



2013
NATIONAL
FIELD SCAN

THE FUNDERS'
COLLABORATIVE
ON YOUTH
ORGANIZING

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**funders'
collaborative
on youth
organizing**

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2013 FIELD SCAN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Youth organizing is an innovative strategy that powerfully engages young people, particularly low income young people and young people of color, to develop and implement individual, community and societal change through community organizing. The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO), founded in 2000, is the only national intermediary that is dedicated to increasing philanthropic resources for youth organizing groups and promoting the leadership of low-income young people and young people of color organizing for social justice.

Youth organizing trains young people¹ in community organizing and advocacy, and helps them use these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities. FCYO believes that young people have strengths and wisdom from their lived experiences and must be at the center of any meaningful change processes. One of the guiding principles in FCYO's work is the belief that those most affected by social injustices— lack of access to resources, structural and institutional racism, unjust policies – are the most knowledgeable of community issues, and if given the tools and resources to organize, are the most effective in developing solutions. Therefore, it is critical for communities, organizations and institutions to create opportunities for youth organizers to be engaged in decision-making processes that impact their lives.

To document trends, challenges and opportunities within the field of youth organizing, FCYO conducts national scans using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. These Field Scans inform FCYO's strategy and help advocate for the work being done by youth organizers across the country. The 2013 Field Scan is our third scan of this type, the second to be distributed publicly. The 2013 scan analyzes data from the respondents of a national survey as well as from in-depth conversations. Of the more than 180 organizations identified for our survey, 61% responded. In addition, we held focus group discussions including one-on-one conversations, with more than 40 organizations nationally.

In the 13 years that FCYO has been tracking youth organizing, the field has advanced in several important ways. What was once a group of isolated organizations has now developed into a field with strong relationships, sharing of best practices, and effective collaboration. Campaign victories have grown from small changes in individual schools and neighborhoods to significant changes to school district, state and even federal policy. Key issues such as school discipline and the human rights of undocumented immigrant students have been transformed by youth activism. But at the same time, youth organizing is experiencing a reduction in funding that could threaten growth, and there are new challenges that must be met if the field is to move to the next level of national impact. This report will attempt to summarize the accomplishments and strengths as well as key challenges facing the youth organizing field.

When reporting on the state of the youth organizing field, it is important to consider the context in which this work is happening. The latest presidential election has raised awareness that the health of our democracy will rest in large part on our ability to engage low income young people and young people of color as one of the largest and fastest-growing sections of the population. While traditional institutions have struggled to engage this population, youth organizing groups have been models in reaching and building the leadership therein. The field was largely created and designed by low income young people and young people of color with their cultures and ways of being in the forefront. For this reason, youth organizing groups now have the potential to play a critical role in shaping our society; doing so at the necessary scale will require these groups to grow and strengthen ties to a variety of new partners as well as to maintain a more stable and diverse funding base to support this crucial work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

¹ The vast majority of the youth organizing field, on behalf of whom FCYO advocates, works with youth between the ages of 13 and 19.

Key Findings

The following is a summary of four key findings regarding youth organizing groups: the growth in maturity and power; expansion of youth development goals; organizing victories, and; funding challenges.

1. Maturity & Power: The field of youth organizing has grown significantly and has reached a level of maturity, scale and coordination in its campaign work. Many core institutions seem poised to lead the field toward greater collective impact and political power, as evidenced by the following:

- **Youth organizing is at the center of key issues in our social and political discourse.** The highest concentration of groups is working around staple campaign issue areas such as education, environment, and community and neighborhood improvement. Compared to what was reported in 2010, a considerably higher percentage of 2013 respondents reported working on campaigns related to key issues in the political moment: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (LGBTQ) issues (+20%); health (+17%); immigrant rights (+15%); and gender and young women's issues (+15%). The growth in these campaign areas can be explained by a combination of several trends. Youth organizing groups are responding to attacks on their communities, gaining momentum and building power around certain issues, and sparking dialogue by bringing important youth issues to a national audience.
- **The youth organizing field is collaborating and building power at a higher level than ever before,** bringing campaigns to scale through the most widespread participation in national and statewide alliances FCYO has ever recorded. The 2013 sample reported a high participation in city-level (82%), state-level (71%) and national alliances (83%), and showed marked increases in participation in state-level (+19%) and national alliances (+35%) than was reported by the 2010 scan.
- **The youth organizing field is increasingly multigenerational in character.** The majority of respondents operate with intergenerational organizational models and an overwhelming majority of all respondents partner with adult allies on campaign work. There is a growing recognition that low-income young people and young people of color are part of whole communities and that to achieve the kinds of changes desired, people of all ages must organize together, building strong youth leadership across social justice movements. There also remains a need to create a safe space for youth-led organizing, one that values and nurtures young people's unique skills, values and challenges.
- **Youth organizing represents an important opportunity to increase civic engagement among the pre-electorate as well as those already of voting age with the goal of increasing the power of low-income communities and communities of color.** Sixty-six percent (66%) of respondent organizations are currently engaged or interested in engaging in 501(c)(3) voter engagement work.² Further, as groups have grown more mature, a subset has moved to set up 501(c)(4) organizations to directly engage in political campaigns. These are especially important findings when considered alongside supporting data showing the growing power of young voters and voters from communities of color.
- **A subset of the field has developed into core, anchor institutions** that have been around for 10-15 years or more and have survived leadership transitions and funding shifts. These groups are important to continued coordination and anchoring of high-level work among established groups and alliances; they also serve as important teachers and resources for emerging groups. The common characteristics of these groups include strong partnerships with adult organizations, leadership roles in networks and coalitions, systematic supports and services for youth leaders, increased fundraising from non-foundation sources, and a variety of strategies to contend for meaningful power.

2. Furthering Youth Development Goals: Youth organizing groups not only train young people of color from low-income communities in community organizing skills, but they are often the only entities able to reach these young people with vital services. Our 2013 scan showed how groups in the field have continued to build a unique form of youth development aligned with the specific principles and character of the communities they represent. This is borne out in the following findings:

- **Youth organizing groups across the country are providing myriad supports and services to young people through formal and informal channels.** This finding confirms that the provision of academic, social emotional and mental health and other traditional social services through a social justice lens is an important way that the field builds leadership through the transformative power of organizing.
- **More groups have developed formal structures to provide services and supports to young people.** The formalization and customization of youth development supports underscores a set of guiding principles and practices for youth organizing groups. They are able to meet the young people where they are in their lives, and address life challenges by designing programs specific to their needs.
- **Transitioning young people into opportunities post-high school and engaging alumni are especially critical areas of focus for youth organizing groups.** Groups have been working to build partnerships with community colleges, universities, young adult organizing groups and employers, while providing engagement and support to young leaders who enter these institutions in the next phase of their lives.

3. Youth Organizing Victories: For the first time as part of the field scan, FCYO collected data on recent youth organizing victories. For the purpose of this field scan, a youth organizing victory is defined as the result of a campaign led by youth or in which youth play a significant role, where the victory itself is long-lasting and makes an impact on a policy, community or institution. Noteworthy findings included:

- **Key Issue Areas:** Of the 84 reported youth organizing victories over the past three years, our scan revealed that the top five issue areas achieving victories were: educational justice/education reform (with 24 victories), immigrant rights (13), environmental justice (11), food justice (10) and health (7). The concentration of victories in these issue areas indicates that young people are helping to define important reforms of our time.
- **Scope and Scale of Victories:** Of the 84 reported youth organizing victories, 80% made impacts at a community level or larger scale (i.e., city, state, multi-state, national, international). Only 17 victories affected a singular entity such as one school, hospital or neighborhood. The remaining victories were largely school district and citywide wins (48), state victories (18) and one national victory, suggesting a trend toward more and larger victories.
- **Use of Innovative Strategies:** The vast majority of youth organizing groups reporting victories are engaged in social networking or use social media as a tool for building and communicating with its base. Ninety-four percent (94%) of groups who have achieved victories use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or their own blogs to stay connected with their alumni and update their community about actions, events and campaign work.

⁶ 2 In our survey, FCYO defined electoral work as intentionally building the voting power of young people and their communities through voter registration, voter education activities, and building alliances with political allies

4. Funding Challenges and Opportunities: The youth organizing field is poised to make significant impact at every level at which it operates – through civic engagement/electoral work, national campaigns, individual impacts on young people through development supports. But it needs significant investment from institutional philanthropy. The evidence demonstrates that long-term investment in youth organizing does result in social change that benefits low-income communities and communities of color. Our specific findings with relation to funding include:

- **The youth organizing field has experienced a significant decrease in foundation funding.** The decrease in foundation funding for youth organizing is the single most important trend we have identified and poses a potential threat to the growth of the field and the health of the communities that groups support.
- **Sustained investment can lead to substantial victories.** In many of the youth organizing victories we learned about, sustained investment from funders in a region or issue resulted in significant campaign victories.
- **Existing funding also has its challenges to sustainable youth-led organizations and campaigns.** The trend in philanthropy is to support organizations working on issues defined by by funders. There is a concern among youth organizers that a large portion of youth organizing activities could be dictated by funders thus diminishing the fundamental youth-driven nature of the work. In addition, issue-specific funders tend to focus on supporting campaign activities to win policy goals, while placing less emphasis on building the infrastructure in low-income communities and communities of color that can support long-term change.
- **Youth organizing is exploring innovative ways to overcome immediate funding challenges while building long-term financial sustainability.** Overall, the two strategies that appear to have had the greatest short-term fundraising success are building a strong individual donor base and learning how to present youth organizing work to a more diverse set of funders. Groups are also exploring strategies to move away from heavy dependence on foundation funding to a place of long-term, collective self-reliance.



Recommendations

FCYO's recommendations are targeted at increasing philanthropic support in four key areas where the field is facing challenges while perched on the cusp of significant opportunity and momentum.

1. Strengthen the Financial Position of the Field:

The challenge of meeting the financial needs of youth organizing groups can be addressed by:

- Substantially increasing direct financial support to youth organizers through general operating grants;
- Supporting financial management capacity-building efforts for youth organizing groups;
- Supporting improved revenue-generating practices among the field, including trainings on fundraising, communications/messaging and individual donor development;
- Supporting the growth and documentation of innovative and fruitful financial sustainability practices among the youth organizing field; and
- Joining FCYO and other funders in developing a shared advocacy strategy to bring more resources into the field of youth organizing.

2. Continue to Invest in Building a Leadership Pipeline:

We must continue to invest in building leadership a leadership pipeline for low-income youth and youth of color by:

- Providing direct, multi-year grants to youth organizing practitioners to engage new members, develop holistic youth support programs, transition young adults into meaningful opportunities, and engage alumni; and
- Supporting partnerships and infrastructure to build connections between the youth organizing field and strategic institutions including colleges, social service agencies, philanthropy and adult organizing practitioners.

3. Encourage Unity and Collaboration Among Strands of the Youth Movement:

Bringing together varying strands of the youth movement is critical to the overall strength of youth organizing and can be supported by:

- Providing space for different constituencies in the youth movement to come together to build relationships and share knowledge through convenings;
- Supporting cohort-based learning circles that allow anchor youth organizing groups to directly work and share knowledge with other established and emerging groups in the youth movement; and
- Providing direct financial support to networks, coalitions and alliances.

4. Invest in a Millennial Youth Movement:

The future of social justice demands we encourage and nurture youth organizers of the new millennium by:

- Helping build the capacity of youth organizing practitioners to engage in nonpartisan 501(c)(3) voter engagement work;
- Building the capacity of the field to develop 501(c)(4) and political action committees; and
- Supporting the growth of partnerships between youth organizing groups and networks, and adult civic engagement organizations.

ABOUT THE 2013 FIELD SCAN

The 2013 Field Scan was researched, analyzed and written by FCYO staff with consultation from members of our Board of Advisors and other field leaders. Over the past year, we reviewed our database and consulted youth organizers and funders and other stakeholders in the field to identify more than 180 organizations spread throughout the United States. 111 of these groups responded to an online survey (a 61% response rate) gathering basic information such as budget size, issue and campaign areas, geographic representation, organizational structure and youth development supports provided to young people, etc. This survey was followed up with five regional focus groups in New York City; Boston; Jackson, Miss.; Oakland, Calif; and Chicago – where FCYO engaged more than 50 representatives from more than 40 youth organizing practitioner groups across the country. These conversations – which included executive-level staff members and youth organizers – were supplemented by phone and in-person conversations with other stakeholders in the field. (All scan participants and questions are listed in Appendix 2, attached to this report.)

The response rate of our 2013 online survey was lower than our 2010 survey. However, it represented a more concentrated sample of youth organizing groups, as intermediaries and funders were not included in data collection. Also, in this report we use the survey data to compare findings against survey data collected for the last scan in 2010. We do so under the assumption that both surveys together offer a picture of the field as a cross-section, and acknowledge that the two samples are quite different. We believe comparisons offer indications of trends, and should be used to suggest directions for future analyses.

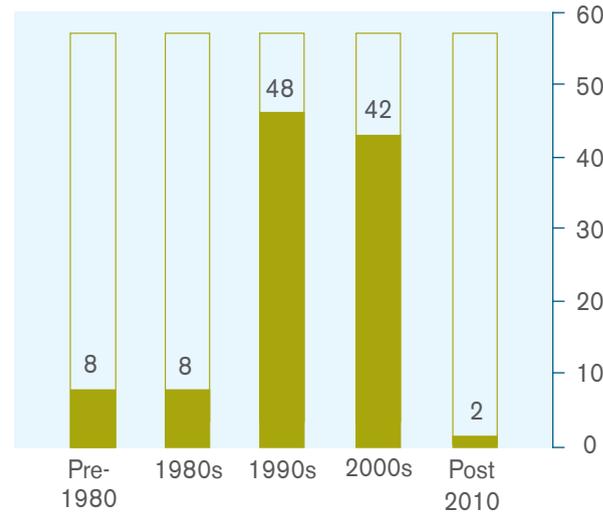
This document is an analysis of the online survey and in-person conversations held nationally. We are pleased to present you with the 2013 Field Scan: The State of the Field of Youth Organizing.



ABOUT THE 2013 FIELD SCAN

Organization Age

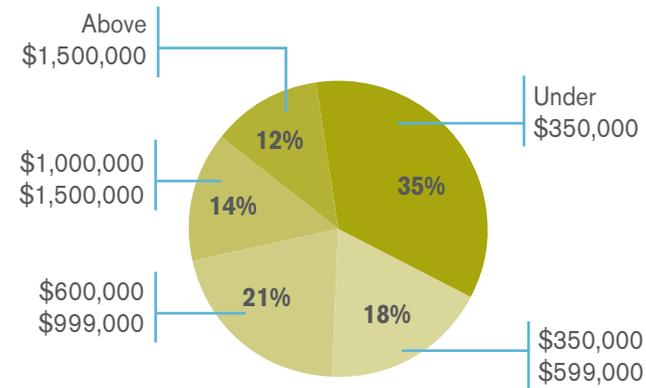
The median age of respondent organizations was 12 years – the vast majority of participant groups were founded during the 1990s and 2000s. Among 2013 respondents, 12 groups were founded in the last 5 years; one-third of these groups are located in the South, specifically in North Carolina (3) and Louisiana (1). This finding supports a promising trend of growth we noted in our last scan when 22% of groups younger than five years came from the South. For a more detailed report on social justice organizing in the South, we suggest the report, *As the South Goes: Philanthropy and Social Justice in the US South*.¹



Graph 1: Groups Founded per Decade

Budget Size & Revenue Diversity

Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents reported organizational budgets of less than \$500,000, with the majority of those falling below \$350,000. As was the case with the 2010 Field Scan sample, we found that of those respondents reporting annual budgets of more than \$1 million – these were almost all large, intergenerational groups, or youth organizing projects within large, adult-led organizations – the average youth organizing budget size or allocation was just less than \$300,000. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents reported holding independent 501(c)(3) status with the remaining percentage having a fiscal sponsor.



