AN ONA23 PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT

Engaging Emergence

Advancing the Future of Journalism for All

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Executive Summary

The Engaging Emergence: Advancing the Future of Journalism for All convening (EE3) had as its beginnings at an **Online News Association** (ONA) dinner in 2022 and quickly became a collaboration led by the **Journalism That Matters** organization and the **Agora Journalism Center** at the University of Oregon.

Funders and sponsors included: MacArthur Foundation, Knight Foundation and Democracy Fund.

In addition, a team of organizers joined Media Innovation Collaboratory, Solutions Journalism Network, Center for Cooperative Media, The Lenfest Institute, LAist, Branchhead Consulting, Trusting News, Listening Post Collective, Hearken, American Press Institute, Future Search Network, and Gather. The Online News Association and Temple University's Klein College of Media and Communication were critical partners to help make space for the gathering.

Finally, two researchers were contracted by Agora: Dr. Sue Robinson at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (and author of this report) and Dr. Michelle Ferrier, who was an original co-founder of Journalism That Matters as a 503c and board president for Journalism That Matters' two prior convenings on engaged journalism.

In all, 120 people showed up for the event held at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA for a Monday evening launch, an all-day Tuesday event, and a Wednesday morning conclusion, which was held at the ONA conference hotel, the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, from August 21-24, 2023.

Finally, during Wednesday afternoon, more than 140 journalists, journalism-adjacent people, technologists, futurists, civic engagement practitioners, executives, and others – including about 40 of those who had attended the pre-conference – packed the room to talk through what a community-powered journalism that strengthened communities and democracy might look like.

The 3-day convening offered an "Unconference" approach that eschewed traditional panels and keynotes and opted instead for small group work. They came together to address the convening question: **How do we advance journalism for all?**

A series of prompts guided the conversations, which were meant to be iterative to build off each other. The centerpiece of EE3 was "Open Space Technology," a practice that invites participants to set the agenda in real-time around a complex or conflicted topic. It has been used in many convenings aimed at systems change. Components of the meeting model incorporate a freeing structure to surface common values and shared understandings of some overarching problem.

This approach, first and foremost, benefits from gathering a wealth of perspectives into a large room with breakout places that create a setting conducive to conversations with groups that often range in size from 5 to 25. The conference used multiple generative change practices. Group roles were assigned during Friday night, which made use of a timeline activity that came from a practice called Future Search[1]. This method as well as all the structured discussions employed were meant to spark

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[1]   More on Future Search: https://futuresearch.net

collaborations, create possibility, and move ranting of negativity towards positive change.

This report gives a summary of the event, documents the themes, and provides insights. In addition, this report offers the results of the registration Google form that all participants were asked to fill out as well as the post-event survey distributed on the last day of the conference. This report incorporates analysis all of this data and offers the following takeaways and statements about EE3 and this burgeoning industry growing around community-powered journalism:

*   The profession of journalism, especially as it is playing out in Western countries, is poised for a transformation the likes of which we have not seen in more than a century. Journalism is at a crossroads, and many of the industry's actors (journalists but also trainers, funders, think tanks, community organizers and others) have settled on "engagement journalism"[2] – thought of broadly – as the saving force for the profession.

*   "Engagement journalism" might also be considered to be "community-powered journalism," which was suggested during the conference as more aligned with the missions and intentions of the work. Core to the work is *listening and learning* in all the dimensions possible. Also core to the work is the involvement of a diverse group of community members in journalism processes.

*   For many in the room, the work of community-powered journalism has always been personal, meaning they view their jobs as a kind of calling that formulates parts of their identities and lived experiences. These agents see destruction and decline all around them – be it climate change or the ongoing, global threats to democracy or the financial crises of newsrooms – and they are desperate (but also hopeful) they can assuage the damage through "Advancing the Future of Journalism for All."

