

A YEAR OF SEEDING FUTURES

LOOKING BACK AT 2022



MYCELIUM YOUTH NETWORK

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“For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children’s mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother’s milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us....

it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.

– *Excerpt from "A Litany for Survival"*
Audre Lorde



A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Dear beloved Mycelium community,

I'm writing now with deep commitment to current and future generations. At Mycelium, we spent 2022 moving to ensure that resources historically kept out of reach from our communities would be open to us. We've participated in the American Society of Adaptation Professionals, the National Adaptation Forum, and state agencies like the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. As we've grown, we've heard that we are the *exception* and not the norm. We are praised for merging climate adaptation plans with grassroots efforts and giving youth institutional and infrastructural power to make change in their lives.

The more we do this work, the more we realize that we should not be unique — if we opened up space for communities of color, for low-income, for queer, for houseless communities to create radical solutions, we would not be at the current climate crisis. We would, in fact, be inundated with the most creative, visionary, and thoughtful climate actions of all time. This is what we need most right now.

I go into 2023 deeply excited about the future. This week, I witnessed youth speak to their collective experience in the face of a changing climate. I saw the ways in which 9 and 10 year olds are already shaping their story. While there is climate doomism, there is so much hope: hope in each other, hope in their community, and hope in the future.

As one youth said, "I see two futures in front of us. There is a future that is an industrial wasteland with no trees or nature. There is another future where people drive less, trees and animals are everywhere, and people are happy." It is up to us as adults to figure out what path we will set our youth up to in the future.

We are already our ancestors' wildest dreams. Let's decide what we do with the incredible potential in front of us.

In joyful, rigorous solidarity,

Lil Milagro Henriquez
Founder & Executive Director
Mycelium Youth Network



DREAMING STATEWIDE

With support from the San Mateo County Office of Education and CA Department of Education, MYN was invited by Ten Strands to create 9th and 10th grade curriculum as part of statewide efforts to develop K-12 open education resources around climate change and environmental justice. Climate Resilient Communities Coordinator Jomar Ventura reflects on how the team is scaling up our climate resilient dreams.



What were you most excited to work on when you started this project?

I was most excited about the opportunity to create curricula that intersects human experience and climate change issues. I was also eager to work with a growing education team that has since incorporated various layers of pedagogy and practices for educators to co-learn alongside youth into lessons that are deeply impactful yet accessible.

What is one challenge or area of growth that you are facing now?

One challenge for this project is creating a curriculum that emphasizes the importance of individual people and places while activating audiences that may never heard of such locations, communities, or EJ issues.

What were some of the major accomplishments of 2022?

The Ten Strands writing team co-created project expectations and brainstormed topics of interest. We then narrowed down a rich community story in navigating environmental justice issues in Kettleman City to anchor and springboard students' learning experiences. I believe a major accomplishment has been continually pausing and adjusting lesson pace and language to reflect MYN's ethic of valuing community strengths and counter-narratives instead of portraying communities most affected by climate change as simply "vulnerable."

How will this project add to or alter Mycelium's existing scope of programming?

There are strategies that we already view as potentially beneficial across educational programming. For example, we intend to incorporate a living wall of youth-inspired questions and use explicitly taught intersectional lenses and frameworks to question systems critically. Planning for student and teacher audiences who may not have extensive background in climate justice also provides insight for broader MYN curriculum planning.



A YEAR IN CLIMATE RESILIENT EDUCATION & YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Climate Resilient Schools (CRS)

MYN's flagship program, offered at middle and high school grade levels, merges ancestral environmental traditions with NGSS aligned Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) curriculum to build community climate resilience across several areas: electricity, food, water, and air.

Youth Leadership Council (YLC)

YLC offers youth an opportunity to enact change directly in their communities. Through youth participatory action research (YPAR) projects that identify local environmental issues, YLC interns design and implement a Climate Action Plan with a focus on transforming their school into a resilience hub, mobilizing their peers, neighborhoods, and local climate experts in the process.





CRS & YLC AT A GLANCE

150+

Students enrolled in CRS across
Oakland & San Francisco

5

School sites with CRS
programming

7

Guest speakers

21

YLC Interns

3

Active YLC sites

\$393k

State and private
foundation funding

\$27.5k

Donations raised for
resilient futures!





"The coolest thing I've learned in class is how to forage and how to use plants as medicine."

— Dolphins student, Pear Tree Community School CRS



"What I like about Mycelium is that we get to learn about the earth's needs."

— Falcons student, Pear Tree Community School CRS



"I didn't know mushrooms could do all the things that I learned about. Like they can break down nutrients and spread it through trees... It's just cool what they could do."

— 12th grade student, Mission High School YLC



IN 2022, WE GAMED FOR JUSTICE

We also piloted the first-ever, live action role-playing Gaming for Justice adventure, *Death by a Thousand Breaths!* Hosted at the Exploratorium, the summer event invited youth and adults from across the Bay Area to dress up, form teams, and navigate a series of challenges to take down the evil polluter wreaking environmental havoc on the fictional Cerulean Port City, inspired by real Oakland history.



Gaming for Justice in 2022

4+

Big bad evil villains defeated

30+

NPCs interacted with

7

Highest character level

5

Campaigns created

Countless

Critical hits taken



47

Adventurers saved
Cerulean Port City



8

Community partnerships, including: Exploratorium, Audiopharmacy, love/speak productions, Gamescape SF, Clements Employment Law, Bissap Baobab, 12 Tides, and the City of Oakland



TO THE
VOLUNTEERS,
CLIMATE
ALLIES,
ADVISORS, &
YOUTH WHO
BRING THIS
WORK TO
LIFE...





...THANK YOU MYCELIUM COMMUNITY!



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