



Social & Economic
Justice Leaders Project

IMPACT REPORT

2022





A Message from Our Executive Director

Progressive movement organizations and leaders have little room to thoughtfully assess the range of possible future conditions, the long-term implications of their current work, or even what they *want* the future to look like. Instead, they are incentivized by both urgent crises and the nature of funding cycles to look just a few steps ahead – to the next year or two or three; to the work of their organizations alone, rather than of the fuller ecosystem; and to the threats that pertain directly to their own specific work.

To be sure, the challenges we face are scary and can feel demoralizing. In most of our lifetimes, the United States has not moved so aggressively *toward* authoritarianism and inequality. As a result, many of the tools and capacities that our organizations have honed over the years are poor matches for the conditions we currently face. And, those conditions invite many of us to imagine an unyielding tide against us, the people and communities we are most concerned about, and our core values.

The Social and Economic Justice Leaders Project (SEJ) protects the ability to do just that –

- to map our way through the quagmire of today and tomorrow to the future we believe in;
- to exercise the muscles that enable us to respond to crisis and opportunity in ways that build toward that future and deepen our relationships with each other and across communities; and
- to rediscover our conviction that we can achieve the joyful and just futures we imagine.

SEJ is a shared resource, capacity builder, and collaboration supporter to provide movement leaders and organizers with space to look further in the future than they usually can alone and build shared long-term strategies that are actionable today.

At SEJ, we focus our attention precisely on the knotty, scary, chronic, and systemic obstacles that confront us with immediate symptoms. Namely, we are focused in three areas:

- The authoritarian threats facing our democracy
- The pivotal moment we face in our economy
- The work needed within the movement to retool and reshape our infrastructure to meet the conditions we are facing.

Many organizations in the progressive ecosystem are designing and fighting for policy fixes to acute challenges in our democracy and economy; however, few are able to focus on the broad threats we face over the long term. SEJ seeks to be one of those few, however, knowing that understanding our futures helps activate today's strategy development.



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In 2022, we focused our efforts on helping our partners — those on the frontlines, at national resource hubs, and at funders that support, build on, and take different approaches to the same issues — transition from responsive strategies to a more proactive stance. In doing so, we hope to build the strategic muscles and relationships we need in order to respond strategically to conditions we don't control.

We've done this work through convenings and scenario exercises, intensive learning cohorts, thought papers and articles, and field building in all of our major programmatic areas:



HORIZONS PROJECT:

SEJ's long-arc (10-30 years) scenario preparedness work, including the destination narrative work of our Bridge Project.



COUNTERING AUTHORITARIANISM:

SEJ's work focused on defeating the authoritarian threat, including our Meridian Project and our work to protect against election sabotage.



NEW ECONOMY:

Exploring and experimenting with generational strategies to mainstream an affirmative post-neoliberal paradigm and working with state organizations to meet climate events with a proactive policy and recovery plan.

We've learned a lot over the past year. Immersive experiences have been more effective than we expected at pushing individuals and groups to creative, actionable problem solutions and future plans. We've also learned where organizations are already taking the long-view in their strategy development, and how open and excited leaders can be to share strategies, resources, feedback, and new ideas with one another.

Mostly, we have learned how many more questions there are to answer together; and this has informed our work in 2023 and beyond. We know SEJ and our partners are tackling some of the thorniest issues in existence, and we are more motivated and determined than ever to support that work by bringing the future into focus by opening the aperture, lengthening the range, and increasing the exposure to inspire new thinking.

Connie M. Razza, Executive Director
Social & Economic Justice Leaders Project



About SEJ

SEJ is a shared resource, capacity builder, and collaboration space for leaders across issues in the progressive movement to:

- Prepare for opportunities and risks through scenario planning and experiential learning,
- Nurture relationships and align strategies,
- Catalyze new projects that translate plans into actions, and
- Expand the social imaginary on social values and systems for a just and joyful future.

MISSION

SEJ convenes progressive movement leaders and their organizations to build shared actionable strategies to win over the long term.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

When progressive leaders and their organizations



they will — individually and collectively — strengthen the overall progressive movement and win a robust and reparative democracy, economy, and future.



SCENARIO PLANNING:

Conducting research, developing scenarios, and training people/organizations on scenario planning.



