

Looking Forward:

YOUTH LEADING THE WAY TOWARD
A SUSTAINABLE PLANET



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Lessons Learned from the ReGenerations:

Youth Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice Grantmaking
Initiative of the Funders' Collaborative for Youth Organizing

Prepared by the Movement Strategy Center and the
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Table Of Contents

Executive Summary

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 The Grantees**
- 5 Strategic Issues and Case Studies**
- 11 Strategic Design of the ReGen/EJ Initiative**
- 13 Key Findings: The Multiple Impacts of the ReGen/EJ Initiative**
- 18 Recommendations to Funders**
- 20 Conclusion – Looking Forward**

Appendices

- 21 Background Information and Evaluation Methodology**
- 23 Key Definitions**
- 24 Timeline of ReGen/EJ Events and Activities**

Executive Summary

In 1991, grassroots and indigenous leaders from across the United States and from around the world assembled at the first People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit which identified, affirmed, and adopted the Principles of Environmental Justice, declaring to the world a commitment to build a national and international movement of all people of color to end environmental racism and restore humanity's rightful and proper relationship to the natural world. On the twentieth anniversary of this monumental birth of the environmental justice movement, the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) is pleased to release this report, capturing lessons learned from a three-year grantmaking initiative that supported grassroots and youth-led efforts to champion environmental justice. Through FCYO's unique grantmaking effort – ReGenerations: Youth Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice (ReGen/EJ) – eleven organizations that value the role of young people's leadership and youth organizing strategies were provided grants and technical assistance from 2006-2010 to build their environmental justice campaigns. Many of these campaigns resulted in enormous victories at the local level and beyond.

The ReGen/EJ grantmaking program, built with significant support from such funders as the Ford Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, and the Merck Family Fund, among others, was an attempt to bridge a generational gap and build leadership to proactively respond to mounting environmental concerns—not just of today but of tomorrow. Adult leaders in the movement, many of whom represented the youth leadership in 1991 at the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, ask, Where is the next generation of leadership prepared to address the continued degradation of our planet and our communities? Today's youth environmental justice leaders face unparalleled, colossal environmental threats, and these youth are responding with new, smart, innovative strategies, such as the framework for climate justice. In addition, they are asking another question: Where are our elders to help us in this fight? Through ReGen/EJ, FCYO sought to provide systematic support to the emerging field of youth organizing within the environmental justice movement by uplifting models of intergenerational leadership in order to both build the field as a whole, and strengthen key organizations and networks within it. Through ReGen/EJ, FCYO has learned that fostering a new generation of leaders in partnership with older generations, is crucial for a sustained response to escalating environmental concerns.

As is a principle in organizing, FCYO adopted an approach that would create a collective response among those most affected by environmental degradation. While FCYO provided general operating support to eleven organizations that had a track record in environmental justice and that embraced youth organizing as a key leadership development strategy, FCYO used a cohort-based model to support the groups as a whole. Thus, the ReGen/EJ grantees benefited not only from multi-year funding, but also from access to additional flexible resources, technical assistance, and peer support and collaboration. As a cohort, the groups participated in annual convenings, which became important movement- and relationship- building experiences.

The ReGen/EJ initiative led to significant impacts at multiple levels, as well as key lessons.

Highlights include:

- At the individual level, young people developed skills in organizing and advocacy, began to see themselves as capable leaders, and had the opportunity to meet and work with like-minded peers committed to environmental and social justice.
- At the organizational level, grantees built institutional sustainability by implementing or enhancing existing intergenerational models that expanded their definition of leadership. Young people and adults learned alongside each other and made decisions together, allowing for a transfer of skills, knowledge, and values between generations of leaders.
- Within the environmental justice movement, grantees strengthened existing networks and co-created new initiatives, including Grassroots Solutions for Climate Justice North America. Leadership in developing a new climate justice framework included several ReGen/EJ grantees and other groups, such as Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, Indigenous Environmental Network, Right to the City Alliance, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and Movement Generation. The emergence of a new framework around climate justice allowed grantees to integrate the work and relationships among the youth organizing and environmental justice groups.
- This initiative underscored the importance of supporting environmental justice organizations beyond the grant dollar. ReGen/EJ created the only national convenings for youth organizers in environmental justice. These collective learning spaces led to the sharing of tools and resources, which, in turn, led to greater movement-building.
- A cohort-based grant initiative coupled with multi-year funding provided grantees with the support needed to build their organizational capacity in environmental justice organizing.

FCYO is honored to have served the eleven organizations of the ReGen/EJ cohort and to serve the movement for environmental justice. We remain committed to youth organizing and to creating a pipeline of young leaders and organizers into environmental justice. It is our hope that ReGen/EJ and the funding initiatives that will follow it help sustain the movement rooted in the Principles of Environmental Justice so powerfully expressed in 1991. It is the best hope for this world and its rapidly changing climate.

Introduction

The mission of the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) is to increase resources and support to the field of youth organizing and to promote the leadership of low-income youth of color in social justice organizing. FCYO acknowledges that young people have strengths and valuable lived experiences, and believes young people must be at the center of any meaningful change processes. In pursuit of its vision, FCYO supports youth organizing—an innovative youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities.

In 2007, FCYO launched ReGenerations: Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice (ReGen/EJ), a multi-year funding initiative to support eleven community-based environmental justice groups to build their capacity and develop the leadership of young people in environmental justice organizing. This initiative took place at a timely period—young people were shaping and pushing the environmental justice movement into new realms while at the same time youth organizing groups expressed the need to build a regenerating base of young people to take on leadership positions. Against the backdrop of the economic downfall, this opportune support from ReGen/EJ allowed the groups to sustain their organizations when they were most vulnerable. The eleven groups featured in this report each received grant support, technical assistance, cohort convenings, and evaluation. Through their involvement, they were provided with opportunities to share tools and models and document inter-generational organizing strategies.

ReGen/EJ is the first of several initiatives under FCYO's ReGenerations framework, which aims to develop a leadership pipeline, or an intentional and systematic pathway that engages young people in organizing, supports their holistic development, and guides their transition into leadership opportunities within the social justice movement. By developing young leaders who are committed to social justice, the youth organizing field establishes a regenerating base that is prepared to take on leadership positions within the social justice movement. For more information on FCYO and the ReGenerations framework, please see Appendix 1.

The ReGen/EJ Cohort of Grantees

One of the principles guiding FCYO's work is the belief that those who are most affected by social inequities—environmental racism, lack of access to resources, disenfranchisement—are the most knowledgeable of community issues, and if given the tools and resources to organize, are the most effective in developing solutions. As such, environmental justice efforts engage communities that are most impacted by environmental degradation and in turn can lead the process of developing and implementing solutions. The ReGen/EJ cohort of grantees, comprised of low-income youth of color, worked on a wide range of issues that they identified as important and needing of attention, both in their communities and within the environmental justice movement. The cohort consisted of eleven groups from various regions of the country: the majority of the cohort was from the South (55%), followed by the Midwest (18%) and the West Coast (18%), and finally the Northeast (9%). See Figure 1 for a map of the cohort.

