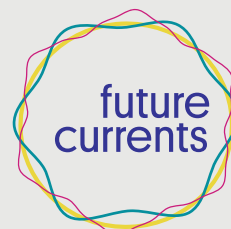


Impact Report

2023



Space to imagine. Strategies for action.

A Message From Our Executive Director



I am inclined to start this letter as we often begin our scenario exercises — inviting you to think about what happened in 2023 that you would not have foreseen.

On one hand, 2023 can be understood as a year of transition — re-norming our workplaces, schools, and social lives after the pandemic; trying to make sense of the economic indicators that are behaving differently than anticipated; navigating the eroding bedrock of our democracy. On the other hand, 2023 was also a year of transformative events that have harmed specific communities, created opportunities for other communities, and widened fissures within our progressive infrastructure.

This look back at our work, accomplishments, and learnings from 2023 affirms our role as a movement utility aimed at providing leaders and organizations the space to frame strategies on a longer time horizon, prepare for conditions outside of our control, and practice responding to crises and opportunities across organizational lines. We train our focus on the knotty, chronic, systemic, and often scary obstacles in our daily lives — whether they are authoritarian threats to democracy, the concentration of economic power in the hands of the few, or the need within movements to retool and reshape our infrastructure to meet changing conditions.

The challenges facing social justice organizations can seem, at times, insurmountable. Our work is to provide spaces and vehicles that provoke deeper analyses, align on what is possible and needed, and develop strategies together to win the joyful and just future we deserve. We look to the future to create pathways today.

As you will see, we have reaped valuable lessons from work we have been doing with partners on our Horizons Project, the Freedom Lab, and Paradigm-Shifting Strategies. What is working and what do we need to change? We brought those questions to budding areas of work, like our Strengthening Organizing, Direct Action Innovation Lab, and Bridge projects.

And, we also asked these questions of our overarching project — provoking ourselves to consider who we have been as an organization and who we are now. We realized that we were not presenting ourselves in ways that powerfully communicated our role and utility to the field.

So, in 2023, we embarked on a rigorous and collaborative strategic branding process. The journey was rooted in curiosity, self-reflection, and openness to change. Going into this, we knew that changing our name would be a major decision, and it was not something we considered lightly. But we forged ahead because we knew it was the necessary next step for our long-term future.

As of January 2024, we are **Future Currents**.

Future Currents works to meet today and tomorrow with clarity and preparedness, creating the space for social justice movements to build resilient relationships, imagine the long-term future, and develop coordinated strategies to achieve their goals.

Our new identity helps us embody a tone, look, and feel that better aligns with the task at hand and our aspirations for the future — to spark new understandings, analyses, and strategies that open up the potential for long-term change.

It does not, however, alter the core of our purpose. We maintain our mission of convening movement leaders and their organizations to build shared strategies for the long term that are actionable today. We continue to be rooted in the work that brought us to this evolution, and we are so proud to share it with you now. We are more inspired and motivated than ever to tackle today's challenges, prepare for tomorrow's possibilities, and map our way to the joyful and just future we deserve.

We are excited to continue this journey with so many of you.

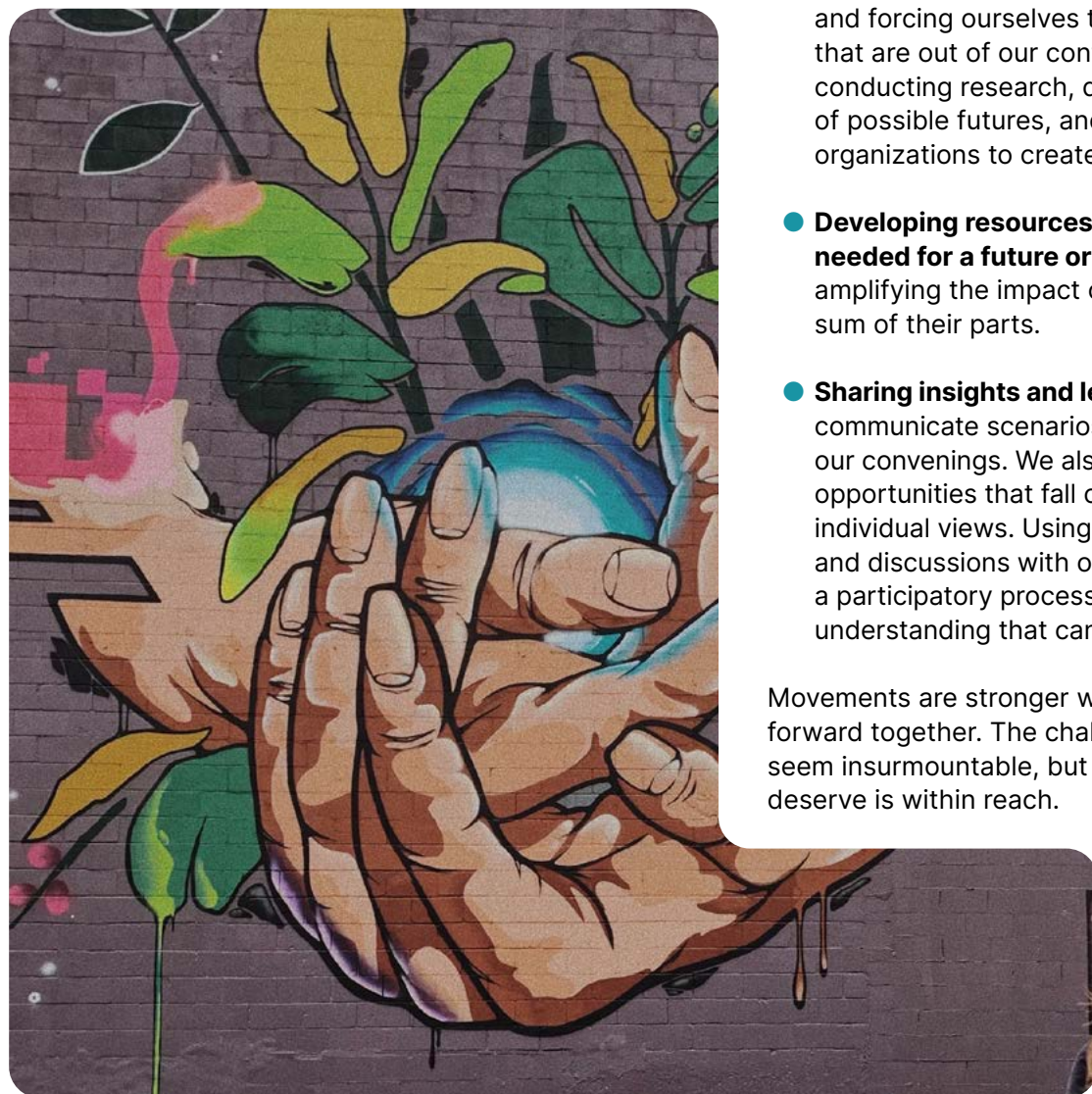
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Connie M. Razza', with a stylized, flowing script.

Connie M. Razza, Executive Director
Future Currents

About Future Currents

Future Currents creates the spaces for movement organizations to build resilient relationships, tackle pressing challenges, prepare for possible conditions, and map our way to the future we deserve. We focus on the knotty, chronic, systemic, and often scary obstacles in our daily lives, whether they are authoritarian threats to democracy, the shifting economic paradigm, or the need within movements to retool and reshape our infrastructure to meet changing conditions.

Future Currents encourages movement leaders and organizations to operate outside the dominant modes of thinking that currently limit the scope of possibility.

