

2021 **Impact** Report



sei BUILDING LEADERS FOR A
RESILIENT WORLD



A Message from Our Executive Director

The climate crisis does not fit into neatly defined boxes. It spills into every aspect of life, affecting everyone on Earth. Responding to it with this same attitude of expansiveness is the only way forward. We know how to get there, and we need everyone to be part of the solution. We all have opportunities to show up as problem-solvers and change-agents and contribute in significant ways, even when we feel overwhelmed. The green transition is on our doorstep, and society is making choices about what shape that transformation will take. SEI is proud to be a leader on this changemaking journey.

We are committed to our mission of building leaders to drive sustainability solutions to bring forth our vision of a resilient world where all communities thrive. Through our innovative education and workforce programs, SEI provides connections, partnerships, and opportunities to make climate action directly accessible and tangible to all who wish to advance climate change solutions. Together, we must build a bridge from where we are today to the world we want for ourselves, for all life, and most importantly, for generations yet to come.

We invite you to explore the following pages to learn about SEI's impact in 2021. In this report, we share inspiring stories from the sustainability leaders in each of our programs and opportunities for you to get involved.

Thanks for joining us on this journey,

Cyane Dandridge

Cyane Dandridge

About

For 24 years, SEI has partnered with schools, campuses, communities, and businesses to develop a sustainability leadership pathway from elementary school to early career.

Our flagship programs (Energize Schools, School of Environmental Leadership, Energize Colleges, Climate Corps, and Energize Careers) educate and empower students and emerging professionals to create thriving, resilient communities.





Energize Schools

2021 IMPACT

230

K-12 schools supported with sustainability curriculum, green career connections, and climate action projects

55,000

Students reached through project-based learning, Earth Day campaigns, and Energy Conservation competitions

63%

Title 1 schools

10

Professional learning webinars guiding teachers through project-based hands-on sustainability curriculum projects



Engaging, inspiring, and empowering K-12 students to become sustainability leaders

Bringing sustainability into K-12 classrooms has never been more critical. In 2021, the Energize Schools program led the integration of curriculum around pressing environmental issues like climate change, watershed protection, and air quality into schools in California and beyond. Energize Schools provided flexible and adaptable support to teachers to integrate curriculum on sustainability topics amid the return to school campuses and hybrid learning. Our bilingual Earth Day Challenge and Green Career Webinar Panels engaged and empowered students to envision themselves as sustainability leaders in their communities and in their future career pathways.

Jessica Govoni, Antioch High School

Teaching science is Jessica Govoni's passion. As a teacher at Antioch High School, Jessica seeks to empower her students, many of whom come from backgrounds that are underrepresented in STEM fields. SEI curriculum helps Jessica engage students in project-based learning about climate change and the built environment. This curriculum includes units on air quality and solar energy, as well as Innovations in Green Technology, an Energize Schools Career Technical Education (CTE) full-length course. While leading hands-on projects with this curriculum, Jessica loves seeing students have "lightbulb moments" and leave her classroom thinking science is "super awesome." Her students are motivated to take what they have learned and create positive change.



“SEI is great. It's like, 'build a car and have it race. Build a solar water heater'... All of this stuff builds on their understanding of the world around them, you know, 'reactivity... how much energy it takes to heat up water... understanding how their electricity gets transmitted to a light switch...' All this stuff is so useful for life. It's good stuff. I dig it.”



Sarah Mondesir, Marin School of Environmental Leadership



“Something that I’ve learned is that in order to be an environmental leader you need to be aware of your surroundings, not only of the environment but of those around you. [The School of Environmental Leadership] program allows you to understand that it is more than just plants and animals. It’s everything. This program is an inspiration to me to be more aware of everything and of everybody because you never know how one group may be affected by another. Racism, sexism—all of these things are connected. We just need to be open and willing enough to accept that and to look into that.”

School of Environmental Leadership

2021 IMPACT

122

students served

1,220

hours of student
community
service

50

community
partnerships

26

student internships



A project-based high school model that focuses on the environment and equity

SEI’s School of Environmental Leadership (SEL) model is designed to develop environmental leaders in high school with a project-based curriculum. In 2021, students at the Marin School of Environmental Leadership (MarinSEL), the SEL’s flagship school, exemplified the leadership that this program seeks to develop in their community. Students spearheaded projects focused on wildfire preparedness, climate adaptation, and the promotion of public transportation. They exhibited entrepreneurial spirit while launching their own green businesses and interned with community partners to advance sustainability on a local level. The interdisciplinary approach of the SEL program prepares students to navigate a rapidly changing world, faced with big problems like climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, as they embark on new career pathways.