In addition to geographic diversity, grantees varied in their organizational maturity and experience with organizing and environmental justice. Some of the grantees focused on youth environmental stewardship or were emerging groups just beginning their work in the fields of youth organizing and environmental justice, while others were well-established organizations with decades-long experience that have contributed to defining the environmental justice field. For key definitions used in this report and grantee descriptions, please see Appendix 2.

BLACK MESA WATER COALITION

Black Mesa Water Coalition (BMWC) is located on the Black Mesa Reservation in Arizona and is dedicated to protecting the health and sustainability of natural resources —water, and plants, and all living beings. BMWC is led by and engages indigenous people to address such issues as water depletion and natural resource exploitation, particularly within the Four Corners region of Arizona. BMWC strives to empower young people while building sustainable communities.

Environmental focus: Rural lands and native rights, community planning, green jobs

COMMUNITY WATER CENTER

Community Water Center (CWC) seeks to ensure that all communities have access to safe, clean, and affordable water. Their mission is to address drinking water issues by creating community-driven solutions. CWC employs strategies such as organizing, education, and advocacy in California's San Joaquin Valley.

Environmental focus: Drinking water

DETROITERS WORKING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice (DWEJ) engages low-income communities of color that have historically suffered from disproportional environmental pollution and have the least capacity to respond to injustices. DWEJ is organized to empower individuals, communities, and community organizations in Southeast Michigan to educate, advocate, and organize for cleaner, healthier communities and environments.

Environmental focus: Green jobs, parks and open spaces, toxic sites, air quality

LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION

The Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) works in two Chicago community areas known as Little Village and Pilsen, which together make up one of the largest Mexican American communities in the United States. Little Village is the third most industrialized community in Chicago, has the second highest rate of air pollution, and has the least amount of open space per capita in the city. Through democracy in action, LVEJO works with families, co-workers, and neighbors to improve the environment and people's lives in Little Village, Pilsen, and the greater Chicago area.

Environmental focus: Transportation, air quality, community planning and green design, toxic emissions

NATIVE MOVEMENT

Native Movement led culturally-based leadership development and sustainability programs in Alaska (Indigenous Leadership Institute) and the Southwest, while inspiring and supporting young indigenous leaders across North America. Their vision was to move the world's people towards balanced relations between each other and with the natural world. Please note that since the conclusion of the ReGen/EJ initiative, Native Movement has closed.

Environmental focus: Sustainable building, rural lands, native rights, community planning

NOLLIE'S CITIZENS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The mission of Nollie's Citizens for Quality Education (Nollie's), based in Mississippi, is to develop grassroots leaders and organizers. By doing so, they will be able to hold political, educational, and environmental systems accountable to the needs and interests of the African-American community.

Environmental focus: Air quality and toxic site clean-up, green jobs, open spaces

SOUTHWEST WORKERS UNION

The Southwest Workers' Union (SWU) is a membership organization of low-income workers and families, community residents, and youth, working for worker rights, environmental justice, and community empowerment. Based in San Antonio, Texas, SWU empowers and organizes its 2,500 members through education, leadership development, and direct action. The aim is to build multi-generational grassroots power to create sustainable systemic change for social, economic, and environmental justice.

Environmental focus: Climate justice, toxic site clean-up

SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT

The Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP) in New Mexico, is a statewide, multi-racial, multi-issue, community based membership organization. SWOP works with people of color, youth, and other poor communities through education, leadership development, training, and direct organizing, to have a voice in the decision-making process at the local, state, and federal levels. Its mission is to empower communities in the Southwest to realize racial and gender equality, and social and economic justice.

Environmental focus: Climate justice, open spaces

UNITED PUERTO RICAN ORGANIZATION OF SUNSET PARK

As the oldest Latino community-based organization, Brooklyn, New York, United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE) is dedicated to the development of Southwest Brooklyn and the empowerment of its residents primarily through broad and converging campaigns for the environment, sustainable development, and youth justice. Through organizing, advocacy, and developing

intergenerational, indigenous leadership, UPROSE addresses environmental justice issues by increasing community awareness and involvement, developing participatory community planning practices, and promoting sustainable development with justice and governmental accountability.

Environmental focus: Waterfront development, land use, brownfields, transportation, air quality, open space, alternative energy, and environmental health

VIETNAMESE AMERICAN YOUNG LEADERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ORLEANS

Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO) empowers under-represented Vietnamese-American youth to work for positive social change through organizing, services, and cultural enrichment. Through organizing, youth gain a sense of ownership in their community and ensure that they have a voice in the rebuilding process of their community, focusing specifically on their education and the environment in which they live.

Environmental focus: Community planning, alternative energy, green jobs, and environmental health

YOUTH UNITED FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) is a grassroots community organization based in East Palo Alto, California. YUCA was created – and is led and run by – young people of color, the majority of whom are from low-income communities. YUCA provides a safe space for young people to empower themselves and work on environmental and social justice issues in order to establish positive systemic change through grassroots community organizing.

Environmental focus: Community planning and green design, environmental health, toxic site clean-up