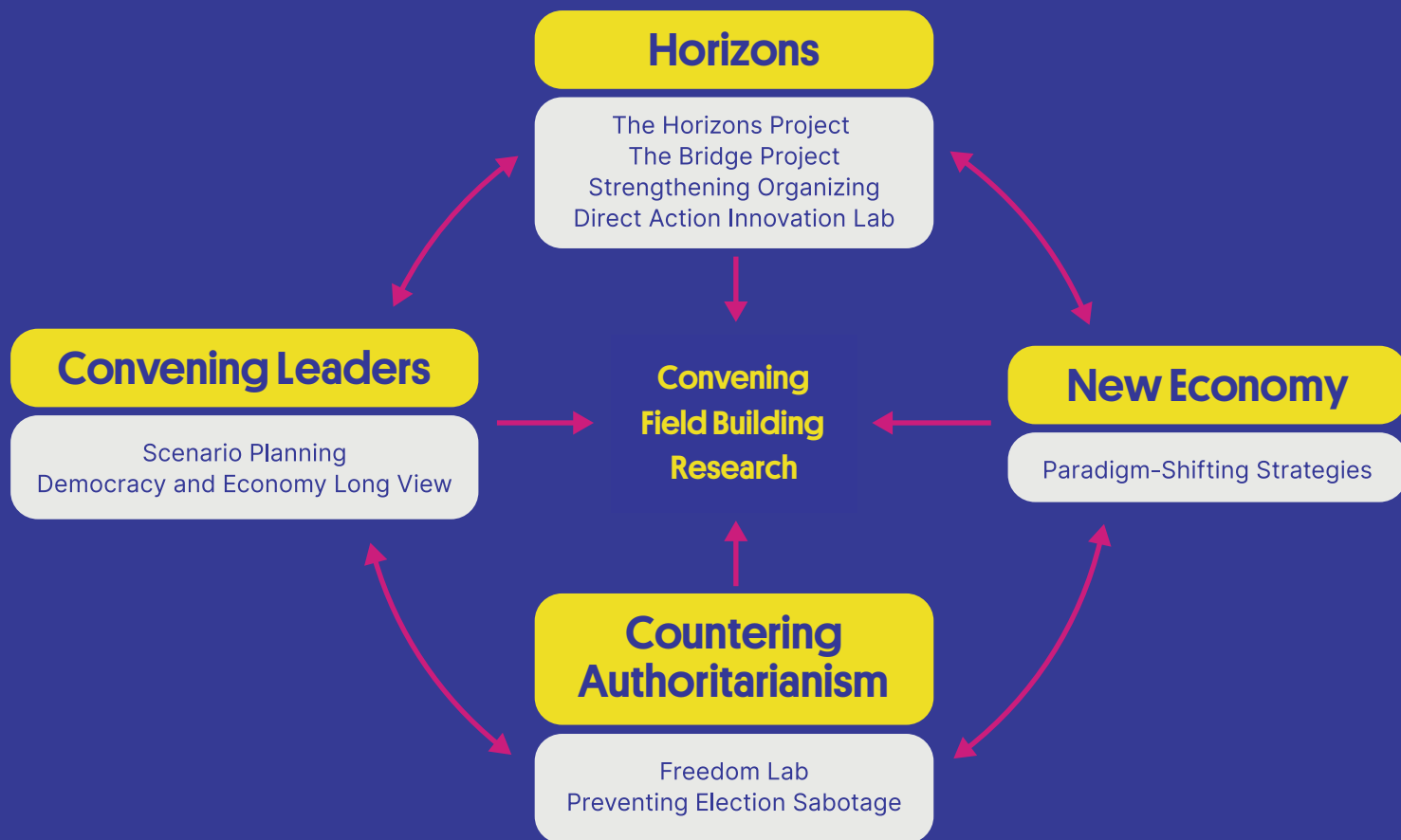


We use a mix of creative methods to spark new understandings, analyses, and strategies that open up the potential for long-term change.

- **Facilitating immersive group convenings.** We bring together leaders and organizations to nurture connections; build a shared understanding of possible futures and conditions; and develop strategies to combat the threats and leverage the opportunities across organizations and issue areas.
- **Conducting scenario-planning exercises.** Scenario planning is a way of thinking about and managing change, exploring the future to be better prepared, and forcing ourselves to grapple with conditions that are out of our control. The process includes conducting research, developing scenarios of possible futures, and guiding leaders and organizations to create strategies in response.
- **Developing resources that build the muscles needed for a future orientation.** We guide the field in amplifying the impact of change efforts beyond the sum of their parts.
- **Sharing insights and learnings with the field.** We communicate scenarios, trends, and lessons from our convenings. We also explore shared risks and opportunities that fall outside of organizations' individual views. Using our research, analyses, and discussions with our partners, we leverage a participatory process to develop a shared understanding that can shape our collective narrative.

Movements are stronger when we focus on moving forward together. The challenges we face can at times seem insurmountable, but the joyful and just future we deserve is within reach.

2023 Programmatic Areas



603

People we've worked with

240

Organizations we've engaged

32

Partnered with organizations
in 32 states

14

Convenings

4

Reports shared with the field

3

New staff members

Our Work in 2023

Horizons

The Horizons Project

What do we need to do and build now to create a country in 20 years in which the dominant, broadly shared common sense drives our public policy, shared action, and private practice toward care for our communities — for each other — in moments of crisis and opportunity? Launched in February 2021 to help movement leaders understand and prepare for future conditions, this project uses an experiential scenario to immerse participants into a dire ten-year future and a more promising thirty-year future, asking what capacities, roles, relationships, and infrastructure are needed to stem a more repressive future and seed a more joyful, just, and beautiful future beyond. Participants inhabited these future scenarios to draw insights for today — for both what we do (or don't do) and how we should be.