CONVENING AND FACILITATION:

Bringing leaders and organizations together for co-visioning and strategizing within and across issue areas.



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP:

Communicating scenarios, trends, and the importance of having a long-term vision and coordinated movement.

STRATEGIES

- Identify future threats and conditions for the movement by engaging experts and catalyzing new cross-organization strategies to address them.
 - Explore shared risks and opportunities that fall outside of organizations' individual scopes;
 - Raise and answer questions, understand the range of possibilities for uncertainties, and evaluate vulnerabilities; and
 - Develop aligned analyses and shared strategies.
- Strengthen relationships across the movement.
- Influence funding to support movement needs, gaps, priorities, and infrastructure.



2022 Programmatic Areas



2022 BY NUMBERS



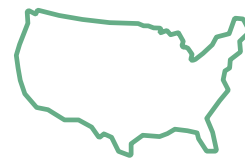
446

SEJ worked with
446 leaders



266

Organizations
engaged



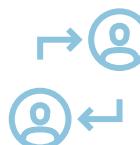
28

SEJ partnered
with nonprofit
organizations
in 28 states



27

Convenings



03

New SEJ Staff

2022 Programmatic Snapshots



Horizons Project



Countering Authoritarianism



New Economy



Horizons Project

SEJ's long-arc (10-30 years) scenario-preparedness work.

HORIZONS PROJECT



The Horizons Project engages movement leaders and future leaders to determine what relationships, capacities, and infrastructure we need to win our worldview as the driver of policy and practice in the next 20 years. Launched in February 2021 to help movement leaders understand and prepare for future conditions, this project uses an experiential scenario to immerse leaders in what our world could potentially look like in 2032 and in 2052 – through the lens of government, culture, society, the economy, and the political landscape. Through the experience, leaders better understand what those times might require – and the infrastructure, relationships, and capacities we must build now in order to successfully meet those futures.

BRIDGE PROJECT



The Bridge Project develops and tests a "destination narrative" for an American Identity of 2052 that is free of white supremacy to inform how we approach building that story between now and then, rather than sticking to the tools that focus on moving the public to just the next step. The inciting question for this project has been, "What would an American identity be if it were outside of a relationship to white supremacy – that is, if it were neither white supremacist nor centered around resisting white supremacy – without being ahistorical?" The goal is not to polarize people into only taking action tomorrow, but to entice people to a new shared identity that is so expansive and rooted in belonging that it is irresistible.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

HORIZONS PROJECT

- SEJ moved from designing and beta testing the immersive scenarios to running the scenarios with a range of cross-ecosystem social justice leaders.
- So far, SEJ has run the exercise in seven half-day sessions for 108 emerging and seasoned social justice leaders.

BRIDGE PROJECT

- On August 23, 2022, SEJ hosted a [webinar](#) to mark the public launch of the *Bridge Project: Reframing the Prevailing American Narrative for 2052*. The event featured SEJ Executive Director Connie Razza, SEJ Fellow and Bridge Project Lead Angela Peoples, as well as Narrative Experts and movement leaders Meg Bostrom (Topos), Jee Kim (Roosevelt Institute), and Chirag Mehta (Community Change).
- The webinar was attended by over 40 people, who appreciated the framing of the Bridge Report as a model for the type of visioning and collective narrative-building that is critical for current movements. One participant noted, *"There's a vulnerability required to hold audacious ideas and visions."* Another affirmed, *"Yes, we spend so much time reacting to things that are detrimental to us and not enough time being proactive in developing a vision that includes us."*

“

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”

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

HORIZONS PROJECT

- Lightly immersive, experiential (rather than analytical) work enables a wider range of insight and exploration than traditional “strategy” workshops allow, strengthening individual and shared creativity and imagination to generate new visions, models, and ways of charting the path forward.
- The insights, gaps, and areas for exploration that emerge through the 2032/2052 scenario work are *quite different* from what social justice leaders typically focus on in present-day work. These include: Preparation to provide survival services/mutual aid within grassroots infrastructure; the need for skills and capacities around conflict (within organizations, the ecosystem, or more broadly in a pluralistic society); and the need to build global/transnational connections now.
- Social change leaders demonstrated a facility for strategizing out of a “bad” future, but relative resistance to experiencing and strategizing toward a “better” future (one built off the vision statements of many of our organizations). In particular, cohorts of participants are often oriented to resist, doubt, or diminish a better future rather than imagine how we collectively achieved it or what that suggests for present-day work.