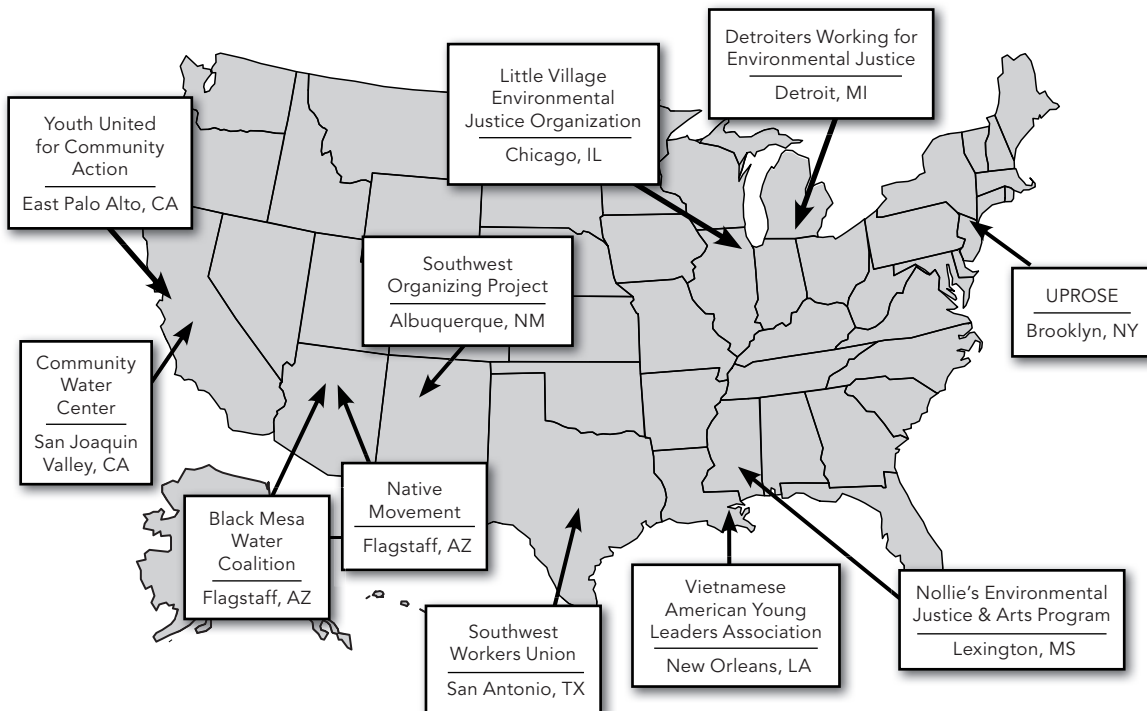


Figure 1: Map of ReGen/EJ Grantees

Strategic Issues and Case Studies

The cohort of grantees worked on a wide array of environmental justice issues over the three years of the ReGen/EJ initiative. Youth organizing work is very intersectional, reflecting comprehensive community responses to complex problems. Documenting the rich diversity of issues engaged by the cohort would take us beyond the scope of this report. The grantees' efforts are not only important to their respective local communities and to the environmental justice movement, but to the wider movements for social justice and the environment. Thus, several case studies have been selected to highlight their work in this report, focusing on two issues of strategic importance: 1) access to clean drinking water; and 2) climate justice. Both these issues are central to the sustainability of communities. Furthermore, these issues are urgent and have the potential to bring together otherwise separate constituencies and movements, such as mainstream environmentalism and the environmental justice movement.

In addition to highlighting the efforts of the different organizations on these two issues, this report will also describe the roles that young people played. For example, young people planned and participated in mobilizations, engaged in scientific research on environmental conditions affecting their communities, advocated for legislation, developed new analytical and communication tools, and exercised leadership in the key environmental justice actions of their organizations.

It is significant to note that in both of these key issue areas, cohort spaces and peer exchanges fostered the development of new significant collaborations and networks. YUCA and CWC have collaborated in California on clean drinking water issues. Nationally, the groups featured in this report working on climate justice formed new networks and spaces for collaboration, including Climate Justice Alignment Process and Youth 4 Climate Justice.

1. CLIMATE JUSTICE

Climate justice – the environmental justice perspective on climate change – is an analysis that asserts that the solutions to the climate crisis must come from the communities that are the most impacted by environmental injustices and are the most vulnerable to environmental disaster and economic upheaval due to climate change. These communities are on the frontlines of coal mines, incinerators, power plants, and refineries, and may reside on coastlines in harm's way. Climate justice organizers have made important contributions to discussions of climate change and global climate destabilization, strongly asserting that the social and economic inequities of the past and present must be addressed in the "just transition" to an environmentally sustainable economy. The "just transition" refers to the idea that a transition away from a fossil fuel-based economy is necessary for the ecological survival of all life on the planet. At the same time, it must right the wrongs that have been created during the development of the fossil fuel-based economy. Young people in environmental justice organizations have been at the forefront of articulating a vision of our future economy that maintains or increases services and supports for the most affected communities while at the same time laying the foundation for environmental restoration and economic revitalization. The cases presented in this report highlight cohort grantees' actions to advance and prepare for this "just transition," while also

fighting to eliminate polluting facilities – such as coal-fired power plants – that harm their communities and contribute to climate change.

Southwest Workers Union

Leading the Movement for Climate Justice

In December 2009, Southwest Workers Union (SWU) sent two youth leaders, Jill Johnson and Diana Lopes, from San Antonio, Texas to the 15th Climate Change Treaty Negotiations Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark as part of the delegation that included Movement Generation, Grassroots Global Justice and the Right to the City Alliance. Both Jill and Diana connected with grassroots social movements from the global South such as Via Campesina and Jubilee South, as well as climate justice organizers from the United States. The youth leaders contributed significantly to the online media presence of people of color at the Copenhagen Summit through blogging, sharing videos through allied channels, and getting interviewed by mainstream and grassroots media outlets.

Given the general lack of detailed knowledge about climate change among the U.S. population, the presence of these organizers in Copenhagen and their continuing commitment to educate their communities in multiple languages is an important contribution to the dissemination of a progressive analysis of climate change and its solutions to various communities. In addition, SWU's youth have brought a climate justice perspective to mainstream environmental arenas like Power Shift and Bioneers¹, and also to social justice movement arenas including the United States Social Forum, held in Detroit in June 2010.

Little Village Environmental Justice Organization

Linking Coal and Toxic Pollution to Climate Change

In 2003, Marisol Becerra first volunteered with Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) to map and inventory the toxins found within 150 blocks of her predominantly Mexican-American community, Little Village in Chicago. Marisol was enraged to discover that in Little Village more than 60,000 youth in a two-mile radius of the Fisk and Crawford Coal Power Plants are forced to breathe air that violates EPA standards. From this finding she was inspired to act, stating, "In order to shut down these coal power plants, build more parks, and clean up the toxins, we must organize more people to stand up and fight." Her first step was launching the youth branch of LVEJO called Youth Activists Organizing as Today's Leaders (YAOTL).

Using the data Marisol and her peers collected, YAOTL collaborated with the Chicago-based youth media organization, Open Youth Networks to devise OurMap of Environmental Justice, an interactive online map that includes links to youth-created videos, descriptions of toxic sites, and gang territory delineations. With this map, Marisol educated her community about local environmental injustice and motivated them to become involved in campaigns. The map uses poignant facts and videos to

1 Powershift and Bioneers are some of the major public gatherings of the mainstream environmental movement. Powershift, as an example, engages primarily college-age students. Young people of color from the environmental justice movement have been instrumental in increasing the representation of people of color in the gatherings as well as expanding the definition of youth to include high school students.

educate the community about the different pollutants and contaminants in Little Village that cause over 40 premature deaths and 550 emergency room visits annually. In 2008, Marisol was awarded a Brower Youth Award for her commitment and work. She and other YOATL members have been a vocal presence at environmental conferences such as Power Shift 2009. In 2009, they also organized local Chicago actions as part of a national day of action on climate change that highlighted the link between the prevalence of coal power plants and climate change.

UPROSE

First People of Color Youth Climate Justice Summit

The First People of Color Youth Climate Justice Summit was held in New York City in April 2010, following a planning process conducted throughout 2009. Along with six other local community organizations who work on a diverse set of issue areas and represent different impacted neighborhoods including the South Bronx, northern Manhattan, and Sunset Park and Williamsburg in Brooklyn, UPROSE brought together over 100 youth over three days. Young people worked with UPROSE senior leaders to develop and execute the outreach strategy for the Summit, designed the program, and collaborated with the other community-based organizations to develop and implement workshops. During the conference, young people educated each other on climate change, climate justice, youth organizing, and intergenerational leadership. They also developed a video that conveyed their message of climate justice to youth in the Global South.

The Summit featured intergenerational work on environmental justice, and trained participants on the history of the environmental justice movement, and climate justice science and policy. Participants had the opportunity to analyze climate change science and relate the impacts to what they witnessed in their neighborhoods. The Summit organizers envisioned that this locally-focused event would help build the climate justice movement nationally by encouraging meaningful intergenerational relationships between youth organizers and activists while connecting their local efforts to efforts in other regions and sectors, such as those by cohort members Black Mesa Water Coalition, Southwest Workers Union, and Little Village Environmental Justice Organization.