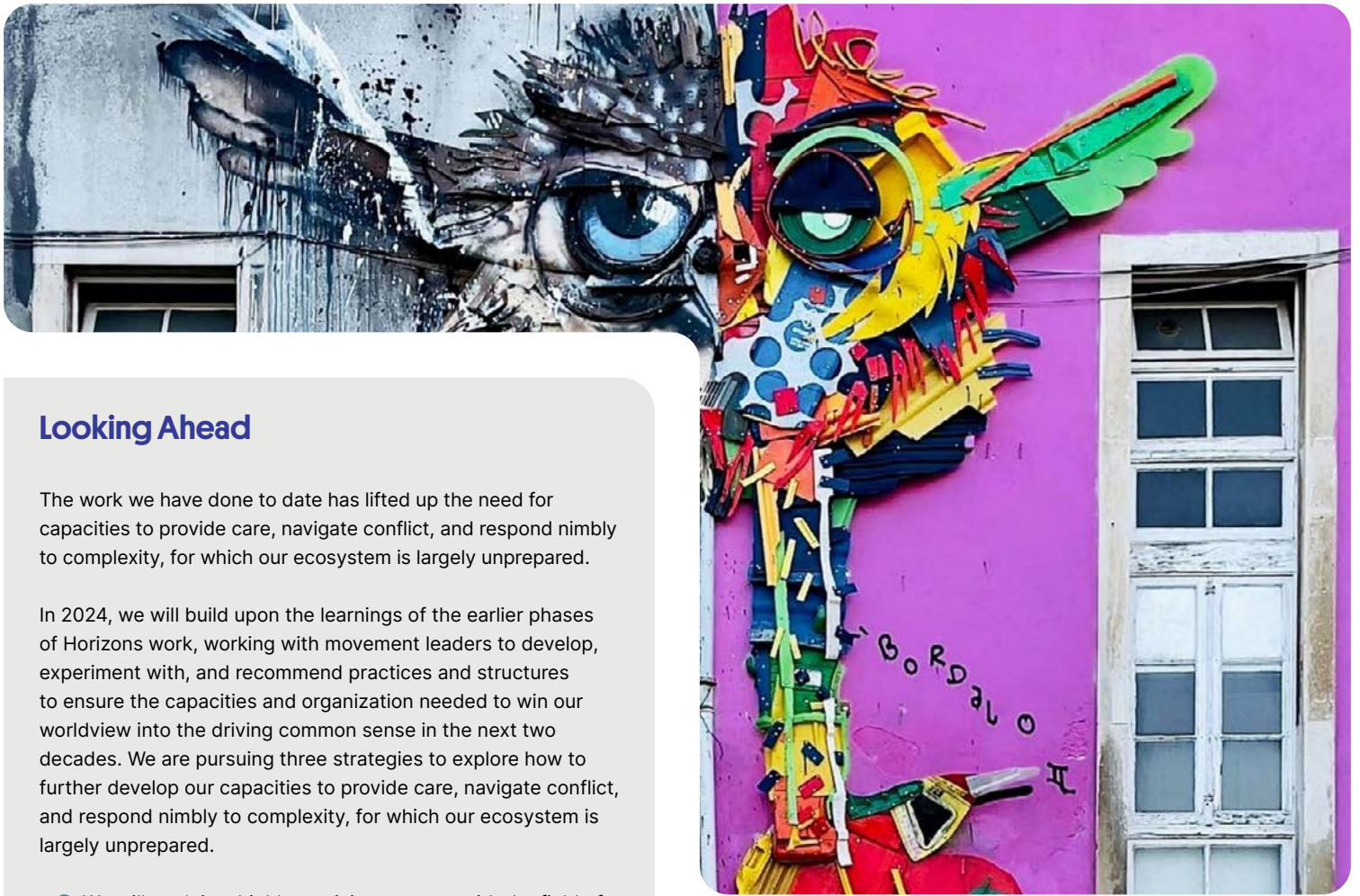
Highlights & Insights

After engaging more than 100 movement leaders in seven half-day immersive sessions, we focused on evaluating and synthesizing what emerged from these explorations. That phase of analysis led to the public release of our report, [“**Dispatches from Possible Futures**,”](#) and engaging the field in discussing our findings.

The Horizons Project sessions surfaced sobering, widely held reflections shared in the report: that we're neither well prepared nor adequately preparing for what is coming in the next decade. We face both known and unknown threats; but our strategies and institutions are not evolving to respond, and our communities and leaders are exhausted. At the same time, we find a through-line of hope, a willingness to look clearly at what's needed, and an appetite for experimentation and risk-taking regarding more effective approaches.

Our Dispatches report also surfaced several provocative questions around care, conflict, and complexity. Providing care and services in the midst of crises (climate events, authoritarian targeting) has risen to the top of a set of strategies for both keeping communities safe and organizing in a potentially more hostile future political environment. This also echoes what we're hearing from direct action designers who say that they and the folks they work with are burned out on mass mobilizations but are motivated by more disruptive actions that take care of people (see [Direct Action Innovation Lab](#)). In a context of the threats of violence that target our folks, participants named the need for greater and more dispersed skills at de-escalation but also for greater skills at engaging in principled conflict with one another and with opponents who might not be principled. We are a field that aspires to better strategy that we execute well.





Looking Ahead

The work we have done to date has lifted up the need for capacities to provide care, navigate conflict, and respond nimbly to complexity, for which our ecosystem is largely unprepared.

In 2024, we will build upon the learnings of the earlier phases of Horizons work, working with movement leaders to develop, experiment with, and recommend practices and structures to ensure the capacities and organization needed to win our worldview into the driving common sense in the next two decades. We are pursuing three strategies to explore how to further develop our capacities to provide care, navigate conflict, and respond nimbly to complexity, for which our ecosystem is largely unprepared.

- We will work in a highly participatory way with the field of organizers, campaigners, and policy advocates but also policymakers, philanthropists, and others often left off of our maps to answer the questions: **What institutions, capacities, and interrelationships are we going to need to win? Which of these do we currently have? What can we repurpose? And what is currently missing altogether?**
- We will meet fractures in our movement with a set of holistic, multipronged approaches focused on both short- and long-term outcomes, grounded and centered on finding ways to show up and stand in solidarity with communities or organizations under direct attack. The goal of this work is to build muscle memory that allows us to stay aligned in the long-term work of thwarting authoritarianism, even in the face of significant wedges. We aim to share any best practices from these concrete and immediate interventions.
- We will partner with [Organizing Resilience](#), a strategy hub coordinating national and local expertise to develop the tools, talent, and networks that will allow movement organizations, government leaders, and philanthropies to respond to both the humanitarian and political crises that unfold during and after moments of disaster.

“We need an invested partner with expertise and commitment to scenario planning that is rooted in movement and understands our bias for immediate action, coupled with our equally important commitment to long range time horizon planning. That’s who Future Currents is for us.”

Ginny Goldman
Lead Strategist
Organizing Resilience

The Bridge Project

The Bridge Project is an experiment in developing a “destination narrative” for 2052’s common-sense American identity. 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?” It begins with the long-term aspiration for a new shared identity that is irresistibly expansive and rooted in belonging to inform how we approach building that story between now and then, prioritizing the material and social changes needed to support that identity, and enticing people to choose that shared identity. This approach complements the common narrative tools that focus on polarizing people into taking the next-step action tomorrow and then the next step from there and so on.



Highlights & Insights

During the past year, Future Currents has established a collaborative research partnership with Topos Partnership and with the Think Big Narrative Learning Community to test and build on the frameworks we developed in 2022.

We partnered with Topos on co-creating a research plan to listen closely to the stories and perspectives of self-identified Americans across demographics, geographies, immigrant status, and political leanings. Ethnographic interviews and innovative message testing methods allowed the team to test the Bridge Project narrative hypotheses and explore adjacent and alternative frames and metaphors, culminating in the launch of the report: [“Belonging In and To America: Exploring Who We Are, to Reimagine Who We Can Be.”](#)

We also worked with Topos and the Think Big community to share and discuss these findings more broadly, engaging over 100 social justice leaders, communicators, and advocates through web-based discussions with the [Think Big Narrative Learning Community](#).

The findings confirm some of our hypotheses — the aspirational framing of working toward a “more perfect” union “where all belong” — but also exposed narrative challenges, including a paradoxical relationship to the diversity of the country and that respondents were committed to the notion that diversity is our strength but unclear on why. This partnership has opened up new and fundamental questions for us, not least of which is: How do we use tools that measure people’s current frameworks to inform a process aimed at shifting the dominant American identity over decades?

We also deepened engagement with movement partners by socializing the content at convenings and conferences.

Looking Ahead

In 2024, we will revamp the project's narrative frameworks, key hypotheses, and narrative practices based on this research and other lessons from Future Currents' work on future storytelling and planning. This year, we see the promise of the Bridge Project as not just a new narrative to redefine who we are and what it means to be an American in the future; it's also an opportunity to shape **how** people are with each other and how we practice the values that define us. For instance, we are looking at ideas around **freedom** and **care** as a core part of American identity, notions of "striving toward a more perfect union" as we consider the country's history of violence and oppression in how we come together and practices of "accountability, not perfection" today as the cornerstones of that work. We will also invest time in strategizing about the future of the Bridge Project and how a larger audience can engage with the narratives and practices we've developed.