Immersive, experiential work enables a wider range of insight and exploration than traditional “strategy” workshops allow, strengthening individual and shared creativity and imagination

BRIDGE PROJECT

In 2022, the Bridge Project focused on sharpening initial findings and frameworks that were developed in 2021. This work consisted of testing with movement organizations that were attempting visionary messaging and testing with narrative experts, for additional feedback and perspective.

Testing with movement organizations helped bring clarity on the potency of “care” as a part of our destination narrative. Many movement leaders see care for their communities and loved ones as paramount to the future they want to see. This aspect of our testing facilitated the broadening of the economic-focused components of the Bridge framework. Based on this testing, we added language about shared abundance, care, and the right to live in prosperity – not just strive for it.

Narrative experts encouraged us to add “narrative practices” that support the frameworks. These practices include action steps and approaches to social change work that can be used to complement the narrative frameworks to make them more practical for our target audiences.



HORIZONS PROJECT

In 2023, we will release a field report of our findings so far in order to: further engage the field in ongoing work; highlight to funders the gaps in long-term capacity and infrastructure that require attention now (especially in the face of the threats to democracy); build channels for engagement in 2023 for participants to date; and reflect on the best mode/role for SEJ within this work and the broader ecosystem.

At the core, the question that we will continue to explore through the Horizons Project is: How do we collectively hold the long arc of change, prepare for the medium-term we face (2032), and remain relevant and responsive to the moment but in new ways that prepare for possible futures?



BRIDGE PROJECT

In 2023, in collaboration with Topos Partnership, we will move forward with public polling and testing to establish a baseline of how segments of the American public respond to the Bridge Narrative framework. This baseline will help us understand what components of the framework are resonating with different parts of our target audiences and could be integrated into narrative strategies sooner than later.

We also plan to workshop the Bridge Narrative Framework with movement leaders who are interested in incorporating the principles of Bridge into their movement building, storytelling, and narrative strategies. This process will engage movement leaders and communicators to not only understand the frames and practices of Bridge, but also explore practical ways to shift how they as progressive leaders approach cultivating identity and belonging in their work.



Countering Authoritarianism

SEJ's work focused on defeating the authoritarian threat.

MERIDIAN PROJECT



The Meridian Project develops, catalyzes, and evaluates innovative interventions to defeat the authoritarian threat. The Meridian Project is guided by a core group, chaired by Deepak Bhargava (CUNY) and Jamila Michener (Cornell University), with diverse substantive expertise and disciplinary background. The advisory group includes: Erica Chenoweth (Harvard University), Joe Goldman (Democracy Fund), Jake Grumback (University of Washington), Cristina Jimenez (founder, United We Dream), Maurice Mitchell (Center for Working Families), Eli Pariser (Civic Signals), Barbara Rosenthal (SEIU), and Jessy Tolkman (Drive Agency).

DIRECT ACTION INNOVATION LAB



In concert with direct action practitioners, SEJ studies direct action and mass mobilization tactics in order to innovate dissent practices that can respond to the current landscape, including COVID-19 pandemic conditions; escalated violence on the right; white supremacist extremism in law enforcement; and the growth of digital and virtual ecosystem. This project also connects leaders who are taking action and planning mass mobilization with experienced tacticians to share best practices for impact in this changing landscape.

ELECTION CRISES PREP



SEJ works to support preparation for possible election sabotage, even as much of the field attends to governing opportunities. In partnership with key national resource organizations, SEJ agitated for and facilitated helpful coordinating infrastructure for the midterms. In addition, SEJ supported state strategic framework development in preparation for possible election shenanigans in the November 2022 midterm elections in four battleground states: Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