Murad Awawdeh, an environmental justice organizer at UPROSE, says, "I joined UPROSE when I was ten years old and have been an active member for thirteen years. In that time we have stopped power plants from coming to the neighborhood and doubled open space, but climate change presents new and complicated challenges for our waterfront community. The Summit was an important space to learn the science and strategically focus on the importance of incorporating youth into the leadership of this issue. It is how we build community."

2. CLEAN DRINKING WATER

Communities of color—especially those that rely directly on groundwater—often lack access to clean drinking water. Throughout the United States, major groundwater sources are being tapped for large-scale agricultural use, including farming and dairies. Groundwater can be contaminated with pesticides and fertilizers, illegally disposed of hazardous wastes, and leaking storage tanks. Since the sources of these types of pollution are usually important industries in the local economy, regulatory agencies are often reluctant to intervene. Young people in the environmental justice movement are leading activism and policy advocacy efforts for the sustainable and wise use of groundwater and its protection as a source of safe drinking water.

Youth United for Community Action

Proactively Planning for Public Health and Community Stability

Through persistent, youth-led community action and advocacy, Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) has led the fight to shut down Romic Environmental Technologies (Romic), a toxic waste transfer facility in East Palo Alto, California. The area was home to several toxic facilities, which led to a toxic plume in the groundwater, adding to the community's burden of above-ground pollutants released by various facilities in the neighborhood. For twenty years, YUCA led the East Palo Alto community in its fight to shut down the Romic plant, mobilizing each time the plant's EPA permit went up for renewal. Finally, in 2007, YUCA achieved a landmark victory — the closing of Romic.

Since then, YUCA has moved into new issue areas that opened up after the successful closure of the plant. In particular, YUCA has been heavily involved in shaping and monitoring the closure process, securing public transparency and biannual notification of how the closure and clean-up were progressing at the site. They have also been instrumental in shaping the local health and safety plan.

As the Romic plant closed its doors, YUCA was provided with an opportunity to take the lead in ensuring that community groups from East Palo Alto have input on the community plan for a new Business District being developed on the site formerly occupied by the toxic facility. Through their organizing experience, young people have become experts in just and inclusive community planning. Youth organizers' demands for accessible language and the translation of technical terms into lay language, as well as the transformation of bureaucratic processes into community-led processes, have contributed to the success of this organizing in these largely immigrant communities.

As former youth member and current Executive Director Annie Loya explains, "The clean-up process of the facility is taking us to a lot of different places. Our new campaign is around the Ravenswood Business District, the industrial district where Romic was once located. The city is now redeveloping it, which is resulting in gentrification and displacement. People want to be able to say what happens on this land. We are creating this larger community process. We are also working with a City Council member and other organizations in East Palo Alto so that the community can lead this process and what the vision will look like."

A classic environmental justice campaign, YUCA's campaign first focused on toxins in the environment and groundwater, and its final success created new work in new arenas. In this case, it is youth leaders and former YUCA youth who are ensuring whole community participation, as well as bringing planners who will work with community members to ensure that best practices of environmental sustainability and community economic development are incorporated into the plans for East Palo Alto.

Community Water Center

Youth for A.G.U.A. – Rural Youth Leading Statewide Water Protection Policy and Advocacy Efforts

Drinking water quality in the San Joaquin Valley is the worst in California due to the pollution of groundwater sources from decades of intensive fertilizer and pesticide application, as well as the massive influx of animal factories to the region. Because the polluting industries form the basis for the local economy, political will to address the contamination has been minimal. Low-income, immigrant, and Latino communities have been harmed by the regulatory inaction, suffering from the effects of widespread drinking water contamination and dilapidated infrastructure.

The primary groundwater contaminant in the San Joaquin Valley is nitrate. High levels of nitrate come from fertilizers, animal factory waste, and leaky septic systems. At concentrations that exceed state and federal health standards, nitrate can cause death in infants, stillbirths, and cancer in adults. Other common groundwater problems in the San Joaquin Valley include arsenic, pesticides, over-chlorination, and contamination by bacteria and disinfectant byproducts, all of which can cause both short-term and long-term illnesses.

Youth for A.G.U.A. (Asociación de Gente Unida Por el Agua) is a grassroots coalition of community residents, youth, and allied non-profit organizations, founded in 2006 to push for regional solutions to larger systemic water problems. A.G.U.A. mobilizes community members to participate in critical policy forums, works to raise public awareness of the severe threats to drinking water quality, and supports local community leadership in the policy debate on how to protect drinking water. A.G.U.A.'s current campaign focuses on securing effective groundwater protection for drinking water sources, particularly from nitrate contamination. This campaign focuses on advocacy at the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, as well as with state and local representatives. By drawing the attention of the media, decision makers, regulators, and industry to the issue of drinking water quality, A.G.U.A. is able to generate change for the many communities that face similar drinking water problems throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

A.G.U.A. youth have been involved with A.G.U.A. since the coalition started. They went with their families to some of the first meetings and rallies. As they, and other youth, learned more and more about the problem of drinking water contamination, they realized the need for youth organizing around the issue. Today, Youth for A.G.U.A. meets on a regular basis. They have become experts on drinking water contamination in the Valley, and are able to define the problem, assess what causes it, and identify who needs to be influenced in order to make change. Their passion comes from their own experiences. As one youth pointed out, "We are fighting for water justice so that everyone in the Central Valley has access to safe and affordable drinking water."

Black Mesa Water Coalition

Indigenous Youth Lead the Passage of the Navajo Green Jobs Bill

The passage of the Navajo Green Jobs Bill presents one example of the visionary environmental justice work that young people are leading. In July 2009, over forty Navajo youth marched into the Navajo Nation Council Chambers in Window Rock, Arizona, wearing green shirts to show support for the first green jobs legislation in Indian Country. This historic legislation was the culmination of years of base-building and successful organizing by the Black Mesa Water Coalition (BMWC) on issues of clean energy and water use in the region. The Navajo Green Jobs Bill established the Navajo Green Economy Commission and Fund, a community-directed approach to securing federal and local green jobs funding while supporting residents' visions of small-scale green development. Nikke Alex, the Executive Director of BMWC, who served as the youth organizer during this campaign, is a member of the Navajo Nation.

"Young people have been involved in the campaign from start to finish," explains Alex, "even writing the legislation." "This is it for us," emphasized Alex and other youth throughout the campaign. "We told everyone, 'Older generations aren't going to face the harsh effects of climate change. But, we will.' I think it was youth who pushed the delegates to vote for the green jobs bill." As Alex told Colorlines magazine, "There's nothing like this in history. It's the first time that Navajo youth have come out to the (Navajo Nation) Council. It's the first time that the Navajo Nation Council's Speaker has worked on a proactive initiative, rather than reacting and applying band-aids."²

2 http://colorlines.com/archives/2009/07/green_jobs_for_navajo_youth_q.html

Strategic Design of the ReGen/EJ Initiative

FCYO unites national, regional, and local grantmakers and youth organizing practitioners dedicated to advancing youth organizing as a strategy for youth development and social transformation. By directing philanthropic resources and increasing support to the field of youth organizing, FCYO is able to strategically support social movements during their critical periods of growth and transition. In ReGen/EJ, FCYO supported youth organizing groups during a period of generational transition within the movement for environmental justice.