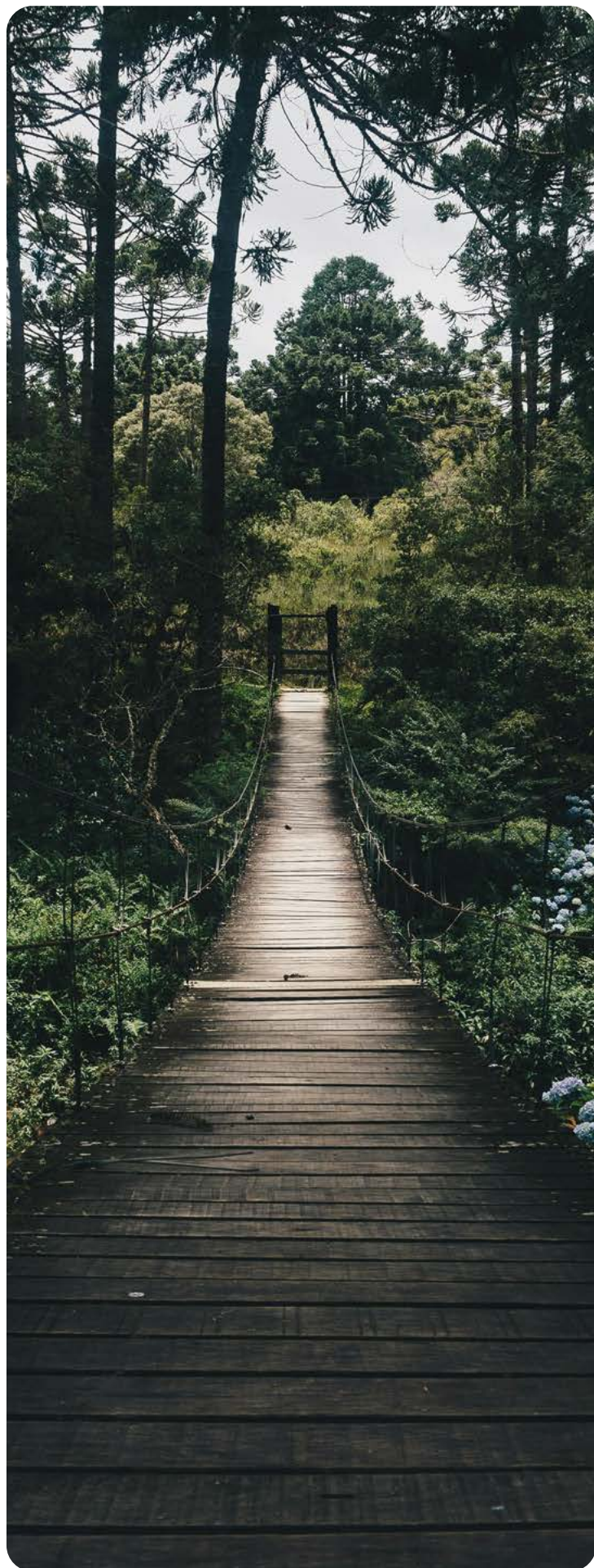
“

Future Currents has been able to give our movements and our fields the support and space to take on really difficult conversations about strategy and direction by being a trusted stakeholder and partner with loving rigor. Future Currents has stepped up to play that role, which is often intentionally and necessarily behind the scenes, but absolutely critical to moving our movements forward.

”

Jee Kim

Former Fellow
Roosevelt Institute





Strengthening Organizing Project

The Strengthening Organizing Project focuses on one of the critical pieces of movement infrastructure: transformational organizing to build the scale and power we need to achieve the democracy and economy we deserve. The project aims to create that space for organizers across tradition, region, and tenure to learn from the strengths of current and past practices; identify the gaps in our practice given the new social, economic, political, and cultural context; and seed experiments and practices to fill the gaps. In addition, this project endeavors to seed and nurture resilient relationships between organizers far beyond existing networks to make possible future breakthroughs in joint work and organizing practice.

Highlights & Insights

Launched in early 2023, the Strengthening Organizing Project is an initiative to:

- Assess the state of organizing.
- Influence funders to invest more — and more strategically — in organizing.
- Create spaces for experienced organizers from every corner of worker and community organizing to learn from and with each other and start imagining what it will take to transform the future.

Over the year, the project completed more than 100 one-on-one interviews as well as small- and large-group learning and discussion sessions to assess the state of organizing — what's working and what needs to change.

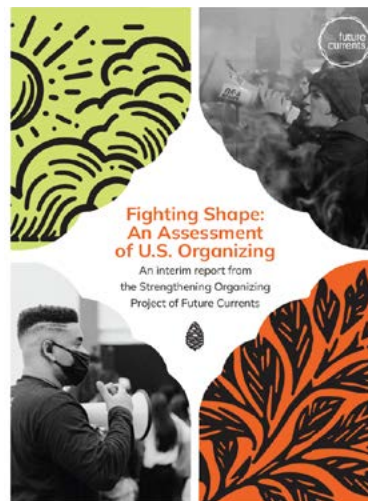
Through virtual and in-person sessions, we created space for learning and “getting real” discussions about where we need to revisit, reinvent, and revitalize the craft of organizing.

This work included a partnership with The Action Lab in November to host the *Gathering about Gatherings*, a two-day convening about a crucial but overlooked dimension of effective base-building: how to construct gatherings that inspire, connect, build collective purpose, and move people into action for power-building. The event centered around a clear thesis: **If we are to meet the moment and get to the scale necessary** to tackle rising authoritarianism, inequality, exploitation, and climate disaster, **we're going to have to get better at getting together.** During the gathering, leading practitioners in the field shared provocative presentations from leading experts and authors (including Priya Parker, author of “The Art of Gathering”), and then rolled up their sleeves to start envisioning new approaches to creating collective spaces for power-building.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, the Strengthening Organizing Project will:

- Capture and disseminate the concrete ideas that emerged from the [Gathering about Gatherings](#) conversation in formats that are easily accessible and useful to other practitioners in the field.
- Hold several learning and discussion sessions on topics that we have identified from interviews and prior discussions.
- Lead three in-person deep-dive cohort retreats and pull learnings from each that can apply to future work gathering people across organizing lineage or model.
- Release "[Fighting Shape: An Assessment of US Organizing](#)," our interim discussion document based on the first half of the project and use it to engage practitioners and funders in further discussion.
- Plan and lay the groundwork for a set of recommendations and a larger convening to be held in early 2025, bringing together organizers and funders to engage in fruitful relationship-building and address other priorities as identified through the 2024 work of this project.



Direct Action Innovation Lab

In concert with direct action practitioners, Future Currents 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 a 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 and design productive experiments for dissent in this changing landscape.

Highlights & Insights

The Direct Action Innovation Lab (DAIL) provided core practitioners with a discussion document to prompt discussion of the findings of a 10-month exploration in 2022 and to deepen the recommendations to inform a report we plan to release in 2024. DAIL led a couple group virtual sessions and many one-on-ones with our network of practitioners, who provided valuable insight into the report's analysis and hypotheses and offered recommendations for potential partners in the field.

DAIL then partnered with 10 organizations in varying capacities, ranging from providing training material to leading the action design process to seeding actions, in order to infuse progressive organizations' strategies with the findings for the report in development and test their effectiveness. Partners included Campaign for Children, Dream Defenders, Jewish Voices for Peace, Look Loud, Make the Road New York, March to End Fossil Fuels, Movement for Black Lives, NDN Collective, The Piggy Bank Breakers (Chorus Foundation x Intelligent Mischief), Rabbis for Ceasefire, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and United Front Ceasefire March.

Over the course of the year, DAIL trained over 1,000 people and put nearly that many people into coordinated actions. Over 20,000 people participated in actions that were shaped by our recommendations.

Last, throughout the field-testing phase, we identified widespread gaps in how groups do action strategy, so we began work on a set of actionable recommendations and accessible tools.





Looking Ahead

The Direct Action Innovation Lab is looking forward to releasing its report and accompanying toolkit in 2024. The report examines tactics and strategies of dissent that social justice movements employ to bring about positive change in their community. The resource will include a tool that supports groups to implement the proposed strategies. These tools, designed for midlevel organizers in both power-building organizations and social movement spaces, will immediately level up the dissent and direct action landscape.

In addition, DAIL is partnering closely with the Strengthening Organizing Project and is leading the development and facilitation of a retreat focused on movement upsurge moments. National moments of mass mobilization are defining political moments for many organizers, yet base-building organizations sometimes struggle to strategize quickly, mobilize efficiently, and absorb new members effectively to meet these moments. This retreat will provide both historical context and space to dig in on solving for these challenges.

Direct Action Innovation Lab trained over 1,000 people and put nearly that many people into coordinated actions.

Countering Authoritarianism

Freedom Lab

The Freedom Lab seeks to identify and cultivate strategies to counter the authoritarian threat. For some time, the United States will be engaged in an internal struggle over whether it achieves a just and reparative democracy or devolves into some form of authoritarian governance. Much of the anti-authoritarian organizing underway relies on mobilizing a coalition of the willing rather than also reshaping who is in the coalition. The Freedom Lab provides a home for long-term strategy development, moving beyond electoral cycles to understand how to defuse the key drivers of the authoritarian push and how to build a broader and more resilient coalition to protect and advance democratic practice. The Lab brings together the best thinking from both practitioners and academics.



Highlights & Insights

The Freedom Lab engaged dozens of groups and experts from community organizers to academics, donors, technologists, and think tanks.