Graph 2: Organizational Budgets

Source of Revenue	Median % of Revenue
Foundations	76%
Government	17%
Individuals	14%
Earned Income	7%
Corporations	6%

Table 1: Funding Diversity

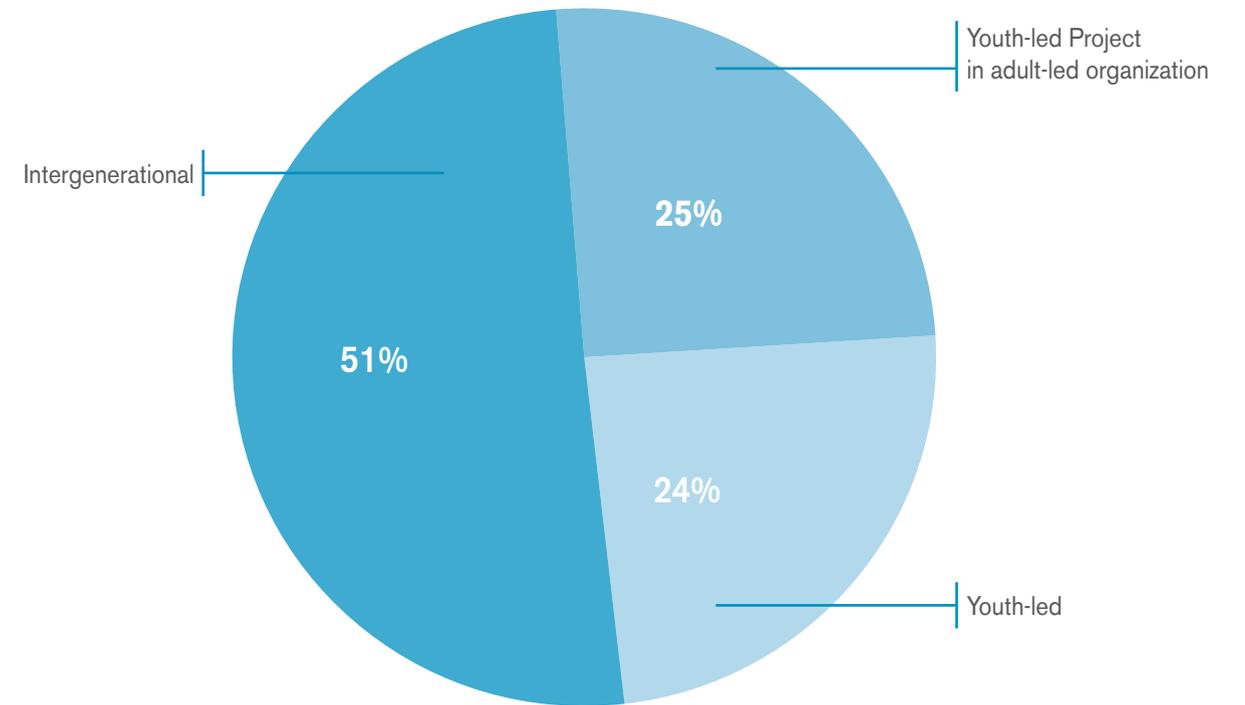
When asked to provide an estimated breakdown of their funding streams by percentage, respondents reported a high reliance on foundation revenue.

Organizational Model

For the purposes of our survey, we asked our respondents to place themselves in one of three types of organizational forms:

- **Youth-led organizations:** In groups using variations on this model, young people provide leadership for the design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns as well as the management of the organization.
- **Intergenerational organizations:** In intergenerational models, young people and adults share leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns, as well as the management of the organization.
- **Youth-led projects in adult-led organizations:** In this model, young people provide leadership for design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns, but may not have a leadership role in the management of the larger adult-led organization in which they are housed.

Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents reported operating under an intergenerational model, while the remaining respondents were equally split between youth-led and youth-led projects in adult-led organizations.



Graph 3: Organizational Model

Staffing

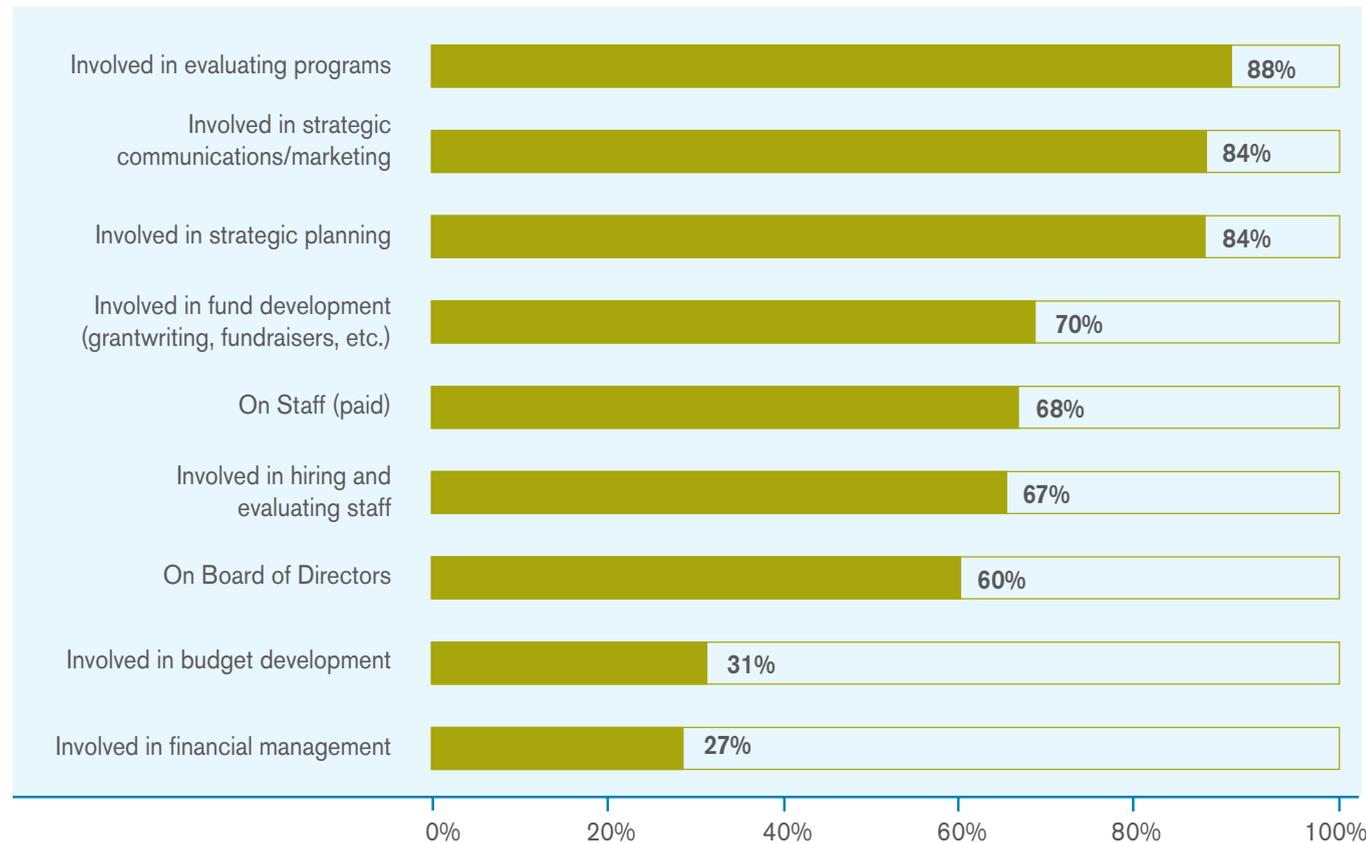
Most respondents reported having between one and nine full- and part-time staff members, and rely heavily on volunteers in their work. Eighty-four percent (84%) of respondents reported having at least one paid or stipended youth organizing position in their organization.

Number of Stipended Youth Organizing Positions	Percent of Respondents
none	17%
1-5	34%
6-10	21%
11-15	9%
More than 15	19%

Table 2: Youth Organizing Positions

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the sample reported having at least one current staff member who participated in their programs as a young person. Many respondents reported that young people were involved in many critical areas of their organizations. In addition, many survey respondents added comments stressing that young people were heavily involved in program development and implementation.

Graph 4: Organizations Where Young People Play Leadership Roles



Membership Base

Respondents were asked to provide estimates of their youth and full membership base; the table below aggregates and analyzes the youth and full membership base of our sample. The data indicates that most respondents are operating with a small core membership base, both in terms of youth and adults. However, there is a small subset of intergenerational groups that have generated large membership bases of young people and adults.

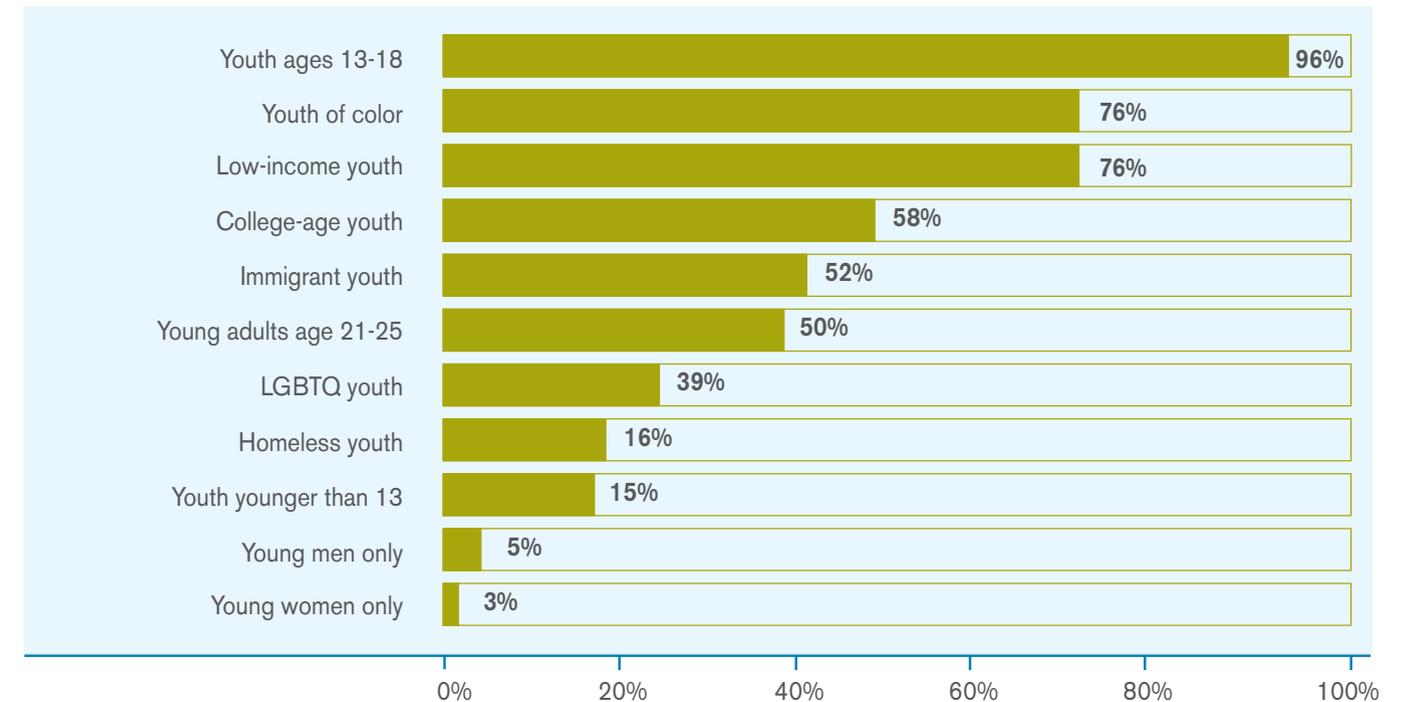
Sample Measure	Youth Membership	Full Membership (Youth and Adults)
Total	32,500	92,000
Average	441	9,244
Median	70	200

Table 3. Membership Base.

Target Population

Our respondents typically engage young people of color between the ages of 13 and 18. Comparing data from our 2004 and 2010 scans to the current scan, we see that youth organizing groups are now engaging young people both younger and older than high school age. Fifteen percent (15%) of respondents reported working with young people under the age of 13, and 58% reported working with college age youth or young adults ages 21 to 25.

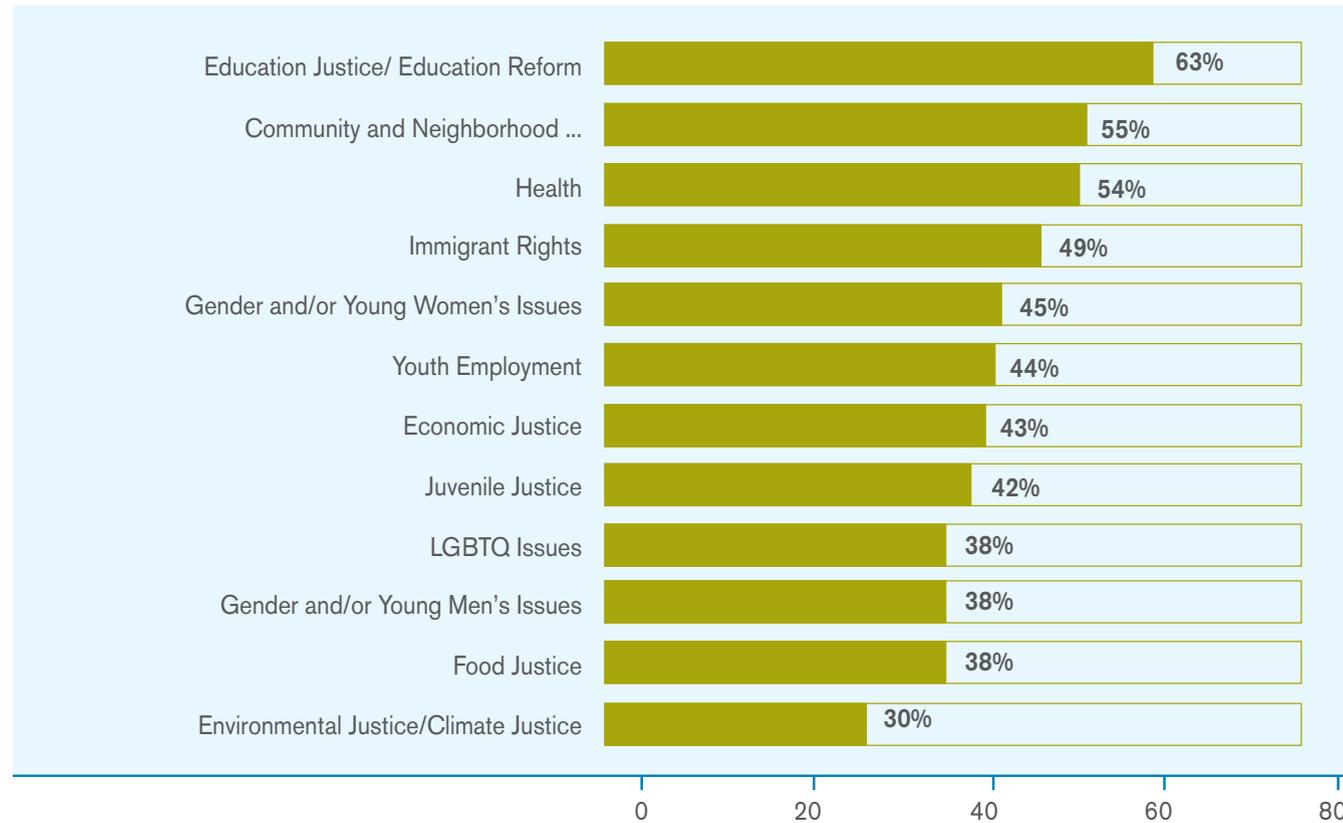
Graph 5: Target Population



Campaign Issue Areas

Our sample reported working across a wide array of campaign issue areas; the top 12 issue areas are listed below.⁴ Overall, the top campaign issue area reported by the 2013 sample was education reform and educational justice, a trend predicted in our 2004 scan, confirmed in our 2010 scan, and sustained in the 2013 sample. Our respondents also reported working on an average of five issue areas at once, confirming the position put forth in our last scan that youth organizing practitioners are responding to multiple issues of concern in their communities.