Each of the eleven grantees in the cohort received a grant of up to \$30,000 in general operating support and the opportunity to access up to \$5,000 for each of the first two years for capacity building support and peer exchanges. In addition to three years of funding, grantees were provided with networking and relationship-building opportunities through annual convenings, support in leveraging new money from other funders, and evaluation activities to capture and share key lessons of their work and the initiative overall. Please see Appendix 3 for a timeline of events and activities.

1. **Strategic, cohort-based grantmaking** – FCYO’s 2005 Field Scan³ revealed that youth organizing groups often felt isolated and disconnected from other groups that were working on similar campaigns and issue areas, and that if given opportunities to meet groups from across the country in a common learning space, they would benefit from sharing information and resources. Similarly, organizations engaging young people in environmental justice work experienced the same challenge; though they worked on similar issues, opportunities to collaborate were most often limited to local or regional efforts. Informed by this finding, FCYO designed this initiative to be cohort-based, where grantees representing different geographic regions and communities could share organizing models, exchange tools and curriculum, and use the strengths of the group to address challenges that they faced in their organizations and within the fields of youth organizing and environmental justice.

Given that this initiative funded a mix of groups with varied backgrounds and histories in youth organizing and environmental justice, FCYO was intentional about facilitating lessons that would benefit both emerging groups and established groups.

2. **Capacity building support** – FCYO acknowledges that support to grantees must go beyond the grant dollar and that in order to sustain and strengthen the fields of youth organizing and environmental justice, it is critical to build grantees’ organizational capacity. The cohort was supported in the following ways:
 - **National convenings:** FCYO coordinated the only national learning experience for low-income youth of color working in environmental justice through national convenings of cohort grantees. Each year, grantees came together to establish relationships, learn about each other’s campaigns, and build skills. The agendas for these annual convenings were grantee-driven, ensuring that the workshops and learning objectives were relevant and meaningful to the cohort. By the end of the three-year initiative, the cohort aimed to develop a shared

3 Since the conclusion of ReGen/EJ, FCYO conducted a Field Scan in 2010, which can be found at www.fcyo.org.

analysis and common understanding of youth organizing and environmental justice.

- **Technical assistance:** Through both the national convenings and individual group consultations, grantees were provided with technical assistance to develop their youth organizing strategies, strengthen their campaigns, and acquire new skills and tools. Workshops at the national convenings included: developing a power analysis; messaging and framing; and mapping community assets and toxins.
 - **Opportunity Fund:** In addition to a general operating grant of up to \$30,000 grantees were able to access FCYO's Opportunity Fund. This small grants program awarded grants of up to \$5,000 and was designed to build the momentum and capacity of the cohort's environmental justice work. Through this fund, grantees participated in peer exchanges where grantees could travel to another organization within the cohort to learn first-hand about their work. In addition, grantees used this fund to attend other national movement conferences. Grantees chose to attend such conferences as Power Shift (Washington, DC), Free Minds Free People (Houston), Allied Media Conference (Detroit), and the US Social Forum (Atlanta).
- 3. Evaluation** – The ReGen/EJ initiative was the first of its kind to specifically explore youth leadership development models emerging from within environmental justice and the potential they have for bringing new voices and multi-issue organizing strategies to other social justice and environmental movements. Because FYCO anticipated that new information and lessons would emerge from this multiyear strategy, it developed procedures to document the practices coming from the cohort of grantees. The concluding sections of this report will provide more details on the key findings from this initiative.

Key Findings: The Multiple Impacts of the ReGen/EJ Initiative

The ReGen/EJ Initiative resulted in several impacts occurring on multiple levels — from the leadership development of individual young people and the organizational capacity building of grantees, to the strengthening of networks within the environmental justice field and the broader social justice movement. It is important to note how these levels influence each other. For example, within the context of environmental justice organizing, increased skills among young people contribute to the overall sustainability of an organization by building intergenerational leadership. And, strengthened organizational capacity increases the staff's ability to better engage young people in social justice organizing. The reciprocal nature of these impacts build off each other. (See Figure 2.)



Figure 2: Multiple Impacts from Individual to Movement

1. IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth organizers were deeply impacted. They developed skills that will prove to be highly transferable to other arenas of their lives as they age, including the broader environmental movement. Also, they developed their leadership skills, which positions them to lead their communities well beyond the campaigns that they successfully implemented.

a. Skills Building

At a practical level, the impact of youth organizer training is important. Opportunities to practice public speaking, issue analysis, setting agendas, meeting facilitation, and strategy development equip young people with a strong skills set that they can apply to their leadership roles within their organization, community, and the environmental justice movement. Furthermore, these skills can be transferred to the workforce and other opportunities within

the social justice movement. Similarly, young people organizing in environmental justice learn substantive scientific research skills through their involvement in campaigns. They gain sophisticated, hands-on experience with data collection and surveys, mapping and analysis, and air and water quality testing, all of which strengthens their skills in applied mathematics and scientific inquiry. In turn, this can help them in academic settings. Lastly—and not to be minimized—many young people benefited greatly from attending the annual grantee convenings held in different parts of the country. For some, these were their first opportunities for travel and leaving their hometowns. From navigating one’s way through an airport to managing themselves in unfamiliar cities, young people took advantage of these learning opportunities, explored places outside of their comfort zones, and were able to care for themselves away from home and family.

b. Leadership Development

ReGen/EJ grantees passionately emphasize the importance of providing opportunities for low-income young people of color to develop their leadership and gain exposure to social justice work. The youth organizing training and mentoring have long-term impacts on the development of young people involved in youth organizing groups. Youth organizing provides a safe space for young people to learn, grow, and build trusting relationships with peers, caring adults, and community members. And, by supporting the holistic development of young people, youth organizing offers a structured path for young people to realize their potential in often challenging circumstances. In the words of Annie Loya, a youth who came up through Youth United for Community Action, and is now their Executive Director:

When I think of the school to prison pipeline, there is a systemic problem. You know, sub-standard schools, teachers that don’t care or aren’t paid enough to care about their students’ learning, families breaking their backs to maintain minimal necessities, communities that aren’t given aid to create real parks and recreation departments, funding going towards prisons, etc. We are small organizations from across the US going up against this mess. There are some real victories when it comes to reclaiming our youth and re-tracking them into something real and tangible.

Sometimes we lose the battle and young people go back to what they know and feel comfortable with. But, more and more we are winning. We are seeing youth through at least high school. We are seeing young women beating the statistical age of teen pregnancy. We are seeing more young people not going back to jail. We are seeing more young people, for the first time, thinking about what they want to pursue as a career. Our goal is to create the person that is the change. So wherever this person goes and whatever they participate in, they carry and act on the values of community and equity.

Through the support of ReGen/EJ, young people involved in youth organizing groups developed strong relationships with peers who provided mutual support and accountability. They were able to observe and follow examples of peer commitment to social and environmental justice, of service to others, and of love for community.

2. IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COHORT

ReGen/EJ grantees were impacted by this three-year initiative in several ways: by strengthening intergenerational work through leadership expansion, sustaining organizational capacity, and connecting with each other in shared learning spaces.

a. Leadership Expansion and Organizational Sustainability

The intergenerational framework that promotes the leadership development of young people of color also contributes to organizational sustainability. In order for campaigns to withstand the battles that can last for decades, revolving leadership as well as leadership at all levels – among youth and veterans – leads to the perseverance needed for the long-term.

For several of the organizations, the ReGen/EJ grant was the first or only support dedicated to their youth organizing work. This allowed for intentional support for young people’s leadership development through the hiring of one or more staff persons dedicated to the development of young people’s leadership skills. Further, this dedicated support bolstered the practice of leadership expansion, embracing more inclusive and equitable power structures within the organization. Young people and adults were sharing decision-making responsibilities and learned alongside each other, using an intergenerational approach to develop a new revolving leadership. When young people are engaged in campaign, program, and organizational decision-making, as senior leaders transition, there are younger generations equipped with skills, talent, and experience — poised to take up the helm.

The addition of new youth leadership roles within organizations helped to strengthen their own leadership pipelines, or their ability to build young people’s skills, develop their leadership abilities, and support their holistic development. Several organizations were able to develop a pipeline with clear successive stages and roles with increasing responsibility and deepening commitment. As youth organizers took on roles with greater responsibilities, they also saw increasing opportunities for leadership. Further, the leadership expansion model employed by some grantees included the shift from hierarchical models of leadership to shared leadership approaches. This shift was intended to deepen the leadership capacity of the organizations and protect them from unanticipated leadership transitions.

b. Shared Learning Spaces

Participants in the cohort sent a message that FCYO has heard from other youth organizers across the country: No one is currently convening youth organizers nationally. Therefore, the annual convenings became unique spaces where grantees could build a learning community, share best practices, and develop a solid foundation of shared values and collaborative goals. This was the only convening space for young people of color working in environmental justice. The cohort expressed the need to continue supporting this national movement-building space—it allows groups to develop a shared vision and common understanding which will advance their work.

3. IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND MAINSTREAM ENVIRONMENTALISM

The young people and organizations represented through the ReGen/EJ initiative demonstrated not only how young people's leadership is critical to the environmental justice movement, but how they serve as an important bridge to strengthening the broader environmental and social justice movements as well.

a. Strengthening the Environmental Justice Movement

One of the most significant impacts that ReGen/EJ has made is the development of a re-generating base of young leaders and organizers in the environmental justice movement. Through the sustained multi-year support of the initiative, young people have worked and learned alongside adults, community leaders, seasoned organizers and elders. They have been trained and mentored, and in many cases have been hired as staff. Through these intentional efforts to expand leadership, young people are best prepared to assume leadership positions.

The cohort brought together groups that have felt like they were working in isolation in their own regions. Through ReGen/EJ they were able to network, and support and build off each others' campaigns. Newly forming networks were supported and existing networks were strengthened.

- **New regional/state network:** YUCA and CWC began to work together on drinking water issues in California.
- **Strengthening existing networks:** the South by Southwest network was strengthened as network members Nollie's, SWU, and SWOP met and collaborated. The strengthening occurred through the formation of new relationships among younger leaders and youth organizers. Prior to ReGen/EJ's annual convenings, the network relationships were limited to a few senior organizational leaders, and throughout the grantees' time together, the network became more intergenerational. Collaboration among network members is thus facilitated because the collaboration is not imposed from the top down, but already expected or anticipated by youth leaders. In addition, the rest of the cohort benefited by learning from this established stronger network.
- **New national initiatives:** the annual convenings became sites for relationship-building that helped launch collaborative projects such as Grassroots Solutions for Climate Justice North America—made of youth organizing groups committed to climate justice, including SWU, SWOP, UPROSE, BMWC and LVEJO.

b. Intersections with Mainstream Environmentalism

Some of the grantees engaged their young people in environmental stewardship, for example, maintaining urban gardens and raising environmental consciousness in local schools, while other grantees employed youth organizing strategies where, for example, young people mapped toxins in their neighborhoods and advocated for their removal. Through this initiative, grantees learned that while young people deeply rooted in environmental stewardship understood the science behind environmental degradation, they did not always fully

comprehend the systemic realities that youth organizers were skilled in assessing. In the end, the groups in the cohort learned that for their work to be most impactful it needed to be grounded in both an in-depth understanding of the natural environment as well as the unjust systems and policies that most affect the environment in their communities. For example:

- While community environmental clean-up activities are popular and important to environmental stewardship groups, clean-up alone is not sustainable if policies go unaddressed, including the lack of regulation of polluting facilities or lack of compliance that results in illegal dumping in poor communities of color. Youth organizing groups have invested their efforts in addressing root causes as well as in shaping policy and building skills to ensure accountability.
- While planting trees and community gardens, and increasing park land does mitigate air pollution thus improving air quality, youth organizing groups also address zoning issues that allow for the siting of noxious facilities in poor communities of color.

Young people, specifically young people of color from low-income communities, are actively participating in processes that are shaping their environment and ensuring that the places they live, work, play, and worship, are safe and healthy. 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. Their energy, drive, and creativity may embolden environmentalists to seek deeper and more radical solutions to these issues.

4. IMPACT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

Youth organizing has the ability to strengthen existing networks, as young people are willing to cross lines of race, ethnicity, and class, bridging these differences while building new relationships. For example, South by Southwest, an existing network that includes SWOP and SWU, seeks to bring Black, Brown, and Native American communities together across traditional political and geographic barriers to share their histories, strategic analysis and current work.

In addition, youth organizing in environmental justice has branched out to many other social justice issues. When YUCA set out to shut down Romic, after many years of campaigning, they became involved in basic land use planning and the development of a business district for the area once occupied by Romic. In another case, BMWC mobilized to oppose the creation of another coal fired power plant in the Black Mesa Reservation. Their mobilization led them into the arena of climate change and climate justice. Their opposition to the plant moved them into the area of green jobs and economic development by way of climate justice, leading eventually to the first green jobs legislation in Indian Country.

Lastly, ReGen/EJ grantees helped bring together and form a new initiative – Grassroots Solutions for Climate Justice North America – which bridges Indigenous, Mexican-American, African-American and Caribbean-Latino youth and adult organizations. Racial reconciliation is a core social justice goal and a necessary requirement of a broad-based movement for social justice. Again and again, the pattern bears out – youth organizing for environmental justice leads to wider mobilizations and action for social justice.

Recommendations to Funders

The key lessons learned from ReGen/EJ have helped FCYO shape its funding initiatives and merit sharing with the broader philanthropic community. From FCYO's cohort-based design to their convening spaces, there were documented strengths and challenges that FCYO hopes will inform peers in philanthropy as they make their own strategic grant decisions.