In 2023, the Freedom Lab launched three major lines of work:

- 1 Organize “beyond the choir.”** Freedom Lab is interested in whether and how we can peel people away from the authoritarian social base or prevent them from getting drawn into it. There is a relatively new and growing field of groups organizing people in communities targeted by extreme right-wing forces. These organizations are geographically and tactically diverse, but all are providing an alternative to arms of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement by organizing around shared interests. These institutions can provide a meaningful political home and may also have secondary democratic benefits by de-escalating potentially violent conditions, providing on-ramps for people otherwise turned off by social movements and building nonpartisan power to prevent democratic backsliding. Freedom Lab is working with Justin Ruben to drive more resources to this “beyond the choir” organizing. We are continuously surveying the space and maintaining a list of groups, identifying and engaging donors who could support this work, and exploring potential models to scale this organizing and nurture the field.

- 2 Develop and test labor education programs.** Labor unions are one of the few large institutional homes for people of diverse political views. Strong unions can foster greater support for democracy and solidaristic values, thereby decreasing support for authoritarianism, but there are no formal programs to do this. Freedom Lab is supporting Grassroots Policy Project, with guidance from experts Stephanie Luce and Bob Master, to develop and pilot a political education curriculum to strengthen member commitment to democratic norms and address the tense political divide within union members.

- 3 Disrupt and weaken the authoritarian coalition.** What we describe as the authoritarian coalition is breathtakingly large — and also quite ideologically diverse. We are exploring opportunities to weaken individual actors and exploit rifts and divisions within the coalition to render it less effective. Work in this area is shared on a case-by-case basis.

Freedom Lab also supports and socializes research on other promising interventions, including:

- Instigating debate about Erica Chenoweth and Zoe Marks’ 2022 [“Pro-democracy Organizing Against Autocracy in the United States.”](#) Convergence Magazine ran a series of articles in response to the paper throughout 2023, which are captured [here](#).
- Using direct service and mutual aid to reach disaffected and organized people and influence their worldview and interrupting and providing alternatives for boys and men (teens and young adults) targeted by far-right propaganda.

We continue efforts to align progressive organizations and establish a center of gravity on anti-authoritarian strategies. There is a lot to do, but we are poised to help identify and support new leadership and begin more coordinated experimentation.

Looking Ahead

In 2024, Freedom Lab will in some cases move to an experimental phase, including piloting the public education curriculum with select labor unions and efforts to encourage corporations to end financial contributions to some of the most radical actors in the authoritarian coalition. Freedom Lab is also supporting efforts looking, in particular, at deeply conservative geographies to better understand whether and how extremists can be isolated and how best to nurture support for democratic reform in rural communities.





Preventing Election Sabotage

Future Currents contributes to the ongoing efforts to develop the needed infrastructure to stay ready for the threats to fair and secure elections posed by anti-democracy forces. We maintain the longer-term view to help inform the critical, more immediate planning and structuring of the joint effort. We also participate in the coordination and creation of scenario planning opportunities, with a particular focus on supporting states in developing their strategic frameworks for election crisis moments.

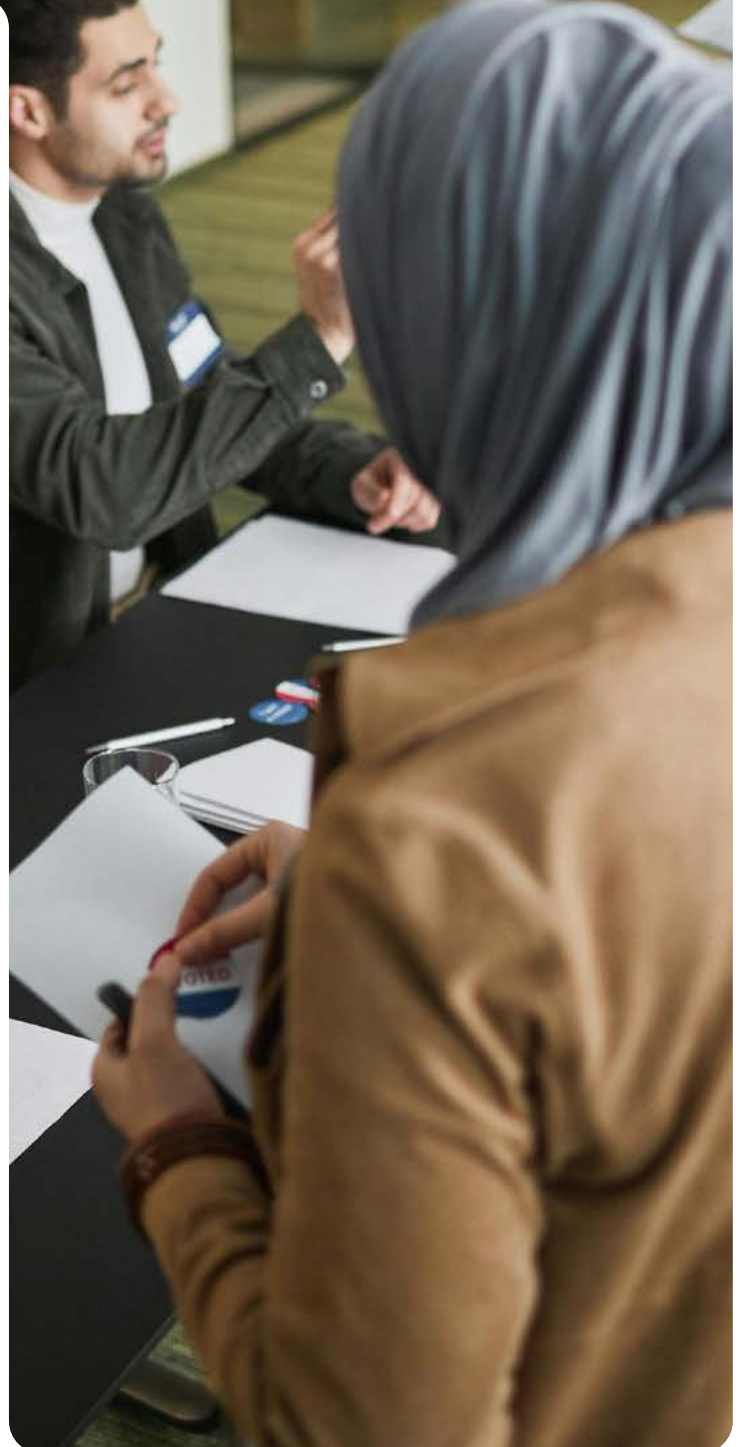
Highlights & Insights

Election integrity work runs parallel and aims to strengthen the capacity of state coalitions of base-building groups and the national infrastructure to support them. Future Currents has focused on strategic planning in battleground states where nascent coalitions lack staff and capacity to understand the threats and align on plans.

In 2023, we completed an evaluation of the support we provided to coalitions in four states — Michigan, Wisconsin, Virginia, and North Carolina — in 2022.

At the national level, Future Currents is a member of the core working group for the Election Sabotage Response Network (ESRN) and a member of the host committee for the ESRN's fall convening of state and national organizations working to prevent election sabotage in the 2024 elections.

At the state level, we began to identify and build relationships with key state partners to determine how we can best support them in building alignment on the threats in their states, doing scenario planning with election sabotage tables working in their states, and developing shared strategic frameworks for action.

