no one else will? Youth fight for community schools but should they be asked to help design and sustain them? Is there a tradeoff between primarily focusing on a single campaign versus working in coalition on multiple campaigns? The persistent neoliberal context in which youth organizing operates creates a series of double binds that pose challenges for youth organizers but also the opportunity for ingenuity and creativity.

Looking back from the vantage point of 2021, just weeks after an election where young progressive organizers of color were instrumental in voting out Donald Trump in states like Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Arizona, it is tempting to impose a "victory narrative" about the political agency and power of young people. This is particularly tempting with the increasing proximity of 2044, when people of color will be a majority in the United States.[4] In many ways this *is* a story of accomplishment and progress – youth organizers are growing increasingly ambitious in their demands, joining together to build national and international coalitions, and boasting political achievements related to immigrant rights, zero tolerance school policies, and recognition of queer and trans rights.

New ideas are spurring promising adaptations in organizing and movement-building as we head into the third decade of the 21st century. The following section describes these trends by drawing on a combination of published articles, interviews and focus groups with youth organizers, and surveys of youth organizing groups.

THE 1990S: A RESURGENCE OF ACTIVISM BY YOUTH OF COLOR

Youth activism in the 1990s was sparked by racist policy changes in the 1980s and early 1990s that targeted young people of color.[5] Looking back at that time, seasoned organizers reflect on the experience of being targeted and seeing how, as one organizer put it, "Poor kids of color in particular were impacted the most." These policies targeted multiple communities and in doing so spurred youth organizers to action. One organizer recalls, "Youth organizing emerged around these multiple attacks against Black and Brown women and immigrants, queer and trans folks."

During this time, youth organizing groups took shape across the United States, perhaps most notably on the West Coast following a series of state referenda that affected poor and low-income youth of color and immigrant youth. The Bay Area, in particular, became a vibrant space for activism, such as when thousands of youth participated in walkouts in the late 1990s to protest the underfunding of education and the state's overinvestment in incarceration. Organizers in Northeast cities, notably New York and Philadelphia, formed new coalitions to pressure elected policymakers to adopt education policies demanded

by their communities, such as more inclusive language policies and more equitable funding. This generation of youth activism also built on the power and legacy of the generations that came before. For example, in the West and Southwest, youth activists learned directly from leaders of the earlier Chicano Rights Movement. Likewise, youth in the Northeast, South, and Midwest reached out to leaders of the Civil Rights Movement for teaching and inspiration. Similarly, youth across Native American Nations learned directly from the traditions and activism of their elders.

Although the field of youth organizing built on and learned from prior movements, it also took on new flavors that resonated with contemporary youth and politicized their generational identity.

Together, this resurgent wave of organizing drew on multiple traditions and cultural practices, including (but not limited to) community organizing, civil rights movement-building, and hip-hop culture.[6] It represented both continuity with earlier generations of organizers and new approaches anchored in youth cultural practices. For example, a recent history of California youth of color activism reports how accomplished movement leaders from the 1960s and 70s, such as Dolores Huerta, Pam Tau Lee, Millie Cleveland, and Anthony Thigpen played important behind-the-scenes roles mentoring and training youth of color.[7] Youth learned from experienced organizers about approaches to build a base of organized young people and create power in numbers.

Although the field of youth organizing built on and learned from prior movements, it also took on new flavors that resonated with contemporary youth and politicized their generational identity. Youth in the 1990s were coming of age in a strange moment when the Democratic Party was embracing neoliberal economic policies and "zero tolerance" tough on crime strategies that had devastating effects on low-income minoritized communities.[8] Youth organizers from that time describe how they and their peers intentionally did not reproduce the same community organizing methods or 1960s slogans.[9] Unlike Alinsky-ite organizations, youth organizing groups tended to be led by young people of color and did not initially belong to national networks. Unlike the Civil Rights Movement, which confronted explicit and legalized racial apartheid, white supremacist policies and practices of the 1990s were often disguised by color-blind discourses, or what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva famously called "racism without racists."[10] As a result, youth organizing groups often made political education central to their work in order to reveal political oppression embedded in race-neutral policy. Youth organizers developed creative strategies to foster anti-racist critical consciousness in the Freirean tradition, including political education about race, class, and gender oppression, the history of civil rights movements, the effect of neoliberal education policies on their public-school funding, and racist structures that propped up the war on drugs.[11]

In addition to the emphasis on political education, youth organizers also drew on hip hop cultural practices to bring young people together and engage them in the work of organizing and political analysis.[12] Some groups offered after-school programs in hip hop music-making or other forms of artistic expression to draw in young people who might not otherwise think of themselves as political. In New York City, the birthplace of hip hop in the Bronx, youth were attracted to hip hop's messages of political consciousness and social justice.[13]

Many early formations placed strong priority on youth-led organizing.[14] The social category of youth offered a political identity that linked people across a range of other social identities, including race, ethnicity, national origin, and gender and sexuality. Organizing groups seeking to build base or represent youth built credibility by being led by youth.[a] Organizing groups drew on leadership development strategies that overlapped with youth development practices that were also on the rise in the 1990s. This alliance with positive youth development would bring benefits and constraints, which we discuss next.

THE 2000S: A NATIONAL FIELD IS FORMED

During the early 2000s, youth organizing networks formalized and philanthropic support increased. At the beginning of the decade, around the time FCYO formed in 2000, youth activists around the country were beginning to focus on field-building and fundraising to support the sustainability and impact of their work. Initial movements that began in response to racist and xenophobic policies transformed into 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with paid staff who could sustain the patient work of relationship-building and base-building with young people in low-income communities of color. Youth organizers engaged foundations and donors by writing grants and leveraging the 501(c)(3) model, including strategically appealing to youth development funders who saw its value to engage marginalized and minoritized youth in leadership and civic engagement.[15] The establishment of a nonprofit infrastructure, along with learning exchanges and intermediary organizations like FCYO, made it possible for youth organizers to be more intentional about building leadership pathways. Groups also brokered relationships among organizations broadly affiliated with social justice movements, such that alumni from one group could find paid work or career opportunities in other national organizations. The effort to create leadership pathways continues to be a priority for youth organizing networks.

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A second major change of the 2000s was the growth of cell phone use, the internet, and digital technology. Youth organizing gained ground just as social media was in the ascendance, typified by YouTube (founded in 2005), Facebook (opened to the public in 2006), and Twitter (2006). Despite the digital divide,[b] youth organizers were able to benefit from a new wealth of information and ease of communication via mobile phones. Mobile phones enhanced an organizer's ability to quickly mobilize young people just as the internet helped them communicate at a national scale and social media spaces created new networking opportunities.

a Youth organizers identified this key point in the early convenings that lead to the creation of FCYO. For direct examples see: https://fcyo.org/resources/strategies-for-building-power-and-youth-leadership-fcyo-origins-part-1n and https://fcyo.org/resources/1998-funder-retreat-fcyo-origins-part-2.

As a social justice infrastructure for youth organizing and activism took root, the field of youth organizing and social movements for education justice and immigration justice began to bear fruit. The Williams Case in California offers an example of a major statutory victory stemming from young people's participation in coalitions for education justice. The case had several outcomes, including requiring the California Department of Education to annually update school report cards, increase public oversight, and allocate more than $1 billion in education spending, which increased access to quality facilities and curriculum materials for students across California. Youth organized and worked in coalitions with each other, universities, and national entities such as the ACLU to move beyond local issues to influence state-level policy, demonstrating the power of youth organizing to spur substantive legal changes. Similar examples exist around the nation.

Young people's roles in immigration justice organizing also took off in the first decade of the 2000s as young people shifted from local organizing to state, regional, and national movements.[16] For example, in 2007 young people engaged in national organizing for the Dream Act, orchestrating student walkouts, massive protests, congressional testimony, and the passage of local, regional, and state policies. They made innovative and successful use of social media to influence the narratives and public discourse away from using words like "illegal" toward "undocumented and unafraid" and "Dreamers." Although not accomplishing all of their goals for federal legislation, immigrant youth successfully mobilized masses of young people – and often their families – to join a social movement for immigration justice and change the national narrative about American identity, which continues to shape politics and culture today.[17]

b The digital divide is the gap between those who have capital and knowledge to access technology to their greatest advantage and those who experience structural, social, and political barriers in doing so. For an overview of the digital divide and its many dimensions see http://www.digitaldividecouncil.com/what-is-the-digital-divide/

The policy victories and growing power for youth of color in the early 2000s demonstrate the increasing sophistication of youth-led organizing. But these victories also brought with them challenges.

The policy victories and growing power for youth of color in the early 2000s demonstrate the increasing sophistication of youth-led organizing. But these victories also brought with them challenges. According to one seasoned organizer, speaking about the state of the economy after the Great Recession, "We taught young people to analyze capitalism and some organizing skills, but they couldn't get a job or go to school." Another key challenge came as youth organizers reflected on their experiences working for social justice and political change in a "space where neoliberalism is all [they've] ever experienced." Organizers questioned themselves, their funding, and what they could accomplish. The influential 2007 publication *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*[18] critiqued the nonprofit industrial complex in ways that resonated with organizers. As one seasoned organizer reflects, there was "a set of youth organizing groups that really took that critique of the nonprofit industrial complex really seriously and were like, 'Yeah, screw this. We don't want to do this anymore' and several organizations closed within the year. They all shut down and disappeared." To add to the challenge, those groups relying on foundations reported a real decline in philanthropic funding.[19] The decrease of support for organizing by foundations, combined with the Great Recession of 2008, created economic precarity that threatened the field of youth organizing.

2010–2020: A RENEWED FOCUS ON BUILDING POWER

The 2010s brought a new generation of youth organizers to the field focused on building political power by adding voter engagement and coalition building to their work. Many experienced youth organizing groups started in the 1990s or early 2000s grew and evolved into multigenerational movements such as the Movement for Black Lives, the Climate Change Movement, the new Red Power Movement, and the Police-Free Schools Movement. Youth also held clear leadership roles in specific uprisings such as the Never Again March after the Parkland High School shooting, the protests against police killings of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the international Climate Strikes in 2019.

In the 2010s, the broader undocumented youth movement turned to fighting deportations and advocating for local and state immigrant rights reform. They continued to build their base of young people across the United States and sharpened their "undocumented and unafraid" messaging, challenging tropes of the "good immigrant" central to mainstream adult-led immigration policy work. According to an experienced organizer who came up in the movement, "I feel like in 2010, 2011 we were just starting to pretty much discover what youth organizing was." That same organizer recognizes that by 2014, "Young people were like, 'Yeah, this is possible. We can definitely do policy change. We can definitely advocate, and we can do it with these few or a couple organizations we have in [our county].'"

Related to this greater focus on political power is the increasing embrace of social movement strategies, including multigenerational organizing and coalitions. Youth organizers worked more in coalition than ever before during this decade. Technologies that first emerged in the 2000s continued to play vital roles in spreading social and political awareness of injustices, organizing rapid response walkouts, and creating spaces for solidarity building and identity development among youth. Moreover, several new coalitions, including with adult community groups and labor unions, gained greater strength during this time, including multigenerational formations such as Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools and Journey for Justice, and youth coalitions such as Alliance for Education Justice, United We Dream, and Youth Everywhere Rising and Resisting. The development of both youth-led and multigenerational coalitions and alliances is now a key element of youth organizers' repertoire as they raise their sights from empowerment to power.

The field of youth organizing has been on a powerful journey over the last quarter century. Each generation of youth in low-income communities of color from the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s has built on a long legacy of activism and deep accumulated knowledge while also utilizing new tools and strategies to respond to the unique challenges of their own political moment. All of this work is led by a youth organizing field that is growing in size, geographic reach, and depth. With this historical grounding in place, we now turn from the broader context of the field of youth organizing to a portrait of present-day youth organizing.

A CLOSER LOOK

THE STRUGGLE TO CREATE JUST SCHOOLS FOR ALL: FROM ENDING THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE TO POLICE FREE SCHOOLS

Youth-led campaigns to address school pushout, the school to prison pipeline, police in schools, and the disproportionate effects of school discipline policies on students of color and students with disabilities serve to illustrate the growing power and impact of the youth organizing field. These campaigns find their roots in public resistance to the wave of policies in the 1990s criminalizing students of color. Those same policies expanded the criminal consequences for student behavior at school and increased the prevalence of surveillance and security measures, including increasing the number of school resource officers on school campuses.[20] A series of federal laws such as the 1994 U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services program (COPS) and the 1994 Guns Free Schools Act solidified a trend towards zero tolerance policing of students.[21] By the early 2000s, youth, parents, and communities organized to confront these changes, specifically the growing criminalization of students of color in school systems and the related increase in police presence in schools.[22]

District by district, youth organizing groups and their intergenerational allies successfully won policies to shift zero tolerance policies into restorative justice policies.

Several academic studies document the evolution of these campaigns and the centrality of the youth organizing field in leading this work at the local and national levels.[23] Individual organizations in several cities such as CADRE in Los Angeles, Padres y Jóvenes Unidos in Denver, Communities United in Chicago, the Urban Youth Collaborative in New York, and Power U Center for Social Change in Miami advanced campaigns to shift district-level policies away from zero tolerance and toward restorative justice. At the same time, these organizations were building strategic alliances through national networks such as Dignity in Schools and the Alliance for Education Justice to share lessons across cities, draft model legislation, collect data on discipline disparities, and build collective power. Critical resources from funders such as Atlantic Philanthropies, the Communities for Just Schools Fund, and the Hazen Foundation supported these organizations to continue both their local and national work.

As a result, individual organizations deeply rooted in local contexts engaged in powerful national networks supported by consistent funding, enabling a growth in infrastructure and base alongside a sharpening of their strategy. District by district, youth organizing groups and their intergenerational allies successfully won policies to shift zero tolerance policies into restorative justice policies. Across the field, organizations used the passage of these policies as a doorway into policies and legislation that would shift funding and school resources toward education justice. For example, one interviewee describes

"dismantling of the school to prison pipeline so that funds are going towards more of the interventions, supports, holistic, restorative approaches as opposed to punitive policing, criminalization of our young people." Some organizations also expanded their work from policy advocacy to engaging as a district partner in monitoring the equitable implementation of these policies.

The youth organizing field also worked collaboratively to ensure that lessons learned from the implementation of local restorative justice policies were included in the United States Department of Education's federal school discipline guidance in 2014. This extended the reach of local youth organizing policy wins to new states and territories. Unfortunately, this guidance was later rescinded by the Trump administration in 2018. In response, the youth organizing field continued the campaign to hold existing local and state level guidance in place despite the shifting federal context.