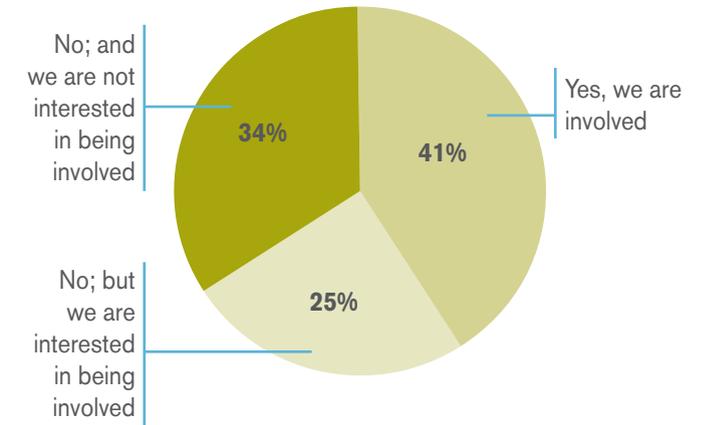
Graph 6: Top Campaign Issue Areas



18 ⁴ We surveyed respondents on a total of 20 issue areas, and allowed for open-ended responses. Other campaign issue areas surveyed were: workers' rights, police reform, school food, media justice, housing, reproductive justice, native rights and anti-militarism.

Voter Engagement Work

FCYO for the first time polled the field on its involvement in voter engagement organizing. The majority of respondents were already doing, or were interested in doing, voter engagement work. Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents are currently engaged in voter engagement work, primarily through Get Out the Vote (GOTV), voter education events and alliance building. Another 24% were not currently doing electoral work but said they were interested in doing so.

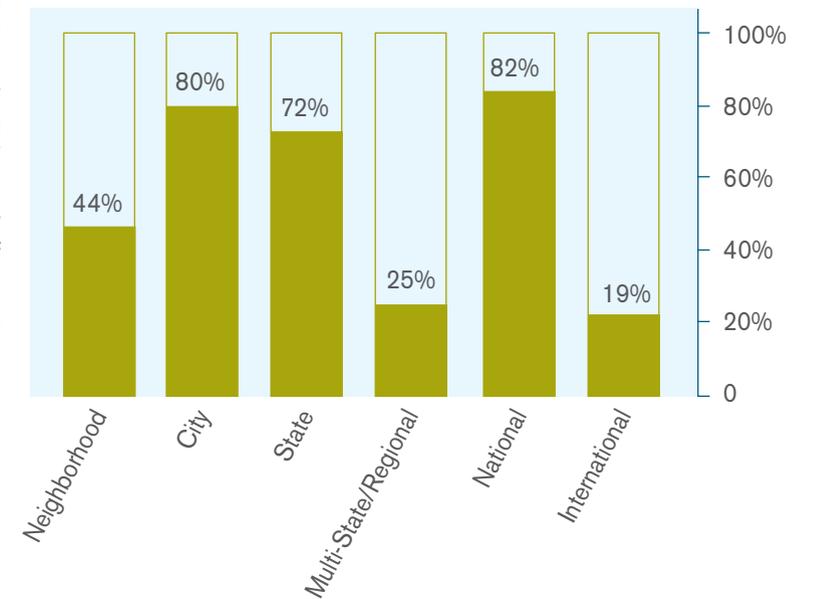


Graph 7: Involvement in Voter Engagement Work

Networks & Alliances

In an effort to track the scale at which groups were collaborating on campaigns, we surveyed involvement in networks or alliances at the local, state, regional, national and/or international levels.⁵ We also asked groups to tell us what specific networks, coalitions or affiliations they were currently a part of, to determine where momentum was building or shifting. Overall, we found that 77% of our total sample indicated some participation in networks or alliances. Of those respondents reporting network or alliance participation, we saw the highest percentage of participation at the city, state and national levels. It is also clear from open-ended responses that groups are working with multiple networks at various levels simultaneously.

Graph 8: Participation in Networks and Alliances

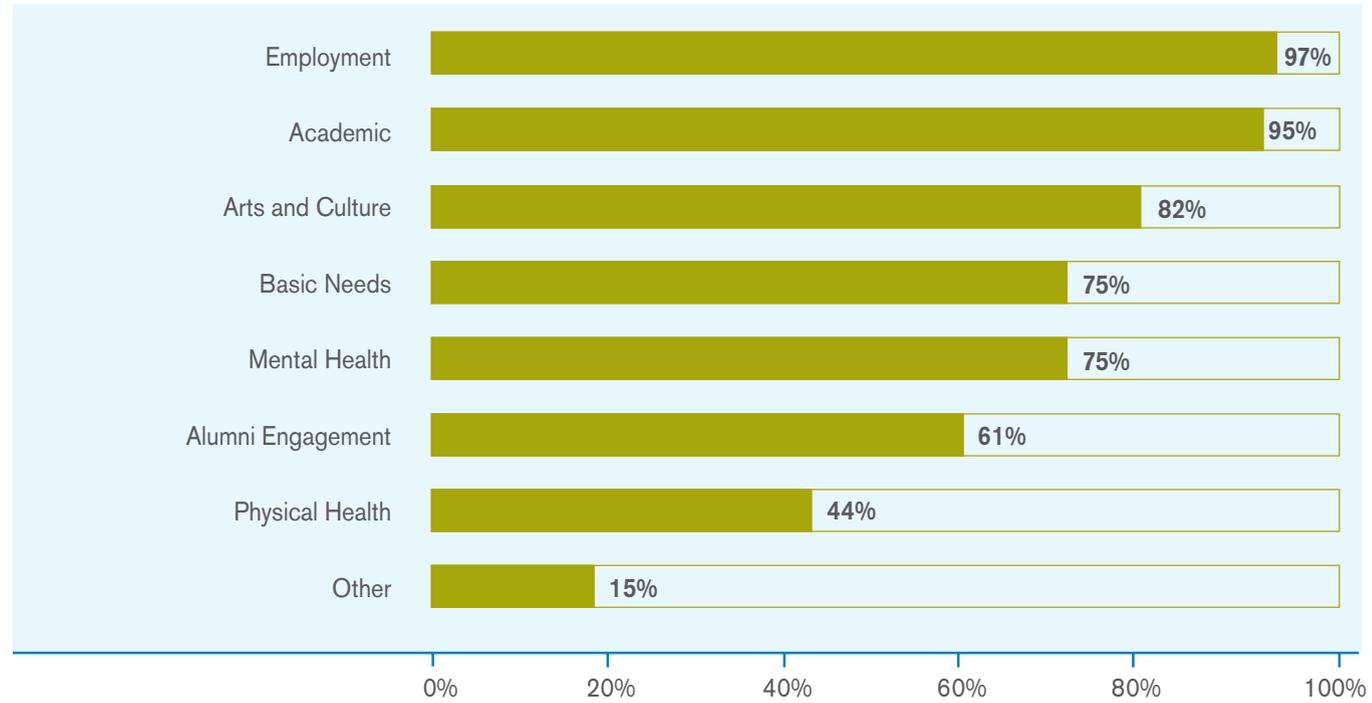


⁵ In this scan, we use networks and/or alliances as broad catch-all terms that include other collaborative formations such as task forces, coalitions, teams, working groups, etc

Youth Development Supports

We know that youth organizing groups not only train young people of color from low-income communities in community organizing skills, but they are often the only source able to reach these young people with vital services. Since our last field scan, we have been tracking the provision of youth development supports more closely. The vast majority of respondents to our 2013 scan provide support and development services to young members across a variety of areas as seen below.⁶

Graph 9: Youth Development Supports



Conclusion

This section was intended to provide a snapshot of our sample as a cross-section of the field, providing data on how and where work is happening, what respondents are working on and whom they are engaging in campaigns and organizations. In the next section we will explore areas of special significance coming out of this data, especially when paired with what we learned in our focus groups.



⁶ The category of "Basic Needs" encompasses the following social services: housing support, legal services, immigration services and parent outreach.

KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS



KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Overview and Framing

We expanded the 2013 Field Scan in several areas to assess different trends and shifts the youth organizing field has experienced in the past several years. We included more questions in our survey to learn how and to what extent youth organizing groups were prioritizing issues, changing the scope and scale of their work, and building power to advance their campaigns. In this section, we present key findings and our analysis of different trends and themes that have emerged, against the backdrop of the political and economic climate, and funding landscape that impacts low-income youth and youth of color and marginalized communities.

Below, we will analyze specific points of interest, including how groups have done the following: partnered with adult allies or used multi-generational strategies; addressed multiple issues and achieved campaign victories; engaged in networks and alliances; explored or engaged in electoral work; and provided youth development supports..

Multi-generational Organizing

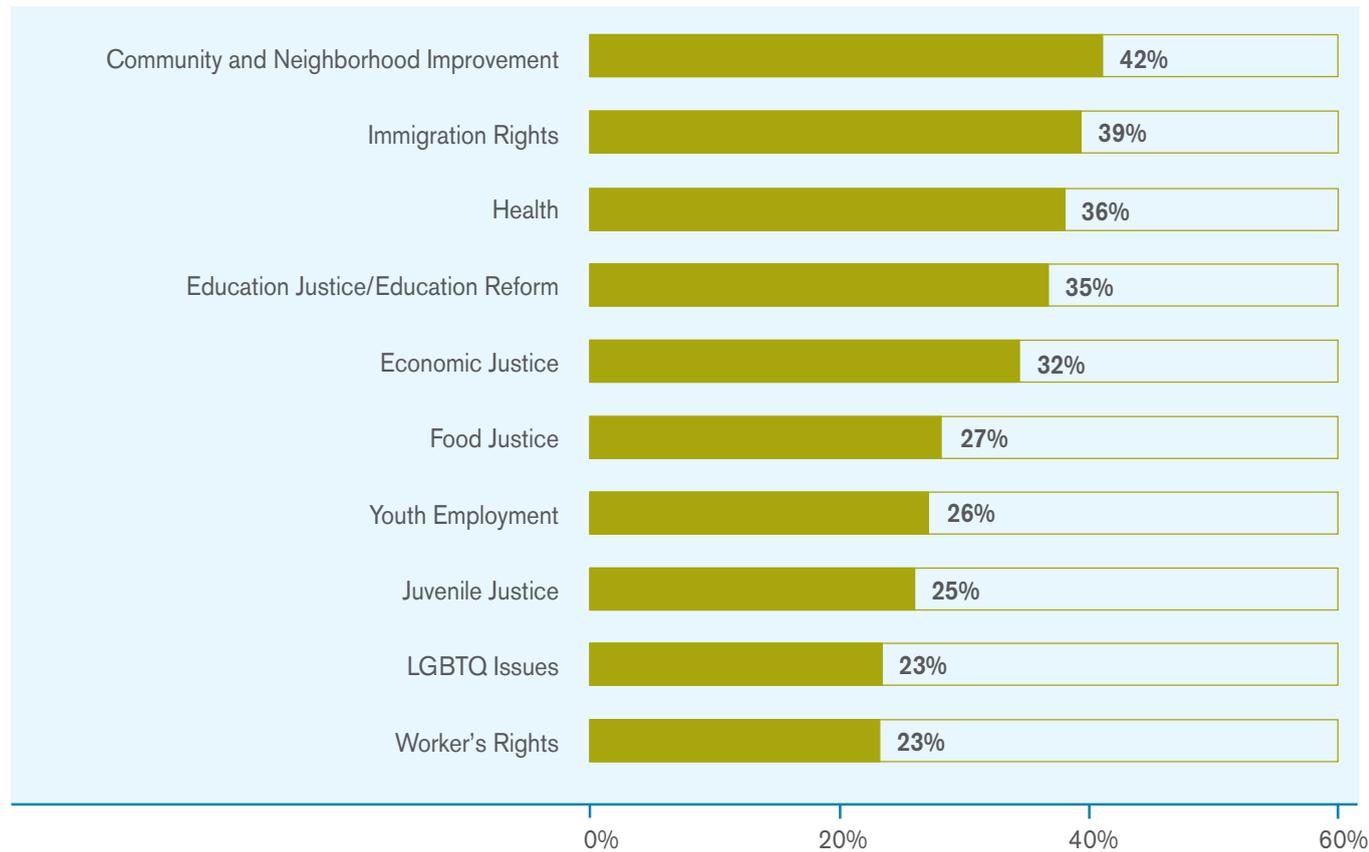
FCYO was particularly interested in learning how the field of youth organizing is involved in “multi-generational organizing,” defined by the Hill-Snowdon Foundation as “organizing efforts that bring together youth (18yrs and younger) and adults to share leadership and power within organizing campaigns and decision-making structures (e.g., organizations, coalitions, networks, etc).” For the purposes of this report, we use the definitions of multi-generational organizing arrangements developed by the Hill-Snowdon Foundation:⁷

- **Intergenerational:** Where youth and adults share leadership in the design, implementation and evaluation of organizing campaigns, as well as the management of a particular organization.
- **Cross-generational:** Where youth-led organizations/projects and adult-led organizations come together in networks or coalitions to do joint work. Youth in these settings have power and leadership in the direction of the coalition’s efforts, but not within the decision-making structures of the other coalition member organizations.

In our 2010 scan, FCYO confirmed a trend toward multi-generational organizing – more than half of survey respondents reported that their groups were run through an intergenerational organizational model. In the current scan, FCYO went a step further to also confirm the cross-generational campaign work in which youth organizers were engaged.

The data from our 2013 survey shows that more than 50% of respondents – as was the case with the last scan – employ an intergenerational organizational model, and also that 88% use intergenerational or cross-generational arrangements in campaigns. The respondents indicated that they use these strategies most frequently in campaign issues focused on immigrant rights, community and neighborhood improvement, health, and educational justice/education reform. This data demonstrates the current multi-generational character of the field of youth organizing.

⁷ The mission of the Hill-Snowdon Foundation is to work with low-income families and communities to create a fair and just society. For more on the foundation’s vision and work, visit HillSnowdon.org



Graph 10: Top Multi-generational Campaign Issues

In focus groups following an initial survey analysis, we asked all participants to share specific experiences with multi-generational organizing and to provide their overall commentary on this topic. These conversations provided a more textured picture of how and why the field is working with adults and some of the challenges and opportunities groups have encountered.

During these conversations, participants shared different experiences and analyses around multi-generational organizing. Each focus group discussed balancing the needs around protecting a safe space for young people to develop, organize and lead on one hand, with the goals of building broad-based community support and learning from experienced organizers by engaging adults on the other. When speaking about building support for campaigns, many groups expressed that cross- and intergenerational strategies are nothing new, are a natural part of strategy, and that they often develop as a progression of youth-led or youth-focused campaigns in certain circumstances.

For example, a faith-based group reported that it frequently engaged adult congregations in its campaigns, because it had close ties already, and because the political power that those groups had in the community provided significant leverage. An intergenerational organization in Boston reported that youth organizers and senior citizen groups successfully partnered around creating an affordable fare structure for the mass transit system because of the clear alignment of goals. Multi-generational campaigns benefit significantly from young people organizing through their unique relationship ecosystems and can be important catalysts for bringing the full strength of communities to action.