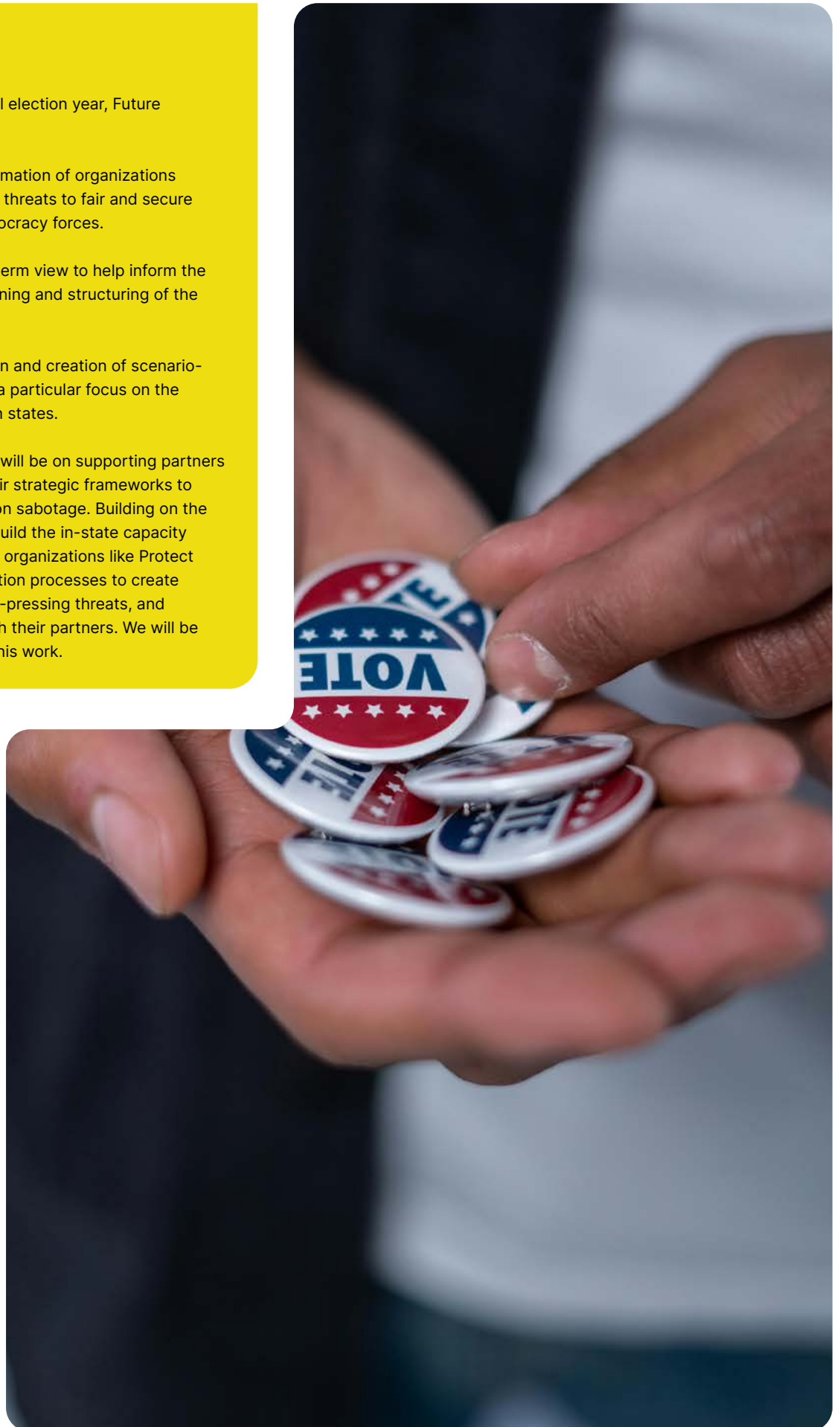


Looking Ahead

As we move forward in this crucial election year, Future Currents will continue to:

- Participate in the national formation of organizations working to stay ready for the threats to fair and secure elections posed by anti-democracy forces.
- Continue to hold the longer-term view to help inform the critical, more immediate planning and structuring of the joint effort.
- Participate in the coordination and creation of scenario-planning opportunities, with a particular focus on the organizing work happening in states.

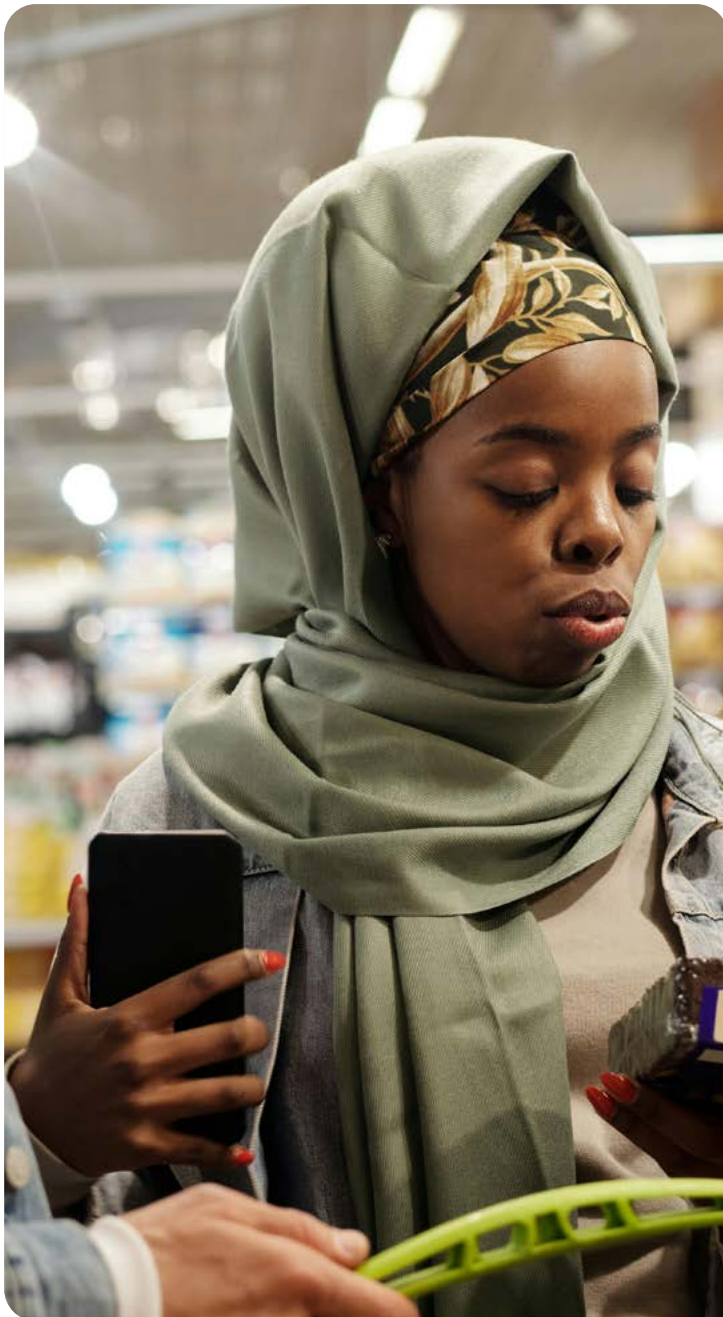
The bulk of our activity, however, will be on supporting partners on the state level in preparing their strategic frameworks to respond to likely threats of election sabotage. Building on the work in 2022, we are seeking to build the in-state capacity to take the threat assessments of organizations like Protect Democracy, facilitate robust coalition processes to create state-based analyses of the most-pressing threats, and develop strategic frameworks with their partners. We will be supporting three to six states in this work.



New Economy

Paradigm-Shifting Strategies

With a cohort of frontline organizers, scholars, and national network connectors, Future Currents' Paradigm-Shifting Strategies was a two-year project to explore and experiment 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. The project was completed this year and is informing other efforts moving forward.



Highlights & Insights

Our Paradigm-Shifting Strategies learning cohort convened 24 participants, primarily state-based campaigners, federal policy advocates, and scholars. The learning cohort focused on how today's organizing and campaigning can build toward generational shifts in our economic paradigm. Participants gathered to learn from campaign case studies, the history of neoliberalism, and each other, particularly as they identified and began to test pilot projects in organizing and narrative strategies.

Participants' pilot projects included entirely new programs or potential programs as well as new components of existing programs. For example, two state-based organizations explored how to develop community-owned news outlets that report from outside of the neoliberal frame. Another aims to develop longitudinal tools to determine how and when people's expressed beliefs spur them into demonstrable action.

We had thought the inclusion of national network leaders in the cohort might grease the wheels to scale up the ideas faster; however, this turned out not to be true — most found that shifting the economic paradigm requires intensive, hyper-local, geographically and culturally specific nurturing in order to be effective.