In the 2020 Field Scan, many organizations share that they further expanded their local and state work during this time by advancing new campaigns to remove police from public schools and expand school wellness and mental health resources. Organizations responding to the 2020 survey report leading campaigns across the following related areas:

Improve school climate and address school discipline policies and bullying **42%**

Expand mental health issues more generally **27%**

Improve school wellness or increase school-based health services **34%**

Improve juvenile justice or reduce incarceration **24%**

Notably, the relationship between education systems and the prison industrial complex is the most commonly referenced campaign issue across the 2020 focus groups and interviews. This campaign work goes well beyond the restorative justice policies just discussed. Youth organizers explain that police violence against people of color in their communities continues to negatively impact their opportunities to learn in school.

> *"Every day you see this regularly in your life…you watch Black men and women, and folks of color… getting shot or beaten by the police on the news. So, you're in your school hallway, walking with an officer behind you… and then you're supposed to go sit in a classroom and focus and learn."*

Other organizers stress that being criminalized in school continues to impact the long-term opportunities for youth.

> *"People do this [work] because it's literally their lives. And if they don't do this, it's going to affect them in the long run… If I'm undocumented, that will ruin me getting citizenship later on… If I'm a Black student, or a Latinx student, I will end up in prison later on."*

Interviewed youth organizers explain that the youth organizing field is expanding this area of work from campaigns to change school level discipline practices towards district, state, and federal level campaigns to defund all government programs that criminalize youth and reallocate those funds to wraparound supports for low-income communities of color. One organizer details their work surveying students on the question "The city public school district spends more than 10 million dollars on school policing. What would you do with those 10 million if it were not being spent on school policing?" The resounding response: "More resources for after-school programs, or mental health resources" led the organization to develop a Counselors Not Cops campaign demanding "a justice reimbursement…divesting the money from school policing completely and putting that money to more mental health resources for students in school." Similar work is happening all over the nation.

Between speaking out at school board meetings, creating online petitions, holding community forums, and leading protests in their communities, it is the persistent efforts of Black, Latinx, and API youth that laid the foundation for recent historic wins in the national fight for police free schools. Following 2020's student-led protests and petitions, school districts in Milwaukee, Oakland, Phoenix, Denver, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Madison, Charlottesville, Seattle, Sacramento, and Portland have cancelled their contracts with police. As of August 2020, fueled partially by the movement for racial reckoning, 30 school districts passed resolutions defunding school policing.[24] While George Floyd's murder at the hands of police elevated the conversation about school resource officers to a national platform, it was the decades of youth organizing that have made these victories possible.

This work is far from over. Ensuring sustainable change through policies like restorative justice is complex and hard long-term work.[25] But it is a remarkable achievement that over 25 years, the youth organizing field has led the nation in shifting ideas, policies, and practices from disproportionality disciplining and criminalizing youth of color and youth with disabilities to creating school climates and cultures that are diverse, healthy, and supportive.

CHAPTER 2: PORTRAIT OF THE YOUTH ORGANIZING FIELD IN THIS MOMENT

In Chapter 2, we turn from the historical legacy of youth organizing to the youth organizing field in this moment. We begin with a reflection on how the field of youth organizing is simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the current context. We then delve into the specifics of the field itself, describing the demographics of movement leaders and the geographic breadth of the field. We conclude with an analysis of the field's maturation and the funding sector's response to this growth.

THE 2020 CONTEXT

To say that the youth organizing field is working in an unprecedented and historic time is an oversimplification of the intensity of the current social and political moment. During the course of the 2020 Field Scan, the youth organizing field co-led a push for racial reckoning in schools and communities,[26] helped ensure record voter turnout and progressive wins in a contentious election year,[27] and played a key role in ameliorating the inequities in systems of public health, education, and the economy, which were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These youth-led actions and wins are visible in headlines and social media feeds around the country. The work of youth organizers is characterized by constant challenge, contention, and change, and is redefining this period in time. Below, the words of one organizer summarize both the immense challenge and possibility of this moment.

> *"I really do think that the pandemic has…not only exposed some of these larger forces and histories… but it allows for great change to happen…Thinking about the social, economic, political radical changes that are going to be coming out of this, out of this storm…I think how we act in this moment is going to inform what's possible after this moment."*

There is already evidence of significant change coming from current organizing efforts led by youth and their allies. Here we offer some highlights.

- During the summer of 2020, youth organizers joined 15-26 million people to create the largest protest in American history. The New York Times estimates that on just a single day, June 6, 2020, half a million people joined protests against racial violence and police killings of Black people in over 550 places.[28]
- Youth organizers worked in regional and statewide coalitions to connect the movement for racial reckoning to their decades of work to transform school policing practices. As of July 2020, over 28 different resolutions to decrease the presence of police and school resource officers in schools were passed in local governments across the country.[29]
- Many youth organizing groups focused their work on increasing voter turnout for youth and the broader public during the 2020 elections cycle. This work helped lead to historic results: "Presidential election turnout among young people ages 18-29 reached 52-55%, significantly higher than the 45-48% turnout of 2016"[30] and "The 2020 presidential election set a participation record, with more than 157 million people casting their ballots. Turnout increased in every state and in 98 percent of the nation's counties."[31]
- Youth organizing groups are at the forefront of helping their communities and the nation address the inequities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As one small example, FCYO launched an emergency grant fund that supported organizations that had to quickly pivot to serving youth in a rapidly changing environment. During virtual forums hosted by FCYO and partners, funded organizations shared information about how they were fighting for health care access and food security, stopping evictions, and ensuring access to the hardware and bandwidth needed to participate in home learning.

All of this work is led by a youth organizing field that is growing in numbers, geographic reach, and depth. We now turn to the field itself.

A EXPANDING NATIONAL FIELD

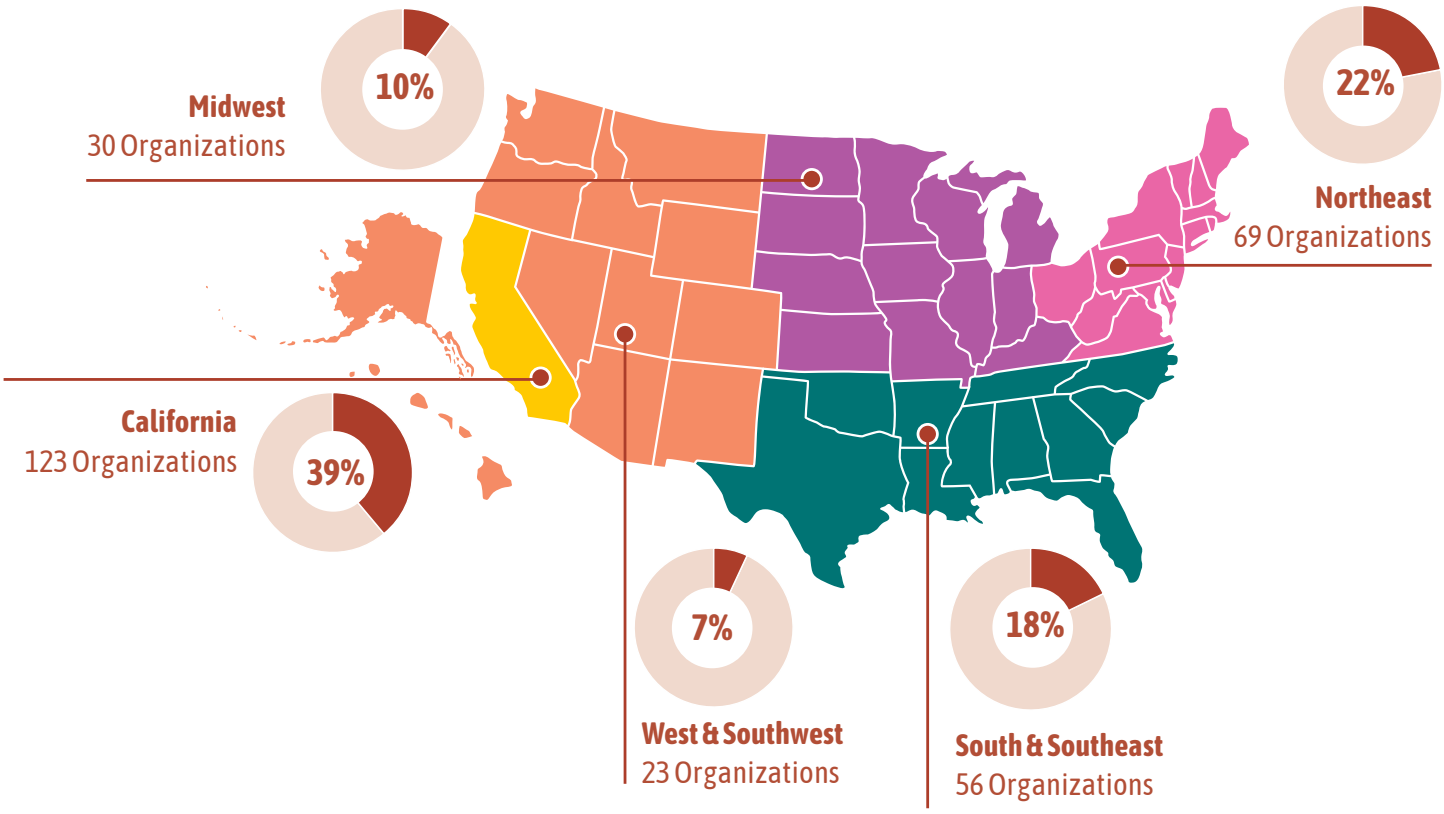
Youth organizing groups can be found across the United States: organizations based in 36 states are represented in this study. In the 2020 Field Scan, 312 organizations responded, which is more than double the number of groups that responded in 2010 (137 organizations). This increase in the number of groups responding to the Field Scan suggests that there may be a rise in the number of youth organizations in many states. In 2010, only six states had responses from more than five youth organizing groups. This number of states more than doubled by 2020, with more than five groups responding from 13 different states. The field's expansion is even more evident when considered regionally. The 2020 Field Scan identifies 56 organizations in the Southern states; only 13 organizations were identified in the 2010 Field Scan. Interview data suggests the expansion of existing youth organizing groups is a likely reflection of organizations'

efforts in the South to build larger bases of young people and reinforce efforts to strengthen ties between generations of organizers (e.g. intergenerational organizing in alliance with youth organizing).

California alone is home to 39% of the organizations identified in this Field Scan. We understand the high number of organizations in California in three ways. First, California has by far the largest population of any state in the US; second, there is a long history of both youth organizing and philanthropic support for youth organizing in California; and third, the survey team is based in California and was able to leverage their relationships to encourage higher response rates.

In 2010, the Field Scan included a recommendation for significant investment in rural areas that face unique challenges in terms of transportation, mobilizing a large base, and tackling less centralized issues. While these challenges have not disappeared, the 2020 data show an increase in participating youth organizing groups from rural regions. More organizations in predominantly rural states (Alabama, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, Ohio, South Carolina, and South Dakota) responded to the survey than in previous years. Interview data also point to an increased focus in rural organizing in states like California and New York.

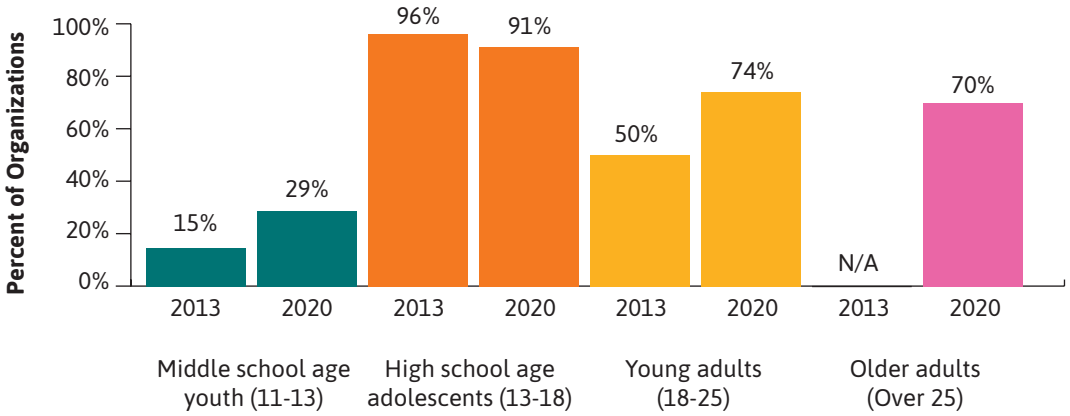
FCYO SURVEY OF THE YOUTH ORGANIZING LANDSCAPE



Region	Percentage of Respondents	Total n	Breakdown of Groups by State
California	39%	123	123
West and Southwest	7%	23	Arizona (3), Colorado (3), Idaho (1), Montana (2), New Mexico (6), Oregon (3), Washington (5)
Midwest	10%	30	Illinois (13), Iowa (1), Kansas (1), Michigan (5), Minnesota (3), Ohio (4), South Dakota (2), Wisconsin (1)
South	18%	56	Alabama (2), District of Columbia (14), Florida (6), Georgia (4), Kentucky (2), Louisiana (4), Maryland (1), Mississippi (5), North Carolina (7), South Carolina (1), Tennessee (3), Texas (4), Virginia (2), West Virginia (1)
Northeast	22%	69	Connecticut (10), Maine (2), Massachusetts (12), New Hampshire (3), New Jersey (1), New York (30), Pennsylvania (8), Rhode Island (3)
Multi-State	4%	11	11 Groups
Total	100%	312	

YOUTH ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS

As in previous years, the core leadership of the vast majority of responding youth organizing groups include high school age adolescents. Since FCYO first asked about the age of youth leaders seven years ago, there is a noticeable increase in the percent of organizations with middle school leaders (ages 11-13) and young adult leaders (18-25).



This year, we added a new question about "older adults" to the survey and learned that 70% of youth organizing groups engage adults as leaders in the work. In other words, 70% of the youth organizing groups surveyed in 2020 are intergenerational. This may be a result of organizations adding adult programming to create a retention pipeline. In interviews, organizers discuss broadening their organizations and networks as an intentional strategy.

> *"Over the years, [our organization] started as a youth organizing organization, and then built our intergenerational organizing models. So, we also organize with parents and more recently we have started developing a pipeline for young adult programs."*

Youth organizers are interested in building a leadership pipeline to retain powerful leaders in the field. Several interviewees are themselves in their 30s and have engaged in the field of youth organizing for 15 years or more. Throughout the interviews, we heard stories of organizers entering the field as early as high school and finding a way to continue, either by remaining in their initial organization or by seeking leadership opportunities in the broader field. Some former youth leaders have found their way to paid staff positions as their organizations continue to grow.

While it is interesting to reflect on the age of the people leading the field of youth organizing, it is critical to remember that age is really only a small part of the equation. As one interviewee explains, youth organizing is more about centering young people in society and creating lifelong leaders.