MERIDIAN PROJECT

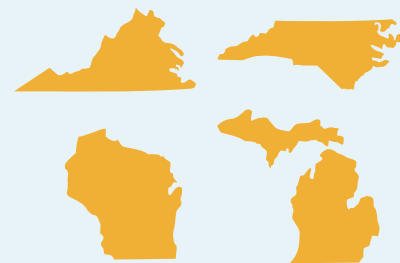
- SEJ launched the Meridian Project in May 2022.
- SEJ worked with Harvard professors Erica Chenoweth and Zoe Marks to explore nonviolent resistance strategies that could be relevant and necessary under a future authoritarian administration. A report, *Pro-democracy Organizing against Autocracy in the United States*, was released in September. The study provides insights into the capacities, gaps, and barriers regarding sustained nonviolent resistance in the U.S.
- SEJ held two formal briefings: An intimate discussion with 17 movement leaders to capture insights and reactions pre-publication and a larger webinar-style briefing with 56 participants and other asynchronous viewers. The report has been circulated widely and served as the provocation for a number of cross-organizational discussions among progressive leaders.
- SEJ worked with Alliance for Justice to convene state organizing leaders in a set of conversations around nonviolent strategies in a shifting political violence landscape. The summary report, *Nonviolent Strategies in a Violent Time*, includes recommendations for how to support groups who are navigating this terrain. SEJ has incorporated this work on political violence into the state planning processes and facilitated connections between movement leaders and political violence experts.

DIRECT ACTION INNOVATION LAB

- The project began in early 2022 and held seven sessions over the course of the year to reflect on dissent strategy, direct action and demonstration, and what has been won and lost over the last decade in the political and economic landscape. Participants have already begun discussing possible collaborative experiments inspired by the instigations and relationships fostered in the cohort.

ELECTION CRISES PREP

- In partnership with the Trusted Election Fund, SEJ designed and hosted a scenario exercise and briefing for democracy funders and practitioners to help them to focus together on the continued threats to our elections.
- In partnership with the Trusted Elections Fund (TEF), All Voting Is Local (AVIL), and the Fight Back Table, we helped organize and perform some core-coordination functions (including co-hosting convening state organizations and national resource organizations in June), and catalyze a representative coordination infrastructure.
- SEJ worked in four states – Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Virginia – to develop strategic plans for contested elections, with the materials and methods made available to organizers in other states as well. The four states are very different in terms of risks, existing leadership and coalition structures, and experience, and while all four had important work underway, none had a strategic planning process in place that engaged a broader coalition. SEJ's most significant contribution to this work was to align on a threat assessment for the 2022 elections, to prioritize the threats with an eye to those that were actionable, and to identify leadership and coalition structures to coordinate work on those priorities.



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WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

MERIDIAN PROJECT

- We've initiated a more robust and strategic discussion about how to build resistance capacity in the face of authoritarianism. During the Trump Administration, the dominant debate was about whether authoritarianism was a real possibility. In our community, that debate is now about how best to respond to the authoritarian threat. We do not expect that the recommendations put forward by Chenoweth and Marks will be the final word, but have found that it provides the basis for a more tactical discussion. Several other organizations and partnerships have used the paper as a starting place for their strategic conversations.
- We've helped move the work on political violence from fear and aggression to one of tactics. Social movements have long debated the merits of nonviolent resistance, and that debate will continue. But we've helped groups to see violence as a tool of the radical right and one that warrants a thoughtful response. Movement discipline in the face of violence is essential, particularly since it is our partners who are often the target of violence and as such can benefit significantly from deep analysis of and training in the martial art of nonviolence and deescalation.

DIRECT ACTION INNOVATION LAB

- Dissent over the last five to seven years has yielded significant movement-driven narrative wins and has shifted the public discourse, albeit without accompanying political or policy gains.
- There has been an increase in acts of dissent across the political spectrum, ranging from mass demonstrations, strategic direct actions, or disruptions on digital platforms and social media. But the public's demands for change have not had as great an impact on decision-makers as in decades past.
- Direct action and demonstrations are being used as base-building tools and opportunities to help the activist base on the left feel empowered and connected. This is a shift away from the tradition of dissent tactics as part of a broader campaign strategy or as a means of escalation against a specific target.



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ELECTION CRISES PREP

- Despite the difficult 2020 election experiences, we do not yet have year-round infrastructure to protect the democratic process and address election interference. We are not aware of any full-time in-state staff devoted to addressing election interference. (Voting rights groups provide some aspects of infrastructure but cover a larger set of issues.) One shortcoming, which SEJ sought to fill in select states, is that key groups were not aligned about how to address threats. We'll continue to evaluate this work in order to help groups better prepare for 2024.
- SEJ's model requires willing partnership with groups, so we did not work in some states that might have benefited from strategic planning support.
- Our original goal was to invest in strategic planning, but we had not anticipated a dependence on the facilitation and convening capacity that we offered. In some states, we kept consultants in place to ensure continuity through the post-election period.