In other circumstances, groups explained that engaging adults in their campaigns was not a matter of course, but can be complex and challenging to staff and young people. Respondents discussed working to address some specific challenges of multi-generational organizing, including:

- Building the capacity and resources to engage more people in outreach;
- Creating a culture in which young people and adults can engage in shared campaigns across differences of gender, sexuality, age, etc.;
- Engaging busy parents with multiple demanding jobs;
- Managing the complex and intensive task of organizing adults in communities with many region-specific languages and cultural barriers;
- Creating and maintaining a supportive, safe space for young people in organizing, especially around sensitive issue areas such as sexuality, poverty and immigration status; and
- Addressing the challenges that young organizers face when leveraging power in partnership with adults and adult organizations.

Although groups have faced challenges to engaging in multi-generational organizing, some have worked to overcome them through intentional strategies that benefit both youth and adults in community partnerships. Focus group participants and survey respondents shared a few ways that their organizations keep young people at the center of these partnerships through cross-generational campaign work and intergenerational organizational leadership:

One youth organizing group stated that their campaigns often involved parents and adults, but only if chosen by youth leadership as a way of having young people identify the adult partners and choose the level of engagement.

Another reported having an intergenerational model but reserving campaign decision-making power for youth leaders, and that adults are not prioritized regarding opportunities for travel or speaking engagements; both of these techniques serve as ways to instill a sense of high value in the capabilities of youth organizers.

Another group indicated that their organization had reached out to adult-led organizing groups to provide strategic technical assistance, but maintained youth leadership and young people as the drivers of their work.

Another intergenerational group reported prioritizing youth members when interviewing or recruiting for staff positions as way of

meaningfully demonstrating and intentionally engaging youth organizers in important organizational decision-making processes.

Overall, respondents agreed that the potential benefits of multi-generational organizing were significant both in terms of achieving wins, bringing communities together and building intergenerational skills among organizers. There was significant concern however, over young organizers being pushed into collaborating with adults, or not having the proper amount of power or support in multi-generational coalitions. There was agreement that multi-generational collaboration should be done in a sensitive, intentional and well-resourced manner so that all parties benefit and draw strength from the partnership.

More than a decade ago, when FCYO started, many organizations focused much more exclusively on building the power of young people; now there is clearly more focus on young people and adults building power together. There is growing recognition that low-income young people and young people of color are part of whole communities and that to achieve the kinds of changes desired, people of all ages must organize together. Therefore, for many youth organizers, the goal has become less about building a pure youth movement and more about building strong youth leadership across social justice movements. Respondents emphasize that organizing with young people and adults requires real attention to elevate the voices of young people, and over the last generation a new foundation of practitioners has emerged with the expertise to do just that.

Issues and Campaigns

Youth organizing engages the most marginalized populations: low-income youth and youth of color who develop and run campaigns addressing the very issues by which they are impacted. Data collected in our survey and focus groups allows us to present trends and themes in youth organizing campaigns, and it gives us a clear picture of how young people view and prioritize issues in the schools and communities. While the youth organizing field has responded to important issue areas institutionally – that is to say, youth organizing practitioner groups have grown increasingly adept and powerful in mobilizing around topical issues – the importance of young people being organically anchored in the most pressing social issues of our time cannot be overstated. Low-income young people and young people of color are at the center of debates around human rights as they relate to education, gender and sexuality, healthy communities and immigrant rights in America.

Areas of Growth: While the 2013 sample maintained the same concentration around top issues such as educational justice/reform, community and neighborhood improvement, and economic justice as was documented in 2010, there were some interesting differences in campaign issues between the two samples. In 2013, a considerably higher percentage of respondents reported working on campaigns related to LGBTQ issues (+20%), health (+17%), immigrant rights (+15%), gender and young women’s issues (+15%), than was reported by the 2010 sample. Allowing for the differences in sample size and constitution, we believe these differences are significantly indicative of momentum around these issues when paired with qualitative data from our focus groups and outside anecdotal evidence.

The growth in these campaign areas can be explained by a combination of several trends. Youth organizing groups are responding to attacks on their communities. They are gaining momentum and building power around certain issues, and they are sparking dialogue by bringing youth issues to a national audience. For example, over the past three years, we have seen increased polarization around gender in anti-abortion groups’ billboard campaign targeting black communities, teenage pregnancy ads featuring only black and Latino children, and the Susan G. Komen Foundation’s controversial withdrawal of funding to Planned Parenthood.

Similarly, in the past three years, we have seen both the Queer youth and immigrant youth communities negatively impacted by issues such as bullying in schools, discriminatory policing practices and depression. The increase in youth groups organizing around LGBTQ justice indicates strong traction around work to advance the rights of LGBTQ young people. In addition, the immigrant youth movement has built strong momentum to galvanize undocumented youth and allies by developing networks and strategies to support

undocumented youth, who have long suffered from fear and depression related to their immigration status. Through direct actions and through its well-established network, the immigrant youth movement has encouraged young people to share their stories – often taking significant risks to come out of the shadows and publicly declare their undocumented status – and expose the social injustices experienced by immigrant youth.

Defending Basic Services: There were a total of 215 campaigns reported in this field scan, of which 19% can be categorized as defensive battles. When reviewing these campaigns, we observed that almost one in five campaigns take on a defensive or protective stance where young people defend services or resources that are being taken away from them. It seems that the loss of services and resources has been caused by widespread austerity budgets resulting in service cuts at every level of government. Young people from these communities have responded with campaigns addressing school closings, housing foreclosures and cuts to youth jobs (see Table 4). Similarly, campaigns to create or expand services for young people have gained traction in areas such as food justice (e.g., increasing access to affordable and healthy food in communities and schools) and immigration, but many have stalled or have even been discontinued in campaigns that require building substantial capital. For example, there are very few campaigns to establish new youth centers and parks, which have been a focus of youth organizing groups in the past, and of those reported in the current scan, there have been significant challenges to complete the projects initially envisioned by young people.

Cuts to government services have had a particularly devastating impact on low-income communities that rely on those services. We are now seeing low-income young people and young people of color playing leading roles in defending their rights to basic services. It is also important to note that these defensive battles have mobilized communities and forged new alliances – such as partnerships between students, parents and teachers coming together around school closings – that can be maintained and ultimately result in positive changes.

Issue Area	Number of Youth Organizing Groups Working on Campaigns
Educational Justice/Education Reform	- Finance reform e.g., weighted formulas (7)
	- School closings (5)
	- Restoring summer school (1)
Environmental Justice	- Fare increases and service cuts in public transportation (8)
Housing	- Displacement and foreclosures (6)
Youth Employment	- Cuts to summer youth employment and training programs (6)
Health	- Cuts to translation services (3)
	- Hospital downsizing/closing (1)
Immigration Rights	- Restoring tuition equity (1)
Workers' Rights	- Wage theft (3)

Table 3: Campaigns to Defend Basic Services

Intersectionality of Issues: In our 2010 Field Scan, we found that youth organizing groups are advancing campaigns that intersect with multiple issues. For example, a campaign to build community gardens in urban neighborhoods that may have limited access to healthy food intersects with food justice, health, and community and neighborhood improvement. Our current field scan revealed that youth organizing groups continue to advance intersectional campaigns. This finding demonstrates several advancements in the field of youth organizing: Groups are no longer working in silos but are building a more connected movement and operate with the analysis that changing conditions in communities requires working with multiple systems. Further, working on intersectional campaigns demonstrates groups' commitment to supporting the holistic development of young people, as youth interact with and navigate through several institutions and systems, many of which have underserved or failed low-income youth and youth of color. In the current field scan, we deepened our analysis by exploring where there is the most intersection, and found that more than 60% of youth organizing campaigns are centered around or connected to education reform and educational justice in some way. Common points of intersection include:

- education, youth employment, juvenile justice
- education, food justice, health
- education, immigration
- education, environmental justice (transportation justice)

With school being an institution to which most young people are connected, this finding should come as no surprise. It does, however, demonstrate the commitment and investment of youth organizers to reform education, as numerous studies and research have made a clear case that educational attainment highly correlates with employment, health and wellness, and overall quality of life. Further, the crises experienced in public education have impacted low-income youth and youth of color at disproportionate rates, making education the civil rights issue of their generation.

Victories

For the purpose of this field scan, a “youth organizing victory” is defined as the result of a campaign led by youth, or in which youth were in pivotal roles, where the victory itself has the potential to be long-lasting and makes an impact on a policy, community or institution⁸.

Top Issue Areas that Achieved Victories: Our survey asked youth organizing groups to report their victories between 2010 and 2012 and describe what each win achieved. We used these reports to analyze which issue areas have gained momentum and have resulted in positive changes for young people and their communities. Of the 84 reported youth organizing victories, our scan revealed that the top five issue areas achieving victories are: educational justice/education reform (with 24 victories), immigrant rights (13), environmental justice (11), food justice (10) and health (7). We are excited to present highlights of some victories in Appendix 1.A.

Impact and Scale: Of the 84 reported youth organizing victories, 80% made impacts at a community level or larger scale (i.e., city, state, multi-state, national). Only 17 victories were limited to affecting a singular entity such as one school, hospital or neighborhood. The remaining victories were largely school district and citywide wins (48), state victories (18) and one national victory. This national victory – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) – is an opportunity for undocumented immigrant youth who meet certain criteria to attain work authorization and a two-year deportation reprieve. During a time when several states adopted anti-immigrant legislation, the momentum that the immigrant youth movement has gained and its ability to galvanize its community and allies, demonstrates the power of young people to effect large-scale social change.

Table 4: Examples of Youth Organizing Victories and Scale – For the period between 2010 - 2012

	SCALE		
	Local (School District, City)	State	National
Educational Justice/ Education Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacement of out-of-school suspensions with in-school suspensions; rewriting Chicago Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct (member organizations of VOYCE – Chicago) - “Race and Social Justice” class offered in seven schools (Californians for Justice – Fresno, Calif.) - Six new health resource centers in high schools (Hyde Square Task Force – Boston) - Secured \$53M from city council to prevent the closing of 11 schools (Youth United for Change – Philadelphia) - Kept summer school classes from being eliminated (Coleman Advocates – San Francisco) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passage of Colorado Smart School Discipline Bill, which requires all state school districts to rewrite their discipline codes to use disciplinary alternatives such as restorative justice, eliminate automatic expulsion (with the exception of carrying firearms on campus), and establish the right for students to appeal expulsions (Padres y Jovenes Unidos – Denver) 	
Immigrant Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee committed to continue offering in-state tuition rates to undocumented students, despite state repeal on tuition equity (Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee and Racine, Wis.) - Prevented deportation of seven students and one mother (NYS Youth Leadership Council – New York) - Secured \$200K for work study positions, available to undocumented youth working in community-based organizations (Coleman Advocates – San Francisco) - Won bias protection for undocumented students in the Chancellor’s Regulation for New York schools (Desis Rising Up and Moving – Jackson Heights, N.Y.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passage of two bills that provide opportunity for undocumented students to access public and private financial aid (multiple groups – California) - Passage of the Illinois DREAM Act, which provides private funds and other resources to qualified immigrant youth to attend college (Multiple groups – Illinois) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – grants temporary deportation reprieve and work authorization to undocumented youth who meet certain criteria (multiple groups – nationwide)
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secured the establishment of Wellness Centers in Long Beach area high schools (Khmer Girls in Action – Long Beach, Calif.) - Passage of countywide tobacco-free ordinance prohibiting smoking in parks (Youth Empowered Solutions – Raleigh, N.C.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passage of statewide ban of tobacco in schools (Youth Empowered Solutions – Raleigh, N.C.) - Translation and interpretation services will be provided by all Rhode Island Human Services agencies (PrYSM – Providence, RI) 	

⁸ We acknowledge the range of definitions of victory and understand the importance of incremental wins that take place during the process of a campaign. We eliminated some reported victories from our analysis (e.g., holding a rally, meeting with elective officials, building youth membership), understanding that those are necessary means to an end and not a victory as defined for purposes of this report.

Table 4: Examples of Youth Organizing Victories and Scale – For the period between 2010 - 2012 (cont.)

	SCALE		
	Local (School District, City)	State	National
Food Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School district made 50+ changes to school food menu, including more fresh vegetables, whole grains and vegetarian options (Southwest Workers Union – San Antonio, Tex.) - Recovery School District agreed to provide fresh, local fruits and vegetables at least four times per week in all district schools (Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools – New Orleans) - Secured opening of an affordable market (FUREE – Brooklyn, N.Y.) 		
Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee committed to continue offering in-state tuition rates to undocumented students, despite state repeal on tuition equity (Voces de la Frontera – Milwaukee and Racine, Wis.) - Prevented deportation of seven students and one mother (NYS Youth Leadership Council – New York) - Secured \$200K for work study positions, available to undocumented youth working in community-based organizations (Coleman Advocates – San Francisco) - Won bias protection for undocumented students in the Chancellor’s Regulation for New York schools (Desis Rising Up and Moving – Jackson Heights, N.Y.)⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shut down Illinois’ entire fleet of Midwest Generation’s coal-fired plants, which have been linked to asthma, hospitalizations for respiratory illness, and death (Little Village Environmental Justice Organization – Chicago) 	

Conditions and Factors of Victories: As all organizers – youth, adults and their allies alike – know, social change and achieving significant victories takes time. Little Village Environmental Justice Organization’s campaign to shut down two coal-burning plants lasted more than 10 years. The federal DREAM Act was defeated in 2007, and it was 2010 before Dreamers were able to push for a monumental victory through DACA, which grants deferred deportation for youth in certain circumstances. In the education reform arena, youth organizing groups’ campaigns became more sophisticated and coordinated over time, allowing young people to address root causes of social issues. In addition to the time it takes to achieve victories, our scan and focus groups provided information that allowed us to assess what other conditions and factors contributed to the success of campaigns. We hope that these findings will inspire organizers and funders alike to maintain and foster the conditions outlined below so that we continue to build upon these victories and achieve future wins.

– Use of Innovative Strategies: The vast majority of youth organizing groups reporting victories are engaged in social networking or use social media as a tool for building and communicating with their base. Ninety-four percent (94%) of groups who have achieved victories use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or their own blogs to stay connected with their alumni and update their community about actions, events and campaign work. Further, several groups have used forms of media and technology, such as local radio stations, film documentaries and GIS mapping to advance their campaigns.

– Availability of Funding: When comparing groups that reported victories to our scan’s full sample, we found that more groups with victories received funding from individual donors and fewer experienced declines in government funding. Even more noteworthy, more groups achieving victories had increases in their foundation funding (+7%) compared to the full sample.

In many of the youth organizing victory examples, groups had support from anchor funders and affinity groups who made long-term investments in youth-led campaigns. The immigrant youth movement experienced an influx of funding from sources such as the Ford Foundation and Open Society Foundation, which helped them to establish structured networks to build an online organizing community and support immigrant youth organizations. Similarly, Atlantic Philanthropies, Public Interest Projects’ Communities for Public Education Reform and the Just and Fair Schools Fund acknowledge the importance of engaging young people in the decision-making processes in school reform, and have developed grantmaking strategies that reflect their investment in youth leadership. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s investment in youth organizing to address root causes of childhood obesity has supported several wins in the areas of food and recreational justice.

As social justice funders and youth organizing funders have experienced the negative impact of the economic downturn on their endowment size – often forcing them to cut or redesign programs – the youth organizing field is left in a challenging state. In focus groups, we heard about campaigns that have been stalled after losing funding, and staff and youth have struggled to keep the campaigns afloat. We hope that funders will be able to draw from the examples of victories presented here to understand how critical it is to support youth-led campaigns over the long run. The evidence here demonstrates that long-term investment in youth organizing does result in policy changes that benefit low-income communities and communities of color.