*   Key to figuring out more inclusive and relevant information flows will be collaborations of all kinds with a focus on connecting stakeholders in different communities and forging solutions through intense civic engagement among a great diversity of people, organi-

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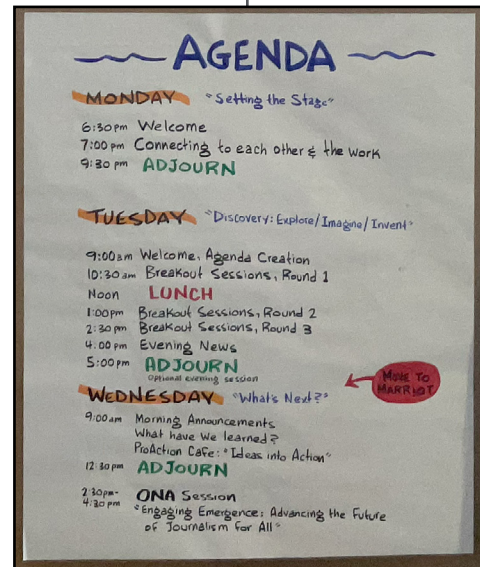
2   See Robinson, Sue. (2023). How Journalists Engage: A theory of trust-building, identities, and care. Oxford University Press.

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zations, companies, and institutions.

- A major challenge to implementing this mission is the lack of cohesion around values, routines, and resources throughout the profession; although, it should be noted, the post-event survey indicated that among this group, widespread agreement existed that the work needed to be public facing, accountable, and community oriented. Furthermore, any solutions will need to take into account the disparate needs and wants of different populaces and the radically altered (and polarizing) ways in which we all consume/share/alter/produce/think about news.

- Many of the conversations and much of the networking that was happening in the EE3 rooms centered on the ongoing need for a redistribution of power and money throughout the profession of journalism as well as within communities and institutions. This redistribution, it was noted, was happening but only slowly and only in some spaces, such as the work ResolvePhilly is doing connecting communities with resources and stakeholders at a grassroots level, outside of bureaucracies. Many in the room were working through journalism to facilitate and speed up that redistribution, such as taking on the organizing of town forums where people could deliberate together with policymakers as a way to help breakdown hierarchies.

- An ethic of care, leading with compassion, and a tendency to the positive also served as themes during the three days, with unprecedented attention being given to mental health and the physical wellbeing of journalists. As part of this paradigmatic philosophy expressed throughout the event, the attendants demanded equity, justice, accountability, trauma-informed work, and reparations to be an essential part of any community-powered journalism, both internally in newsrooms and our various organizations and disciplines, but also externally towards helping societal institutions to change, to be better.

Who was in the room?

The organizing collective included: Agora Journalism Center, Journalism That Matters, Temple University, Solutions Journalism Network, the Media Innovation Collaboratory, the Listening Post Collective, Hearken, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Gather, LAist, Branchhead Consulting, The Center for Cooperative Media, Trusting News, FutureSearch Network and PhillyCam. Of the 139 people who registered, about 120 people attended. They were journalists, community organizers, civic engagement practitioners, nonprofit CEOs, newsroom trainers, journalism and democracy funders, futurists, democracy think tanks, students, researchers, educators, artists, publishers, DEI workers, and press trade organizations.


A pre-event survey filled out by about half the registrants indicated that people were anticipating finding collaborators, building their networks, and seeking solutions to journalism challenges. They were looking for connections and creative ideas for moving past roadblocks to community work with newsrooms. "*I am interested in ways to weave community engagement into my reporting practice as well as how to empower community members to tell their own stories.*"

Peter Block of Designed Learning wrote that they were "committed to new narratives" through taking "one more step in the movement" to,

most of all, "Learn." Most indicated in these early surveys that their hearts and minds had already been won over to engagement and other kinds of community-powered journalistic practices, such as solutions journalism and collaborative journalism. Another, Sandra Hannebohm of Twice As Good, reported that:

> *It seems to me that mindfulness and radical Black journalism are both evolving rapidly in the English-speaking world, and both manifest in different forms to address the injustices of traditional media and forge a better way forward. I hope to learn more about the ways these two movements are manifesting and informing the future of journalism.*