MERIDIAN PROJECT

The Meridian Project will support research and development, as well as shovel-ready experiments in 2023. We are particularly focused on how to interrupt recruitment to authoritarian ideologies, as well as strategies to weaken the pillars of support for authoritarianism.



DIRECT ACTION INNOVATION LAB

In 2023, we will share the state of dissent report and findings with organizers and strategists through in-person gatherings where we can test and expand on the lessons of 2022 research. We also will launch experiments to test the effectiveness of innovative direct action tactics with partners in the field.



ELECTION CRISES PREP

We are also laying the ground for what we expect to be an even more challenging terrain in 2024. SEJ will continue our work with key partners in building the standing infrastructure for an ecosystem-wide defense against election sabotage.



New Economy



PARADIGM-SHIFTING STRATEGIES

With a cohort of frontline organizers, scholars, and national network connectors, SEJ's Paradigm-Shifting Strategies work explores and experiments with generational strategies (and their more immediate implications) to mainstream an affirmative post-neoliberal paradigm – an economic order that supports a democracy that is participatory, pluralistic, multiracial, and reparative.



CLIMATE

Our work in this area in 2022 aimed to socialize climate drivers of migration and begin preparing various movements for climate migration and work with state organizations to prepare to meet climate events with a proactive policy and recovery plan.

PARADIGM-SHIFTING STRATEGIES

- Launched in 2022, SEJ held the first six months of regular sessions with 18 leaders as well as visiting scholars to deepen their shared analysis of the ideology of neoliberalism and its incorporation into the fabric of national and international life. During each meeting, participants focus on a particular element of neoliberal ideology as well as begin to prepare possible collaborative experiments inspired by the instigations and relationships fostered in the cohort. SEJ authored a snapshot of this work, called *Organizing strategies to shift the economic paradigm*, in The Hewlett Foundation's New Common Sense.
- **Facilitated Countervailing Powers Convening and published essay series.**
Co-convened by Working Families, The Action Lab, 22nd Century Initiative, SEJ, and the NYU Initiative for Community Power, this 1.5 day convening and essay series, co-published by *The Forge* and *The American Prospect*, bring together organizers, lawyers, policymakers, journalists and scholars to examine oligarchic policy and practice. The series also studies policy and enforcement changes that are passable and/or enactable that would build mass-participation organizations and/or flatten barriers to mass participation in shaping U.S. society and revitalizing and expanding U.S. democracy. The articles are:
 - *Laws That Create Countervailing Power*, by Robert Kuttner
 - *The Reinvestment Movement vs. the Bankers*, by Robert Kuttner
 - *Using Policy to Reorganize Power*, by Lauren Jacobs and George Goehl
 - *From Countervailing to Prevailing Power*, by Dania Rajendra and Scot Nakagawa.

Both the essay series and the convening brought together advocates, scholars, funders, and organizers from three distinct strands of policy and organizing: electoral organizing, housing, and antimonopoly. It's the first time these three elements of progressive infrastructure met to consider their individual efforts in relation to each other. Emerging from these in-person and print conversations are a number of new public and private collaborations amongst organizations new to one another as well as active in other SEJ programming, and a broadening of the idea of oligarchy beyond any one segment.

CLIMATE

In conjunction with the Emerson Collective, SEJ worked to assess the cross-sector impacts of climate migration. Our work included structured interviews and four convenings with leaders in the climate, immigration, labor and democracy sectors, as well as with academic experts on climate migration impacts to: gather input on impacts and how sectors are responding; discuss the impacts of climate migration on democratic attitudes and social cohesion; talk to labor movement and climate migration leaders to explore the movement connections and role of the labor movement; and engage environmental movement leaders on climate migration and how their movement can pivot to climate adaptation.

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

PARADIGM-SHIFTING STRATEGIES

The cohort of participants is ambitious, unusually open to sharing organizational strategies and resources, and to identify organizational and operational shifts to make. They have also demonstrated that they are hungry to learn and strategize together about contesting ideological terrain and about international and historical examples to consider alongside the recent history of U.S. neoliberalism.

