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2023 Annual Grassroots Convening Report

Engaging People Power: Youth, Volunteers, and Boards

A 3 Part Virtual Series
Held via Zoom and 1 In-person event.
Friday's October 6th- 20th, 2023

The 2023 annual Convening of California Wildlands Grassroots Fund and California Environmental Grassroots Fund grantees was for the first time since the onset of the pandemic, a hybrid event- with three virtual sessions and one in person Happy Hour. Keeping the virtual sessions allowed us to include grantees from our Grassroots Leadership Fund and other Rose Foundation grants programs and partner organizations across the country while the in-person happy hour provided an opportunity for grantees, panelists, and stakeholders to network and foster connections.

The convening achieved remarkable success, setting a record for the largest number of participants at a virtual gathering organized by the Rose Foundation. In total, 128 attendees (including 95 grantees) actively engaged in three free 90-minute online workshops. These included two panel discussions and one hands-on virtual training exploring strategies for building the people power of small organizations. These sessions took place every Friday from October 6 to October 20, 2023 and covered the following subjects:

October 6 - Youth Engagement: Fostering the Next Generation of Environmental Activists. A panel discussion exploring how to integrate youth in grassroots groups- from volunteers and activists to strategic board members and leaders of youth-driven collaborations. Participants learned from the experiences of youth leaders and organizations engaging the younger generation in their work.

October 13 - Growing your Impact: Strategies to Attract, Manage, and Integrate Volunteers. A hands-on workshop focused on expanding the impact of grassroots organizations by imparting strategies to attract, manage, and integrate volunteers.

October 20 - What to do when my board...? The Ins and Outs of Board Development and Management. A panel discussion delving into the intricacies of board development and management, providing valuable insights on how to successfully navigate board conflicts, build active and engaged boards, and establish expectations to ensure board success.

The convening culminated with an **in-person Happy Hour** hosted at the Rose Foundation's Oakland, CA office on Friday, October 27, 2023. This gathering was a celebratory occasion marking the first in-person meeting of Rose Foundation grantees since the beginning of the pandemic. Beyond celebration, the Happy Hour also provided a vital space for Bay Area grantees, California-based funders, partner organizations, board members, and staff to foster connections and rejuvenate relationships.



Highlights:

Altogether, 128 attendees participated in the Convening. 95 of the attendees were grantees, representing 82 different grassroots organizations. This was considerably higher attendance than our last few virtual convenings which averaged about 61 grantee attendees. On average we had about 56 grantee attendees per virtual session. Of the grantee attendees, 28% were grantees of our California Environmental Grassroots Fund, 23% were California Wildlands Grassroot Fund grantees, and 10% were Grassroots Leadership Fund grantees. The additional 39% were from other Rose Foundation grantmaking programs, primarily our watershed funds and Rapid Response Fund (3%).

This year the themes, format of presentations and broad outreach seem to have attracted greater interest than our previous virtual convenings, as we saw a larger number of participants at individual sessions than with our first three online convenings in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Of the grantee attendees, two

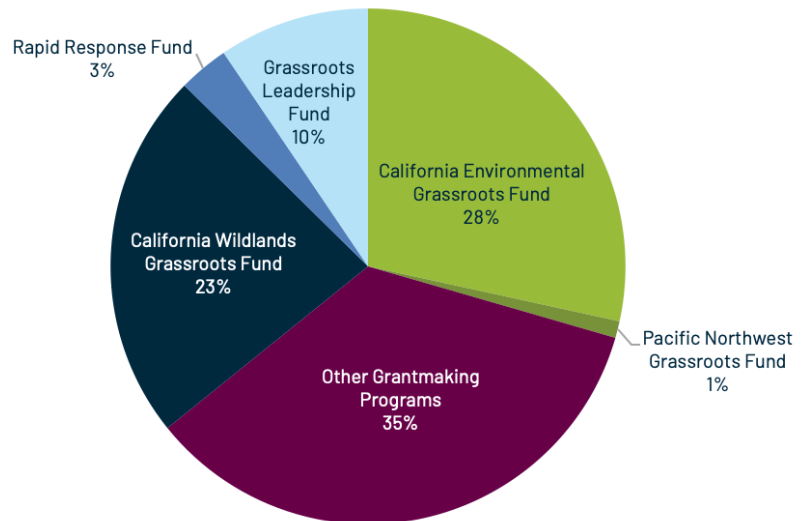
attended all four events (3 virtual sessions and the in-person happy hour), 15% attended at least 3 sessions, and 25% attended at least 2 sessions. Additionally, we had another 83 grantees who signed up for the different sessions but did not attend. These large registrant numbers indicate interest from people who may end up engaging with the recorded workshops and other resources, though they did not attend at the time of the event.