Several called the gathering a group of "change agents" working to "center human belonging" and talked about disrupting power distributions. Many wanted to use the event to move forward in some way, to enhance the engagement journalism movement and uncover new pathways. The registration notes were decidedly positive and optimistic for the work ahead. We do not have a demographic breakdown of either the registrants nor the attendees, however, visibly, people of color appeared to be a large part of the gathering; indeed, in the post-event survey, of the 72 people who responded, more than half (54%, or 39 people) identified as something other than Caucasian.
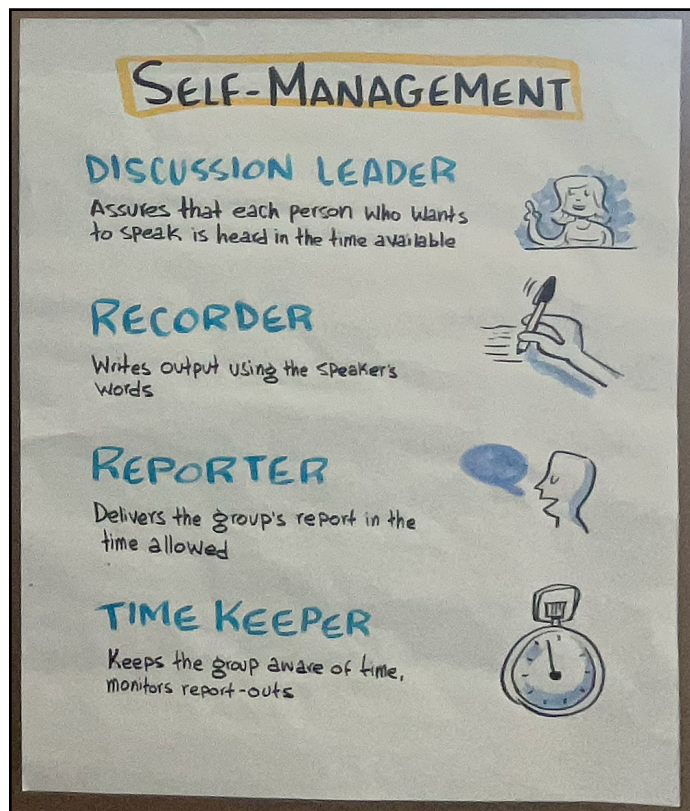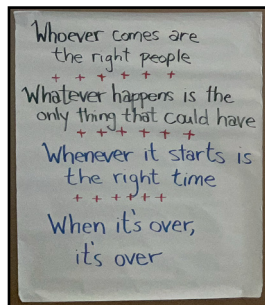
Convening Notes and Insights

Monday's Timeline session (5:30-9:30pm)

We laid the groundwork by creating and considering personal, global, and journalism events of note over the last thirty years in what was called a "Timeline."

EE3 organizers posed the metaphor of a central garden with many doors and frameworks that come together into a core place of beauty that centers collaboration, inclusion, engagement, solutions, and context, and offers opportunity for the unexpected to happen. In the main activity for the evening, participants were tasked with thinking about the past over a 30-year timespan from these perspectives: personal, world/global events, and journalism/community-centered journalism work. As people wrote down events, others put checkmarks next to events that also bubbled up for them. Examples of the kinds of things people wrote down were:

- **Personal**: Births/adoptions, marriages/divorces, finishing degrees, book publications, moves, car accidents, layoffs, recoveries, firsts such as first websites and getting paid to blog, immigrations, a large variety of different academic studies, and fellowships abroad.

- **Journalism**: Internet, Craigslist, Netscape, Nonprofit journalism, rise of Mexican free media, Starr Report, 24-news cycle and cable, business model disruption, MTV News, peace journalism, Rodney King video witnessing, magazine heyday, Fox News, Dart Center, ONA launched, Al-Jazeera, fake news, YouTube, news deserts, serial podcasts, Unity disbanding, Detroit bankruptcy, Election SOS, decline of Facebook, and all that happened with Twitter (X).

- **Global**: Internet, Y2K, NAFTA, Ukraine war, Columbine and other school shootings, Iraq, the release of Netscape, Facebook and other social platforms, Umbrella Movement, Black Lives Matter, tsunamis and other natural disasters, journalist murders across the globe, Napster, China, MeToo, Breonna Taylor and other police killings of Black people, Israel/Gaza, Climate change, Brexit, Trump, hip hop, 5G, Biden, and other newsworthy events.

In the second activity, we formed groups to tell a story about who we were in the room according to the timeline work and what implications were for the stories surfaced in relation to our mission to advance the future of journalism for all. Each group was assigned one of the time-lines, with several groups responsible for combining all of it. "What do we do with all this data? We figure out what it means to the community gathered here," said one of the moderators, Sandra Janoff, a psychologist and consultant who co-developed the principle-based methodology used as the discussion strategies.