> *"Young people have always been at the forefront of movements and of social change. Now, more than ever, young people [are] part of deciding the problems and solutions for themselves, especially [when] young people are most impacted. It just makes the most sense because it's about creating someone who has a lifelong commitment to social justice and to equity."*

INTERSECTIONALITY: UNDERSTANDING WHO YOUTH ORGANIZERS ARE & WHAT THEY DO

This year, we aimed to include demographic data in our survey that would allow for self-identification among multiple identities. We included traditional categories (gender, ethnicity, and race), and also new survey categories including currently or formerly incarcerated, foster youth, youth experiencing homelessness, English learners, refugees, and immigrants. Such categories are not always available on surveys for self-identification but are important to include because they reflect valuable perspectives in the work of organizing and justice. Including these options revealed that youth organizing leadership represents a variety of intersectional identities.

When compared to previous FCYO Field Scans, two shifts stand out: The representation of queer and trans youth within core leadership has almost doubled from 39% in 2010 to 75% in 2020 and the representation of youth leaders of color has increased from 76% in 2010 to 99% in 2020.

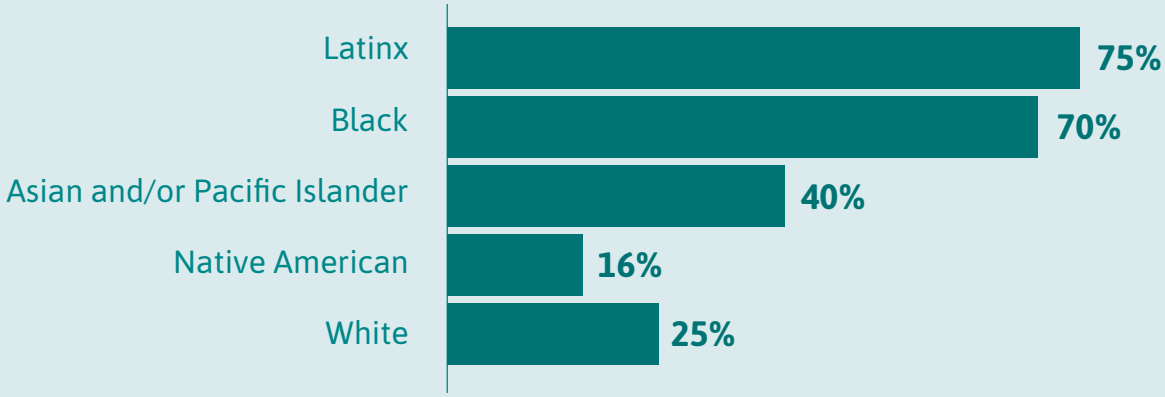
Youth organizers also use the term "intersectional" to explain how organizations link their work across various issue areas.[32] For example, youth organizing for environmental justice can simultaneously address racial justice, health, pollution, and food access as interrelated priorities under one campaign.

MATURING ORGANIZATIONS IN A MATURING FIELD

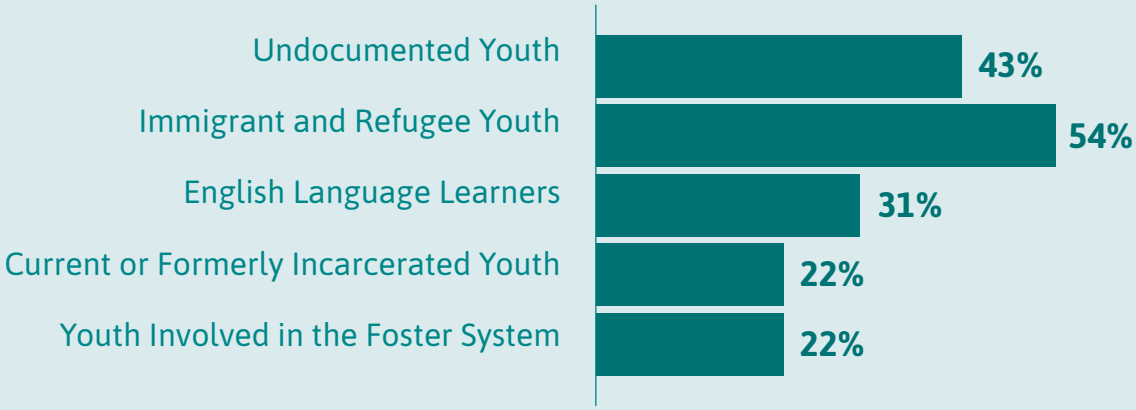
Almost one-third of the organizations that participated in the 2020 Field Scan were founded in the early 2000s, with the median age of the organizations at approximately 12 years. This means that these organizations were founded in 2008: these are mature organizations. Other important indicators of maturing organizations and a maturing field include good resource access and allocation both in terms of capital and people (e.g., paid staff, part-time and full-time staff, and funding support). We discuss these indicators at greater length in Chapter 3.

CORE LEADERS IN YOUTH ORGANIZING

What racial/ethnic groups are significantly represented among your core youth leadership?



Which populations make up a significant portion of your core youth leaders?



34% of surveyed groups report transgender youth are among their core youth leaders in their organization

49% of surveyed groups report the majority of their core youth leadership are young women & girls (cisgender and transgender)

54% of surveyed groups report that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer youth are significantly represented among their core youth leaders

CAMPAIGNS[c]

Today's youth organizing field continues to build on a long legacy of supporting and leading movements, campaigns, and public actions that seek to create justice and equity. This section describes the major trends in the policy-focused aspects of youth organizing, focusing specifically on the seven years since FCYO's 2013 Field Scan.

Campaign Issue Area	Primary Issue	Shared Issue
Criminal Justice	30%	46%
Education	61%	29%
Employment	13%	48%
Environment	24%	39%
Gender/LGBTQ	26%	46%
Health	36%	36%
Housing	21%	42%
Immigration	33%	44%
Native Rights	7%	38%
Systems Reforms	51%	28%
Violence Prevention/Antimilitarism	21%	40%
Voting	37%	38%

The top four primary issues include education, systems reforms,[d] health, and voting, in order of highest priority. There is a second group of primary issues that about one quarter to one third of the groups are working on – these include immigration, criminal justice, gender/ LGBTQ, and environment. In contrast, the top four shared issues include criminal justice, employment, gender/LGBTQ, and immigration issues in order of highest shared priority. It is notable that none of the top four shared issues overlap with the top four primary issues. According to qualitative data, while organizations tend to have tighter areas of focus and expertise on a set of primary issues, they also ally with other organizations on a broader range of issues.

c We asked youth organizers to identify campaigns and issues they are working on (over the last 3-5 years). If the organization leads frequent campaigns in a particular issue area, it is labeled "primary." If the organization sometimes leads campaigns or supports allied campaigns in an issue area, it is labeled "shared."

d Systems reforms represents a very broad category of activities including government investments in youth programing, tax reforms, transportation access, corporate responsibility, and media accountability.

Campaign Issues are Relatively Consistent Over Time

While each of the FCYO Field Scans over the years asked respondents about a different set of campaign issues, there are some trends over the years in primary campaign issues. Education is consistently identified as a priority campaign issue across the 2010, 2013, and 2020 surveys. Over 60% of the organizations reported working on this issue across all three surveyed years. Health also featured as one of the top four priority campaign issues in 2010, 2013, and 2020.

There are a couple of notable differences over time. Systems reform was added to the survey in 2020, and just over half of the organizations report leading campaigns in this area. However, in the interviews and focus groups, youth organizers rarely reference "systems reform" as a topic area. Rather, they were more likely to discuss the specific issues of government investments in youth programing, tax reforms, transportation access, corporate responsibility, and media accountability. Similarly, voting and gender/LGBTQ campaigns were added to the survey in 2013 and asked again in 2020. Between these two points in time, more organizations were working on both issues as primary issues in 2013 than 2020. Yet the addition of shared issues in 2020 shows that these issues are still very much on the youth organizing agenda.

By Focusing on Systemic Inequality, Youth Organizing Campaigns are Intersectional and Interconnected

Though the survey data allows us to conceptualize the work of youth organizers as discrete issue-focused campaigns, we know from the focus groups and interview data that youth organizing campaigns and actions overlap across issues. Indeed, looking more closely at campaign work helps illustrate how the concepts of intersectionality and interconnection discussed earlier play out in the field. As a starting point, youth organizers explain that systemic oppression cuts across all of their campaign issues and they see all of these campaigns as connected.

> *"It's race, it's class, it's patriarchy, it's gender binary. So, youth, I think, really were some of the most radical in terms of just trying to get to the root cause, radical in their analysis around these pervasive systems of oppression. I think [they] really helped all of us articulate, but also sort of be accountable to, the reality of these forms of oppression as they play out just in our families, communities, in larger society."*

Youth organizing policy work is grounded in a critique of the unjust society that organizers live in.

Youth organizing policy work is grounded in a critique of the unjust society that organizers live in. Importantly, this organizer explains that youth across the field are both naming this systemic critique and holding the rest of society – including other social movement organizers – accountable for addressing it. Throughout the interviews and focus groups, systemic inequalities such as racial capitalism, neoliberalism, and patriarchy are at times hinted at and other times they are referenced directly.

Systemic critique enables the youth organizing field to build connections across seemingly disconnected policy issues. One youth organizer explains this kind of thinking, saying, "Good youth organizing has to have an analysis of not only the problem and solutions that are directly connected to that particular issue or movement, but how it's interconnected to other movements." The school to prison pipeline is perhaps the strongest example of how this focus on systemic inequality leads to inter-issue work. Leaders of the youth organizing field describe ending the school to prison pipeline work as part of education justice, criminal justice reform, health equity, racial

justice, and justice for students with disabilities. As another organizer explains, low-income young people of color interact with education systems, public health systems, immigration agencies, public health services, and breathe air, drink water, and eat food grown in local environments. This means that to effectively address the needs of their members requires youth organizing groups to address multiple interconnected issues.

Young people today are organizing on a wide range of issues, building on decades of youth-led and multi-generational campaigns to advance a more just and equitable world. While campaign issues have remained relatively consistent, it is clear that groups have become far more intersectional in their approach, drawing connections between different issues and forming coalitions to address a wide range of concerns beyond their primary focus. Their approach to advancing racial, economic, and gender justice involves breaking out of the issue silos that have dominated in philanthropy and social justice.

While the limits of this report make it impossible to describe every significant advance in the youth organizing field, we offer a closer look at two examples – ending the school to prison pipeline and demanding police-free schools and immigrant rights reforms – that showcase the evolution of youth organizing. These two issues demonstrate the power of youth organizing in coalition with adult organizations to both win concrete policy changes and transform public narratives. A third feature exploring youth organizing for health equity will be released in a standalone report later this year. As the data above demonstrate, however, these are just three of the many issues youth organizing groups are addressing today. From policing and mass incarceration to health equity and climate change, young people are playing leading roles in broad alliances to address the most pressing issues of the moment. The final section of this paper takes a closer look at the successes and challenges of youth organizing groups in forging durable power.

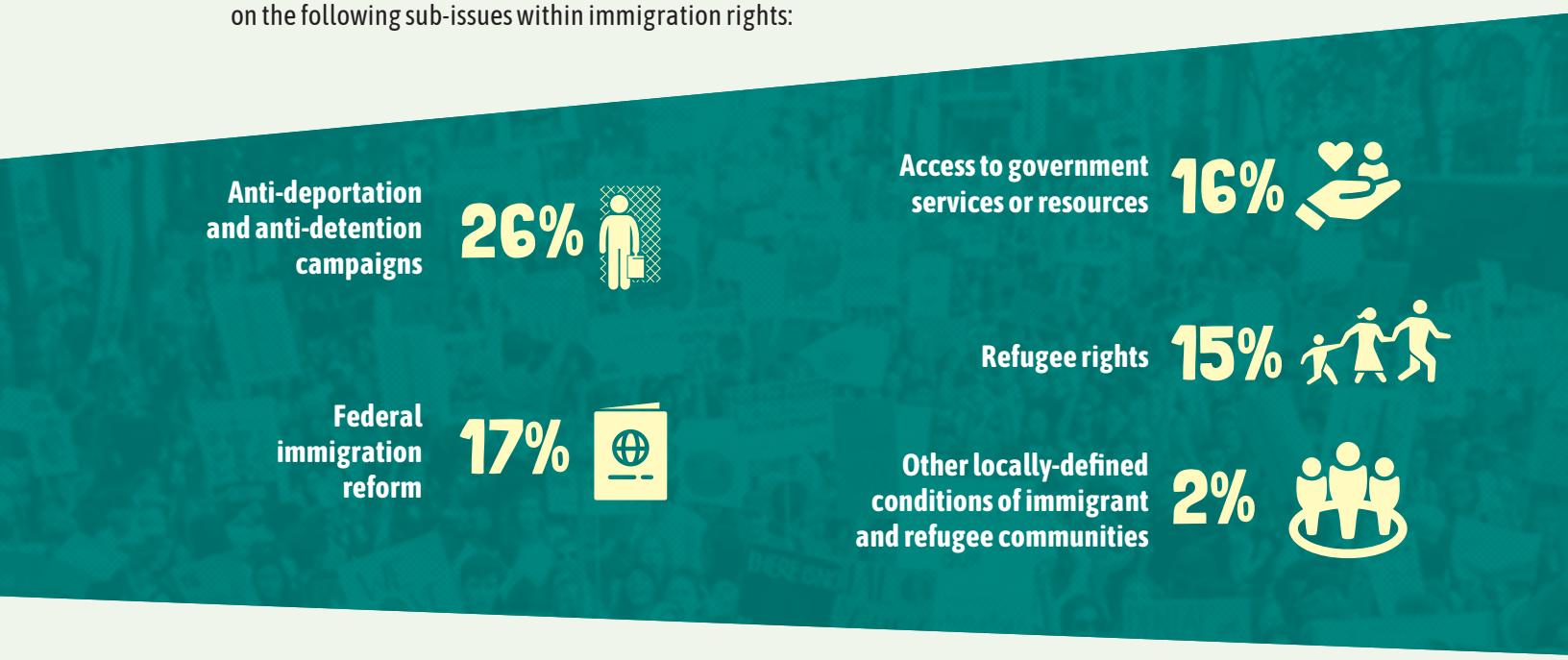
SUMMARY: ADVANCING THE FIELD IN CHAOTIC TIMES

In this moment, the youth organizing field is best understood not as a series of static portraits or photographs but rather as an organizer's livestream that catches the reality that young people are navigating a series of fast moving political, social, education, and health crises. This livestream is moving and rough, real and unframed, temporal and far from permanent. Youth are both creating this livestream and walking through it. 312 organizations in rural, suburban, and urban communities answered our survey. But with the constantly growing and evolving field, we expect that there are far more. As a field, these youth are more diverse than the generations that came before them. They span a much wider age range from middle school through young adulthood; Black, Latinx, Asian American, Indigenous, and white youth are well represented in their leadership; many groups are led by women and girls. Our survey also documents increasing numbers of queer and trans youth leaders.