Looking Ahead

From the Paradigm-Shifting Strategies cohort, we identified a lack of clarity, unity, and preparedness among progressives in their approach to a future economic crises. To help address this gap — and building on our work on Paradigm-Shifting Strategies and on the next economic recession (which ran from 2018 to 2020) — we are undertaking a Next Economic Crisis project. We want to collaboratively build, socialize, and advance a shared understanding of what constitutes an economic crisis, how progressives can work to prevent economic crises, and what must be ready when an economic crisis hits to respond with adequate solutions to support people, build power for workers and families, and win the narrative battles that will frame the post-crisis economy.

In 2024, we seek to:

- Engage a wide variety of policy experts, economists, advocates, and organizers to creatively, inclusively, and proactively envision how we should think about economic crises and understand the new normal of our economy.
- Develop a shared definition of economic crisis and an analysis of potential looming economic crises.
- Engage progressive leaders in convenings, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations to develop, socialize, and advance this definition and analysis.
- Prepare scenario exercises to pressure test this definition and analysis and identify what existing work and gaps there are in progressives' preparedness for future economic crises.



Other Projects

Sometimes our work doesn't fit into neat categories because the world — and the issues that we tackle — are intertwined and cross boundaries. Several of our projects are focused on creating the space for movement leaders, funders, and other partners to expand their imagination, strengthen their relationships with each other, and align on practical strategies.

Democracy and Economy Long View

The Democracy and Economy Long View (DELV) program hosts bimonthly calls with mid-career progressive movement staffers (mostly from advocacy and policy organizations) that are focused on the challenges in the U.S. democracy and economy. Participants demonstrate a deep curiosity and interest in identifying infrastructural and ecosystemic gaps, deepening analytical tools (including but not only disability, racial, and gender justice lenses), as well as building relationships across the field.

In 2023, we held 17 DELV project sessions that included a total of 40 participants. The group focused on co-governance at the center of many of our conversations. In addition to this overarching theme, DELV helped folks to remain informed on issues outside of their everyday work. The opportunity to speak with and learn from organizers helps re-center the role of people power in movement strategy.

This year, we learned that DELV serves as a useful space for promising mid-level people in leading organizations to learn about the perspectives, analyses, and theories of change of other entities in the landscape; build relationships across their peer organizations; and have space to develop their leadership outside of their organizations.



DELV allowed me to think more about the corporate accountability and monopoly work in the work, family, and gender space. I was also able to form stronger relationships with folks by seeing them on a consistent basis.



Vicki Shabo

Senior Fellow for Gender Equity
Paid Leave & Care Policy and Strategy
Better Life Lab at New America

Strategy Facilitation

Governing 2025 Scenario Exercises

Future Currents developed a scenario exercise for progressive leaders and organizations to strategize about how to meet very different, but equally plausible, governing scenarios. The Governing 2025 Scenario Exercise places participants in 2026 and asks them to imagine one of two paths to getting there — one in which Joe Biden is president and the other in which Donald Trump is president. The scenario details a cross-issue federal governing context with attention paid to how federal governance is being felt in particular state contexts.

The Governing 2025 Scenario engages a diverse range of participants in an opportunity to:

- Consider the conditions we might face after different election outcomes.
- Strategically consider organizational and movement priorities given the opportunities and threats that might arise in the political and cultural landscape of various plausible futures.
- Collectively contend with what approaches and relationships are needed to ramp up, abandon, and/or newly pursue to be better prepared to meet any future condition.

We have run the scenario for both individual organizations and collaborative formations. In 2023, we ran the framework scenario with the Democracy and Economic Long-View group. We ran a tailored scenario exercise for a collective of over 50 immigrant justice leaders.

In 2024, we will run the scenario with leaders from national organizing networks, the staffs and members of policy and organizing groups both at the national and state levels, philanthropic funders, and others. We are also training organizers to run the scenarios with their memberships.

The JPB Foundation Strategic Facilitation

In 2023, when movement leader-campaigner-strategist Deepak Bhargava was announced as the next leader of The JPB Foundation, the foundation began a strategic reset of its strategy by which to navigate its new era. JPB sought to partner with Future Currents because it believes that how it develops its strategy is just as important as what that strategy is. JPB is committed to setting the direction of the foundation in deep relationship with leaders of movements, experts, and practitioners — and saw Future Currents as the right partner to bring all of these sectors together and lead a provocative, honest, and collaborative process.



Future Currents worked with The JPB Foundation to design and convene a series of sessions with external other grant-makers, practitioners, and experts to rigorously test and collaboratively strengthen the foundation's proposed strategic framework, generate strategies for fulfilling the strategic framework to inform JPB's strategic planning in 2024, and deepen relationships with each other and the foundation. We also planned and facilitated an interactive retreat for foundation staff to engage with the foundation's new direction, build upon the work in the external sessions, and continue to expand and deepen the foundation's strategic thinking as well as push staff members beyond their traditional modes of planning. In addition, we invited a wide set of movement leaders to contribute to a briefing book of case studies and original thought pieces on how the Foundation might orient toward most effectively supporting the power of those who have been denied it to challenge and change oppressive systems and advance visions of a more just, democratic, and sustainable society.

Looking ahead, Future Currents sees this role of nurturing open and aligned strategic conversations between field organizations and philanthropy as critical to the long-term success of our project.



Future Currents is an indispensable hub for social change movements, providing pathbreaking analysis and crucial forums for cross-movement dialogue on key topics. It helps movements lift their eyes to the horizon – to understand the world that's coming, and to get clearer on the world we want to build.

Deepak Bhargava
President
The JPB Foundation



As you *may* have heard... 2024 is an election year! Future Currents has a special role to play in moments of immediate need — we facilitate movement preparedness for both the just-beyond-the-immediate and the long-term futures.

Future Currents is committed to supporting the full movement ecosystem — organizations, leaders, and funders — to tackle immediate priorities while maintaining our strategic orientation toward the long-view: Encouraging our partners to look and build toward the just and joyful future we deserve.

As we look to our work ahead, we consider how to be most useful in the world. We ask ourselves:

How can Future Currents better share what we are learning about insights from the past that apply today and about what we might be facing in the future with the field?

Some of our work to address this question will include:

- **A Retrospective of 2020.** Four years ago, the first COVID-19 cases were reported in the United States, upending life across the country within weeks. But that was only one of a series of seismic events that altered individuals' lives in the U.S. over the course of the year. In many ways, the major stress and immediate needs of 2020, especially those related to the pandemic and public health concerns, feel like part of the distant past — and there is a dissonance between what actually happened and how well we did in our response. This year, Future Currents is developing a 2020 retrospective of what was happening on the ground and an analysis of where our movements were able to enshrine progressive values in our country. Through this effort, we seek to strengthen progressives' preparedness for future cataclysms.

- **A Power-building Analysis of Climate Migration within the US.** To date, most people return home after being displaced by natural disasters; however, continual recurrence and gradually changing climate could lead to larger-scale, more-permanent migration. What does this mean for building power and power-building organizations? Could base-building organizations prepare in advance for massive population shifts, either a shrinking of their current footprint or a surge in new constituents? Could they begin to build relationships between potential sending-and-receiving geographies to welcome community members and work toward short-term assistance for the displaced, long-term recovery programs; protections against scammers; expanded social safety net programs; and protecting their ability to participate in our democracy? We are developing modeling of displacement from climate change and/or natural disasters (within the U.S.) to equip power-building organizations for strategic preparedness.

What are the futures that we need to help people get ready for?

- **Governing 2025 Scenario Planning.** We will continue supporting organizations and movement groups in planning beyond the upcoming election to help them ensure their strategies, relationships, and capacities are ready to face the challenges and opportunities of the future — whatever it may be.
- **Next Economic Crisis.** We will complete stakeholder interviews and research as well as host in-person convenings of organizers, policy experts, and advocates to better understand the opportunities and challenges of advancing a stronger progressive response in the wake of economic crises. And we'll prepare scenario exercises to pressure test ideas that will prepare progressives to win sustainable power for workers and families in future economic crisis response.

What capacities can we help the field build or strengthen?