Here are some insights gained from the exercise:

- **Personal**: Thinking through the myriad of personal milestones, groups noticed the keen pull to find connection with one another, especially in the midst of external chaos such as the recent covid pandemic. Through these human connections of birth and death, of learning and sharing of knowledge, journalism helps people construct meaning in a way that should offer (but often does not) a

sense of belonging for all. "How are you able to bring what you are feeling and what you are going through into your work as a journalist?" asked one of the groups.

- **Journalism**: The groups found significance in the notations of a redistribution between power and money as well as who can be considered an expert, who is responsible for misinformation (and fixing it), and what is considered to be credible evidence. Groups noted that the profession (in Western countries as the conversation was very Western-centric) was poised at a precipice, tumbling into transformation that demanded an overhaul in practice and values. The timeline artifact also displayed fissures, splinter revolutions that were developing new spheres of information flows in which different kinds of journalists navigated new terrain with new skill sets, norms and protocols: "We spent three decades with all of us trying to put all of our Legos together before realizing that some of us have Lincoln Logs." Yet the timeline also showed a major through-line story of commercial media, although some participants did highlight the work being done in alternative, community, and indie media, as well as some of the media revolutions happening in other countries during this same time span. In addition, it was noted that earlier versions of journalism valued a kind of "feeding the people" a homogenous diet of information mentality that is being challenged.

"We spent three decades with all of us trying to put all of our Legos together before realizing that some of us have Lincoln Logs."

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Now, "we are trying all kinds of foods. We are trying different ways of cooking these foods. We are running the gamut of trying to get to a place where we are feeding ourselves… We are losing a lot of the gatekeepers and the investors that are telling us what to put on the menu. We want to try a different protein, try to fry it in a different way. But this is a double-edged sword. We do not always know what is the best diet. We really have to figure out what are the best things to put in our bodies."

"The world has shrunk and yet we are farther apart than ever."

• **Global**: The first insight derived from the global notations indicated that the people in the room choose events and movements as if they were writing headlines. Many of the notations – but not all – represented disaster: calamities such as war and sickness and mass shootings. It was noted that these major events needed to be contextualized and that many of them had seemed certain to change the world in some significant way but that had ultimately resulted in little revolution. The headline of our story, we concluded, is that "the world has shrunk and yet we are farther apart than ever," quipped one participant reporting out for their group. "We still have the inclination to focus on the worst of what happened, the worst of our society, seeing trauma, seeing tragedy. But where are the beautiful silver linings that got us to where we are now, diseases are being eradicated, maternal health has been improving. What are the implications of this timeline on journalism? We have to give more attention to what happens in between the worst things. That is clear to us."

• **Combining all three**: A major value change happening in all the timelines is a focus on a redistribution of power and money: whose voices get heard? This movement at hand is intent on transforming whose perspectives get counted. What was once top-down, hierarchal-driven change is now hyperlocal, spurred by the harm caused by governments, the press and other institutions. Through all the timelines, we see innovation bubbling up from local communities in response. Indeed, one theme to run through all the timelines was technological advances, from cable news to the Internet, and the new content formats developed for different kinds of platforms. Yet, with every new technology, we see the same cycles moving through the personal, the journalism industries and the global timelines with little changing:

A lot of the bullshit that was in 1993 is still weaving through now. We need to be a lot more radical. We need to be more aggressive. I was in a room like this 20 years ago. I want to be doing something different 20 years from now.

Further, some participants were dismayed at the very Western, very English-speaking focus of all the timelines even as globalization, climate change, and a growing populist, authoritarian paradigm have spread throughout the globe. The conversation turned to possible responses, talking about trauma-informed journalism and the need for an ethic of care as something that needed to happen globally and for the future: "Care is really a form of power. When we are struggling against these enormous systems of power, care is a weapon against that and is going to be what gets us out of this mess," said one participant. We were reminded that even though we are hardwired to watch out for threats around us – and thus, our own focus on the negative in the exercise – we also crave the positive, spiritually, and must nurture that part of us as well.

Monday evening's final exercises focused the event's conversation toward resolutions and change through system disruption. "True innovation happens when those systems die and in their absence something else is born." It was emphasized that this work must happen at all levels

of society, but especially at the individual, micro level. "Joy and communion and community is not a scale project, so many of the solutions funding or launching a project is all about doing those things at scale but starting information projects that are right sized and not scale sized." Collectively, the group seemed to agree to center "community-powered journalism" as a driving schematic for the work ahead, both in the conference sessions but also to take with us to implement in our jobs.