A junior at the Marin School of Environmental Leadership (MarinSEL), Sarah Mondesir is a self-described introvert whose high school years have been marked by the pandemic and social injustice. Sarah credits MarinSEL’s emphasis on team-building and real-world learning opportunities for helping her grow. In particular, Sarah points to the Sustainable Enterprise class as a transformative learning experience. In this course, students channel their passions and interests into a business model and develop a “pitch.” For her enterprise, Sarah developed a storytelling cookbook that includes favorite recipes of Black social justice activists and those lost to police brutality, with the goal of representing these individuals - Black women, in particular - in a way that the media often overlooks. For Sarah, social justice and environmental leadership go hand in hand. She has appreciated the opportunity to “dig deep within herself” throughout the process, developing into a leader among her peers.



Climate Corps Education Outside

2021 IMPACT

33

schools received
a dedicated
ecoliteracy
educator

13,748

students engaged
in hands-on
garden lessons

6,377

garden lessons
were taught by
CCEO fellows



Planting the seeds of science and ecoliteracy to grow environmental leaders in elementary schools

The Climate Corps Education Outside (CCEO) program kicked off 2021 by distributing over 10,000 garden kits to elementary school students. SEI's outdoor education program places emerging educators, CCEO Fellows, at elementary schools where they typically teach in garden classrooms; however, this year began with students learning from home and engaging in virtual garden lessons. Over the course of the year, our CCEO Fellows and students alike joyfully returned to their school gardens and in-person outdoor learning. Thousands of students engaged in inquiry-based, hands-on science and ecoliteracy lessons during the regular school day and on their own school campuses through the CCEO program.

Shannon Mo, Lockwood STEAM Academy

When Shannon Mo, also known as Farmer Shannon, first stepped into the garden space at Lockwood STEAM Academy in the Fall of 2020, the garden was "pretty much a huge rectangle of mulch." It was the height of the pandemic, and students were learning from home. Shannon got to work building raised beds, setting up irrigation, and planting annuals, all while teaching a full load of classes to elementary students via Zoom. With the return to in-person learning in 2021, Shannon—now a second-year Climate Corps Education Outside Fellow—has been able to welcome those same students back to campus and into a thriving garden space. Here, Shannon relishes hands-on learning and exploration and building trust to cultivate relationships. Now that students are in the garden, they are building on connections they formed during virtual lessons, with one student excitedly declaring her love for peas and beans after remembering the previous year's lesson.



“ I love working with kids, and to build something tangible, to work with plants, to grow food – in my mind, that's the most obvious way to create justice, to feed our communities, to teach others how to feed their communities, and to pass that love and knowledge and respect for nature and connection on to children. I feel cheesy saying this, but they are inheriting our Earth and they are the hope for the future. When you work with kids, you get to witness their imagination and their power and their ability to change and morph. I see no better job.”



Energize Colleges

2021 IMPACT

28

fellows and interns hosted by campus and community partners entered sustainability career pathways

16

campuses utilized as living labs and/or received faculty professional development

93%

of interns reported that they were prepared for an entry-level job within an energy-related career pathway upon completion of the programs



Partnering with students and faculty to create pathways to climate careers

Energize Colleges supports integrating sustainability in campus facilities, curriculum development and updates, and faculty professional development. In 2021, the Energize Colleges team provided meaningful, paid internship opportunities for current college students. Energize Colleges is now working in all major California higher education systems including California State University, University of California, and California Community Colleges. Partnering with a range of higher education institutions enables Energize Colleges to meet the diverse needs of students and faculty and to engage emerging leaders, wherever they are on their sustainability journey.

Kylee Singh, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In 2021, Kylee Singh, Sustainability Coordinator at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly SLO), began supervising an Energize Colleges Fellow. In collaboration with the Energize Colleges program, Kylee spearheaded the creation of the first-of-its-kind, system-wide California State University (CSU) Faculty Learning Community, which aims to connect faculty across 23 CSU campuses. With such a large undertaking before her, alongside the diverse set of sustainability initiatives she leads at Cal Poly SLO, Kylee was excited to bring on a Fellow to support her efforts. Together, Kylee and the Cal Poly SLO Energize Colleges Fellow work to achieve her goal of developing more sustainability-focused courses across the CSU system. Kylee embraces the mentorship opportunity this fellowship brings, saying, “I think the ability to work with a Fellow and see the development from start to finish in someone’s professional development is a really incredible opportunity.”