– Making the case for economic security: The campaigns that led to victories tended to incorporate a message or frame connected to economic security – how the passage of legislation or a policy change would lead to a stronger workforce and boost in the economy. In education reform, several youth groups organizing to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline present cost-benefit analyses, such as cost per student compared to cost per inmate. They also note how workers who have attained college degrees make on average \$1.3 million more in their lifetime than those without a college degree, providing more disposable income to stimulate the economy. Advocates for immigration reform have made similar arguments, making the case that lifting undocumented students’ financial barriers to college would lead to college degrees and better jobs with more taxable income. As the market fluctuates and the general public’s view on our country’s economic security has become a priority, it is important for youth organizing groups to work collectively to build a solid case that supporting youth will lead to impacts on a national level.

– Changing the discourse on youth issues: Youth organizing groups are redefining the very issues around which they organize, often using a human rights framework, demonstrating that much of what youth organizers are advocating for are policies that treat young people with dignity, fairness and respect. For example, young people who have been campaigning for education reform over the years have done much to shift the way educators, parents and students themselves talk and think about education, as well as young people’s role in solving problems in the educational system. They have reframed the student “drop out” crisis as the student “push out” crisis, acknowledging the many factors that contribute to students being pushed out of school and into the prison and low-wage job pipeline. With regard to school discipline, young people have gained momentum and national attention – as demonstrated in senate hearings, social documentaries and media hits – and are leading the efforts to ensure student codes of conduct and disciplinary practices are just and fair for all students. Similarly, we have seen how the immigrant youth movement has successfully connected with the general public by sharing stories of being brought to the United States at a young age, the message of the importance of keeping families intact, and effectively making “Dreamers” the moral and ethical heart of the broader immigrant rights movement. Within the past several years, we have seen how immigration has risen to become one of the top issues on the national agenda, with young voters generally favoring reforming immigration laws and creating pathways to citizenship for undocumented youth. And, within the past year, the decision for the Associated Press to drop the phrase “illegal immigrant,” which immigrant advocates have argued is a dehumanizing term, demonstrates the significant strides organizers have made in changing discourse on youth issues. By redefining issues and shifting dialogues, youth organizers have fundamentally changed public perception on critical issues such as education and immigration. This has allowed for youth organizing groups to achieve whole sets of victories and creates a broader paradigm shift that will help advance these issues in public debate.

Networks, Coalitions & Alliances

Since our 2010 Field Scan, an exciting trend to note is greater scale on the part of youth organizing groups and their increasing ability to organize at the state and national level. While the survey data confirmed that overall, the same percentage of the 2013 sample was engaging in networks and alliances as did the 2010 sample, there were interesting differences. The 2010 field scan documented a high level of participation in local and city-level networks and alliances, with some evidence of growth around national and state alliances. By comparison, the 2013 sample reported a high participation in city-level alliances, but a significantly higher participation in state (+19%) and national (+35%) networks and alliances. We believe this data offers a significant indication that the field of youth organizing is collaborating more frequently than ever, and is positioned to make real coordinated impact at the state and national levels. This is supported by our analysis of campaign victories above.

In our focus group discussions, commentary around involvement in this kind of collaborative work was intertwined with that of multi-generational work, sharing many of the same challenges and opportunities. Participants appraised the strategic benefits of engaging in networks and alliances around campaign issues, alongside the financial benefits of receiving collaborative grants and sharing resources.

Participants also pointed out that this work can have many challenges. We heard that the demands of participating in networks or alliances, either through resourcing shared campaigns or by taking a leadership role, sometimes overshadowed the benefits because of either a lack of resources or clear goals for the organizations involved. Others simply said that there were too many networks on similar issues, so that participation was too time-consuming. As one participant noted:

“We’re overextending ourselves so we can be in all these conversations on all these initiatives, and they’re important; they’re about critical issues in our community. But then how do we meaningfully engage when we’re at this point when we don’t have the staff capacity to do the work we need to do within our organization, provide services, provide support to our youth organizers and then do this outside coalition-building work?”

There has been tremendous growth in networks in recent years and with that growth comes growing pains. In particular, groups are trying to add this collaborative work to their existing work, often without much in the way of additional resources. This causes strain. For these networks to be successful, philanthropy must provide additional resources. The financial costs and benefits of network and alliance work are discussed further in the next section, focusing on funding.

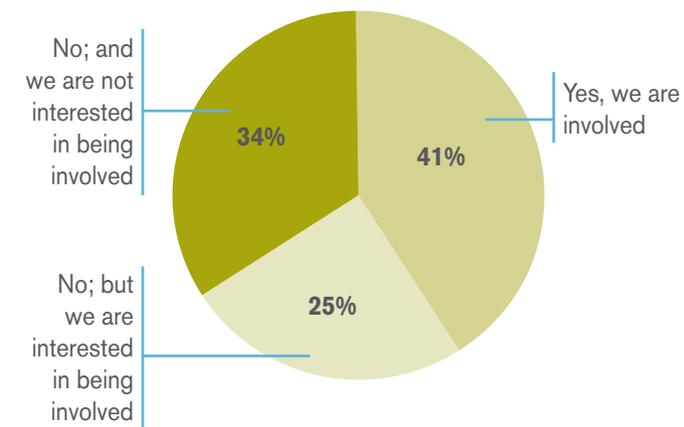
We also surveyed groups on what specific networks, coalitions or affiliations they were currently a part of, in order to determine where momentum was building or shifting. The five most common national alliances mentioned were the Alliance for Educational Justice, Dignity in Schools Campaign, Grassroots Global Justice, Right to the City and United We Dream. At the city and state levels, alliances show more variety and are more regionally specific but show a concentration around the issues of immigrant rights, youth job creation, education reform/justice and environmental justice. Our sample reported involvement in national alliances through regional, state and city chapters that may allow for more local engagement alongside broader national coalition work. There was especially strong state and city-level alliance work in New York, Boston and California, as these areas have considerable number and concentration of organizing groups and higher levels of funding support than other areas.

This data showing a high level of network involvement at the city, state and national levels, along with many region-specific alliances, indicate that the field is positioned to coordinate on many issues and levels. These findings indicate a higher level of sophistication among many youth organizing groups as a result of sustained investment in infrastructure and resulting in significant wins at each level. However, there are challenges to active participation in high-level network and alliance work that will require significant investment and collaboration between funders and field leaders if we are to see these wins repeated and policies implemented.

Voter Engagement Work

“It became more real for our people that you can enter this [political] system. It empowered us to want to be more involved in the political processes: one of our staff members got on the rent stabilization board, I got on the public works and transportation commission, a lot of community members are pushing us to run for city council now. So we also made a conscious effort to be examples to our young people.”

Two-thirds of survey respondents in 2013 were already doing or were interested in doing nonpartisan voter engagement work, which we defined broadly to include a number of activities (voter registration, Get Out The Vote, voter education events, voter education through door knocking, using technology, alliance building). Of those currently doing this work, a high percentage of groups were doing so through Get Out the Vote campaigns, through their own voter education events and door-to-door activities. Of important note, nearly two-thirds of those engaged in voter engagement work reported doing so through participation in alliances. An important emerging trend is that at least six respondents were involved in 501(c)(4) activities, often through intergenerational city and state alliances such as SF Rising, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote and VOTE NY. These established groups have expanded their work to launch separate 501(c)(4) entities to directly engage in electoral work that can include lobbying and sponsoring political candidates to further the political goals of their constituency and their neighboring communities.

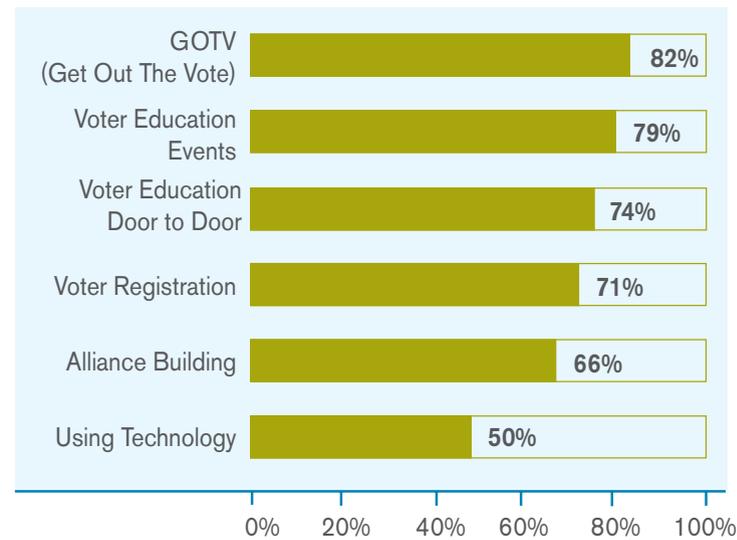


Graph 7: Involvement in Voter Engagement Work

This engagement and interest in voter engagement work is noteworthy as it represents a shift toward capturing political power. In our focus groups, some participants discussed overcoming reluctance to engage in voter engagement work because it provided opportunities for successful collaboration that would not have been available otherwise. In general, groups indicated that the heightened political moment had translated into greater involvement from young people and their communities. Several groups indicated that the election of President Barack Obama provided the impetus for further engagement in the democratic process and for conducting voter engagement.

This data and commentary around voter engagement, while preliminary, represents another important indication of the sophistication of campaign work being carried out by the field. These findings are especially important when considered alongside recent analyses that have highlighted the increasing power of youth voters (ages 18-29) in recent elections, and the potential impact for investing in the pre-electorate youth who are typically targeted through youth organizing. These analyses showed, among other points, that:

- Although youth voter (ages 18-29) turnout dropped in 2012 from its all-time high in 2008, the number of young people has increased as a share of the electorate over the past several elections.⁹
- People of color made up 42% of this young electorate in 2012, having increased as a share of the electorate in each of the last three presidential elections, while consistently representing issues of importance to their communities by a substantial majority each time.¹⁰
- Thirty-five percent (35%) of non-college youth voted in the 2012 election and remain an under-represented demographic in the electorate.¹¹
- Non-college youth are typically more ethnically diverse, more often Queer-identified and support community investment with their votes more than those who have attended college.¹²



- “Voters tend to retain the political allegiances they forge when entering the electorate as young voters.”¹³
- “Funding to conservative youth civic engagement groups has continued to outpace funding to progressive youth civic engagement groups, with the disparity rising to an all-time high of \$48.5 million in 2010.”¹⁴
- “The low levels of civic participation among non-college youth – measured by indicators such as voting, attending a public meeting, volunteer activities and group membership – have been attributed to lack of opportunities to serve and engage, not apathy or anti-social attitudes.”¹⁵

The opportunity that youth organizing presents as a strategy for youth civic engagement within this context, has been proven recently in a collaborative report from the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Southern California, *Learning to Lead: The Impact of Youth Organizing on the Educational and Civic Trajectories of Low-Income Youth*. This report compared youth organizing alumni ages 18-26 from across the state of California, with young people from similar backgrounds. The differences in academic (discussed in the next section) and civic outcomes between these two groups are compelling:

- “Youth organizing alumni are more likely to volunteer, to participate in civic organizations, and to take a variety of political actions ranging from sharing information to marching in protests.”¹⁶
 - “Alumni from youth organizing groups are far more likely than other young adults to participate in school, community, and political organizations, and are more than twice as likely as other youth adults to report participating in decision-making therein.”¹⁷
 - “Youth organizing alumni are almost twice as likely (55% to 29%) as other young adults to report that they have volunteered “very often” or “somewhat often” over the past year.”¹⁸
 - “Youth organizing alumni are roughly twice as likely as other young adults to report having worked on an issue affecting their community (65% to 27%) or shared perspectives on social and political issues online (56% to 30%).”¹⁹
 - “Youth organizing alumni who hold documentation are more likely to have registered to vote than their counterparts in the general population.”²⁰

The highlighted points from both reports above show that young voters are a critical and growing electoral base and that low income young people and young people of color have potential to gain significant political power. There is also a strong opportunity to engage a non-college youth electorate who have thus far been under-utilized. Youth organizing represents an important opportunity to increase civic and electoral engagement among the pre-electorate as well as those already of voting age with the goal of bolstering the power of low-income young people and young people of color. Youth organizing may also offer an important force in helping to mobilize voters, young and old, in their peer communities, in the home, and other adult-dominated community spaces, as young people are often more energizing and credible messengers and educators.

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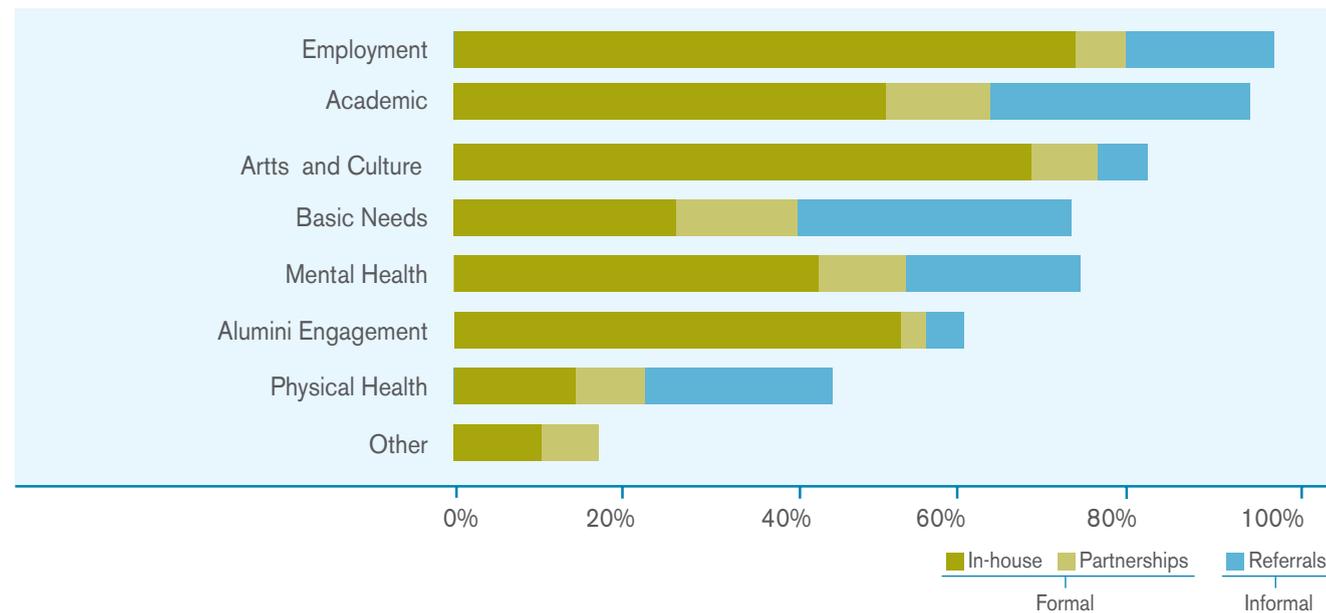
Youth Development Supports

Over the years we have seen how youth organizing groups have deepened their work in providing youth development supports. With adolescence generally being a time of personal, emotional, and often stressful life changes, groups have embraced a holistic approach to supporting young people, acknowledging that youth must be healthy in body, mind and spirit to be strong organizers and transition successfully into adulthood. In our 2013 sample, the vast majority of groups offering social and emotional, academic and employment services to their members.

Building on the 2010 scan, in our current survey we aimed to provide a more detailed picture of how youth organizing groups support the needs and development of young people. By expanding the survey questions, we were able to capture the diversity and range of services youth organizing groups provide. In addition to understanding what support groups are providing, we delved deeper into this area by including questions about how groups provide support. That is, are services provided in formal ways (e.g., in-house staff/volunteers, through formal agreements or partnerships with agencies) or informal ways (e.g., giving young people information or referrals)? The data shows that the organizing field continues to grow this area of their work.