A CLOSER LOOK

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS CAMPAIGNS AND MOVEMENTS

Across the 2020 Field Scan, youth organizers point to immigrant rights campaigns as powerful examples of the success of the youth organizing field over the last 20 years. The work spans organizing for expanded access to higher education for undocumented students, to advocating for access to ethnic studies and culturally relevant curriculum in K-12 schools, to organizing Know Your Rights campaigns for undocumented immigrants, to protesting the separation of families seeking asylum in the United States. Thirty-two percent of organizations answering the 2020 Field Scan survey lead campaigns on immigration rights, making it the fifth most common priority campaign area. More specifically, organizations report working on the following sub-issues within immigration rights:



One leading example of efforts to improve the conditions of undocumented immigrants and mixed-status immigrant families living in the United States is youth organizing to expand higher education access for undocumented youth.[33] Beginning in the early 2000s, young people organized at the state and national level to ensure that undocumented college students could both access and afford higher education. The impetus for this movement is grounded in the IIRIRA of 1996,[e] an act of Congress that restricted states from offering in-state tuition to undocumented college students. The IIRIRA effectively barred undocumented youth from attending college at a time when the national rhetoric loudly said that going to college was critical to becoming a successful adult. Undocumented youth organizers and their allies first addressed the impact of this federal legislation at the state level, successfully working in several states to pass legislation allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at public universities.

e The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act is a piece of federal legislation that was signed by Bill Clinton in September 1996.

Following these state level wins, youth organizers turned their attention to increasing access for students across the nation through federal legislation. As a result of their steady campaigns, members of Congress proposed the DREAM Act of 2002 which would have lifted the restrictions on in-state tuition and provided a path to citizenship for young people. Unfortunately, the DREAM Act did not pass in 2002, and barriers to higher education and the continuance of an underclass of undocumented students persisted. The DREAM Act was introduced but did not pass again in 2007 and 2010. Despite these legislative defeats, the undocumented youth movement persisted and led to the passage of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), an Executive Order issued by the Obama Administration in 2012.[34] DACA improved opportunities for immigrant youth to attend college by increasing access to financial support, changing norms and rules within universities, and establishing protections from de jure harassment. Another of the many wins that stem from this activism is a reframing of racist and classist public discourses about immigrants by introducing terms like undocumented, which reclaimed and demanded humanity.[35]

Following these state level wins, youth organizers turned their attention to increasing access for students across the nation through federal legislation.

The power of building alliances across generations and race are important lessons stemming from the undocumented student movement. Speaking to the importance of intergenerational organizing, one youth organizer explains the origins of the early work.

> *"Young people that were doing their own thing and then realized, wait a minute, we don't want our parents or other family members who aren't DREAM Act eligible not to be organizing with us. They were working with adults or even younger, bright young people who weren't DREAM Act eligible either. But they were doing multigenerational organizing."*

The historic 2006 May Day marches and protests in which millions of people in cities and towns across the country joined together to object legislation that would further criminalize immigrants and the people that help them is one example of these powerful, intergenerational coalitions.[36] Other interviewed youth organizers explain the power that comes from building solidarity across race.

> *"Undocumented immigrant students are folks that have really set a bar also for the solidarity around how you do work with Black communities or especially Black undocumented communities."*

Black organizers in our study share that their alliances with Latinx[f] and immigrant communities is a unique solidarity born from years of working alongside each other. They explain that as a result of sustained solidarity, Black organizers mobilized in defense of their Latinx peers when Latinx communities came under fire from ICE and other sources. This reciprocal support across issues and time creates an immense bond that speaks to the deep alliances and networks of youth of color advocates and organizers.

f While not all immigrants are Latinx, many of the most visible organizers proudly claimed their Latinx heritage. Additionally, many of the campaigns and stereotypes calling for stricter immigration reforms were explicitly targeting white America's fear of Latinx (Black and Brown) people.

The undocumented youth movement is also in relationship with the broader youth organizing movement. Many young immigrant leaders continue to spearhead campaigns on an array of issues into their early adulthood.[37] This strong connection to a broader base of allies became even more important upon the Trump administration's nationalistic ambitions. During the Trump administration, with its highly visible and terrifying acts against immigrants, youth and adult immigrant rights leaders worked together not only to maintain DACA but also address the onslaught of executive actions targeting immigrants, including immigration bans, narrative campaigns to build a wall between the United States and Mexico, family separation policies, and unlawful detention. Youth organizers both led and joined in protest against the Trump administration's increased ICE presence, deportation raids in communities of color, family separations, and the expansion of inhumane detention camps. Organizers describe Know Your Rights campaigns that included backyard meetings to educate undocumented community members on how to respond if ICE knocks on the door or a police officer pulls them over while driving without a license. Other organizers describe campaigns to give undocumented drivers time to get their cars out of police impoundment. In another state, youth organizers won a campaign allowing undocumented immigrants to get drivers licenses. Other mentioned campaigns including fighting against efforts to block immigrants from receiving social services and creating sanctuary cities and school districts.

Even now, in the nascent Biden administration, we can see additional wins of the immigrant rights movement as dehumanizing policies and practices begin to be lifted.[g] Unfortunately, evidence is simultaneously emerging to suggest that activism to support immigrants is still very much needed. As one example, migrant youth continue to be detained in federal facilities under the Biden administration.[38] Fortunately, youth organizers come to this moment with the base, knowledge, and power needed to advance justice for immigrants. As shared throughout this example, the field has decades of experience, layered alliances across generations, race, and ethnicity, and a lived history of creating positive changes and preventing unjust barriers for immigrants across the nation.

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g One of Biden's first presidential orders showed that the importance of the past four years of effort by organizers, *Preserving and Fortifying Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)*: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/preserving-and-fortifying-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca/

CHAPTER 3: THE FUTURE OF YOUTH POWER

BUILDING STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS

- **Progress:** Stronger Organizations in an Expanding Field
- **Continued Challenges:** Building and Sustaining Organizations' Staffing and Financial Health
- **Future Directions:** Professional Development for Organizing Staff and Expanding, Diversifying, and Aligning Funding

DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS

- **Progress:** Building a Pipeline of Youth Leaders
- **Continued Challenges:** Meeting the Demand for Supports and Services and Expanding a Field-Wide Leadership Pipeline
- **Future Directions:** Creating Opportunities for Transformation and Leadership Across the Field

FORGING DURABLE POWER

- **Progress:** Forging Durable Power Through Networks, Alliances, and Voter Engagement
- **Continued Challenges:** Learning to Build and Sustain Durable Power
- **Future Directions:** Enacting a Vision of a More Just World

The 2020 Field Scan documents a youth organizing field that has matured from engaging young people in activism and leadership to using complex strategies and infrastructure to build political and narrative power. Over the last 20 years, youth organizers have won powerful victories, developed thousands of leaders, and built strong organizations, and they have a vision that goes far beyond what they have achieved so far.

Across this study, youth organizers describe building and wielding their power to create a more democratic, socially just, antiracist society. Enacting this vision requires reinventing and reimagining systems and institutions and also broader cultural narratives about collective identity and values. Transforming society in this way, as one participant describes, requires us "to undo a lot of the damage that's been done." In their explanations, organizers reference the immensely difficult racial, economic, and political climate in communities of color, especially under the Trump administration. Organizers speak about needing to move this country away from systemic racial violence towards systemic equity, away from deep economic gaps between low-income families and the top 1% towards a more just economy, away from terrible access to basic health care, clean water, and healthy food, toward the creation of safe and just communities.

Many organizers reference the ways that the changing demographics of the country offer a powerful opportunity for transformative change, while at the same time acknowledging that that future is by no means a foregone conclusion.

> *"Black and Brown youth are the rising majority in high schools and public institutions, and I think that what we'll see is kind of a rising consciousness around that…I think there's something around young people being this last political body in this country without any rights of democracy. We are going to see the emergence of a dream nation…finding their political voice, realizing that they are this majority. But I also see a lot of potential struggle there—that if we understand the history of race and oppression in this country, young people becoming a rising majority also then potentially incurs state violence."*

Youth organizers are clear that addressing these challenges and bringing about the world they envision will require a significant increase in capacity.

This statement reveals the ways that youth organizers are both hopeful about the possibility of a more just world and realistic about the challenges and threats in front of them. They have a vision for a world characterized by racial, economic, and gender justice. At the same time, they realize the immense challenges of global pandemics, rising white supremacy, climate change, and other threats. With this in mind, many youth organizers are clear that addressing these challenges and bringing about the world they envision will require a significant increase in capacity. They recognize the progress made in winning substantial policy victories and developing thousands of young leaders and also acknowledge that building the world they want will require a new level of resources, alignment, and power.

h As researchers we acknowledge that it is impossible to determine how much of the growth in survey responses is the result of an actual increase in the number of organizations that exist versus changing in data collection methodology or the growing credibility of FCYO as an organization. However, the idea that more organizations exist in more states and in better communication is backed up by our interview and focus group data.

As we talked to youth organizers from across the country about the last twenty years and their vision for the future, three domains consistently arose: building strong organizations, developing leaders, and building power for transformative systemic change. This is not surprising as these domains represent both the primary aim and the conditions for success for the field. In this final section, we explore these themes in detail with an eye toward the progress made over the last twenty years, the challenges and pitfalls organizers experienced, and what youth organizers view as necessary for the successful future of the field.

BUILDING STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Youth organizing groups are the bedrock of youth-led movements for social change. Acting simultaneously as a central community gathering space, a hub for political strategy, and an incubator of youth leaders, the strength and sustainability of each individual youth organizing group is instrumental to the capacity of the field overall.[39] In the last 20 years, the field of youth organizing witnessed an expansion in the breadth and depth of its impact, as youth organizing groups grew in size, number, and reach. Yet this growth does not necessarily signify field-wide organizational sustainability. Rather, youth organizing groups must contend with a variety of ongoing threats, including economic volatility, shifting political conditions, limited opportunities for staff and leadership development, and pressures to institutionalize, professionalize, or otherwise shift their work away from the grassroots. As the strength and sustainability of its organizations play a crucial role in determining the future of the field, we turn our attention to the infrastructure of youth organizing as a key area of inquiry and investment.

PROGRESS: STRONGER ORGANIZATIONS IN AN EXPANDING FIELD

Each year that FCYO scans the field, a growing number of organizations answer the survey.[h] A 2004 Field Scan by FCYO and the Edward W. Hazen Foundation identified 120 youth organizing groups across the United States, with subsequent FCYO 2010 and 2013 Field Scans identifying 137 and 180 groups, respectively. This year, 312 youth organizing groups responded to the 2020 Field Scan. In the last 16 years, the number of youth organizing groups responding to the survey has almost tripled.

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In understanding a growth of this magnitude, it is helpful to consider the specific context in which the 2010 and 2013 Field Scans took place – a time in which the youth organizing field and its philanthropic supports were left grappling with the difficult aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. In 2013, 41% of youth organizing groups reported a decrease in foundation funding and a majority of surveyed organizations reported staff layoffs, program cuts, or consolidations. The 2013 Field Scan also revealed that several organizations surveyed for the 2010 Field Scan closed their doors or discontinued youth organizing work.

It was not until after 2013 that youth organizing groups experienced the effects of a stabilizing economy. The last 10 years also mark an era in which the Occupy Movement, Movement for Black Lives, the Undocumented Youth Movement, the Water Protectors of Standing Rock, March for Our Lives, and other high profile progressive social movements began to take hold of the public consciousness. The growing volume of social movement dialogue inevitably expanded the known avenues for young people to join in organizing for social change, with organizations subsequently forming across issues, regions, and constituencies to harness their energy to respond to the multiple social crises of the times.[40]

Importantly, the philanthropic community's parallel growth offered further scaffolding for the field's expansion to take place.[41] The 2020 Field Scan is the first in which youth organizing groups report an increase in foundation funding and more substantial organizational budgets than previous field scans. Youth organizing groups reported an average budget of $546,653 in 2020; in comparison, in the 2010 and 2013 Field Scans, the majority of groups reported budgets of less than $350,000. The growth of philanthropy's interest, engagement, and investment in youth organizing is a benefit to the field.

CONTINUED CHALLENGES: BUILDING AND SUSTAINING ORGANIZATIONS' STAFFING AND FINANCIAL HEALTH

Despite evidence of more organizations engaging in the field, youth organizers report a number of challenges regarding the strength and sustainability of their organizations and networks. Their reflections broadly fall into two themes: the strength of their organization's staff and the sustainability of their organization's financial health.

Limited Staff Time to Meet Many Needs

Within any youth organizing group, the work of organizational management and leadership definitively requires great time and investment on behalf of its people. While in 2010, 86% of youth organizing groups had at least one full-time youth organizing staff person, just 65% of groups in 2020 reported the same (a comparable question was not asked in the 2013 Field Scan). Among those with at least one full-time youth organizer in 2020, groups have an average of seven part time staff and three full time staff. The staff in these same groups report an average of 46 youth in core leadership positions, and a median youth membership of 100. While there is no magic ratio of paid staff to core leaders and members, interviewed youth organizers explain that staff members can often find themselves pulled in many directions especially because their work extends from supporting campaigns to providing holistic youth support and leadership development. One youth organizer describes this lift:

> *"You've got to organize young people, support them, and connect them to services. You have to fundraise and talk to people…and you might not necessarily know how to talk or ask for money. You have to make sure folks are getting health care. Attend to folks' grievances. There is no model for this…"*

As this organizer points out, and several others echo, a modest number of youth organizing staff stretched across many organizational responsibilities can pose challenges including barriers to leadership development, feeling taxed by organizing work, feeling unrecognized by the broader field, and experiencing limited opportunities to advance their organizing careers. Many organizers also express the need to be adequately paid for their work and in some cases the desire to pay young people as well.

These challenges point to broader questions facing the field regarding the best organizational model to meet the multiple aims of youth organizing. As it matures, some parts of the field want to professionalize and establish formalized career trajectories, pay structures, and comprehensive services. Other organizations are embracing models more tied to social movements than traditional nonprofit structures. These organizations emphasize the need for broad-based movements that rely more on members and leaders than paid staff. While there will likely continue to be a variety of approaches to these questions, there is across the board an agreement that movements need resources and that structures that support the development and long-term engagement of young organizers are necessary.

These challenges point to broader questions facing the field regarding the best organizational model to meet the multiple aims of youth organizing.