“ [Energize Colleges] has tons of research material already to offer us, and so we’re super excited to pull all [of it] together and connect the dots so that we can get faculty super excited and see some big change coming out of this.”



Climate Corps

2021 IMPACT

165

Fellows placed in partner organizations

108

partners hosted Fellows

110

training hours provided on early-career competencies for sustainability professionals, including equity, resilience, and innovation



Advancing sustainability solutions with organizations while fostering emerging climate leaders

SEI's Climate Corps, a fellowship program for those seeking to enter the sustainability field, saw growth on all fronts last year. In 2021, Climate Corps expanded nationally to yet another state with a cohort of six fellows in Washington state working at a range of sites from a school district to a county government to a bank. SEI also took on implementation of the California Climate Action Corps program alongside our longtime partners, Bay Area Community Resources. During the 2021-22 Fellowship year, Climate Corps is employing the most Fellows in its history, who are all driving forward climate solutions and poised to enter the climate workforce as the next generation of climate leaders.

Banu Erdim, Kitsap Bank

“ I think [Climate Corps] is a great opportunity for sustainability-minded leaders to get access to an awesome network of people, training, real-life experience to advance their work, cultivate the skills necessary for a successful career working for the environment... Without SEI, I wouldn't be in this position that I'm in right now.”



After receiving a master's degree in Environmental Control and Building Technologies and working five years in the engineering consulting industry, Banu Erdim was looking for ways to challenge herself and transition to a new industry. In particular, she wanted an opportunity to work in sustainability from a big picture perspective, incorporating her existing architecture and green building background into business. That's when she applied to Climate Corps. As a Climate Corps Fellow, Banu worked for Kitsap Bank in Washington state on sustainability initiatives, including community engagement and exploring energy efficiency and environmental practices across the bank's portfolio. With the help of her Fellowship experience, she recognized the role of banks in sustainability through enterprises they finance and through their internal strategies. Due to her stellar work as a Climate Corps Fellow, Banu was hired full-time with Kitsap Bank as a Sustainability and ESG Analyst following her Fellowship.

Benji Miramontes, Sustainable Solano

“ [Climate Action Corps] is a wonderful opportunity for learning about what you think you want to do and maybe about yourself in a professional context – what does or doesn’t work for you in a work environment, and that is super valuable to know.”



Benji Miramontes’ passion for safeguarding communities against imminent climate threats drew them to join the California Climate Action Corps program and dedicate a summer of service. As a California Climate Action Corps Fellow with Sustainable Solano, Benji worked heavily on climate action planning and community engagement. In their multifaceted position, Benji talked to city staff and contractors about what safety measures and policies were in place and gave flood walk tours of areas prone to flooding. They valued the opportunity to enter the workforce and gain experience while simultaneously learning about local climate action. After their California Climate Action Corps fellowship, Benji joined Climate Corps for a fellowship with San Jose City College.



Energize Careers

2021 IMPACT

71

people received training on critical skills for sustainability careers

25

employees placed in viable green jobs

83%

of participants reported an increase in their knowledge of energy efficiency through Energize Careers training



Create a diverse and representational sustainability workforce through industry-advised training of people who experience systemic barriers to high road employment

SEI’s Energize Careers program is an innovative model focused on supporting people who face systemic barriers to employment opportunities to access high-wage, high-growth jobs in the green economy. This cutting-edge program addresses two critical issues facing our communities—the growing population of disadvantaged workers, including many who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate crisis. Energize Careers is poised to play a critical role in achieving a just transition by placing workers in sustainability jobs and providing them with the training that will equip them with the skills to access green career pathways.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at SEI

SEI's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) acknowledges the importance of diverse lived experience and representation, while recognizing that equity and inclusion encompass so much more. All communities thrive only when belonging and power exist with equal access to opportunity for all people.

Building from the release of our DEI Policy the year prior, 2021 was a year of developing implementation strategies. The DEI Policy team and oversight group for advancing racial equity moved forward a number of initiatives to build staff capacity to center equity, as well as to develop equity within SEI programs.

Building our team's capacity to center equity

The beginning of the year saw the continued implementation of SEI's new policy to annually train the entire staff on the topic of racial equity. Our team built racial consciousness and learned tools for discussing racial equity and surfacing a counter narrative to a dominant discourse that devalues Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC). Through dedicated resources to new equity leadership roles on the team, we were able to create transparency on equity initiatives and to practice these new skills. In all-hands meetings, staff retreats, through internal



communications, we talked about how our own social identities relate to SEI's sustainability work; we celebrated struggles, accomplishments, resilience, and brilliance of historically marginalized communities; we released and trained all on a Racial Equity Framework; we developed a process for organizational listening and assessment.