Formal and Comprehensive Services: FCYO documented a shift in how youth organizing groups are providing youth development supports, specifically in the areas of academic and mental health. While the percentage of groups overall providing these supports remained constant over the past three years, significantly more groups in the 2013 sample have developed formal structures to provide these services. This indicates that groups are now either providing academic and mental health in-house (i.e., within their own organizations) or have established partnerships or linkages with outside organizations so that young people can access services easily. Both models differ from informal methods, where young people are typically provided information on where to access resources elsewhere. Specifically, 11% more groups reported providing formal academic support and 21% more groups reported providing formal mental health support in 2013 compared with 2010. Similarly, in FCYO’s Leadership Pipeline program, which engages 18 youth organizing groups nationwide, a network analysis revealed that the cohort as a whole doubled its number of mental health partnerships in two years, suggesting that supporting a young person’s holistic health is a priority for the field.

Graph 12: Youth Development Supports – Formal and Informal Services



In addition to the formalization of services, we found that youth organizing groups are providing a diverse range of services to support their young people. Within the academic support category, groups offer tutoring and SAT/ACT preparation along with assistance on college and scholarship applications. Further, groups are integrating academics into their organizing work by establishing agreements with colleges so that young people earn college credit for their organizing work. And, within the mental health category, groups support the social/emotional health of their youth by offering services and programs such as counseling, young women’s and young men’s groups, spiritual and transformative practices, and mentorship programs.

The trends of formalization and customization of youth development supports underscore a set of guiding principles and practices. Youth organizing groups are able to meet the young people where they are in their lives, and address life challenges by customizing programs specific to their needs. Further, by formalizing supports, youth organizing groups are dedicating staff and program time to youth development services. They are also identifying youth-friendly organizations or professionals who are sensitive to the needs of low-income young people and young people of color. Lastly, by supporting the holistic development of young people, youth organizing groups are integrating youth development into their organizing work, demonstrating the importance of advancing campaigns while taking care of oneself and one another. One organizer described how the holistic approach has changed the way young people view their future in social justice work:

“We, ourselves, have a lot of responsibility in being a little smarter about how we’re training people now. One of the easiest things is, as people, to be more healthy and sane. Because [young] people used to look at us and not want to be us. Now they do.”

Transition Support: Our current field scan shows that employment supports, which included job readiness and internship opportunities, was the top youth development support offered to young people. Compared to the 2010 sample, 10% more respondents in the 2013 sample reported linking young people to internship opportunities, and 13% more provided formal internships within their own organization. This underscores the commitment of youth organizing groups to building the skills and confidence of their youth so that they can transfer that experience to the next stage of their lives. This finding also signals a possible change due to economic shifts. As college becomes less accessible and affordable to low income young people and young people of color, groups may be focusing more on employment. Many youth whose economic realities have changed need to work to finance their way through college or to help support their family.

In addition to employment support, groups are supporting their young people’s transition into adulthood by staying connected to alumni. More than a third of our respondents track program alumni and more than half provide opportunities for volunteering and other alumni engagement strategies. In our focus group discussions, participants told us about how they were helping to transition young people into new opportunities after high school (e.g. employment, college), and the opportunities and challenges facing this work. The discussion echoed what we’ve heard from grantees in our own ReGenerations: Leadership Pipeline Initiative: that linking young people to meaningful opportunities after transitioning out of youth organizing, while maintaining ties to home organizations and social justice movements, is an extremely important and under-resourced part of their work. In our conversations, several areas were stressed as important to transitioning young people:

- College partnerships – partnerships with local community colleges and other institutions should be expanded to better transition youth organizers into higher education and provide intern resources
- Alumni database/IT support – groups have asked for assistance or support around creating a database to track program alumni
- Resources to connect young people to leadership opportunities within social justice organizations or networks

While this is a growing area within youth development supports, a challenge still remains. In focus groups, participants discussed the scarcity of resources to keep their organizing efforts moving forward and talked about the difficulty securing funding to provide youth development to their current group of young people. Despite long-term investment and all the strong relationships grown with youth members, groups have found that it still requires additional resources to engage young adult alumni in structural issues. The job of engaging alumni is often managed by a volunteer, and groups expressed that more efforts would be made to engage alumni if funding were available. As one participant stated,

“It’s a resource issue: We just don’t have enough resources for our young people to continue that engagement. Whether it be about activism, finding a job, going into political positions - there’s not enough resources for young people after they leave and even when they’re in the program.”

Improving Outcomes: Providing academic, social, emotional and mental health and other traditional social services through a social justice lens is an important way to build leadership through the transformative power of organizing. Youth organizing groups represent uniquely supportive organizational settings that provide a necessary and important opportunity structure for youth to become engaged in the civic and political life of their communities. The power of youth organizing in supporting strong outcomes in young people has been supported by recent research. In the eleventh installment in FCYO’s Occasional Paper Series, *Building Transformative Leadership: Data on the Impacts of Youth Organizing*, researchers highlighted several important findings:

- “Involvement in organizing increases young people’s educational motivation and aspirations.”
 - “Eighty percent (80%) of youth surveyed noted their grades improved and 60% reported that they took more challenging coursework due to their involvement in organizing; and,”
 - “Eighty percent (80%) of youth surveyed reported plans to pursue a college education and close to half of the sample said they expected to obtain a graduate or professional degree beyond college.”²¹

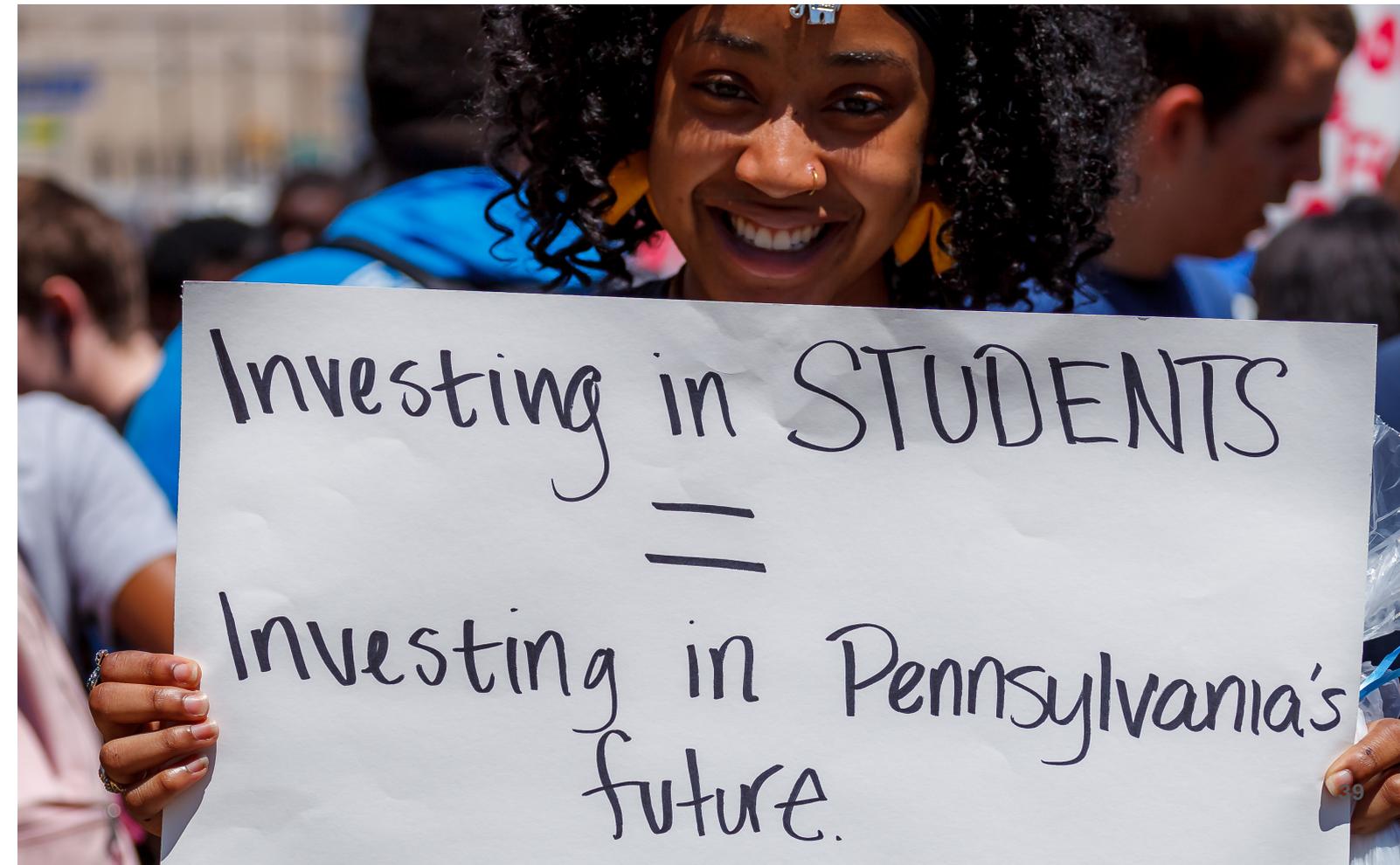
Most recently, *Learning to Lead: The Impact of Youth Organizing on the Educational and Civic Trajectories of Low-Income Youth*, compared youth organizing alumni ages 18-26 from across the state of California, with young people from similar backgrounds. The research looked at academic and civic outcomes between these two groups, and generated striking findings:

- “Youth organizing alumni were significantly more likely to attend a four-year college when compared to young people from similar backgrounds. Among low-income youth whose parents did not get a bachelor degree:”
 - “The likelihood of attending a California State University or similarly ranked school is 33% for youth organizing alumni compared to 17% for similar youth from the general population; and,”
 - “The likelihood of attending a highly-selective college is 17% for YO alumni compared to 5% for the general population.”²²

The report cited three main factors inherent in youth organizing that foster these outcomes:

- “Youth organizing groups promote a context for learning;”
- “Youth organizing groups provide members with holistic and culturally relevant college counseling and guidance; and”
- “Youth organizing groups encourage members to see college going as connected to a broader political and community empowerment agenda.”²³

Progress has been made in bolstering the kind of developmental supports within the field of youth organizing that help generate these outcomes, but more can be done to continue and elevate this work. It is also clear that more investment should be made to specifically help youth organizing groups’ transition their young people into new roles after high school, while helping to support alumni.



²¹ Shah, S. (2010). *Building Transformative Leadership: Data on the Impacts of Youth Organizing*. New York, NY: Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing.

²² Rogers, J., & Terriquez, V. (2013). *Learning to Lead: The Impact of Youth Organizing on the Educational and Civic Trajectories of Low-Income Youth*. Los Angeles, CA: Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access.

FUNDING



FUNDING

Decrease in Funding for Youth Organizing

Since 2008 there has been a significant decrease in foundation funding for youth organizing, the causes of which are several. The financial crisis of 2008 had immediate impact on the endowments of philanthropic foundations, causing some to immediately cut grantmaking and others to take phased-in corrective action to maintain steady grantmaking through the first years of the crisis. This has resulted in immediate and late-surfacing changes on the part of philanthropy and social justice philanthropy in particular including the decline of multi-year grants, tightening of restrictions for receiving funding and significant decline in small foundation support.²⁴ Continued poor market performance has exacerbated these effects. Equally as important, over the last three years, several foundations that had provided pivotal support to the field have shifted their programmatic focus away from youth organizing, creating a vacuum that many groups are struggling to fill.

The reduction in foundation funding is especially significant given the level of reliance on foundations across the field. As noted previously, 2013 survey respondents reported that a median of 76% of their revenue came from foundations.

	Median % of Revenue	Percentage of respondents reporting change in revenue in past two years	
		Increase	Decrease
Foundations	76%	5%	41%
Government	17%	9%	18%
Individuals	14%	21%	4%
Earned Income	7%	7%	5.00%
Corporations	6%	2%	2%

Table 4: Changes in Funding

These changes in philanthropy have had a significant impact on youth organizing groups. As shown above, 41% of respondents reported a decrease in funding from foundations. The prevalence of groups reporting decreases in foundation funding was backed up by conversations in focus groups across regions: Time and time again, youth organizing leaders reported that they had seen reductions in grants from foundations or full loss of support from key funders. Many groups discussed making hard organizational decisions including staff layoffs and furloughs; cutting or consolidating programs and services; and consolidating staff roles. The majority of the more than 40 organizations that we spoke to in our focus groups reported that they had made staff layoffs, program cuts or consolidations. In addition, several organizations that participated in our 2010 Field Scan have closed or discontinued youth organizing work.

²⁴ The Foundation Center. "Diminishing Dollars: The Impact of the 2008 Financial Crisis on the Field of Social Justice Philanthropy." 2011. Retrieved from: http://foundationcenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/diminishing_dollars2011.pdf

Several funders who have continued their commitment to youth organizing have worked hard to maintain their funding to current grantees, but have not been able to add new grantees. For the field to grow, and for there to be greater opportunities for young people to engage in their communities, we encourage the growth of new and innovative youth organizing groups and networks. This recent funding climate has been particularly difficult for new organizations. Emerging organizations expressed how challenging it is to identify and secure funding. Only five groups in our sample were founded since our last scan and only one was founded in the current decade. Stand-alone youth led organizations (those that are not multi-generational or youth led projects in a larger organization) and single-issue organizations also seem to be having a particularly difficult time raising funds in this climate. Multi-issue and multi-generational organizations have, in some cases, been able to find creative ways to attract funding not specifically designed for youth organizing and demonstrate that youth organizing can be an effective way to meet those outcomes.

Many participants in our focus groups also reported that much of the funding that is available to youth organizing groups has become more restrictive. Whereas in years past it was easier to raise money for groups who defined their own issues, now many funders are supporting youth organizing groups to focus on issues determined by the funder. In most cases, young people had already demonstrated a real commitment to these issues and it is a positive development that funders are recognizing that young people are capable of winning significant policy victories on a variety of areas. While this kind of funding has been essential in supporting the field during a time when other funds were scarce, it also raises some challenges. There is a concern among youth organizers that a large portion of youth organizing activities could be dictated by funders thus diminishing the fundamental youth-driven nature of the work. In addition, issue specific funders tend to focus on supporting campaign activities to win policy goals, while placing less emphasis on building the infrastructure in low-income communities and communities of color that can support long-term change.

Managing the Changes in Philanthropy

From survey data and focus group conversations, we have learned that youth organizing groups have taken innovative steps to raise revenue in the face of adversity. While many groups are looking for new ways to approach foundations, there is also much interest in increasing the amount of resources raised from non-foundation sources. Groups across all regions spoke of exploring and/or implementing measures to fundraise collaboratively, increase individual giving, establish membership fee structures, generate social enterprise or other earned income, and attract government support. Although many groups spoke of exploring these as new tactics, the results are still mixed.

Collaborations and Scale: As highlighted in the data on higher network and coalition participation, the field of youth organizing is more collaborative than ever, with a greater ability to garner power and achieve wins at a larger scale. From focus group conversations, we learned that this collaboration was not only in the service of furthering campaign strength, but could also be used to attract more funding or to share costs. Practitioners reported that there were both strengths and challenges that come from these collaborative efforts. On the strengths side, each region had examples of how collaboration or alliances of various scales had attracted funding or shared costs. In the Bay area and across the South, SF Rising and the South by Southwest (SxSw) Experiment were highlighted for their multi-issue, multi-generational coalition work and success in securing collaborative grants those individual groups might not have been able to access, including around electoral work. Several groups in Boston highlighted their effective coalition work around youth job creation as well as the success of multi-generational campaigns around the affordability of public transportation in Boston, with its Youth Affordabili(T) campaign. FIERCE in New York City highlighted the success they have had in partnership with the Audre Lorde Project, Queens for Economic Justice, Streetwise and Safe and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project in securing funding for a racial justice campaign. Also, Californians for Justice reported that they are an anchor group for a large collaborative grant made through the Campaign for Quality Education.