Striving for Financial Health

Despite the funding increase reported this year, building true financial health continues to be a challenge for the youth organizing field. Financial resources are now distributed over a much broader pool of recipients with varying fundraising capacities. While nearly half of all surveyed organizations have a dedicated staff member in charge of development, more than half (51%) do not. Moreover, 47% of the responding organizations indicate that they lack development and grant writing capacity and 40% identify burdensome application procedures as an obstacle to securing funds.

In addition, the youth organizers describe ongoing difficulties in securing and sustaining funding related to philanthropic practices that are inconsistent with the aims, activities, and needs of the youth organizing field. Asked about such barriers, 49% of responding organizations indicate that funders do not understand organizing, 37% state that funders consider their organizations too political, and 14% say that funders deem their organizational budget too small to fund. In focus groups and interviews, several youth organizers name "trust" as a major concern in their work with funders. One youth organizer reflects on the continued disparate investments faced by organizations led by people of color:

> *"[People of color are] starting to lead these organizations, including myself. And... we still have to deal with racism at that level because, it's like, I am Chicana, working class. I went to a state college, I didn't go to some fancy Ivy League school. So, funders are like 'prove to me that you could do X, Y, and Z.' And they don't give you money. But if a white person comes in with a social justice or social worker background, they're giving more money, right, to experiment and plan. So really investing in our development of our own people in these organizations and increase funding. Multiyear—but don't give us $30,000—give us $100,000, $200,000 a year."*

The above excerpt is one of more than 30 quotes detailing similar experiences in funder-organizer interactions. Whether owing to implicit mistrust of their leadership and ability to meet deliverables, bureaucratic demands on capacity, diverging interests of issue, region, or geographic disparities, youth organizers face funding practices that result in racist outcomes. These dynamics between youth organizing groups and philanthropy result in funding disparities that further reproduce and exacerbate inequities in the field, hindering youth organizing groups' ability to secure funding.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ORGANIZING STAFF AND EXPANDING, DIVERSIFYING, AND ALIGNING FUNDING

Aligning with the field's continued headway over the past 20 years, youth organizing groups hold sophisticated insights around the best strategies to ground their organizations' strength and sustainability. To overcome barriers to realizing their vision, youth organizers are clear on the opportunities and resources needed to expand staffing and leadership development opportunities in their organizations and build authentic and effective relationships with philanthropy. Below we detail several highlights.

Establish Supports for the Professional Growth and Development of Staff and Organizers

Overall, youth organizers identify a need to support and build the capacity of people who can lead strong youth organizing groups, including the full spectrum from new organizers to Executive Directors. To be able to be successful in their current positions and lead the field into the next decade, youth organizers call for "more intentional training." Organizers emphasize the challenge of having to learn by trial and error and "guessing." As another organizer explains, "I feel like there needs to be an actual investment in understanding what it is that we actually do so we're no longer having to guess all the time." Beyond professional development as staff leading an organization, youth organizers also call for further professional development as organizers, including training in political analysis and movement-building, or, in brief, how to be an effective organizer. One organizer describes the multi-layered requirements of a youth organization:

> *"[Does your organization] have the abilities and commitment to analyze the political situation, to do power mapping? To knock on people's doors and get them involved, to do one on ones, to do public speaking, to plan strategy and tactics, from really big to really small things. Developing staff and members' capacities to be good organizers. Having as big a base as possible and have that be a skilled base."*

A comprehensive training institute for youth organizers offers a promising means to distribute the organizational resource demands across the field as a whole.

As the above quote explains, maintaining an effective youth organizing group calls for a specific repertoire of skills and conceptual tools that youth organizing staff are well aware of. Yet youth organizers report that their organizations lack the infrastructure, funding, time, and personnel to effectively share them with their youth leaders and members.

Fellowship programs or other training institutes for new organizers can expand the knowledge, skills, and networks of new organizers. As detailed further in the section below, a comprehensive training institute for youth organizers offers a promising means to distribute the organizational resource demands across the field as a whole. Youth organizers explain that such an institute might include a combination of hard organizing skills, political education, organizational models, and tools to support members' and youth organizers' wellbeing alike.

In addition to staff training and role clarity, the challenges youth organizers identify point to a need to shore up organizational infrastructure through developing strong organizational leaders. For example, there is no training program for Executive Directors and other organizational leaders, and as such many must pursue their own learning around fundraising, staff management, financial management, and other organizational wellness concerns. For this reason, the transition of a strong Executive Director can have an outsized impact on an organization. Looking forward, the organizational infrastructure of the youth organizing field stands to strengthen from furthering opportunities for the next generation of Executive Directors, developing support mechanisms for existing Executive Directors including peer circles and coaching, and implementing supports for transitions to ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

Build Fundraising Capacity & Establish Better Alignment Between the Field and Philanthropy

The youth organizing field understands a successful fundraising strategy to be rooted in organizational capacity, philanthropic responsiveness, and authentic, trusting funder-organizer relationships. Surveyed youth organizers view philanthropy as a critical partner to their organizations and are seeking organizational capacity-building opportunities with funders (68%), the leveraging of their current funders for introductions to other funders (83%) and to other youth organizations (61%), and rapid response funding for urgent needs (72%). As it relates to philanthropy's responsiveness to youth organizing's stated needs, some youth organizers share that a number of foundations are open to rethinking their funding processes to better meet the field's needs, including rewriting their RFPs or accepting alternate modes of reporting (e.g., video account or interview as opposed to a written report). Other organizations are beginning to identify foundations open to extending the lifetime of grant funds to better accommodate organizing timelines (e.g., providing a five-year grant that better aligns with organizing work through an election cycle).

Importantly, youth organizers also discuss what works in philanthropy. Youth organizers share appreciation for the flexibility to determine how best to use funds and do their work without restrictions. Similarly, they value funders who make genuine efforts to learn about the community where grant funded work is being done. Just as youth organizers can identify the relational growth edges of philanthropy, they also report gratitude for the many funders willing to see youth organizers as people nested in a community with whom to form relationships toward a grounded understanding of where the resources are going.

Seek Alternate Sources of Funding Beyond Private Foundations

A key strategy to bolster an organization's economic sustainability is to diversify its funding streams. Yet 10% of surveyed groups report that foundations provide all of their funding and 41% indicate that more than three-quarters of their budget came from foundations. Philanthropy's priorities, while ideally aligned with those of grassroots organizing, are prone to change based on a number of factors, including economic climate, leadership's interest areas, and new and existing relationships. Aware of the threats posed by an overreliance on one source of funding, youth organizers are seeking to develop new revenue generating sources that give them more autonomy and opportunities for self-determination and sustainability. These include running trainings and workshops (38%); selling t-shirts, swag, or other outreach materials (25%); using their expertise in cultural arts, media, or design expertise (10%); and creating toolkits (9%). Youth organizers also shared their exploration into community banking where there is a pooling of resources, tax breaks on spaces like community gardens, tax increment financing, and starting businesses with people of color. Youth organizing groups have also engaged in campaigns that have sought to secure funding from local government agencies.

A key strategy to bolster an organization's economic sustainability is to diversify its funding streams. Yet 10% of surveyed groups report that foundations provide all of their funding and 41% indicate that more than three-quarters of their budget came from foundations.

Make Investment in Organizational Capacity a Top Philanthropic Priority

While funding for youth organizing has increased over the years, the 2020 Funder Scan indicates that significant regional disparities exist and funding to the field still pales in comparison to related fields like youth development and civic engagement. Youth organizing groups are presenting a powerful vision for young people in transforming society and they are clear that achieving this vision will require additional resources. They argue that as our world faces multiple crises, investing in the leadership of young people from the communities most impacted by injustice should be a top philanthropic priority.

DEVELOPING TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERS

A defining characteristic of youth organizing is its dual function to create systemic change in communities while supporting the development of lifelong leaders with the skills to bring about a more just society. Youth organizing is thus both proactive and responsive, acting as a training ground for future leaders while building the power of young people engaged in social justice movements. This multidirectional focus is grounded in the understanding that transformative change requires an interplay between systems change and personal transformation.

Compared to labor and community organizing, a focus on individual development has long been a strength of youth organizing. A growing body of research confirms that engaging young people in organizing is one of the best ways to support their holistic development and that it is especially relevant for young people of color, low-income young people, and others experiencing the impacts of oppression.[42] Engaging in youth organizing can positively impact young peoples' social-emotional development and educational outcomes while also building their deep and sustained community and civic engagement.[43] Moreover, youth who engage in youth organizing are more likely to have the opportunity to engage in high-quality research-based experiences than their peers in more traditional youth development programs.[44]

Youth organizing is both proactive and responsive, acting as a training ground for future leaders while building the power of young people engaged in social justice movements.

Youth organizing groups in this study also report using political education, healing and wellness offerings, and holistic supports and services as key to building a leadership pipeline. In this section, we reflect on the points of progress made over the past 20 years in building leaders and consider the critical questions that remain about how to balance organizing for systemic change with meeting young people's acute needs. Finally, we examine future directions for building a leadership pipeline that truly supports young people from the communities most impacted by injustice so that future movement leaders can emerge.

PROGRESS: BUILDING A PIPELINE OF *YOUTH* LEADERS

Advancing Political Education

Equipping young people with a political education that supports them to understand the root causes and interconnections between issues in their communities and broader social issues such as structural racism, heteropatriarchy, and economic inequality is a distinguishing characteristic of youth organizing. Over the last 20 years, thousands of young people have participated in such transformative political education programs in their youth organizing groups.[45] The importance of political education cannot be overstated, as critical consciousness can play a fundamental role in supporting agency and healthy identities for young people, especially those who experience oppression.[46] A majority of surveyed youth organizing groups (82%) offer regular political education. Training and curriculum from intermediaries such as the Grassroots Policy Project, Movement Strategy Center, and the School of Unity and Liberation are essential in supporting organizations to build out this work and ensure that their campaigns truly address the structural issues underlying inequities. Political education helps young people who are experiencing oppression to build a critical understanding of systemic problems in their communities.

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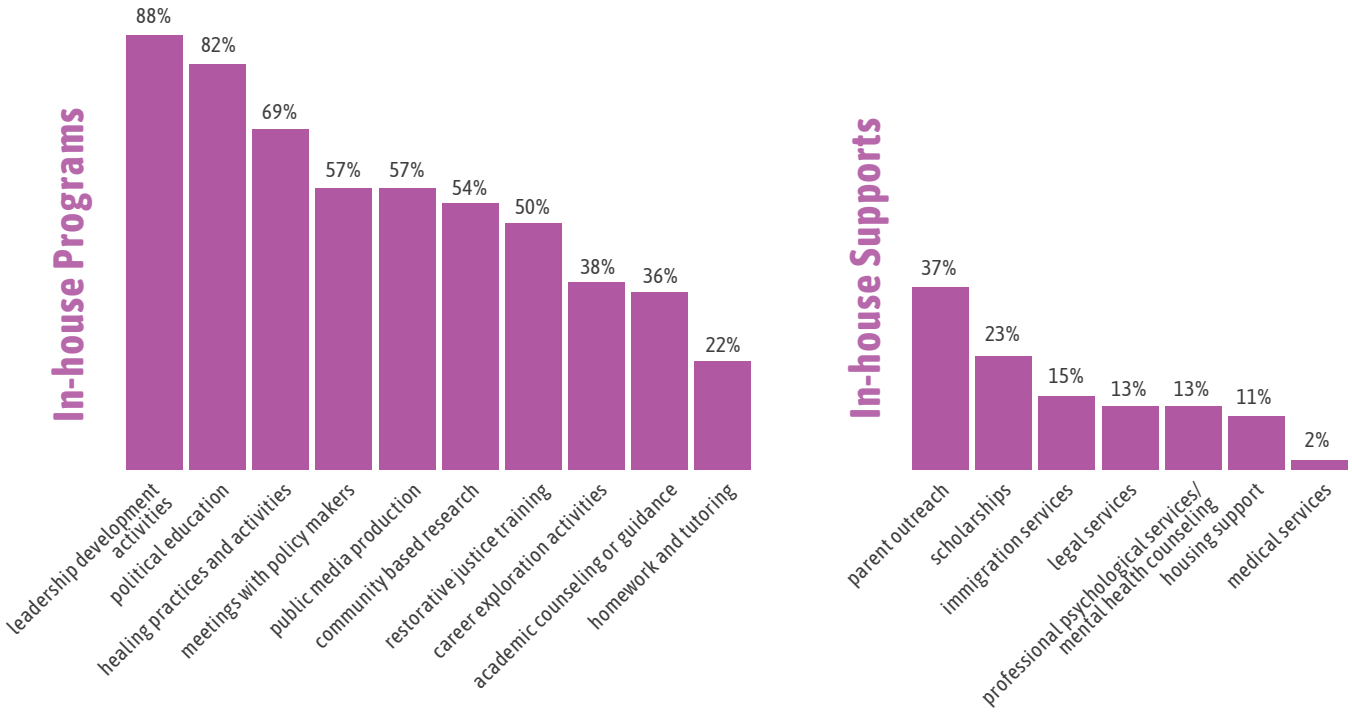
Offering Healing and Wellness Supports

There is an element of healing inherent to youth organizing that involves supporting organizers as they begin to heal from the effects of broken systems in society. Across the study, youth organizers share countless examples of how the process of organizing, building base and power, and engaging in leadership is a "lifesaving process." As one organizer explains, "Finding that connection between yourself, your people, the land…it's healing self-identity stuff."

Youth organizing groups offer integrated structured emotional supports, wellness programming, and healing justice to young people. Thirteen percent of surveyed organizations report that they provide formal mental health services, while 69% of youth organizing groups report engaging in regular healing activities, including talking circles, support groups, and mindfulness activities. Interviewed organizers report that their organizations are also expanding their understanding of healing to include collective trauma and offering of supports beyond the medical model. Many groups now describe their organization's work as "healing centered youth organizing" or see healing justice as a critical component of their work. Organizing groups approach mental health, wellness, and healing justice in a variety of different ways including use of traditional cultural practices, partnerships with mental health professionals, and integration of personal transformation practices. A series of recent reports further testify to healing centered youth organizing as a growing realm of practice.[47]

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES



Providing Holistic Supports and Services

Youth organizers understand that as they engage young people of color, low-income young people, girls, and queer and trans young people, the members of their organizations often face the brunt of the very systemic inequities they are working to change. Because of this, youth organizing groups support young people's material and emotional needs in many different ways. This includes providing direct services to youth such as parent outreach, scholarships, immigration services, legal services/representation, and housing support.

Beyond direct services, youth organizing groups also offer a wide range of activities to support young people's holistic development, ranging from leadership development and political education to community based research and academic counseling. While some youth organizing groups provide in-house services, others connect their organizers to these resources through partnerships with other agencies and community organizations. The overarching result is a holistic, politicized approach to meeting young people's needs that takes into account the systems of oppression at play.