Benefits of a Virtual Convening

Although we miss the connectivity of in-person events, the online format provides flexibility for our grantees to plug into the sessions where and when desired and greatly expands the geographical reach of the event, removing travel barriers. The online sessions allowed us to explore creative formats for our sessions. We organized two panel discussions, each featuring a diverse panel of at least 5 participants from various parts of the country and diverse backgrounds. Throughout each panel discussion, participants actively shared resources and thoughts in the Zoom chat, enriching the discussion and fostering connections. The hands-on virtual training incorporated small breakout rooms, allowing individuals to actively participate and engage in more in-depth conversations.

An additional benefit of the virtual format is that all session recordings are available on our website for grantees to return to and explore at their convenience. We hope this will provide a valuable tool for future grantees and allow us to expand our store of available capacity building resources to share with all our grassroots grantees. The webinar recordings, slides, and additional resources can be found on our Resources and Recording page: <https://rosefdn.org/2023/resources-and-recordings/>

**2023 Grassroots Grantee Convening
Attendees by Fund**





Spanish Language Accessibility

For many years, the Rose Foundation has offered simultaneous Spanish translation during the Convening to make the event accessible to grassroots groups led by Spanish-speaking community members. This year, our webpage about the event, email outreach and registration for the Convening were offered in both English and Spanish. Every session had simultaneous Spanish interpretation with training materials in both English and Spanish. Our interpreters did an excellent job incorporating Spanish interpretation into the flow of the panels and training, and directly engaging Spanish speaking participants during the workshops. Though not as robust as participation in previous years, we were pleased to see 11 registrants and at least 3- 5 people per session who utilized the simultaneous translation. We also recorded our session in Spanish and are available in our Resources and Recording page: <https://rosefdn.org/2023/resources-and-recordings/>

ROSE FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Encuentro Annual de Capacitación

Fortaleciendo el poder popular:
juventud, voluntaries y juntas directivas

**GRATIS Y EN LÍNEA,
VIERNES DE OCTUBRE**

Celebremos juntas en persona.
¡Ven a nuestra Happy Hour el 27
de Octubre en Oakland, CA!

Para más información visite rosefdn.org/2023convening

Evaluation

Attendees were asked to complete a short evaluation survey at the end of each session. In total, over the 3 sessions, we received 36 completed evaluations with an average response rate of about 22%. While this rate falls below our typical response rate for in-person gatherings, it represents an improvement compared to last year's virtual convening. The lower response rate is consistent with online training experiences and was further influenced by the sessions concluding just in time, leaving insufficient time for the survey.

Unfortunately, with only 36 responses to the feedback form, it's hard to make meaningful statements about how participants received the training sessions. From the little data we have, this is what we can say:



Youth Engagement Virtual Panel Discussion:

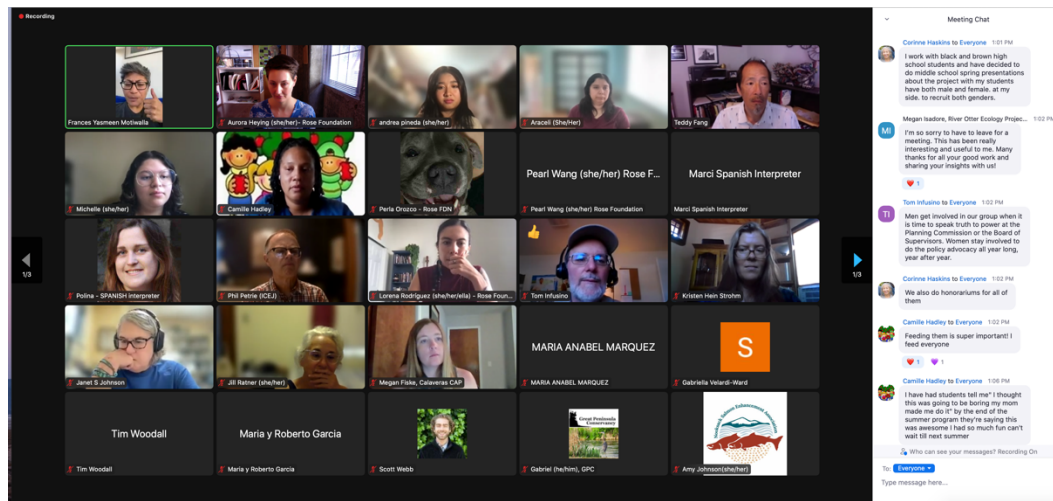
90% of the respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the session topic was relevant to their work and would recommend the training to others. Around 50% would have preferred a Q&A in smaller groups. We also got a lot of positive qualitative feedback, including grantees expressing interest in creating a “youth seat” on their organization’s board. Selected written feedback is included below:

“I enjoyed hearing answers from a wide range of panelists with a variety of experiences and age ranges. All the panelists answered with honesty and were given ample time to complete their thoughts.”

-Lorena Cervantes, Comite Progreso de Lamont

“This training helped me brainstorm some ideas for how to engage youth and how to tie in climate justice topics into preserve conservation/stewardship. I liked hearing about the leadership progression and the importance of having a program that reaches students at a young age and engages them until early adulthood.”

-Benjamin Bravo, Community Action Project



Volunteer Engagement Virtual Training:

95% of the respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that the session topic was relevant to their work and would recommend the training to others. They also respond that they learned useful techniques to manage volunteers in their organizations and that the trainer was an effective facilitator. We also got a lot of positive qualitative feedback about the incredible facilitation of the trainer. Selected written feedback is included below:

“It was amazing how much information was included in 90 minutes that I can now use! Especially, the many suggestions about volunteer retention and recruitment, management.”

-Anonymous feedback

“I learned that simply changing the way I communicate can make a huge difference. For example, if I'm speaking to H.S. Students I can present it as not only a volunteer opportunity but as an internship that they can then put on their resume.”

-Dolores Howard, San Luis Obispo Beaver Brigade



"I learned so much about how to build a volunteer base! Imminently, we will be using the advice to be upfront with volunteers about what will happen on a volunteer day."

-Arielle Laub, Common Vision

Board Development Virtual Panel Discussion:

90% of the respondents strongly agreed that the session topic was relevant to their work, they would recommend the training to others and that they learned useful techniques for Board recruitment and management. Grantees also expressed the value of having diverse perspectives and panelists backgrounds. The very active zoom chat during this session spoke to the breadth of grantee questions and interest in this topic. Selected written feedback is included below:

"The diversity of perspectives on the panel was really helpful to hear about board engagement at different types of organizations and see where there are clear parallels with board engagement and some differences."

-Rose Snyder, Point Blue Conservation Science

"I learned various ways of recruiting new Board members. And posting the application form, with job description, on the group's website. What to do when the Board is no longer aligned with the mission of the group. Full disclosure of the expectation of a working board, especially if the group is a front-line organization"

-Gabriella Velardi-Ward, Coalition for Wetlands and Forests

"I learned that 1) May ask other groups in a coalition to make Board nominations. 2) May team up old board members with new members. 3) May ask exiting board members to recruit their replacements. 4) May fill board spaces with young people for diversity"

-Tom Infusino, Community Action Project

Reflections:

This year, our convening focused on the theme of people power and how to strengthen it. To achieve this, we organized two sessions in a panel discussion format, allowing us to center the experience of our own grantees. They played a fantastic role as panelists, bringing their expertise and talents developed over years of community organizing and leadership in grassroots organizations. They were the focal point of our sessions.

Of the 9 panelists in our two sessions, 2 were part of the Rose Foundation's Youth Program, 2 were Grassroots Leadership Fund grantees, 1 California Environmental Grassroots Fund grantee, and 2 California Wildlands Grassroots Fund grantees. Their participation showcased our belief that our grantees are the true experts for our grassroots convenings and at the same time, it strengthened our grantee-funder relationship as we worked collectively on the questions explored during the panel discussions. This format not only provided a platform for peer learning, but also fueled the remarkable engagement observed in the Q&A section and Zoom chat during the panel discussions.

We also organized a volunteer engagement training session that was a great success. The trainer, Molly McClure, did a fantastic job breaking away from the presenter-student format and managed to create a



collective space where participants had the opportunity to share questions and insights about the topic among themselves. Throughout the session, there was active participation from various grantees who shared their experiences in recruiting more volunteers and developing strategies to manage them. Molly provided detailed and specific information on the subject while allowing the session to evolve into a productive conversation among grantees and participants.