Tuesday morning's reflections

After reporting out to participants who had not attended the first evening sessions of EE3, we turned attention to inviting participants to set the agenda for what they wished to discuss. Here are most of the topics discussed:

- journalists for all includes conservatives
- how might you be more radical
- venting about how POC are seen as activists when they report on communities they belong to
- how do we grow/catalyze/train a wider movement of people working to advance journalism for all
- how do we make solutions education to work for change instead of against it
- what is the role of public, educational, governmental, community access media
- how do we listen to community to identify injustices/harm that need to be uncovered
- how can we address trauma and duty of care in hybrid/remote newsrooms
- how do we make media/journalism that supports democracy beyond elections
- communion and community don't scale
- media literacy education: how much of the responsibility is on readers vs journalism vs institutions
- how do we go from serving communities one by one to becoming

the network hub
- is the increase of funds for nonprofit news giving communities healthier info/news ecosystems
- does anyone not a journalist want journalism
- how do we lift up first-person worker stories through our media platforms
- watchdogs/guide dogs/or no dogs
- how do journalism support organizations work together
- how do we prioritize mental health as journalists
- how do we create a framework for successful change
- what is the sustainability for nonprofit journalism
- how can build accountability into the organizational structure of news orgs
- how might we transform communities with joy, common purpose and belonging,
- how do we tell stories that advance movements that are dismantling capitalism
- when you are working inside a news org, how do you get the buy-in and connect the engagement
- how can we perform journalism as public service, without compromising quality, integrity, and inclusiveness for the sake of revenue
- getting leadership to trust that communities know what news they want and need
- how do we work towards transformation that starts with self reflection and self-accountability.

A compilation of session notes can be found here:
https://journalismthatmatters.org/engagingemergence/session-notes/

Open Space Technology Agenda Setting

(Participants announce breakout session topics in real time)

Among the insights gained during these breakout sessions for the day were:

- That accountability in journalism does not look like those oppressed doing the work of fixing the oppression. That work must be done by the oppressors. "What would it look like to not put all the responsibility on people who are being harmed, and to use the power and privilege to enact that work that needs to be centered?"
- That we must build both internally to newsroom workers and externally toward communities and also to and from funders of disruption.
- That transparency is needed.
- That representation is needed, broadly understood.
- That codes of conduct are necessary but typically there is no pathway of consequence or response when codes are broken.
- That boards of directors should have power and be relevant and representative of communities served. One idea: Organizations need to have multiple boards that have multiple functions. Community advisory groups (multiple groups represented on different boards, perhaps), DEI goals, fundraising goals. Boards need to be careful of putting people dominant to the local culture in charge, lest voices be silenced.

- Communities of practice comprising intergenerational, intersectional membership offer a less hierarchal approach to accountability.
- Trust is linked to accountability.
- We need to show journalists how to survive trauma and to take care of themselves. How do you build resilience? If you want a staff to feel fully nurtured, what are the benefits you can offer as an organization?

Other insights can be found in these session notes:
https://journalismthatmatters.org/engagingemergence/session-notes/

Tuesday afternoon's Evening News

At the end of day on Tuesday, we came back together to discover common threads of ideas that we could run with in the work. Here we noticed absent voices, with one man noting that in the three sessions he attended focusing on mental health, he saw only one male at each, pleading "please go be part of the conversation." Others suggested that it "might be important to talk more about *storytelling* as opposed to *journalism*" to avoid the baggage that journalism brings with it.