Building a Leadership Pipeline Across the Field

Building a social justice leadership pipeline has long been a key aim of the youth organizing field. Looking closely at the work of FCYO provides one window into this effort. A theoretical framework for understanding the youth leadership pipeline is laid out in a 2010 FCYO report that makes case for building intentional

pathways between youth organizing groups and opportunities for education, employment, and continued social justice involvement.[48] From 2010-2012, FCYO undertook *Regenerations: Leadership Pipeline*, a grantmaking initiative in partnership with the Movement Strategy Center to support 18 organizations in building their capacity to support young people's lifelong engagement in organizing. Through *Regenerations*, significant progress was made in building out an integrated leadership pipeline that connects with and across youth-led, intergenerational, and adult organizing groups. Many youth organizing groups continue to utilize the *Regenerations* leadership pipeline curriculum and toolkit in their work. Other efforts, such as the School of Unity and Liberation's Youth Leaders Board and the New World Foundation's Civic Opportunities Initiative Network also made significant contributions to this work. Our 2020 survey confirms that leadership development is happening across the field, with 88% of surveyed groups reporting that they conduct regular leadership development programs and activities.

From strategic advisers, to organizational leaders, to political representatives, many youth organizing alumni are now playing important roles in social justice movements.

Youth organizing groups also develop programs that engage and support the transitions and continued leadership of alumni. Of the groups surveyed, 75% report involving alumni in their programming (versus 61% in 2013). Just under two thirds report maintaining an alumni database (compared to one third in 2013). This is important to the field considering that youth organizing alumni are more likely to remain civically engaged than those who engage in student government or similar organizations.[49] Several organizers in this study further explain that they represent a generation of young people who were first trained as organizers and advanced the ranks either in their original organization or as leaders or staff of peer youth organizing groups. From strategic advisers, to organizational leaders, to political representatives, many youth organizing alumni are now playing important roles in social justice movements. Study participants share a need for more formal partnerships between youth organizing groups and external partners to support alumni transitions. At the same time, some organizations are working to secure strong partnerships with a variety of such institutions including universities, labor unions, and adult organizing groups.[50]

CONTINUED CHALLENGES: MEETING THE DEMAND FOR SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AND EXPANDING A FIELD-WIDE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE.

Expanding Healing and Wellness Supports, Holistic Supports, and Direct Services

Youth organizers in this study share that the work of organizing is intensely powerful but also painful. Organizers live and share in the struggles of the people they work with. They know who faces an eviction, whose family is grieving, and who is in need of a healthy meal. Organizers are trusted leaders in their communities, meaning they are often the first ones called upon to support their communities. Despite the growth in wellness and healing justice supports in youth organizing groups, organizers discuss the continued challenge of balancing leading campaigns and meeting young people's current and future social, emotional, and material needs.

They explain that organizing and public activism can create new stress, particularly in a national political climate that enables xenophobia, anti-Black violence, and gender-based violence. Because such stresses emerge in the context of activism, organizing spaces need to tend to the emotional and personal well-being of the youth organizers. As one organizer puts it:

> *"We ask people to bring their full selves to this sort of work; to come with their full identities; to come with their heart and their trauma. All of these things that…we [staff] are not equipped to deal with…I think that, that's a huge challenge that [youth organizers] understand that we are dealing with people dealing with high levels of trauma—the systemic traumas…."*

As youth organizers work to redress these systemic traumas while dismantling deeply rooted structures of inequity, the conditions of their work and lives will inevitably remain difficult. As such, youth leadership development will require ongoing diligent attention and continued advocacy for the resources needed to offer wraparound healing and survival supports to the youth organizers doing this important work.

Expanding the Leadership Pipeline

Despite field-wide efforts toward building out a leadership pipeline, many participating youth organizers voice concerns that the field does not effectively engage youth as they transition into adulthood and away from youth organizing. Questions like "What happens now?" and "Are we actually preparing youth to move on into this field?" arise across our interviews and focus groups. Field leaders are clear that organizing groups do not have the capacity to do everything, but they are also seeing a bigger need to support alumni as they navigate toward college, careers, and adulthood.

> *"If we are building out, if our young people are graduating from our programs, are being in these alumni or young adult components and want to continue movement building, where is it that they'll be able to get these jobs? If we're not opening new spaces, new positions, if we're not investing in the field of youth organizing?…not only investment in terms of more money to organizations but general investment of what youth organizing is."*

This is an ambitious task, because it calls not just for resources that support young people's learning and skill development, but also building career pathways for aspiring community leaders and organizers – a task that requires substantial funding and organizational capacity beyond an individual organization. Building out a leadership pipeline is thus not solely a matter of internal programming to support alumni and prepare future leaders but requires a field-wide effort to increase the opportunities – paid and otherwise – available for youth organizers to continue their efforts to advance their organizing and justice work as they move into their adult lives.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSFORMATION AND LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE FIELD

Support Youth Organizing as Individual and Community Transformation

As discussed throughout this section, many youth organizing groups are questioning how to organize while also meeting young people's direct needs. Youth organizing groups are conscious that this question will only grow in the years to come as they face the effects of climate change, global health crises, and increasing wealth disparities. Many organizations are working to develop an integrated approach to organizing and supporting young people and there is a strong case to be made that these two aspects of the work can support rather than compete with each other.[51] Meeting young people's needs and supporting their personal transformation can help them lead more powerful campaigns. At the same time, effective organizing in and of itself can be a powerful form of healing from trauma and oppression.

Meeting young people's needs and supporting their personal transformation can help them lead more powerful campaigns. At the same time, effective organizing in and of itself can be a powerful form of healing from trauma and oppression.

With limited resources, organizations have to make tough decisions about where to focus their work, as there is no simple answer. Some organizations are choosing to lean in further to meet youth organizers' acute needs and ground their work in a healing centered approach.[52] These organizations are developing a politicized form of youth development.[53] Other organizations are emphasizing building power. These organizations are grappling with how to develop member supports and practices for personal transformation that fit within their capacity, while also supporting their primary focus on building power for structural and/or political change.[54] Across the different organizational approaches, there is great demand for training organizers in practices that support emotional intelligence and personal transformation while moving people toward action for change. Youth organizers are at the forefront of developing organizing strategies that are transformative for both communities and individuals.

Cultivate an Intergenerational Leadership Pipeline

Strong social justice movements require a robust infrastructure that can support the next generation of organizers, elected officials, and movement leaders. Youth organizing groups have trained thousands of young people with many going on to play crucial leadership roles, but our data indicates that too many

young leaders are being lost along the way. Given the overall importance of this work, the task of infrastructure building should be understood as a movement-wide necessity and collaborative project, and not the job of youth organizers alone.[55] Labor unions, community organizing networks, think tanks, and policy organizations might work in partnership with youth organizing groups to develop internships, fellowships, training programs, and jobs for young people transitioning from youth organizing groups. A field-wide infrastructure containing many such partnerships between these groups would make it decidedly easier for young people to continue their activism as they transition to adulthood.

In addition, there are activities youth organizing groups can do to prepare their members for a lifetime of social justice leadership. In capacity building programs such as FCYO's Youth Power Lab, there is a growing dialogue about the need for youth organizing groups to see themselves as part of intergenerational movements rather than a stand-alone youth movement.[56] If young people's political identities are solely attached to being young, their ability to stay connected to organizing as they get older is limited. If, on the other hand, they already have experience being in partnership with unions and community groups, and if they are committed to a broad vision of a just society, they can see a pathway for their continued leadership.[57] In addition, some youth organizing groups are now developing their programming to systematically increase the level of responsibility and accountability of young leaders to ensure that they truly have the skills to lead as they move to adulthood.[58] This training can also include concrete skills in registering, educating, and mobilizing voters.[59] Overall, there is a critical need to build a strong intergenerational infrastructure that supports the long-term involvement of young people in social justice work whether as a professional organizer, rank and file worker, or grassroots community leader. This task requires strong relationships and collaboration between youth organizing groups and other sectors of society.

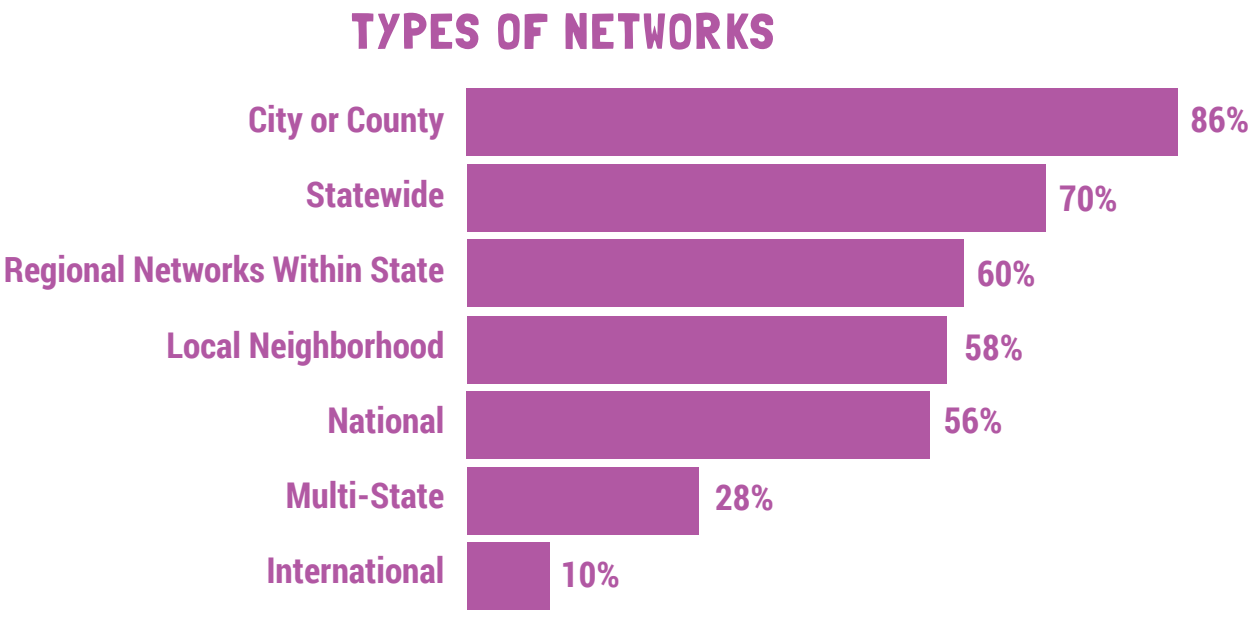
FORGING DURABLE POWER

As discussed earlier, school discipline and immigrant justice represent two particularly potent arenas of youth organizing, with the field securing significant policy victories and fundamental shifts in the common sense over the past 20 years. These are only two of the many examples of how, over the past 20 years, the youth organizing field has increased its ability to organize and win victories that improve the lives of people in their communities. Reflecting on progress made since 2000, FCYO's 2013 Field Scan identified a marked increase in the scope and scale of victories as youth organizing groups broadened their wins from policies at the individual school or neighborhood level, to policies that impacted school districts, cities, and states. Between 2010-2020, a research team led by Veronica Terriquez documented 26 youth organizing victories in California's Central Valley alone.[60] Below we detail key highlights from the youth organizing field's progress toward power building followed by some continued challenges and, finally, visions for a future characterized by the power to win.

PROGRESS: FORGING DURABLE POWER THROUGH NETWORKS, ALLIANCES, AND VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Building Strong Networks and Alliances

Alliances and networks are a key social movement strategy in which multiple organizations combine efforts at local, state, and national levels to mutually support one another and act in collaboration on shared issues. This year, we asked organizations to indicate if they were involved in networks and alliances at the neighborhood, city, county, state, and national level (respondents could indicate multiple options). We found that youth organizers are often connected to other groups: almost all respondents (98%) indicate that they participate in networks and alliances.



These networks and alliances are often intergenerational: 26% report that they "always" engage in intergenerational alliances, and another 69% do so most or some of the time. Only 4% of the surveyed organizers say that they "never engage" in intergenerational alliances.

Leading Voter Engagement Campaigns

Coordinated youth-led efforts can lead to increases in young voter turnout even in a context that is hostile to organizing efforts led by youth of color.[61] In this study, we found that youth organizing groups are increasing their reach by combining issue-based organizing with 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) voter engagement work. This change in youth organizing parallels a larger change in other movements as well. Increasingly, many nonpartisan organizations (501(c)(3)) have partisan organizational spin-offs (501(c)(4)) that enable their policy influence to extend further.[62] Twenty years ago, few youth organizing groups were incorporating voter engagement into their organizing strategy. In contrast, in 2020, 37% of surveyed youth organizing groups work on voting campaigns as a primary issue and 39% as a shared issue. Youth organizers are further amplifying the power building impact of integrated voter engagement by doing so within networks and alliances such as the Alliance for Youth Action and Power California.

Integrated voter engagement, which combines voter engagement, issue organizing, and leadership development has become a core strategy for youth organizing groups to increase power. For example, this youth organizer reflects on the multiple benefits of voter engagement work.

Integrated voter engagement, which combines voter engagement, issue organizing, and leadership development has become a core strategy for youth organizing groups to increase power.[63] For example, this youth organizer reflects on the multiple benefits of voter engagement work.

> *"We can definitely use that people power that we have from young people and really provide them the tools and knowledge and for them to see, 'How is this political landscape? Can it be impacted by the organizing efforts?' And if we mix both together, how do we create an impact in the electoral process? Voter engagement creates space for multiple wins – educating young people about the democratic process, reaching out to potential new members and building support for their organizations, potentially winning policy changes that align with an organization's mission and even changing the electorate."*

Youth organizing groups vary in the specific voter engagement strategies they use. While some youth organizing groups focus on reaching young voters, others are engaging young people in organizing voters of all ages (e.g., canvassing, voter registration, and voter education). Twenty-three percent of the youth organizing groups we surveyed lead voting rights campaigns and 9% are focused on campaigns to lower the voting age to 16. Regardless of the form it takes, voter engagement work is used for building a base and developing leaders. Furthermore, experimental research from California demonstrates that peer-to-peer outreach among young voters increases turnout, particularly among first time voters. As such, civic engagement, when involving messaging by and for young people can increase political power.[64]

CONTINUED CHALLENGES: LEARNING TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN DURABLE POWER

While youth organizing groups have won significant victories, mobilized large numbers of young people, and increased their capacity to build power, youth organizers also point to the challenge of building the kind of power necessary to achieve their full vision for their communities. For this level of power building, interview participants explain that the field must expand its work "beyond campaign organizing and a perspective of just winning campaigns to having more of a social movement and liberation transformation…nobody's free 'til everybody's free."