While our in-person (Halloween) Happy Hour didn't draw the expected attendance, it proved to be a catalyst for meaningful connections and collaborations. Three of the grantees who attended were part of our December site visits, emphasizing the importance of in-person connections for relationship-building and addressing power dynamics between funders and grantees. The happy hour also welcomed partner organizations like The Color of Water and Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership, fostering connections between them and our grantees working in the Bay Area. It remains to be seen how much the pandemic has affected people's interest and willingness to attend in-person events. We will continue to explore that question in 2024 as we begin plans for a fully in-person convening.



Attendees at the grassroots Halloween Happy Hour

The success of this convening was also shaped by a thorough analysis of feedback from previous convenings and 1:1 check in calls. Insights from this data revealed a growing interest among our grantees in involving younger generations in their work, strengthening volunteer networks, and establishing better practices in leadership and governance within their organizations.

In conclusion, our key success factors this year included thoughtfully chosen session topics, the dynamic panel discussion format, featuring grantees as panelists, top-tier facilitators, and the provision of a complementary in-person networking space. Armed with these insights, we look forward to future convenings, where we can continue strengthening the grassroots activist groups and co-creating a network of changemakers that foster systemic transformation for communities and the environment.

Future Convening Topics:

In 2024, we are looking forward to a return to an in-person Convening. Unsurprisingly, fundraising topped the list of requested future convening topics, with grantees expressing interest in both institutional funder strategies and general donation solicitation. We also had requests to explore topics such as work life balance for part-time activists, conflict resolution in grassroots organizations, DEI practices, and communications to advance public advocacy. In 2024, we envision a training format that incorporates space for facilitated networking and a panel discussion, fostering more in-depth



engagement and insightful conversations. Furthermore, we aim to carve out a dedicated space for youth involvement, inviting more young environmental leaders to both present and actively participate in the event.



Attendees at the grassroots Halloween Happy Hour



Meet the Panelists and Trainers

Youth Engagement Panelists



Andrea Pineda (she/her)

New Voices Are Rising Coordinator at Rose Foundation. As Youth Coordinator of New Voices Are Rising, Andrea plans and leads the Summer Climate Justice Leadership Academy as well as the school year fellowship. She has been involved with the program since her junior year of high school in 2017! She is passionate about making learning fun and accessible for everyone, especially when it's about environmental justice.



Araceli Moreno (she/her)

Youth Education Advocate for the Central Valley at Save California Salmon. She has a BA in Linguistics from UC Davis and master's in education, Instruction and Curriculum Design, from the University of San Diego. Araceli is Hñähñu and Wixárika, and an advocate for culturally relevant pedagogy in public education and immigration rights. She also volunteers her time with a local grassroots organization as a community organizer working on mutual aid programs, and with immigrants and asylum-seeking people.



Camille T. Hadley

Co-Founder and Executive Director of Little Growers Inc. Brevard County, FL. Camille is a highly accomplished community advocate and environmental justice leader. Hailing from Compton, CA, she began her journey by actively working towards the restoration of Compton College's accreditation while addressing community food insecurity through her Not-For-Profit Organization, Tartar Marketplace. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management with a focus on Marketing from California State University Dominguez Hills. She has made significant contributions to various organizations and committees, including the Leadership Council for Anthropocene Alliance, the South Brevard NAACP Environmental Justice Committee, and the Sierra Club and Women's Earth

Alliance Grassroots Accelerator for Women Environmental Leaders.

Michelle Arango **Youth vs Apocalypses**

Michelle is a youth organizer who has been actively working on Environmental Justice related issues since 2016. Since then she has worked on numerous campaigns such as No Coal in Oakland and CALSTRS work. She is also has spoken at regional and state level hearings to advocate for climate justice and recruited students as young as 12 to go on these hearings. As of right now, Michelle is working with middle school aged youth to develop a new generation of youth organizers.



Ted Fang



Founder of the Florence Fang Community Farm: Florence Fang Community Farm is the largest community farm in San Francisco, and the City's only USDA-registered farm. Mr. Fang is also President of the San Francisco Farm Bureau and an elected representative for San Francisco on the USDA Urban County for the Bay Area. He is also the first Asian American to serve as editor & publisher of a major daily newspaper, the San Francisco Examiner. He is a founding member of the California Free Press Association, the Asian American Journalists Association and New American Media. Mr. Fang's community and philanthropic activities include co-founding the Hep B Free campaign and helping to develop the first ever U.S. National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan. Mr. Fang is an alumnus of UC Berkeley and Peking University.