More equity-centered programs

In each of SEI's programs, we intentionally sought out partnerships that would allow us to prioritize the critical environmental justice and climate equity work that is essential to the sustainability of our planet. For example, SEI partnered with a diverse group of organizations to develop the 'Oregon Climate Equity Project,' which will broaden the climate movement and strengthen BIPOC leadership in the state.

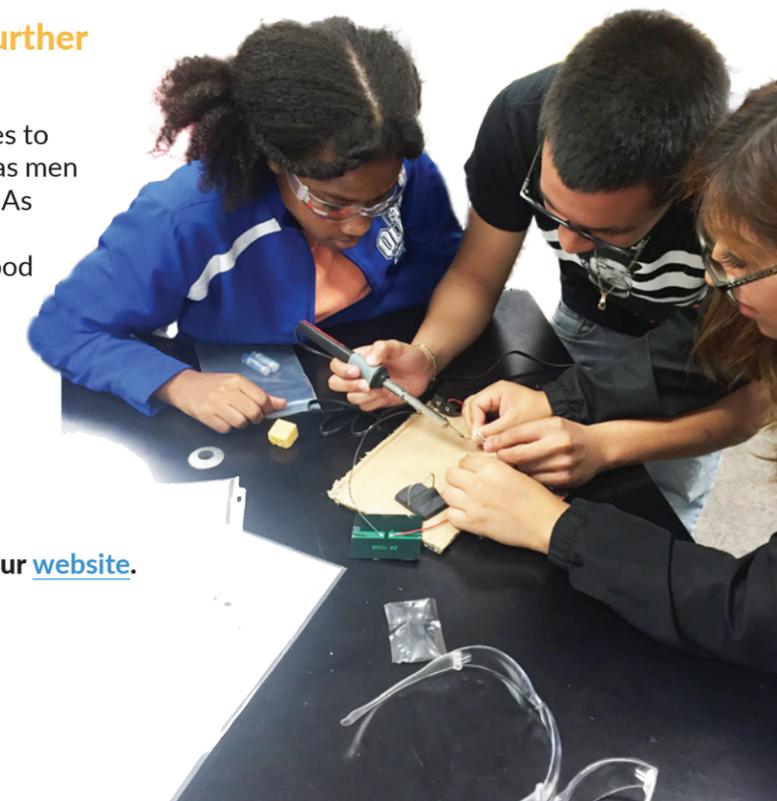


In program teams, we workshoped with the Racial Equity Framework for more transformative impacts in curriculum development, student collaboration with climate vulnerable and historically marginalized communities, Fellow support, and addressing systemic barriers to sustainability employment. We contracted professional trainers to support teachers participating in our programs on creating inclusive classrooms and to lead professional development on climate issues affecting local Indigenous communities. We began the process to build equity requirements into project charters, scopes, budgets, and evaluations.

There is much work ahead: intentional, meaningful, and equity-centered change takes both time and resources. However, SEI is committed to this path as a critical and necessary approach to sustainability.

Workforce development for groups further marginalized by the pandemic

SEI continues to value gender diversity and strives to close the wage gap between those who identify as men and those who identify as women or non-binary. As a certified woman-owned business, workforce development of those who experience womanhood is a top SEI objective - all the more so with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women in the workforce. We are as committed as ever to ensure a STEM and sustainability leadership pipeline that supports people who identify as women and people from racialized groups.



Learn more about SEI's commitment to DEI on our [website](#).



Thank You

With gratitude, we'd like to recognize our board and partners for helping us build sustainability leaders in 2021.

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Get Involved

GIVE

Contributions to SEI impact thousands of emerging leaders each year through SEI's five flagship programs. Your support helps SEI strengthen our valued partnerships with schools, communities, and businesses to develop a sustainability leadership pathway from K-12 through early career.

We are deeply appreciative of your gift to make our work possible. Thank you!

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As we expand nationally, the ways we can work together to build sustainability leaders continue to grow. We'd love to partner with you – get in touch!

 [Email](mailto:sei@seiinc.org) us: sei@seiinc.org

 Give us a call: (415) 507-2181

 Check out our [website](#) to get a sense for our partners and supporters





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