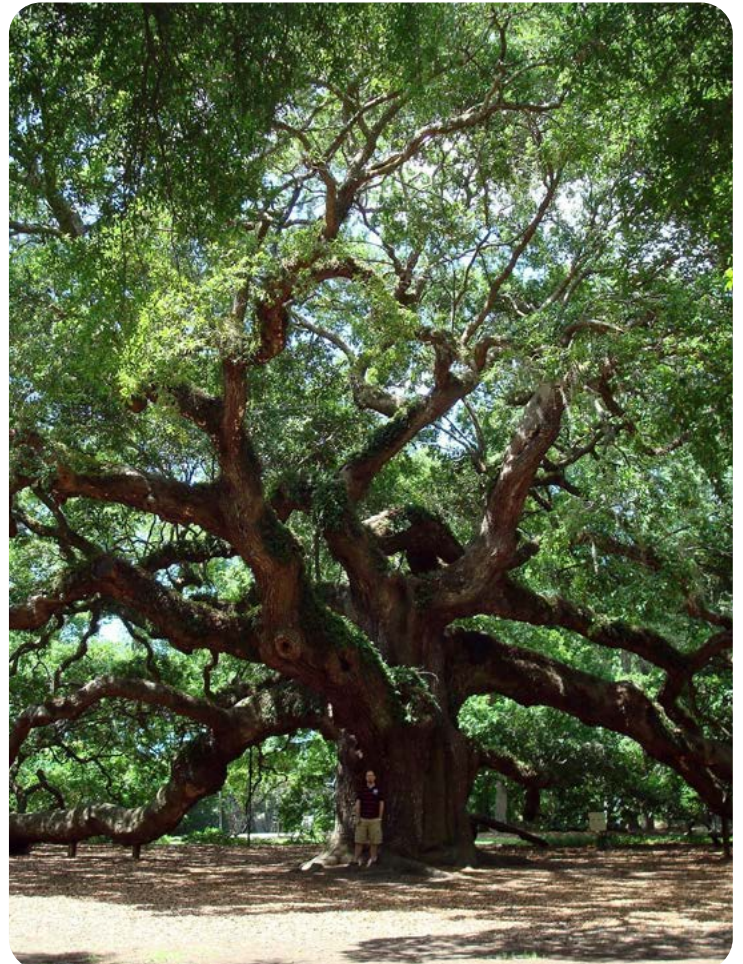
- **Horizons.** This year, we will work with existing and new partners to understand what structures and capacities we need to build power and create systems of care while navigating conflict in a complex and rapidly changing world. Who (institutions and individuals) do we need and what do we need for and from them to overcome the authoritarian threat and to create the just and joyful future we deserve.
- **Strengthening Organizing.** Building from our interim report, we'll convene organizers and engage philanthropy to identify what is missing from this interim analysis and develop solutions, experiments, and recommendations to the challenges identified. Among our questions, we are focusing on priorities like how to sharpen our understanding of power, how to strategize within and across different lineages of organizing, who and how many people we collectively need to organize, and how to develop the leadership and rigor of a progressive movement that has grown dramatically in size but not necessarily in skill.
- **Anti-fracturing practices.** Work with core project partners to help leaders and organizations build or strengthen solidarity frameworks and strategies to resist the divide-and-conquer tactics of authoritarian opponents.

A Thriving Future Currents and Flourishing Community

To make sure that we are well positioned to fulfill our ambitions for the coming year — and beyond — we are committing to a deliberate process for mapping a responsible growth trajectory that will allow us to meet the needs of the field, and we are finding new ways to share our learnings with the field.

To further those goals, we are thrilled to announce Janelle Jones (of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth) as Future Currents' newest board member! Dorian Warren (co-president of Community Change), a champion and vital thought partner who always improved our work, completed his time on our board in 2023.

Future Currents cultivates a society and future that are democratic, radically inclusive, inspiring, and reparative. We help movements better understand the outcomes of our current conditions and actions. And we aim to not only strive for shared flourishing and care but to make it a reality. We know that, working together, we will build the reflexes to respond to the future in ways that advance our beautiful goals. And we are fired up to approach the future with a shared sense of possibility and determination.



Thank You

Our profound gratitude goes to all who supported Future Currents in 2023.

SUPPORTERS

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The JPB Foundation
Mertz Gilmore Foundation
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Dania Rajendra, Director, Learning Communities
Sasha Rauch-Kelly, Strategist
Connie Razza, Executive Director
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Monisha Som, Director of Communications
Nicole Svajlenka, Senior Research Strategist

2023 FUTURE CURRENTS FELLOWS

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Deepak Bhargava, Meridian Project
Amy Carroll, Horizons Project
Zoe Hudson, Freedom Lab
Cristina Jiménez Moreta, Strengthening Organizing
Jamila Michener, Freedom Lab
Angela Peoples, Bridge Project
Lissy Romanow, Strengthening Organizing
Nsé Ufot, Strengthening Organizing
Crystal Zermeño, Strengthening Organizing

2024 FUTURE CURRENTS FELLOWS

LJ Amsterdam, Strengthening Organizing &
Direct Action Innovation Lab
Nicole Boucher, Anti-Fracturing
Emily Chatterjee, Horizons Project
Zoe Hudson, Freedom Lab
Cristina Jiménez Moreta, Strengthening Organizing
Kandace Montgomery, Strengthening Organizing
Jamila Michener, Freedom Lab
Angela Peoples, Bridge Project
Lissy Romanow, Strengthening Organizing
Nsé Ufot, Strengthening Organizing
Crystal Zermeño, Strengthening Organizing

FUTURE CURRENTS ADVISORY BOARD

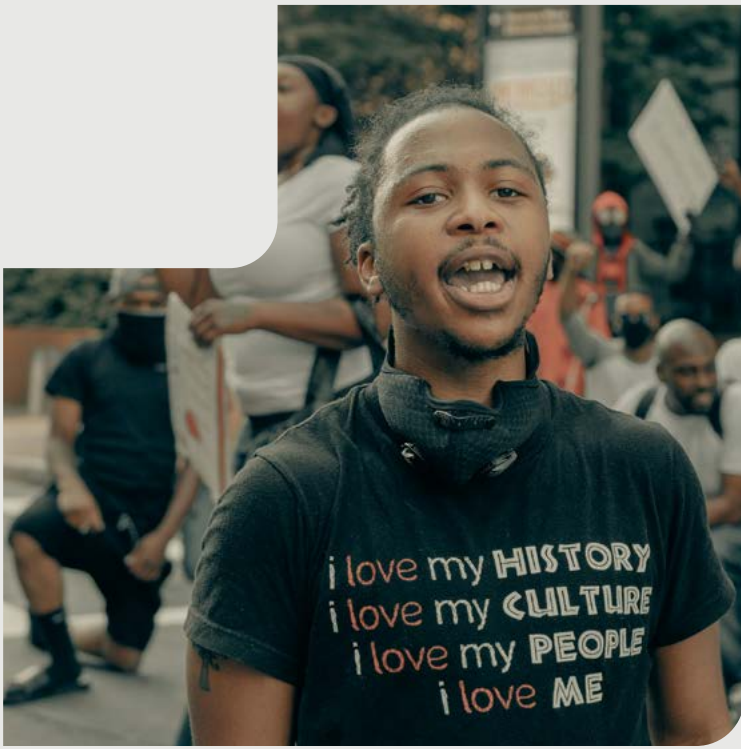
Members of Future Currents' Advisory Board bring expertise in the movement field, possible futures, communities of funders, and Future Currents' financials. (Affiliation provided for identification purposes only.)

2023

Rodney McKenzie, Fetzer Institute
Scott Nielson, Arabella Advisors
Eshanthi Ranasinghe, The Audacious Project/TED
Dorian Warren (*chair*), Community Change

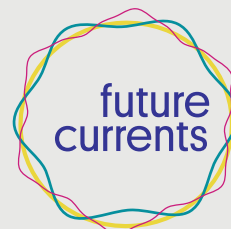
2024

Janelle Jones, Washington Center on Equitable Growth
Rodney McKenzie (*chair*), Fetzer Institute
Scott Nielson, Arabella Advisors
Eshanthi Ranasinghe, The Audacious Project/TED



Impact Report 2023

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Space to imagine. Strategies for action.