Building and Sustaining Power that Transforms Economic and Social Conditions

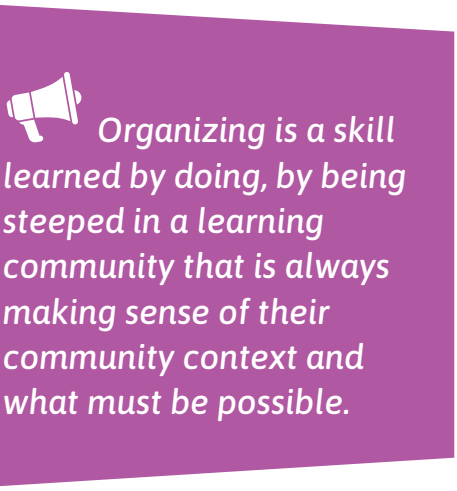
The question of how to best build and sustain power that will lead to real transformation of economic and social conditions is a priority in the field. More and more, leaders and organizers are calling into question how youth organizing is creating lasting change.

> *"I define success as creating movement forward to really build greater movement and alignment around a clear common purpose and vision that is long-term…Concrete steps and actions and demands that result in tangible shifts and improvements that can be felt in our lives…I think because of philanthropy, oftentimes we have to define success as one specific policy win or one specific narrow victory and I think that all of those are deeply meaningful but to me the success is 1) how those are tangibly shifting conditions in schools and communities of color specifically, but also 2) how they're clearly pointing towards a longer-term vision. That's what we want."*

Building the power needed to truly improve conditions in communities the way this organizer describes requires focusing on more than a single policy win. As described in the *A Closer Look* sections, individual policy wins are powerful and important but also can be overturned when the political context shifts. Across the immigrant rights, school discipline, and divest/invest campaigns described, organizations successfully shifted from a focus just on one immediate goal or policy change toward a longer-term strategy of building the power of the field. While they continued to ensure that their campaigns would create and sustain discrete wins, they also expanded their focus of their organizing to address the persistent inequality in their schools and communities across issues, time, and space.

In describing their work, youth organizers reflect that while some policies could be changed through relying on a small group of charismatic leaders sharing their stories and convincing decision makers to do the right thing, addressing the big issues that underpin structural inequities requires something more. These youth organizing groups are working to strategically differentiate between helping young people feel empowered and actually building the power needed to create durable change. This requires building larger bases and strategic alliances that can force decision makers to act. The challenge of how to build meaningful power is a key question not just for youth organizing, but in organizing for social justice overall.

Interview participants recognize that their work and the success of the field requires a long-term vision and a movement that is balanced in leadership development, political development, and an ability to shift the unjust conditions under which communities exist. What is required is "this constant thoughtful development and practice with base building, the door knocking, the integration of integrated voter engagement, the influencing of public discourse, and policy movement." Put simply, organizing is a skill learned by doing, by being steeped in a learning community that is always making sense of their community context and what must be possible. The political power must come from the strategic action of developing stronger leadership pipelines that incorporate political education, power and base building, and strategic united fronts.



FUTURE DIRECTIONS: ENACTING A VISION OF A MORE JUST WORLD

Youth organizers repeatedly articulate a vision of young people playing a key role in sparking broad based, intergenerational movements for a more just and democratic world. Yet many also recognize that addressing the challenges facing their communities in this moment will require a new level of power. Definitions of power vary among organizers, but by and large, organizers point to power as the ability to impact basic conditions in a given community, such as the ability to compel decision makers to follow a community's defined agenda or to replace those decision makers.[65]

As youth organizers grapple with how to build the kind of power needed in this moment, a few themes arise. First, many groups are looking at how to move from lifting the power of small groups of young people to building social and political power that can force decision makers to act. This requires them to ask questions such as how many peers they need to organize to truly hold power in their community, what kind of alliances they need to enact the change they want, and how to engage with the electoral system. Second, many organizers are thinking strategically about the specific roles of young people in social movements. This includes identifying the specific forms of power young people can wield given their unique positioning in society, considering the role of young people in catalyzing intergenerational movements, and developing pathways that support young leaders' lifelong engagement. Finally, many youth organizers are looking to ensure that their day to day organizing work is tied to a longer-term strategy for transformative change. This means creating a clear vision of a just and equitable society, developing campaigns that work toward that vision, and building alignment with a wide range of partners around a shared strategy to advance a long-term agenda. Youth organizing groups are experimenting with new strategies in relation to these themes. Below are a few of the leading areas of experimentation and growth.

Expand Base Building

As youth organizing groups look to expand their power, an increased focus on base building is a common theme. FCYO defines a base as "a broad group of people that have some baseline level of unity with a particular organization, institution, or person *and take action* according to that unity."[66] As FCYO's definition

suggests, an organization's base is key to advancing the organization's objectives. Data from this study also show that many youth organizers are grappling with how to build their base. On average, the base of each organization in our study is about 100, though a few organizations report base numbers of 6,000 and higher. This variation in base numbers is in part due to a variety of factors that can influence an organization's capacity to build a sustainable base. Nonetheless, there is broad recognition that creating lasting change will require the ability to organize larger numbers of people and youth organizers are actively experimenting with new strategies to do this. For example, in FCYO's Power Lab, youth organizers are testing out new approaches to building power across multiple geographies, issues, and constituencies.

Cultivate Long-Term Strategic Alliances

Long-term strategic alliances represent another approach to expanding power. While some forms of youth organizing focus primarily on organizing young people in a specific constituency, many organizers recognize that building the power to address big issues such as structural racism and climate change will require bringing together diverse constituencies around a shared agenda.

> *"What does it mean to build strategic partnerships or strategic alliances or how are our groups really connecting with some of the broader national social justice networks? And that level of integration happening more…is also something beyond just the resources… [it also includes] the depth of the knowledge of the field."*

Youth organizers share many examples of building alliances. In many instances, youth organizers are intentionally surveying their communities for unions, community organizations, and others with whom they share a common interest and bringing them together around a shared agenda. This energy being directed toward building long-term strategic alliances capitalizes on youth organizing's progress and emphasizes the unique role young people can play in not just organizing other young people but in building broad based intergenerational movements.

Expand Integrated Voter Engagement

Many organizers emphasize that expanding their voter engagement efforts is a key strategy for building power. They underscore that as young people of color become a larger portion of the electorate, ensuring their engagement is critical to a robust democracy and advancing equity and justice. 2020 saw youth organizing groups play significant roles in turning out young voters.[67] But organizers are careful to note that young people's involvement is not limited to engaging young voters. Often it is young people, even those who cannot vote because they are under 18 or undocumented, that form the core of canvassing operations to engage whole communities. As youth organizers build more sophisticated voter engagement operations and combine this work with their issue organizing, they are demonstrating an effective method for building power. Lessons from California indicate that ongoing training and technical assistance can facilitate effective civic engagement campaigns, particularly among youth organizing groups with limited prior experience in conducting a disciplined and targeted voter outreach.[68]

Build Campaigns for Today and Tomorrow

Finally, many organizers highlight the importance of developing campaigns that both improve conditions for their communities today and help advance their long-term vision for a more just and equitable society. They describe the need to align organizations around a broad vision and a long-term strategy that guides their work. In addition, many organizers talk about the need to build campaigns that truly develop young people's leadership. They describe how the pressures to win short term policy wins can emphasize inside maneuvering by staff rather than building the mass engagement of impacted communities. As an alternative, they suggest prioritizing campaigns that deeply engage young people and their communities and develop their capacities as organizers and ultimately as leaders of society.

> *"Today's campaigns and tomorrow's wins must include youth who are unafraid to challenge the way things are done so that today's campaigns are not just about a shift in policy, but represent new vision, transformative change, and new ways of building power for sustainable change."*

CONCLUSION

BUILDING THE POWER TO TRANSFORM OUR NATION

Twenty years into the contemporary youth organizing movement, the youth organizing field has a bigger, stronger, and more diverse base. Their leadership development strategies are advancing and funding for youth organizing is evolving in powerful ways.

The history that this movement organizes from is rich and nuanced, beginning with a resurgence of youth activism in response to the criminalization of youth of color in the 1990s, to the formation of a national field in the early 2000s, to a renewed focus on building power over the last 10 years.

More organizations responded to the 2020 Field Scan than ever before. These organizations are led by young people who are diverse across race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigrant status, and more. This generation is using their intersectional identities and social locations as places of power from which to organize. They understand systemic inequality as a common strand across public systems, and from this place they are organizing the field in innovative and powerful ways. Twenty years in, this new wave of youth organizing is credited with leading and supporting political accomplishments in a host of areas, including ending the school to prison pipeline, increasing higher education access for immigrant students, fighting for clean air and water in their communities, transforming voter engagement, and so much more.

In addition to these policy wins, we also see evidence of young people's narrative power – shifts in public opinion and popular discourse – such as how the immigrant youth movement changed how undocumented youth are portrayed in popular media, how organizing for Black Lives hastened a new racial reckoning and greater public awareness of structural racism, and how widespread youth mobilization contributed to a growing consensus about the need to invest in counselors instead of cops in schools.

Youth organizers are becoming leaders in today's broader social movements. Young people are learning how to lead organizations, build coalitions across campaigns, and strategically partner with organizers in other generations. They are innovating new strategies for social movement sustainability, such as supporting their members with mental health services and adopting a variety of healing justice practices to sustain their work to combat systemic oppression.

As detailed in the companion Funder Scan, foundations are recognizing this innovative and powerful leadership by increasing overall dollars to the field and developing new grantmaking strategies. Youth leaders are learning how to strategically support their organizations by diversifying their fundraising efforts.

The youth organizing field is poised to lead this nation in healing from the COVID-19 pandemic, in bringing a racial reckoning to our school systems, health care systems, and other critical public institutions, and in pushing for deep investment in communities rather than complacency or acceptance of the economic crisis. Yet amidst all of this success and power, leaders of the youth organizing field call out the need for both the field and philanthropy to level up to meet this moment. The field is calling on philanthropy to invest more in power building and organizational infrastructure rather than single campaigns. The field is calling for a deep investment in building a generation of leaders over time – not in response to a single crisis. As the most diverse generation, the field is calling on philanthropy and society to increase its support – financial, political, and otherwise – in understanding youth organizing as work that transcends previously defined boundaries of policy issues or identity. As the field of youth organizing grows in size, geography, and power, so too must our support and solidarity.

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

RESEARCH STUDY

This report summarizes information from a multi-site, multi-methods research study that we call the 2020 FCYO Field Scan. This year-long study was commissioned by the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing and aims to quantitatively and qualitatively understand the state of youth organizing in this moment and the arc of youth organizing over the last quarter century. Field Scan data sources include:

1. 2020 National Youth Organizing Survey: 312 organizations responded to surveys collected in Summer - Fall 2019 by Dr. Veronica Terriquez.
2. Focus group and interview data, which were conducted and analyzed by the Research Hub. These data were collected between November 2019-September 2020 before and during the pandemic, economic crisis, and racial uprising. These resulted in a total of 27 hours of recorded audio files with 59 youth organizers representing 38 organizations. Included in these data are:
    - Six in-person focus groups conducted in November 2019, three of which included 17 participants, representing 14 organizations from FCYO's Healthy Communities work and 18 participants representing 15 organizations from FCYO's Pipelines to Power Initiative.
    - Six online focus groups conducted between January and February 2020.
    - Twelve one-on-one interviews conducted between January-September 2020.
3. Supplemental budget survey: FCYO distributed a supplemental survey requesting FY20 budget information to the 312 survey respondents. The supplemental survey was returned by 117 organizations.
4. FCYO requested 2016-2017 grants-level data from Candid for the 312 youth organizing groups who took the survey. Candid's database included information on foundation grants for 179 of these youth organizing groups.
5. FCYO Youth Organizing Map which includes self-reported data on organizations' areas of focus, population group of focus and funding information, including their top three funders.
6. Literature reviews that began in Fall 2019 continuing through the completion of this project.
7. Analyses of previous FCYO Research Reports and Field Scans, including Strategies for Building Power and Youth Leadership (FCYO Origins Part 1), 1998 Funder Retreat (FCYO Origins Part 2), the Occasional Paper Series, 2010 National Youth Organizing Field Scan, and 2013 National Youth Organizing Field Scan: The State of the Field of Youth Organizing.[i]

i These research reports and prior field scans can all be found on FCYO's website at https://fcyo.org/resources/type/research.

We engaged in collaborative research design and analysis between three separate research teams and the leadership of FCYO. The full national scan team met monthly throughout the year to design the study and align the work across data collection efforts and FCYO interests and needs. In addition, each of the teams described below participated in several separate meetings with FCYO leadership. Each final research publication from this collaborative process is authored by specific members of the full team, reflecting each members' leadership in data collection, analysis, and writing. All the reports are published by FCYO.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

The 2020 FCYO Field Scan was led by multi-disciplinary researchers at three different research organizations in close consultation with FCYO staff. The survey team was led by Dr. Veronica Terriquez with support from Jonathan Sanchez. The team leading the focus group and interviews team, as well as the synthesis and write up of all data is housed in the Research Hub for Youth Organizing at CU Boulder, and led by Dr. Siomara Valladares and Dr. Michelle Renée Valladares, Matt Garcia, and Kate Baca. In addition, Dr. Ben Kirshner, Dr. Adam York, Katherine Sommerville and Dr. Katherine Wiley supported our work with analysis and writing. The funders research team was led by Dr. Seema Shah. The FCYO staff team includes Eric Braxton, Mónica Córdova, Kel Kroehle, Hashim Benford, Jennifer Maldonado, Luis Gauthier, and Kandice Head.

Bias was mediated with ongoing reflexivity; that is, we considered how our own experiences and positionalities might influence the data to which we had access, the framing of this field scan and the interpretation of the data. Throughout the design, data collection, and analysis processes, we also balanced our own biases by engaging amongst the research teams and with FCYO staff in reviewing this work.

Reactivity was a concern in this field scan because FCYO provides resources and technical assistance to many, if not all, of the participating organizations. We mitigated the concern that participants would feel compelled to overemphasize their responses by ensuring confidentiality and member checking. We also offered participants a clear explanation of the value of their voices as important and legitimate contributors to better understanding the changing landscape of youth organizing.

METHODS

This field scan used a collaborative mixed methods research design. The collaborative mixed methods design allowed our field scan team to develop a multifaceted understanding of youth organizing over the last quarter century. The study design follows key points from education researchers on collaborative methods.[69] Collaborative research in this mode (1) "aims to be in relation with and responsible to specific communities, contexts, places, and peoples;" (2) design, interpretation, and dissemination of findings emerges from within the community; (3) findings support real experiences that are of value to the community; (4) prioritizes knowledge gained from the community's experiences; and (5) "illuminates core sustaining practices" of the community.[70] In this study, the community in question is the community

of people that make up the field of youth organizing, while FCYO is acting as a key player from within the field and in a position to disseminate findings. The mixed methods design is used to speak to both the macro and micro elements of the field of youth organizing. Quantitative findings suggest key understandings about the macro level of the field while qualitative findings dig deep into the micro level understandings that explain field-specific phenomena. Key to presenting the findings of this field scan is integrating the quantitative survey data with the qualitative data from focus groups, group interviews, and individual interviews.