Several groups, as noted above, reported that engaging in partnerships, coalitions or networks has had decidedly mixed result, sometimes becoming more of a drain on staff time and resources than a boon. This might suggest that the field needs more resources so that practitioners may better evaluate which collaborations are strategic and what resources are needed to truly make them effective.

Earned Income: There has been a good deal of interest in developing social enterprise projects to support youth organizing. However, many groups reported that they have been cautious about implementation, or that they have implemented initiatives without any significant windfall to report. Examples of success in this area include Youth On Board (YOB), Oasis Family Center and Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!), all of whom provide fee-based advisory services. YOB has had success providing funder advisory services based around its model for organizing around student evaluation of teachers; Oasis Family Center has begun charging for youth development trainings to youth-serving organizations that are interested in youth-led social change; YES! derives 13% of its revenue from fee-for-service activities and has grown its yearly budget by more than \$200,000 for the past three years.

While many groups are interested in finding ways to raise earned income, success in these efforts has not yet been widespread. Several organizations do possess business skills; however, expanding the use of social enterprise to support youth organizing would require significant training as well as funding for start-up. If this is to become a reliable source of funding for the field, investment in capacity building will be necessary.

Individual Donors: Our survey data and focus group discussions reveal the growth of contributions coming from individual donors. On average our respondents indicated that individual donors make up 12% of their funding and 21% of groups reported that they had increased the amount of funds from individual donors over the last two years. Many organizations have participated in individual donor fundraising training programs including those sponsored by the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training. It appears that those efforts are bearing some fruit.

A few groups have been particularly successful. FIERCE grew its incoming revenue from individual donors more than 10% in recent years to diversify funding streams. The Philadelphia Student Union is in the midst of similar campaign to build a \$100,000 individual donor base in an effort to create a sustainable funding model that is more independent from foundation support. InnerCity Struggle has also built a robust individual donor base and raises a large amount of funding through an annual gala.

Government Funding: Relatively few respondents from our 2013 sample reported revenue from government grants or contracts; typically youth organizing has not actively pursued funding from these sources for a number of reasons. However, some youth and intergenerational groups have been able to tap into sources of government money at the city, state and federal levels. Community Coalition has received funds from First 5 Foundation of Los Angeles to fund organizing around the rights of relative caregivers. The Chinese Progressive Association receives funding from the city of San Francisco to conduct housing outreach services. RYSE, a Richmond, Calif., group, receives funding for mental health and wellness services it provides through its center. The Colorado Antiviolence Project has also received money from the City of Denver to conduct trainings with local social service providers about how to engage queer youth. Nuestras Raices receives funding from the USDA to train local farmers. And YES! receives funding from N.C. Dept. of Health and Human services for substance and tobacco use prevention. It is important to note that for some of these (mostly intergenerational) groups, government funding goes to support programs either tangentially related to youth organizing goals, or goes to different initiatives entirely. However, these examples and others may hold potential for further exploration as they may offer important practices for how groups can compete for government funding without sacrificing organizing principles, goals or capacity.

Other challenges: A smaller subset of our focus group participants raised awareness of the difficulties they faced because of regional isolation. These leaders explained that fundraising was particularly challenging for their work because of specific factors related to their location, including: difficulty engaging community partners; dearth of regional funders; and being misunderstood by national funders unfamiliar with their unique community problems. FCYO has already expanded its work in growing regional support for youth organizing, partnering with the Perrin Family Foundation and the Heinz Endowments, in Connecticut and the Pittsburgh area respectively, to analyze and advise grantmaking strategies to support emerging youth organizing work. In our focus groups and through other conversations with field leaders we've heard a call for FCYO to help raise awareness and coordinate regional funders toward youth organizing. It is clear that more resources should be devoted to the challenges of these and other groups operating outside of major urban areas.

Conclusion

Overall, the two strategies that appear to have had the greatest short-term fundraising success are building a strong individual donor base and learning how to present youth organizing work to a more diverse set of funders. Many youth organizing groups have been reliant on a narrow set of social justice funders, but this is a relatively small pool. Some organizations have been able to attract dollars from youth development funders and government agencies by learning how to articulate and translate their work in different ways to different audiences. In many cases larger organizations that work on a variety of issues and offer a range of services in addition to organizing have had an easier time doing this. Similarly, many larger funders prefer to fund larger organizations. Thus, increasing scale and forming alliances are important to attracting funding. Small independent organizations are likely to struggle to raise funds in this climate.

Youth organizing groups are employing a variety of creative strategies to replace the loss in foundation dollars. These efforts are crucial to the long-term sustainability of the field. In the short term, however, they are unlikely to replace diminished foundation giving. The decrease in foundation funding for youth organizing is the single most important trend we have identified and poses a potential threat to the growth of the field. There is a critical need for foundations to increase giving for this important work.



CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION: THE GROWTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE YOUTH ORGANIZING FIELD

In the 13 years that FCYO has been tracking youth organizing, the field has grown and advanced in several important ways. Simultaneously, youth organizing is also experiencing a reduction in funding that could threaten growth and prevent a move to the next level of national impact. In concluding this report, we discuss areas of evolution and growth, offer recommendations for funders to support the field as it faces challenges, and highlight potential for youth organizing to contribute to millennial generation youth movement.

Evolution and Growth

The Coalescing of a Field: When FCYO started there were few opportunities for youth organizing groups to come together. Many groups did not even know others doing similar work. Many survey respondents and focus group participants reflected on the tremendous growth in opportunities for communication and collaboration in recent years. What were once isolated organizations have now developed into a field with strong relationships, sharing of best practices, and a variety of collaborative efforts.

Holistic Supports for Young Leaders: Youth organizing offers the unique opportunity for the most marginalized youth to ignite their leadership through community organizing – to be a voice for their communities and their peers in addressing the most pressing needs of those most impacted by societal inequities. The power of organizing cannot be underestimated in this regard; the youth that are part of this unique field are often deeply affected by the conditions they fight. Over the last 15 years, many youth organizing groups have been grappling with how to meet the diverse social, emotional, academic and economic needs of their youth members. Our 2010 Field Scan highlighted the growth in the number of organizations providing these types of holistic supports to their members, helping the leadership of low-income young people and young people of color to really blossom as they age. This trend has continued over the last three years with more and more groups formalizing these services. In talking to youth organizers, it is clear that these elements are seen as a crucial part of their work and are integrated into programs to support the holistic development of young people. In some cases, youth organizing groups are creating stronger in-roads with service providers in their communities, thereby sensitizing those entities that were once seen as politically distinct and unable to really reach and serve low-income young people and young people of color. In other instances, youth organizing groups, themselves, are developing and strengthening in-house capabilities to provide these services, building on deep relationships grounded in trust. While additional data is needed to document the results, we are already seeing larger numbers of young people graduating from youth organizing groups, going on to college, and building stable lives that support their continued community leadership.

Increasing Scope Scale and Power: In the 1990s, many youth organizing groups started their work at a small scale, focused on very specific campaigns often in one school, one city or one region. Early campaigns in youth organizing focused on issues of dignity such as clean, safe bathrooms in schools. These smaller-scaled campaigns allowed youth organizing groups to really define their work and principles, and focus on building a small core of strong leaders. Over the years, as groups developed and as they experienced more victories and more defeats, they have begun asking what it will take to truly transform conditions in their communities. As the field has seeded and grown, youth organizing has built power at larger levels, through a number of approaches including building networks, coalitions and alliances; increasing formal and informal collaboration with adult organizations; and engaging in the electoral process.

The results of these changes are clear. Education organizing groups are no longer just winning changes in individual schools, but are now instrumental in passing key districtwide policies such as the banning of suspensions for “willful defiance” in the Los Angeles



Unified School District. In many cities, youth organizing groups and young people are now seen by policy-makers as key stakeholders who must be involved in important decisions. In addition, a few issues such as school discipline and the human rights of undocumented immigrant students have been transformed by youth activism. But there is still a long way to go. Youth organizing groups must continue to increase their scale and form powerful alliances if they are to build the power needed to achieve healthy and equitable communities and attract the funding needed to sustain their work. It is clear, however, that many groups are committed to that project and are beginning to contend for power at scale for low-income communities and communities of color.

The Development of Anchor Institutions: The last few years have seen a set of youth organizing groups grow and mature to the point that they could be considered anchor institutions for the field. Many of these organizations have existed for 15 to 20 years. They have survived leadership transitions and downturns in the funding climate, demonstrating that they have the capacity to weather major changes and that they will be important institutions in their communities for years to come. They have also supported the growth of thousands of young leaders and demonstrated the ability to win significant campaign victories.

The development of anchor institutions is significant because these organizations demonstrate what young people are capable of when given the opportunity and adequate support. In addition, these long-standing organizations serve as important models for new organizations and have accelerated their development. In Pittsburgh and Connecticut, for example, new youth organizing groups are rapidly developing by learning from long established groups.

There are many differences among these organizations. Some are long standing multi-generational organizations with roots in the civil rights movement while others are relatively newer stand-alone youth-led organizations. Some are single issue while others address a variety of issues. While there is no single model for these organizations, some common themes include: strong partnerships with adult organizations, leadership roles in networks and coalitions, systematic supports and services for youth leaders, increasing fundraising from non-foundation sources, and a variety of strategies to contend for meaningful power.

Challenges and Recommendations

1. Support the Financial Position of the Field: Strong youth organizing groups developed during a time when stable funding was relatively available. Since then, the financial crisis of 2008 and the changing priorities of a few key funders have created a reduced and unstable funding environment. This loss of funding poses a threat to the continued growth of the field just as established groups are developing the capacity for dynamic change and as new groups and networks continue to emerge. In response, youth organizing groups are engaged in a variety of strategies to create new revenue streams including increasing individual donor fundraising, earned income projects and collaborative fundraising. While some of these efforts are bearing fruit, sustained foundation support is needed for groups to further develop this work and share benefits with the broader field. While additional resources are crucial, in the meantime groups need capacity-building support and financial planning help to survive lean times. Taken together, these changes will help the field move further toward a place of collective sufficiency, less reliant on foundation support.

- Support for this work could include:
- Substantially increasing direct financial support to youth organizers through general operating grants;
- Supporting financial management capacity-building efforts for youth organizing groups;
- Supporting improved revenue-generating practices among the field, including trainings on fundraising, communications/messaging and individual donor development;
- Supporting the growth and documentation of innovative and fruitful financial sustainability practices among the youth organizing field; and
- Joining FCYO and other funders in developing a shared advocacy strategy to bring more resources into the field of youth organizing,

2. Continue to Invest in Building the Leadership Pipeline: Youth organizing groups have been effective at engaging high school and middle school students, but there is often a lack of support for these young people as they get older. As highlighted in all our field scans, there is a need for a comprehensive leadership pipeline that can connect young leaders to opportunities for education, employment, internships, mentorship and community engagement. This will require partnerships among youth organizing groups, campus-based organizations, civic engagement groups, labor unions and a variety of partners.

While popular discourse often includes the need for a leadership pipeline, rarely does it include middle and high school students or focus explicitly on low-income young people and young people of color. In this regard, youth organizing has a vital role to play. Over the last three years FCYO has invested significant resources in this arena and both high school and post-high school aged youth organizing groups have grown. If a pipeline that supports low-income young people and young people of color moving into key community leadership roles is to be built, greater resources and increased collaboration between diverse partners are needed.

Support for this work could include:

- Providing direct, multi-year grants to youth organizing practitioners to engage new members, develop holistic youth support programs, transition young adults into meaningful opportunities, and engage alumni; and
- Supporting partnerships and infrastructure to build connections between the youth organizing field and strategic institutions including colleges, social service agencies, philanthropy and adult organizing practitioners.

3. Encourage Unity and Collaboration Among Strands of the Youth Movement: There are several different kinds of organizations supporting the leadership and civic participation of young people today, each with a slightly different constituency and focus. These include anchor and emerging grassroots youth organizing groups focused on middle and high school aged young people, campus-based organizations, and constituency groups such as NAACP and United We Dream. While relationships among these different types of groups are growing, there is often still a lack of knowledge about each other. Greater cohesion among these groups could contribute to a powerful youth movement that could insert the voice of young people into major national policy debates such as student loans, youth employment, immigration and the debt ceiling. Strong, sustained investment is needed to broker partnerships with different constituencies (youth development providers, adult-led organizations) and to help shore up the effectiveness of youth-led groups.

Support for this work could include:

- Providing space for different constituencies in the youth movement to come together to build relationships and share knowledge (through convenings);
- Supporting cohort-based learning circles that allow anchor youth organizing groups to directly work and share knowledge with other established and emerging groups in the youth movement; and
- Providing direct financial support to networks, coalitions and alliances.

4. Invest in a Millennial Youth Movement: The latest presidential election has raised awareness of the critical role that young people will play in shaping our democracy. Several studies have shown that young people were the margin of victory for President Obama. As the demographics of the country are changing, the majority of young people are now young people of color. In the past, political leaders have often written off this group, assuming either that their numbers are too small or that they are too disengaged to have a meaningful impact on society. It now seems clear that young people of color have the potential to be difference makers in addressing a variety of social issues.

Demography, however, is not destiny. Sheer numbers alone will not result in young people of color becoming more civically engaged. In fact, some studies have shown young people of color to have some of the lowest rates of civic engagement. Many young people of color are deeply disillusioned with institutions that they believe have not served them well, and therefore can be loath to get involved.

The health of our democracy will rest in large part on our ability to engage young people of color as one of the largest and fastest growing sections of the population. While traditional institutions have struggled to engage this population, youth organizing groups have been models in reaching and building the leadership therein. The field was created and designed by low income young people and young people of color with their cultures and ways of being in the forefront. For this reason, youth organizing groups now have the potential to play a critical role in shaping our society.

Support for this work could include:

- Building the capacity of youth organizing practitioners to engage in nonpartisan 501(c)(3) voter engagement work;
- Building the capacity to anchor youth organizing practitioners to develop 501(c)(4) and political action committees; and
- Supporting the growth of partnerships between youth organizing groups and networks, and adult civic engagement organizations.

Youth organizing has the potential to serve as the entry point to a leadership pipeline for low income young people and young people of color. Doing this at the scale that is needed will require youth organizing groups to grow and to strengthen ties to a variety of partners that can engage young leaders as they graduate from high school. It will require the development of leadership pipeline infrastructure that can support young leaders as they get older. Youth organizing groups are beginning to show that they are ready to take on this challenge. With adequate investment from philanthropy and partnerships from key institutions, youth organizing is poised to play an instrumental role in building a movement of young people working alongside adults for a fair and just society.



Appendix 1: Victories Analysis

Along with field's growth in several issue areas, the youth organizing field has also experienced several major campaign victories that not only impact the youth organizers – through increased knowledge, skills and agency – but also impact schools, communities and policy. These descriptions highlight the top five areas that achieved significant victories: educational justice/education reform, immigrant rights, environmental justice and food justice.²⁵

Educational Justice/Education Reform: Consistent with our previous scans in 2004 and 2010, educational justice/education reform is the most common campaign issue in the youth organizing field. This sustained focus from the field over time, along with support from philanthropy, has resulted in important victories across the country such as improving unfit school facilities, establishing ethnic studies curriculum, and requiring that schools provide courses for students to be eligible and prepared for college. Youth organizers have built on this momentum to create and join state and national networks to coordinate campaigns at scale.