- A. Importance of dedicated funding to youth organizing:** Youth organizing has tremendous power to galvanize and sustain the involvement and growth of young people in the social justice movement. For many of FCYO's grantees, ReGen/EJ provided the only funding to support a dedicated staff position, making it vital in ensuring youth leadership. Funding to grantees was also used in a variety of other ways to sustain young people in youth organizing for environmental justice, thus enabling them to grow in skills, confidence and experience. In some cases, grantees used grant funds to provide stipends to young people; in others to fund part-time jobs. In order to continue to build off this work, dedicated funding for youth organizing within the environmental justice movement is imperative.

- B. Intersectionality:** Though this report focuses mostly on the impacts that young people have made in environmental justice campaigns, it is important to note that environmental justice organizing does not occur in isolation. As demonstrated in the case studies, it intersects with other issues such as education, economic justice, and health. The issues confronting low-income youth of color and their communities are complex and, thus, youth organizers are often engaged in multiple sectors at once.

For example, many youth organizing groups are engaged in education reform and school-based organizing in addition to their environmental justice work. In these cases, it has been common to find the education activists reaching out to the environmental justice activists to seek collaboration. Youth who are focused on education organizing then take on many initiatives common to environmental stewardship and environmental justice, such as school and community gardens, waste audits of schools, recycling campaigns, and clean energy in schools.

- C. Supporting the intergenerational model:** The field of youth organizing recognizes the deep value of adults and young people working together and employing intergenerational organizing strategies. The primary feature of intergenerational organizing across the cohort is leadership expansion. Youth leaders are expressing the need for increased mentoring by seasoned organizers and are seeking more intensive collaboration with their elders. At the same time, adults are considering how best to prepare the next generation of leaders to whom they can pass along their skills and knowledge. FCYO anticipates that youth organizing within the environmental justice movement will see continuing efforts at leadership expansion, but will also see more and more deliberate and varied efforts at intergenerational organizing and collaboration.

- D. The cohort model — supporting movement-building spaces:** By funding a cohort of grantees, FCYO was able to support a group that came together to power a movement—not just an individual group or an individual issue. FCYO established a cohort that has been working together for three

years and is looking to continue to build together as a group, in diads and triads and as individual organizations in their local communities. Further, FCYO learned that technical assistance doesn't need to be top-down or come from outside the cohort. Learning from each other is valuable, and it is what the grantee cohort wanted. Dedicating funding to facilitate peer-based learning and shared learning spaces became the foundation of relationship building among FCYO's grantees, which propelled their work and built the trust that was needed to continue their collaborative work even after this initiative ended.

- E. Cohort multi-year support:** Multi-year funding is critical to the success of FCYO's initiative to create a leadership pipeline through youth organizing in environmental justice, as this kind of funding provides the time necessary for grantees to establish a learning community and build relationships with each other. Also, this funding allows grantees to think critically about what is best for their community and how to prioritize issues and campaigns. Given that policy changes and environmental justice wins take time, multi-year funding supports grantees in realizing their greater vision and developing long-term strategies for social change.

It is important to note that at the outset of ReGen/EJ, FCYO set a goal to build the organizational capacity of the cohort grantees. As ReGen/EJ evolved through its first and second year, it became clear that the initiative would do more to sustain existing capacity than to build new capacity when the worst financial crisis in decades erupted in the fall of 2008. Several grantees reported the loss of large amounts of funding due to changes in foundation programs and priorities. Thus, in late 2008, FCYO raised funding to extend the initiative for one more year. The multi-year funding provided by ReGen/EJ was of critical importance during those difficult times, and helped to keep the cohort together and in operation.

Conclusion – Looking Forward

Young people historically have been at the helm of movements and the fight for social justice, even when our society often does not recognize them as agents of social change. When young people are not seen for their strengths and contributions, they are less likely to be invited into decision-making processes that impact their lives. Youth organizing in environmental justice provides an effective solution to these issues by providing opportunities for young people to engage in activities and networks based on the values of community, equity, democracy, and justice. The ReGen/EJ grantmaking initiative supported a cohort of organizations dedicated to youth organizing and environmental justice and sought to help build a pipeline to regenerate the leadership of the environmental justice movement and put it on more sustainable footing.

FCYO firmly believes that transformative and meaningful change at a large scale needs to be led by those most affected by injustice. FCYO also believes in the importance of strengthening the communities that bear the brunt of environmental justice issues: communities of color, poor communities, immigrant communities, and indigenous communities. One of the central goals of ReGen/EJ was to help build the power of young people, and their leadership within their communities, in order to help spearhead the environmental justice (and other social justice) movements. In funding youth organizing and environmental justice, philanthropic organizations support a wide spectrum of activities that enhance the growth of young people in leadership. Beyond the stewardship of issues, young people are taking leadership roles within their communities — engaging in research, educating themselves and their peers, coming up with realistic solutions, advocating for change, and in many cases, implementing or creating that change. As such, young people will be able to take on new challenges that are sure to arise within the environmental justice movement.

Young people from affected communities must be at the forefront of visioning, designing, and directing their futures, in conjunction with committed, passionate allies from the traditional environmental sector. The cohort of young people who were trained, developed, and supported through ReGen/EJ are already changing the analysis of key environmental issues. They are providing leadership in environmental justice sectors and across many other progressive social movement sectors. Beyond that, young people are becoming national and international leaders and local and regional architects of innovative solutions to environmental problems. They are engaging in climate justice, community planning, green design, parks and public spaces planning, trash reduction, recycling, greening urban systems, green jobs creation, sustainable economy planning, rural land use issues, and native rights. These youth, along with the adults and elders who support them, are taking the lead in developing an intergenerational movement, a regenerating movement that will continue to grow in power and vision.

With this year marking the 20th anniversary of the People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, which identified, affirmed and adopted the Principles of Environmental Justice, it is important to not only celebrate this historic occasion and the significant accomplishments within the environmental justice movement, but also to reflect on the significant contributions and leadership that have come from young people. FCYO looks forward to the ongoing growth of those young leaders and organizers who will continue the struggle for environmental justice, heeding the lessons learned by those who preceded them, while charting new paths in the face of new challenges.

Appendix 1: Background Information and Evaluation Methodology

ABOUT THE FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE FOR YOUTH ORGANIZING (FCYO)

Since its founding in 2000, FCYO has advanced its mission to increase resources and support to the field of youth organizing and to promote the leadership of low-income youth of color in social justice organizing. It has provided more than \$5 million in direct grants to the field and has leveraged millions more from partners in philanthropy. FCYO seeks to bring about a just and equitable society in which young people are recognized as valued members, decision-makers, and leaders in their own lives and communities. In pursuit of this vision, FCYO supports youth organizing—an innovative youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities. FCYO recognizes that youth organizing employs strategies that require a significant cultural shift in a society that does not fully recognize the voices of young people, and does not always see their strengths and assets. Acknowledging that young people have strengths and valuable lived experiences, FCYO believes they must be at the center of any meaningful change. One of the principles guiding FCYO's work is the belief that those who are *most affected* by social inequities – environmental racism, lack of access to resources, disenfranchisement – are the most knowledgeable about community issues, and if given the tools and resources to organize, are the *most effective* in developing solutions.