Survey Methods for the 2020 National Youth Organizing Survey

Survey questions were drafted by Veronica Terriquez then reviewed for clarity by FCYO, the qualitative team, and the funder scan team. Important questions to the design of this survey included establishing FCYO's common understanding of "youth organizing" and determining what dimensions of both organizing activities and nonprofit structures were expected to be influential to the field of youth organizing. Prior field scan surveys and FCYO's mapping project also provided insights into what questions to draft. While most answers to survey questions were categorical, many included an "other" option where participants could type their unique answer.

Our aim was to gather information from as many youth organizing groups across the United States as possible. Groups that were registered with FCYO were invited to take the survey along with groups that were part of youth organizing networks in California. The survey was administered through Qualtrics. Survey collection was rolled out in two phases. First, surveys were sent to youth organizing groups in California during the summer of 2019. Second, in early fall the survey was sent to the youth organizing groups in the rest of the country. This two-phased roll out allowed the survey team to learn from the wave of participants and make adjustments for the second roll out. In addition to the two phased roll out, several versions of the survey were administered to youth organizing groups in an effort to prevent burdening groups that had recently participated in FCYO's innovative mapping project, which was data heavy. Data collection ended in November 2019.

Data was cleaned and analyzed using Stata Software for statistics. Preliminary analyses were conducted starting September 2019, with final analyses completed in April 2020. Descriptive statistics were produced for this report.

Methods for 2020 Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

The qualitative portion of this scan was designed as a series of focus groups with youth organizers. Focus group questions were designed by the Research Hub team in collaboration with FCYO and in cooperation with the survey and funder teams. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the qualitative research teams pivoted from only collecting focus group data to collecting small group and individual interviews in addition to focus group data. Focus group protocols were slightly adjusted at that time in order to facilitate those additional formats; however, the questions themselves stayed mostly the same.

Qualitative data was collected from 59 youth organizers. In meetings taking place from June 2019 to October 2019 the Research Hub strategized with FCYO on participant sampling, aiming to interview organizers

based in strategic locations across the nation for this scan. Additional sampling meetings took place in January, February, March, and August 2020. Sampling was an iterative process, involving intentional and directed scans of long-time youth organizing leaders, seasoned youth organizers, and up and coming youth organizers. Importantly, participants in the qualitative sample are part of organizations that are included in the national survey. These data were collected across 22 sessions totaling 25 hours of transcribed audio. Of the 22 sessions, 10 were focus groups and 12 were individual interviews. Focus groups were collected on-site at the FCYO joint convening in Phoenix, Arizona, which took place in November 2019. Focus groups included members of FCYO's Healthy Communities cohort and Pipelines to Power cohort. Additional focus groups and individual interviews were conducted via Zoom between January and April 2020. Additional follow up interviews were conducted with some participants in September 2020.

Data analysis was conducted with the goal of understanding how participants make sense of the past, present, and future of the field of youth organizing. Each of the 22 audio recordings of qualitative data were professionally transcribed and analyzed using Dedoose qualitative data analysis software. Prior to analysis, the qualitative team met to draft, reflect on, and redraft a coding schema meant to systematically categorize excerpts of information present in the transcripts. The coding schema included 54 codes split into broad categories of mission-driven codes, theory-driven codes, time codes, policy codes, and organization capacity codes. Each of these categories contained several subcodes, facilitating a deductive analysis of these data. Importantly, Dedoose allows for team coding. Two members of our qualitative team worked to code these data, though the bulk of the coding was taken on by one member (who is a heroine).

Themes and findings from the qualitative coding were used to develop analytical memos. More than two dozen memos were written on topics such as 'Being Youth Led,' 'Intersectionality,' 'Base Building,' and 'The Future of Youth Organizing.' These memos provided a deep analysis that informs research reports in the 2020 Field Scan. Our analytic process paired deep collaborative conversations with an iterative drafting process. In collaborative meetings between the Research Hub and FCYO staff we discussed findings and collectively analyzed major themes, grounding our shared analysis of present day organizing and the future of youth organizing in the history of the field. These conversations, the analytic memos, and the iterative drafting process allowed us to break important topics into logical publications within this series.

Methods for 2020 Funder Scan

This Field Scan leverages data points in conjunction with FCYO's Funder Scan entitled *Investing in the Power of Youth People: 20 Years of Philanthropic Support for Youth Organizing.* The Funder Scan leverages survey data collected by Veronica Terriquez and her research team referenced in the above section. Additionally, FCYO sent out a budget specific survey to the 312 youth organizing groups in their database with a response of roughly 37.5 percent (117 groups). Complementing this data was both the FCYO Youth Organizing Map and Candid Grants Data. The Youth Organizing Map collected data in conjunction with FCYO's 2019 convening, asking groups to identify their organizations' areas of focus, population group of focus and funding information, including their top three funders. This map included 128 groups as of the time of analysis and is self-reported data and did not include the total amount of funding received by groups. With respect to the Candid Grants Data, FCYO provided the names of the 312 organizations that responded to the survey in order to obtain grants data from 2016 and 2017. Candid then worked to inde-

pendently verify the grants reported by foundations. That particular data set only included 179 groups and skews towards grants from larger foundations with smaller organizations or organizations with a fiscal sponsor less represented. This dataset did include detailed information on the various foundation locations and grant amounts allowing an analysis of patterns in youth organizing to extrapolate the broader field of funding with respect to youth organizing.

Leveraging Prior Reports and Other Documentation

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this Field Scan, our research teams were able to leverage high quality information from prior field scans provided by FCYO. To do so, findings from these documents were first summarized by members of our qualitative team, then compared to the quantitative and qualitative data collected in 2019-2020.

Literature Review

Publications in the 2020 Field Scan are informed by literature both from the field and from the academy, as well as popular media. Field-based literature includes publications such as FCYO's Occasional Paper Series, publications by youth organizing groups, and publications by education rights organizations. Academic research includes books, journal articles, and monographs published on the topic of youth organizing and youth activism. Popular media was also referenced in the writing of Field Scan reports. Newspaper articles, op-eds, and blog posts contain a wealth of information on the field of youth organizing, especially on the victories won by youth organizers. We recognize and honor the commitment in bringing together different genres of the literature with our qualitative data findings in order to capture as much of the field of organizing as possible. We use an expansive definition of literature in order to capture the multiple voices of the field of youth organizing and move away from privileging a singular narrative in an ever-expanding field.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The 2020 Field Scan included survey responses, interview responses, and focus group responses thanks to the candor of 312 organizations, listed below in alphabetical order. Group names are listed as reported by staff.

482Forward
67 Sueños Program
99Rootz
A Better Chance A Better Community (ABC2)
A+ Schools
ACE
ACT for Women and Girls
Advocates for Youth
Alianza CV
Alliance for Educational Justice
Amistades, Inc.
Anonymous List for Change, Inc
API Equality-LA
APIENC
Appalachian Center for Equality
Arab American Action Network (AAAN)
ARTE
Asian Americans United
ASPIRE
Assata's Daughters
Atlanta Economic Justice Program
AYPAL: Building API Community Power
BAJI (Black Alliance for Just Immigration)
Baltimore Algebra Project
Black Organizing Project
Black Parallel School Board
Blue Hills Civic Association
Boys and Girls club of Kern county
Brady
BRIDGES
Brighton Center
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
Brothers Sons Selves Coalition
BYP100
CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities
CAIR Sacramento Valley / Central CA
California Center for Civic Participation
California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance
California Native Vote Project
California Walks
California Youth Connection
Californians for Justice Education Fund, Inc.
Carolina Youth Action Project
CASA
Causa Justa :: Just Cause
CAUSE (Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy)
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center for Community Advocacy
Center for Nuleadership on Urban Solutions
Central American Resource Center – CARECEN - Los Angeles
Centro por la Justicia - Southwest Workers Union
Cesar Chavez Service Clubs
Changeist
Chicago Freedom School
Chicago Votes
Chinese Progressive Association - San Francisco
CHIRLA California Dream Network
CHIRLA WiseUp!
Chispa
Churches United for Fair Housing
Citywide Youth Coalition, Inc.
Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth
Communities for a Better Environment
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice
Communities United/VOYCE
Community Coalition
Community Engagement Center
Community Food Advocates
Community Works
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (C.O.P.E.)
Connecticut Students for a Dream
Critical Exposure
CTCORE-Organize Now!
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
DC Peace and Economic Justice Program
Deep Center
Detroit Action
Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan (DAYUM)
Dolores Huerta Foundation
Dream Defenders
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
Earth Guardians
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
EBAYC Sacramento
Education Justice Alliance (EJA)
El Pueblo
Emgage FL
Empowering Voices for Peace and Justice (PA State Program)
EmpowerMT

Engage Miami Civic Fund

ERASE Racism

Esperanza Community Housing Corporation

Faith in the Valley Kern

Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE) - Program of Fifth Avenue Committee

Fathers & Families of San Joaquin

FEEST

FIERCE

Fighting Back Partnership

Filipino Migrant Center

Fireweed Collective

Florida Immigrant Coalition

Florida Youth SHINE

Forward Montana Foundation

Foster Youth in Action

FRESH New London

Fresno Barrios Unidos

Fresno Boys and Men of Color

Future Leaders of America

Generation Justice

Generation Vote

Gente Organizada/Pomona Students Union

Georgia EmpowerMEnt

Georgia Shift

Get Lit - Words Ignite

Girls for Gender Equity

Girls Justice League

Global Action Project

Global Kids

GreenRoots

Grow Hartford Youth Program

GSA Network / GSA Network of California

HANA Center

Healing and Transformative Justice Program: New York and New Jersey

Hearing Youth Voices

Her Health First (Girls on the Rise)

Highlander Research and Education Center

Hmong Innovating Politics

HOPE Collaborative

Hyde Square Task Force

Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence

Ignite NC

Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC)

Inland Empire Immigrant Youth Collective

InnerCity Struggle

IntegrateNYC

InterIm Community Development Association

Jakara Movement

Jolt

Kansas Appleseed

Kentucky Student Environmental Coalition

Khmer Girls in Action

KidWorks Community Development Corporation

Kite's Nest

Korean Resource Center

Labor/Community Strategy Center

Latino Equality Alliance

Learning Alliance of New Mexico

Legacy LA

Lents Youth Initiative

Levante Leadership Institute

Lighthouse Youth & Family Services

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization

Logan Square Neighborhood Association

Los Angeles Brotherhood Crusade, Black United Fund, Inc.

LOUD For Tomorrow

love faith and hope inc

Madera Coalition for Community Justice/Madera Youth Leaders

Magic City Youth Initiative

Make the Road CT

Make the Road New York

Many Languages One Voice

Massachusetts Avenue Project

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health (MassCOSH)

Mekong NYC

Mi Familia Vota Education Fund

Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH)

Mid-City CAN

Mikva Challenge

Mikva Challenge

MILPA

Minnesota Alliance With Youth

Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project

Momentum Alliance

Monsoon Asians & Pacific Islanders in Solidarity

MOVE Texas

MSA West (Muslim Students Association West)

Multicultural Resource Center

Native American Community Board

National Juvenile Justice Network

Native Justice Coalition

New Hampshire Youth Movement

New Mexico Dream Team

New Orleans Youth Alliance

New Voices are Rising

New York State Youth Leadership Council

Nis'to Incorporated

NJ Communities United

NMCAN

Nollie Jenkins Family Center

North Bay Organizing Project - Latinx Student Congress

Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition/ Sistas and Brothas United

Oakland Kids First

Oakland Leaf

Oakland Rising

OC Human Relations

OCA-Greater Houston

Ohio Student Association

One Common Unity

One Step A La Vez

OneAmerica

Pa'lante Restorative Justice

Pacoima Beautiful

Padres & Jovenes Unidos

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)

Paving Great Futures

Peace by Piece New Orleans

Philadelphia Student Union

Pittsfield Listens

PODER

Poder in Action

Portland Outright

Power California

Power Shift Network

Power U Center for Social Change

PRO Youth & Families

Project VOYCE

Providence Student Union

Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM)

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Pueblo Unido Community Development Corporation

Puente Human Rights Movement AZ

Raices Cultura

Red Hook Initiative

Resilience Orange County

Restaurant Opportunities Centers United

rethink new orleans

Rockaway Youth Task Force

Roots For Peace: Healthy Communities

Rosedale Freedom Project

RYSE

SAY San Diego, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention Program

Schools LA Students Deserve

Seattle Community Justice Program

Seeding Sovereignty

Serving All Vessels Equally, Inc. (S.A.V.E.)

Sierra Club, My Generation campaign

SIREN (Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network)

Sister‚Äôs Keeper Inc

Soar

Social Justice Learning Institute

Sociedad Latina

South Kern Sol

Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA)

Southern Echo Inc.

Southside Together Organizing for Power

St. Louis Peacebuilding Program

Student Action

Student Immigrant Movement

Student PIRGs

Students for Sensible Drug Policy

Students Making a Change

Telling Our Story/Students for Educational Justice

Tenants and Workers United

Tewa Women United

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol

The Center for Popular Democracy/ Action

The City School

The Epicenter of Monterey

The Global Action Research Center/City Heights Youth for Change

The LGBT Center Orange County-Youth Empowered to Act

The Roosevelt Network

The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment

The Source LGBT+ Center

The STAY Project

TODEC LEGAL CENTER

Together for Brothers (T4B)

True North Organizing Network

Tunica Teens In Action, Inc.

Twin Cities Healing Justice Program

Ubuntu Village NOLA

UC San Diego Center for Community Health Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

UCLA Dream Resource Center

UnifiEd

United Roots

United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)

United We Dream Network, Inc.

UPROSE

Urban Peace Movement

UrbEd

UTEC

Ventura County Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice

VietLead

VietRISE

Voices For Racial Justice

Voto Latino

Wabanaki Program

Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA

West Dayton Youth Task Force

Working Narratives: Coastal Youth Media

YA-YA Network (Youth Activists-Youth Allies)

Young Civic Leaders at MassVOTE

Young Invincibles

Young Organizers United

Young Women's Freedom Center

Youth Activism Project

Youth Alliance

Youth Art & Self-empowerment Project

Youth At The Center

Youth Empowered in the Struggle

Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!)

Youth Environmental Justice Alliance

Youth In Action

Youth Justice Coalition

Youth MOVE National

Youth on Board/YouthBuild USA

Youth Organizing! Disabled & Proud

Youth Together

Youth United for Change

Youth United for Community Action

Youth Voice

YVote and Next Generation Politics

ENDNOTES

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