CLIMATE

Participants in this effort identified several broad lessons for further consideration, including:

- The current policy frameworks don't meet the moment and are driven by people who are unwilling to imagine cross-border solutions to the climate crisis. Currently, every border surge is considered a crisis, and 30 years of crisis management is a failure.
- Ecofascism, connected to racial and ethnic nationalism, is on the rise in right-wing parties around the world. While those parties are operating through democratic channels, these are not democratic values. They are using the climate crisis to fuel scarcity and drive peoples' sense of grievance. Often, they couch migration in terms of economic threat (leading with "jobs") rather than climate.
- Climate migration might provide opportunities for empathy and solidarity, as many people are experiencing changes because of the climate crisis. This presents the possibility of emphasizing the potential for positive dynamism and moving away from the "threat" frameworks that often infiltrate immigration narratives. We need to develop a better definition of belonging and political membership.

“

I deeply appreciated the level of conversation – it was intellectually challenging with low ‘performance’ dynamics. People came with honesty and an abundant willingness to question and engage.

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PARADIGM-SHIFTING STRATEGIES

In 2023, we intend to gather in-person at least once more as a cohort, meet on Zoom as needed, build funder interest and funding for shared experiments, and hold a much larger 100-person gathering to socialize lessons and approaches for the wider field at the end of 2023.



CLIMATE

The implications of climate politics, climate events, and climate migration loom large over every consideration in the anti-authoritarian and new economy work. We'll be returning to these questions and developing programming in response to both emerging research and field needs.



Other Highlights from 2022

SEJ's work convening and strengthening relationships among movement leaders and supporting their long-term planning efforts.

DEMOCRACY & ECONOMY LONG VIEW

The Democracy and Economy Long View (DELV) nurtures relationships across organizational lines to broaden the scope of the strategic conversation in preparation for possible future economic and democratic crises and opportunities, and to create opportunities for incubating shared efforts that might set in motion a thriving, just, and reparative future.

The longstanding nature of DELV and seeing the same faces or organizations week after week has truly helped to form new and stronger relationships. Participants are able to have clear and accessible conversations that go deep on an issue area that may be outside of the everyday scope of their organizations' work. The opportunity to learn together creates a sense of community and optimism for what we are facing as a progressive movement.

The future aspirations of DELV include encouraging participants to use the space to perform post-mortems on their work—with particular attention to what went wrong and how to pivot moving forward while keeping in mind the long-term vision of a progressive democracy when we are facing crisis and urgency today.

“The scenario planning takes us out of our work and makes us face a horrific or optimistic future. Hearing what was top of mind for others is useful. I've taken the thoughts back to my organization. It helped inform my work and made my organization better in planning. The space is created for questioning and learning.”

EXPLORATION OF CO-GOVERNANCE

In 2022, we explored the gap between groups on the “outside” (in the field) and individuals on the “inside” (primarily those working in the federal government). Our initial thinking was that we could use the opportunity created by new federal laws with massive implementation challenges to bring together these two groups and devise and create new approaches to implementation and policy design. Our question was: How can external validators such as SEJ (and partners in the states) help demonstrate to people on the inside that if the government can show up in certain ways, it will increase trust in government *and* lead to better programmatic outcomes?

We learned that by the point in the process that agencies are tasked with implementing a massive new program or law, the opportunity for the sort of stakeholder engagement processes that SEJ is best positioned to help design and support competes with the internal timeline and logistical pressures of simply making things happen.

WEST CREEK

From June 27 - July 1, 2022, the Ford Foundation and SEJ convened – and the Arthur M Blank Family Foundation hosted – a group of 26 leaders grappling with how to grow a robust movement for a reparative, multi-racial, feminist democracy. They considered what will be needed to create opportunities and time for capacious strategic visioning necessary to plant the seeds of such a democracy.

The retreat brought together participants across a range of identities, backgrounds, areas of expertise, disciplines, and theories of change for a one-time experience aimed at sparking new thinking about what we are working toward, what challenges could impede our progress toward that goal, and what new strategies could help accomplish our vision. The retreat was designed in alignment with the Arthur M Blank Family Foundation's principle of the 50/50 formula, which "invites all participants to thoughtfully spend half of their time outdoors," and the commitment to explicit intention and reflection throughout the retreat.

Through the programmed sessions, outdoor activities, meals, and free time, participants connected with one another. Without exception, participants who evaluated the session have identified multiple people with whom they stay in touch for collaboration and thought partnership.