Volunteer Engagement Trainer



Molly McClure (also known as MJ) has been organizing, facilitating political education, and building social justice organizations for 20 years. Molly was first politicized through queer, feminist, and anti-capitalist actions in the 90s in the Pacific Northwest and spent the early 2000s teaching sex education in Philadelphia high schools before moving back home to the SF Bay Area. They spent 14 years working at Causa Justa :: Just Cause, an organization building the power of Black and Latino immigrant communities to fight gentrification and criminalization. At Causa Justa :: Just Cause, MJ developed the

volunteer and intern program into a vehicle for hundreds of people to support tenants and migrant justice organizing. Molly is passionate about building movements that can win big and be spaces of connection and joy, loves parenting their two tweens, appreciates dad jokes, and is happiest in the redwoods.

Board Development Panelists



Evlyn Andrade

Executive Director at EarthCorps Evlyn holds a B.A. from UC Berkeley. She most recently served as a Policy Advisor to a San Diego County Board Supervisor. Previously, she was the Development Director at Climate Action Campaign, and prior to that, she was Manager of the Center for Public Health Practice and the Office of Diversity at the UC Berkeley School of Public Health. She has volunteered with the Teach in Prison Program and as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for youth in the foster care and juvenile justice system. She has been a passionate proponent of social, economic, and environmental justice and has served on various executive boards.



Dr. Jacquelin Echols

South River Watershed Alliance Board President With over 13 years as Board President of the South River Watershed Alliance (SRWA), Jackie has a great experience on how to develop, manage and consolidate a Board. Dedicated to restoring the South River's ecology for both nature and people, SRWA advocates awareness, collective action, and robust river management for cleaner water. Through Jackie's leadership, SRWA persists in its essential work, surmounting challenges at both organizational and governmental levels, ensuring the safeguarding and revitalization of this River.



Pam Fujita-Yuhas Pam Fujita-Yuhas served as a Foundation Director for the NW Fund for the Environment where she co-managed the operations and grantmaking programs of the foundation for the past 25 years. A former volunteer coordinator of the Puget Sound Funders group, she also served on grant committees of the Social Justice Fund and the Seattle Foundation. An advocate for funder practices that center equity, communication and trust, she joined the Puget Sound Stewardship and Mitigation Fund Advisory Board in 2021 and continues to learn from and enjoy working with the Rose Foundation community.



Tom L. Hayashi (He/Him), MS Ed, PhD, ACC, CMC. Chief Capacity Building Officer at Center for Volunteer & Nonprofit Leadership Tom brings over 25 years of professional expertise in designing and facilitating people-centered capacity building outcomes and leading organizations and initiatives to greater impact. His thought leadership publications include Dare to Earn, Social Enterprise Workbook (Nonprofit Solutions) and most recently Leading Agile and Resilient Teams, Coaching Strategies Field Guide to Climb Mountains (FORUM), Institute for Management). Tom also contributes as an Adjunct Associate Professor of Human Resource Management for Bovard College, University of Southern California and founding faculty to the Organizational Development Network's Global OD Competency Learning Series.



Complementary Data:

Total Registration	189
Total Registration (excl. RFN)	178
Total Affiliations Registered (excl. RFN)	104

Total Unique Attendees	128
Total Unique Attendees (excl. RFN)	115
Total Unique Grantees Attended	95
Total Affiliations Attended (excl. RFN)	82

Youth Panel Attendees	79
Youth Panel Attendees (excl. RFN)	70
Youth Panel Grantees Attended	61
Youth Panel Affiliations Attended (excl. RFN)	53

Volunteer Training Attendees	65
Volunteer Training Attendees (excl. RFN)	58
Volunteer Training Grantees Attended	50
Volunteer Training Affiliations Attended (excl. RFN)	46

Board Panel Attendees	50
Board Panel Attendees (excl. RFN)	42
Board Panel Grantees Attended	35
Board Panel Affiliations Attended (excl. RFN)	36

Happy Hour Attendees	19
Happy Hour Attendees (excl. RFN)	11
Happy Hour Grantees Attended	7
Happy Hour Affiliations Attended (excl. RFN)	9