For example, in California, we have seen alliances comprising Inner City Struggle, Youth Together, Californians for Justice, Asian Pacific Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership, and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network achieve citywide and state policy victories that ensure all students have access to coursework to make them eligible for the state's higher education system. These groups are actively monitoring the implementation of this policy, and have continued their work together to push for other reforms in public education, such as a school finance reform measure to establish an equitable funding formula that provides more funding to districts with higher numbers of low-income students and students learning English.

As a result of coordinating efforts, youth organizing groups have made tremendous strides in school reform, reaching a high level of sophistication and changing the way young people are engaged in decision-making around school policies. In our current field scan, we have seen how youth organizing groups are leading campaigns and making significant advances in the area of school discipline reform. Member organizations in Chicago's Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE), as well as national networks such as the Alliance for Education Justice and the Dignity in Schools Campaign have been working on school discipline reform for several years, recognizing that youth of color are more likely to receive harsh disciplinary punishments for minor misbehavior (e.g., writing on desks), when compared to their white counterparts.

As a result of the criminalization of youth of color, students who are suspended or expelled miss critical learning time, creating barriers and challenges for them to succeed in the classroom. Punitive disciplinary measures along with other systemic factors such the overuse of law enforcement in schools and the failure to provide a quality education to students – which disproportionately impacts youth of color – contribute to both the achievement gap and the student “push out” crisis. Young people from youth organizing groups across the country have developed a critical analysis of the intersection between education and juvenile justice, and in their efforts to dismantle the “school to prison pipeline” – the systemic factors which push youth from school and into the criminal justice system – have called for reforms that address students' minor offenses through restorative practices that keep students in the classroom.

As a result of advocacy and organizing, groups have achieved victories at city and state levels: from VOYCE youth leading the re-write of the Chicago Public Schools' Student Code of Conduct to end the use of harsh discipline, and the entire Los Angeles Unified School District recently banning suspensions for the vague category of “willful defiant” acts, to Padres y Jovenes United serving as the driving force behind the passage of the Colorado Smart Discipline Law, which requires all state school districts to use disciplinary alternatives such as restorative justice and establish the right for students to appeal expulsions. These victories represent reforms seen in a number of youth-led campaigns around school discipline that center around the idea that punishments must reflect the level of offense, underscoring how critical it is to change the longstanding practices that have criminalized and pushed out youth of color from school.

²⁵ In an effort to bring attention to the important work that youth organizing groups are doing across the country, we will follow up this field scan with a thorough review of youth organizing victories in the past decade. For the purpose of this report, we have limited the number of groups highlighted and feel that they represent the advancements that the field as a whole has experienced. We do not wish to minimize the efforts and victories of groups not highlighted here.

Immigrant Rights: Compared to our 2010 scan, we observed a slight increase in the number of youth organizing groups engaging immigrant youth and a significant rise in groups advancing immigrant rights campaigns (+18%). Again allowing for variation in sample size and constitution, this growth is indicative of a considerable momentum around youth-led work on immigrant rights, particularly work related to passage of the federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors or DREAM Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship to undocumented immigrant youth – or “Dreamers” who came to the United States as minors and are directly impacted by unjust immigration laws. In explaining this trend, it is impossible to overstate the contribution that networks like United We DREAM and DREAM Activists, from which many youth leaders have come, have made in advocating for immigrant rights. While the federal DREAM Act was defeated in 2007 and again in 2010, Dreamers continued to push forward, all the while building their base and becoming arguably the most visible advocates for changes to the immigration system. Despite the defeat to establish a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, immigrant youth have achieved significant victories at the local, state and federal levels.

At the local level, the youth from Voces de la Frontera have secured in-state tuition rates for undocumented students at the University of Wisconsin. After winning in-state tuition in 2009, and then having it revoked in 2011, youth were able to negotiate with the university to uphold and honor the legislation they fought for. At the state level, immigrant youth groups in California, such as Coalition for the Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA), which coordinates more than 30 high school, community college and college-based “Dream Teams,” celebrated the victorious conclusion of a 10-year struggle for educational access for immigrant students. In 2011, two assembly bills were passed giving an estimated 26,000 undocumented students access to public and private financial aid that was previously unavailable to them. Finally, at the national level, Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) announcement made in June 2012 was regarded as one of the most significant victories in the immigrant youth movement. After the federal DREAM Act was defeated, Dreamers broadened their organizing strategy, understanding that their efforts should not solely be focused on passage of legislation around citizenship, but should incorporate a broader vision for immigrant justice. The DACA announcement provides the opportunity for undocumented youth who meet a specific set of criteria (e.g., age upon coming to the United States, number of years in the country) to apply for a two-year employment authorization. It addresses several of the core issues that immigrants advocate for: preventing deportations and creating opportunities for undocumented youth to gain employment. With the estimated 930,000²⁶ immigrant youth eligible for DACA in the United States, immigrant youth organizing groups such as the 52 affiliate organizations in 25 states that comprise the United We Dream Network, took the lead in conducting outreach efforts and workshops for undocumented youth to support young people applying for temporary relief. DACA has changed the outlook for many undocumented youth. Unjust immigration laws have limited their options – from pursuing higher education and attaining meaningful employment – and many youth have struggled with depression and anxiety that comes with hiding one’s status and fear of being deported. DACA has given undocumented youth a new opportunity and hope for a brighter future, and hopefully serves as a major stepping stone to Dreamers’ vision for a pathway to citizenship.

Environmental Justice: Youth of color from low-income communities are actively working to ensure that communities most affected by environmental degradation become safe and healthy places to live. By considering the relationship between people and their living environment, and developing a critical analysis of race, class and the root causes of environmental justice issues, youth organizers strengthen the efforts of mainstream environmentalism that largely focus on community clean-up activities, planting trees and increasing park land. Youth organizers in the environmental justice movement understand that these mainstream efforts alone are not sustainable if policies go unaddressed, including the lack of regulation of polluting facilities, lack of compliance that results in illegal dumping of toxic substances, and zoning laws that permit the placing of noxious facilities in low-income communities of color.

In our current field scan, groups campaigning for environmental justice achieved local and state level victories. At the local level, groups reported wins in transportation justice such as restoring bus service to youth and working class communities that rely on buses to commute to school and work, and ensuring that youth have access to affordable public transportation. Youth-led coalitions such Affordabili(T) in Boston have fought against fare hikes and service cuts, and were able to win a youth pass pilot program in 2011 that offered reduced price transportation to students. Similarly, in New York City, member organizations belonging to the Urban Youth Collaborative successfully secured free MetroCards, impacting more than 600,000 youth and their families.

And, at the state level, 2012 marked the monumental victory of a 12-year campaign coordinated by Chicago’s Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO), which demanded Midwest Generation shut down two of its coal plants. The Little Village neighborhood is a low-income, predominantly Mexican-American community that identified the coal-burning plants as being responsible for high asthma rates, asthma hospitalizations and even death of residents. After years of organizing, where young people showed tremendous creativity in developing tactics, including a GIS mapping project and a locally distributing a youth-run newspaper, Midwest Generation announced the closure of not only the two plants in Chicago, but their entire fleet of plants in the state of Illinois. While many factors converged to make the shut down happen, both political and economic, most stakeholders acknowledge the leadership role of LVEJO and its youth organizers in building a coalition large enough, diverse enough and powerful enough to bring about this dramatic victory.

Food Justice: Our field scan revealed food justice as an emerging area in youth organizing that has garnered national attention the the past several years. Childhood obesity rates have more than doubled in the past 30 years for children (ages 6-11) and tripled for adolescents (ages 12-17).²⁷ The prevalence of obesity among young people of color from low-income communities has been astounding, as the issues of poverty, inequity, lack of access to quality foods and safe, green spaces are inextricably linked to poor health outcomes. To ensure that obesity and other related health conditions are addressed and the trend reversed at a young age, it is critical to identify strategies for youth and their communities implement policies addressing the structural issues leading to an epidemic that, if left untouched, will result in severely obese adults and higher rates of death among those who have not yet reached their prime.

The field of youth organizing has been well-positioned to address this reality and create strategies to tackle it with the leadership of the young people most affected at the helm. In the past three years, we have witnessed specific policy victories that largely focused on the intersection of food justice and education, where young people have drawn clear connections between what youth eat and their ability to perform well in school. Given the high levels of participation among low-income youth eligible in free or reduced school meals,⁴ youth who are organizing for food justice have conducted campaigns and achieved victories related to school food options. For example, youth from the Baltimore Algebra Project (BAP), who have since 2003 spearheaded campaigns around school funding, youth employment and ending the school-to-prison pipeline recently became concerned about the health and quality of school food. After launching a National Student Bill of Rights in 2008, in which one of the sections called for all schools to provide students with high quality and healthy school food, in 2010 youth from BAP began organizing to improve school food in Baltimore by conducting surveys, collecting petitions from students and testifying at school board meetings. These efforts resulted in several important victories, such as developing a scratch cooking pilot program in one school, opening salad bars in three schools, and getting the district to hire a salad bar coordinator to oversee the expansion to other schools.

Youth organizing groups in the south, such as Southwest Workers Union (SWU) in San Antonio, Tex., and Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools (Rethinkers) in New Orleans also achieved wins at the school district level, with SWU convincing their school district to make 53 changes to the school food menu including more fresh vegetables, whole grain, and vegetarian options, and the Rethinkers winning an agreement from the Recovery School District to provide fresh, local fruits and vegetables at least four times per week to all of their schools. Lastly, in the southwest, Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture in Kykotsmovi Village, Ariz., convinced a school district on the Hopi reservation to pass a youth-written policy banning junk food sales in schools. Given the tremendous progress that youth organizing groups have made in the area of food justice, as well as their ability to connect a public health issue to organizing efforts, several youth organizing groups have begun the process of developing a comprehensive Healthy Schools Agenda. The agenda combines research-proven approaches with the practical on-the-ground experience of young people to create a holistic set of policy recommendations at the local, state and national level. These youth organizing groups aim to use the agenda as the basis for coordinated campaigns.

²⁷ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of obesity and trends in body mass index among US children and adolescents, 1999-2010. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2012;307(5):483-490. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/obesity/facts.htm>

²⁸ NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/aboutlunch/nslpfactsheet.pdf>

Appendix 2: 2013 Field Scan Participants

1HOOD	Pittsburgh	PA
A+ Schools	Pittsburgh	PA
Action Communication and Education Reform	Duck Hill	MS
Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA)	Anchorage	AK
Albany Park Neighborhood Council (APNC)	Chicago	IL
Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE)/Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project (REEP)	Roxbury	MA
Anchorage Faith & Action Congregations Together (AFACT)	Anchorage	AK
API Youth for Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL)	Oakland	CA
Arab Youth Organization (AYO!) a program of the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)	San Francisco	CA
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (ACRJ)	Oakland	CA
Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)	Oakland	CA
Baltimore Algebra Project (BAP)	Baltimore	MD
Beantown Society	Jamaica Plain	MA
Black Mesa Water Coalition (BMWCC)	Flagstaff	AZ
Blocks Together	Chicago	IL
Boston-area Youth Organizing Project (BYOP)	Boston	MA
BreakOUT!	New Orleans	LA
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC)	Chicago	IL
CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities (formerly Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence)	New York	NY
Californians for Justice (CFJ)	Long Beach	CA
Center for Teen Empowerment	Boston	MA
Center for Young Women's Development (CYWD)	San Francisco	CA
Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)	San Francisco	CA
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)	Los Angeles	CA
Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth	Oakland	CA
Colonias Development Council (CDC)	Las Cruces	NM
Colorado Anti Violence Program	Denver	CO
Colorado Organization For Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)	Denver	CO
Colorado Progressive Coalition (CPC)	Denver	CO

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)	Huntington Park	CA
Community Coalition	Los Angeles	CA
Community Water Center (CWC)	Visalia	CA
Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC)	Brooklyn	NY
Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM)	Jackson Heights	NY
Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE)	Providence	RI
Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation Youth Force	Boston	MA
Energy Action Coalition	Washington	DC
Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE)	Brooklyn	NY
FIERCE	New York	NY
Freedom Inc	Madison	WI
Gandhi Brigade	Silver Spring	MD
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)	New York	NY
Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network)	San Francisco	CA
Global Youth Justice	Somerville	MA
GreenLeaf	Denver	CO
Homies Organizing the Mission to Empower Youth (HOMEY)	San Francisco	CA
Hopi Tutskwa Permaculture	Kykotsmovi	AZ
Hyde Square Task Force, Inc.	Jamaica Plain	MA
Idaho Community Action Network (ICAN)	Boise	ID
Illinois Safe Schools Alliance	Chicago	IL
Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL)	Chicago	IL
Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)	Bemidji	MN
InnerCity Struggle	Los Angeles	CA
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (JJPL)	New Orleans	LA
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO)	Chicago	IL
Khmer Girls in Action (KGA)	Long Beach	CA
Kids Rethink New Orleans Schools	New Orleans	LA
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KRCC)	Chicago	IL
La Union (UCL, Inc.)	Brooklyn	NY
League of Young Voters Education Fund	Brooklyn	NY

Appendix 2: 2013 Field Scan Participants (Cont.)

Little Village Justice Organization (LVEJO)	Chicago	IL
Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN)	Portland	ME
Make the Road New York (MRNY)	Brooklyn	NY
Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV) California Collaborative	Oakland	CA
New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC)	New York	NY
North Carolina Focus on Increasing Education Leadership & Dignity (NC FIELD)	Kinston	NC
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition	Bronx	NY
Nuestras Raices	Holyoke	MA
Oakland Kids First	Oakland	CA
Oasis Center	Nashville	TN
Padres y Jovenes Unidos	Denver	CO
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER)	San Francisco	CA
Philadelphia Student Union	Philadelphia	PA
Power U Center for Social Change	Miami	FL
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN)	Las Vegas	NV
Project HIP-HOP (Highways Into the Past - History, Organizing & Power)	Roxbury	MA
Project Reach	New York	NY
Prologue Early College High School	Chicago	IL
Providence Youth Student Movement (PrYSM)	Providence	RI
Rooted In Community (RIC)	Berkeley	CA
RYSE	Richmond	CA
Seattle Young People's Project (SYPP)	Seattle	WA
Sistas and Brothas United* (SBU)	Bronx	NY
Sociedad Latina	Roxbury	MA
Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA)	Los Angeles	CA
Southerners on New Ground (SONG)	Atlanta	GA
Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)	Albuquerque	NM
Southwest Workers Union (SWU)	San Antonio	TX
Southwest Youth Collaborative (SWYC)	Chicago	IL
Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)	n/a	WV
Students Working for an Agricultural Revolutionary Movement (SWARM)	Goldsboro	NC

Students Working for Equal Rights	Miami	FL
SxSW Experiment	Jackson	MS
Teach Our Children and Youth UnleashED	New Haven	CT
Tenants and Workers United	Alexandria	VA
The Brotherhood/Sister Sol*	New York	NY
Tierra Y Libertad Organization (TYLO)	Tucson	AZ
Tunica Teens In Action	Tunica	MS
Ugnayan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Linking the Children of the Motherland)	New York	NY
United Teen Equality Center (UTEC)	Lowell	MA
University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia (UCCP)	Philadelphia	PA
UPROSE	Brooklyn	NY
Voces de la Frontera	Milwaukee	WI
Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE)	Chicago	IL
Washington Interfaith Network*(WIN)	Washington	DC
WeCount!	Homestead	FL
Young People's Project*	Jackson	MS
Young Women United (YWU)	Albuquerque	NM
Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!)	Raleigh	NC
Youth In Action (YIA)	Providence	RI
Youth Innovation Movement Solutions	Tupelo	MS
Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)	Los Angeles	CA
Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice (YMPJ)	Bronx	NY
Youth on Board	Somerville	MA
Youth Organizing Institute (YOI)	Durham	NC
Youth Together	Oakland	CA
Youth United for Change (YUC)	Philadelphia	PA
Youth United for Community Action (YUCA)	East Palo Alto	CA
Youth Uprising (YU)	Oakland	CA



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