The programming built to a partially immersive, visually engaging Horizons scenario exercise that put participants into a politically hostile 2032 and a promising 2052. The exercise asks what it would take for movement to be resilient through such an environment in order to move forward a robust democratic worldview to impact governance and the economy. Then it asks us to examine what work must we begin in 2022 to build that resilience.

In 2023, we will surface steps to take as a cohort or as parts of this group with a particular focus (e.g., furthering the incubation of the nodes).

STAND-ALONE SCENARIO EXERCISES

SEJ supports movement organizations and partnerships in sharing anchoring experiences for analysis and planning.

In 2022, SEJ conducted six stand-alone scenario exercises for a range of foundations and nonprofit organizations working on issues including reproductive rights, childcare policies, and elections. Participants tested strategies and tactics in preparation for a range of contingencies post-decision, including opposition behavior; how to align strategies with partners amidst political uncertainties; how to grapple with possible federal and state policy environments in the near- and longer-term future following the 2022 midterm elections; and how to respond to some of the challenges in our current political economy.



Looking to 2023

As we enter 2023, we are committed, motivated, and excited to advance our organizational and programmatic efforts to push our view further into the future than conventional practice and organizational needs may allow; create conditions for pro-active leadership and agenda-setting; prepare for conditions outside our control; and practice responding together to crisis and opportunity.

NEW PROGRAM LAUNCH: STRENGTHENING ORGANIZING

Our programmatic goals include **launching the Strengthening Organizing Project** in early 2023. This work, part of the **Horizons Project**, will enable organizers across tradition, region, and tenure to identify what current organizing practices we need to lift up and preserve – as well as examine what new organizing practices we need to create – in order to have the scale and power to build a new and robust democracy-driven consensus in our contemporary political, cultural, economic, social, and environmental context.

ACCELERATING CURRENT PROGRAMS

- SEJ will continue to advance our work in the **Bridge Project** to establish, test, and popularize a narrative framework for an expansive American identity rooted in belonging.
- We will develop and test creative strategies specifically designed to break authoritarianism through the **Meridian Project**.
- In the **Paradigm Shifting Strategies**, we will work with participants to develop their experiments toward generational campaigns and share lessons from the results — failures, successes, and everything in between — with the wider field.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

SEJ is excited to expand the impact of the discussions, explorations, and insights made possibly by SEJ's work by developing and sharing reports, holding briefings, and engaging in targeted media relations efforts.

SHARPENING OUR BRAND

Since SEJ's founding more than five years ago, the organization and its portfolio has grown substantially. It is time our brand reflects that growth, and in 2023, we will develop a branding strategy and visual identity representative of who we are and where we are going. This clarity will allow SEJ to more easily and effectively share lessons, insights, and resources with a wider range of movement leaders and organizations.

CONTINUING OUR GROWTH

In the coming year, SEJ is excited to continue our growth trajectory, increase and diversify our budget, and expand our organizational capacity to work with our trusted partners. Together, we will build strategies that are not only actionable today, but that will be suitable well into the future.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed their resources, time, and energy to helping SEJ advance its work in 2022.

SUPPORTERS

Democracy Fund

Ford Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The JPB Foundation

Mertz Gilmore Foundation

Omidyar Network

Open Society Foundations

Open Society Policy Center

Proteus Fund

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Trusted Elections Fund

SEJ FELLOWS

LJ Amsterdam, *Direct Action Innovation Lab*

Deb Axt, *Strengthening Organizing*

Deepak Bhargava, *Meridian Project*

Amy Carroll, *Horizons Project*

Zoe Hudson, *Countering Authoritarianism*

Jamila Michener, *Meridian Project*

Angela Peoples, *Bridge Project*

Kevin Simowitz, *CoGovernance (Powerbuilding)*, (2022)

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Ayana Wint, *Administrative Assistant*

SEJ ADVISORY BOARD

Members of SEJ's Advisory Board bring expertise in the movement field, possible futures, communities of funders, and SEJ's fiduciary.

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Scott Nielson, *Arabella Advisors*

Eshanthi Ranasinghe, *Liberated Futures, The Audacious Project*

Dorian Warren (chair), *Community Change*



Social & Economic Justice Leaders Project

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