The main goals of FCYO are to:

- Increase the level of funding directed towards youth organizing groups;
- Support youth organizing groups to develop stable and sustainable organizations; and
- Increase the awareness and understanding of youth organizing among funders and community organizations.

In order to accomplish these goals, FCYO employs a multi-level capacity building model that engages grantee partners, funders, and field experts in strengthening youth organizing. To advance our mission, we integrate grantmaking, group learning, research, and evaluation with funder education and advocacy.

ABOUT THE REGENERATIONS FRAMEWORK

FCYO adopted the Regenerations Framework in 2006 to coordinate its funding initiatives around the broad goal of sustainability in social justice organizations. The framework originated in two separate but related research efforts. In 2005, the Ford Foundation commissioned Movement Strategy Center (MSC) to develop a report on why and how environmental justice groups were:

- Incorporating youth leadership and intergenerational alliances into their work;
- Expanding leadership and supporting individual and organizational transitions;
- Using new strategies to expand and connect issue areas and communities; and
- Finding new ways to regenerate and sustain the broader environmental justice movement.

The research for the report, entitled “ReGeneration: Young People Shaping Environmental Justice⁴,” had the following major findings:

1. Youth organizing is a vital and essential aspect of the contemporary environmental justice movement. Young people are pushing the bounds of environmental justice and mainstream environmentalism as they tackle multiple issues that affect their communities.
2. Traditionally, in most organizations working on environmental issues, leadership is top-down, focused on the “charismatic” leader, and not inclusive of young people. These are poor environments in which to grow new leaders. As a consequence, many organizations find that when the long-term leader is ready to step down or retire, there are few or no second-tier leaders ready to take their place.

Informed by MSC’s findings about the need for a regenerating base of leadership in the environmental justice movement, FCYO launched the first ReGenerations funding initiative in 2006: ReGenerations: Youth Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice (ReGen/EJ). The multi-year funding initiative, directly supported by the Ford Foundation and the Surdna Foundation, among others, attempted to respond to the critical need for youth leadership development in order to create a sustainable environmental justice movement. Over three years, ReGen/EJ re-granted \$1 million in funds to a cohort of eleven environmental justice groups across the country that practiced youth leadership by creating opportunities and avenues for collaboration, information sharing, and movement building, and by documenting effective models of community organizing. By supporting cohort-based grant-making, FCYO aimed to observe how providing technical assistance to both the individual organizations and the group of grantees as a whole could form and optimize a national learning community.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The information presented in this report comes from data collected between 2006-2010 through grantee reports, evaluations from convenings, and consultant reports. Much of the data was collected through in-depth interviews with our eleven grantees, conducted by Diana Pei Wu.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. How can environmental justice and youth organizing groups integrate youth leadership development and leadership expansion into their work?
2. How do we sustain and strengthen the environmental justice movement?
3. How is this work connected to the wider movement for social justice and the environment?
4. What are the most effective ways to provide resources and support to this field?

4 Quiroz-Martinez, J., Wu, D., Zimmerman K. (2005). ReGeneration: Young People Shaping Environmental Justice. Oakland, CA: Movement Strategy Center.

Appendix 2: Key Definitions

Note: Many of these definitions are adapted from MSC's report "ReGeneration: Young People Shaping Environmental Justice."

Climate Justice: The urgent action needed to prevent climate change, which is based on community-led solutions and the well-being of local communities, indigenous peoples and the global poor, as well as biodiversity and intact ecosystems. Because climate change is a historically recent phenomenon, climate justice builds off of the definition of environmental justice (see below).

Environmental Justice: The movement led by communities of color against environmental racism, and for sustainable, self-determined, and just communities. The environmental justice movement seeks to redress the two fundamental parts of environmental racism: 1) the disparate or disproportionate impacts of environmental hazards on low-income communities of color; and 2) the exclusion of low-income communities of color from environmental decision-making that impacts their collective health and quality of life. Organized in reaction to the mainstream environmental movement, which has often promoted environmental policies without due consideration of their impact on communities of color and without prior consultation with community leadership, the environmental justice movement seeks to establish a direct role for communities of color in all environmental decision-making that impacts their communities. Environmental justice efforts work to reduce or eliminate the impacts of the production, emission, disposal, or storage of hazardous or toxic substances on low income communities of color. This movement is guided by the Principles of Environmental Justice, which were elaborated at the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991.

Intergenerational Organizing: A leadership model in which youth and adults are in active leadership at all levels of an organization and movement, from membership to staff and board. Most intergenerational organizations have strong leadership development components to support growth of all their members and to help youth and adults. Youth-led and intergenerational work can, and often do, co-exist.

Leadership expansion: An expansion of leadership roles or leadership styles/practices within an organization to enable more participants to exercise leadership; a component of intergenerational organizing models within youth organizing and environmental justice.

Mainstream Environmentalism: Efforts to reduce the impacts of pollution and toxic substances on human health and the natural environment—air, water, soil, and animals.

Youth Development: A facilitated, structured process through which young people build skills and competencies to that are central for a successful transition into adulthood. Principles of youth development include: safety and structure, belonging and membership, opportunities for independence and control, meaningful relationships, identity development, and self-awareness.

Youth Organizing: An integrated youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing skills to alter power relations and create meaningful community change. Young people define issues that are relevant to them, develop a social analysis about the issues, and design and implement solutions.

Appendix 3: Timeline of ReGen/EJ Events and Activities

YEAR	EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
2005	<p>Movement Strategy Center releases report “ReGeneration: Youth Leadership Expansion for Environmental Justice”, which emphasizes the need for a regenerating base of leadership within environmental justice movement.</p> <p>FCYO completes a youth organizing field scan that supports the need to develop low-income youth of color in social justice organizing.</p>
2006	<p>Ford, Surdna, and other social justice funders award FCYO with grant support to develop the ReGen: EJ Initiative (ReGen/EJ). FCYO develops grantmaking parameters, evaluation measures, and program components. Through a highly competitive process, eleven environmental justice and youth organizing groups across the country are selected for this cohort-based initiative.</p>
2007	<p>Year 1 of ReGen/EJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantees receive up to \$30,000 in general operating support. • 1st national convening held in San Antonio, TX, hosted by Southwest Workers’ Union (SWU). • Grantees apply for Opportunity Fund, several using the grant to attend the U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, GA.
2008	<p>Year 2 of ReGen/EJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantees receive up to \$30,000 in general operating support. • 2nd national convening held in the Bay Area, CA hosted by Youth United for Community Action (YUCA). • Grantees apply for Opportunity Fund, several using the grant to participate in peer exchanges and national conferences.
2009	<p>Year 3 of ReGen/EJ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grantees receive final year grant of up to \$30,000 in general operating support. • 3rd national convening held in Brooklyn, NY hosted by UPROSE. • Grantees receive individualized consultation from Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (GIFT) to strengthen fundraising capacity.
2010	<p>ReGen/EJ’s three year grant period ends, and with the support of consultants, FCYO concludes evaluation process. Data is collected through interviews and written reports to develop case studies that document the impact of the initiative on grantees and the fields of youth organizing and environmental justice.</p>

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