We heard pitches for collaboration on many topics, including those working in the space of community information hubs and seeking a way to network among the whole information system. Many expressed the joy of finding a "tribe" within the community of practitioners. "It is refreshing to have these conversations and to know that some of the
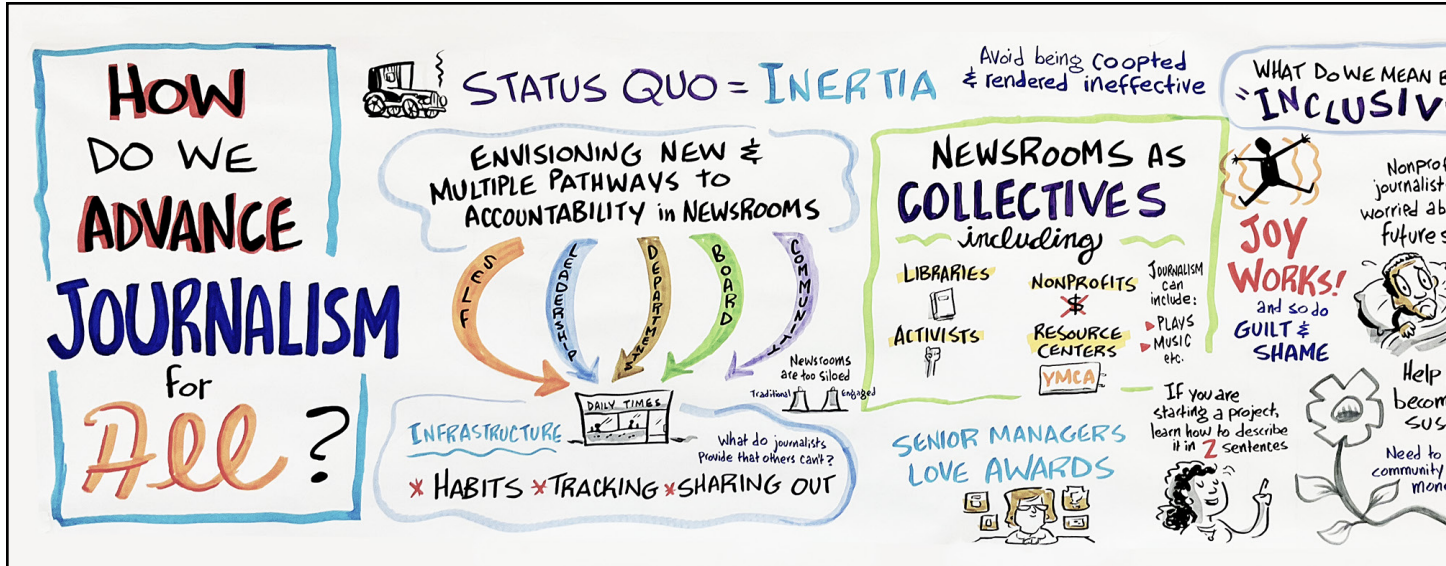
problems I have are other people are going through the same. We are not alone." Much appreciation was given of the diversity in the room, especially from people who did not identify as journalists but as community activists and organizers, among others. We noted how many of us are engaged in creating spaces of care and joy for the work, for communities, for ourselves. It was noted how 10 years ago it was difficult to even get a panel about community engagement and journalism at the Online News Association and now we had an entire convening.

Wednesday Morning Session

(What to call our work, what are its values and principles and what are strategies to adopt the ideas)

Organizers began the morning noting that the session would be about "order emerging out of chaos." Co-organizer and facilitator Peggy Holman noted that "The birth of novelty is not always pretty. Things must die for new things to emerge. How do we create a bubble for disruption so change can come around?" The (un)conference, she said, was an invitation to gather a wide swatch of perspectives into a welcoming space in order to bring about disruption of problematic structures compassionately, creatively. "How do we cohere in a way that serves us all?" she asked.

The tasks for the session involved naming possible labels and descriptions of the work, tthe actual labels and descriptions of the work, the values, qualities and principles of the work, and the spaces of accountability in that work, and then to figure out how to advance adoption of these principles. Small groups considered how journalism and other

information media can respond to community needs towards a better world in a way that is curious and solution oriented.

Such work demands "intentional rigor" that is inclusive and community centered (and community led, built, and powered). It mandates relationship building as a core commitment with a code of ethics that prioritized empathy, compassion and care.

Active and deep listening must be present as journalists embed themselves into their communities with whom we co-create information and knowledge. Groups talked about "slow journalism" and "deliberate journalism" as "amplifiers of community members" and how the work

should be "lifting up" people. Some debate occurred around the idea of "truth seeking" and whether journalism can find truths, with one participant noting, "But I do not want truth; I want justice" and another responding, "You have to have truth to have justice." One concluded with group agreement that: "There is a difference between accuracy and truth. You can be accurate at the same time you are lying. There is a larger sense of truth (the whole story) that is related to justice…so perhaps it is seeking wholeness."

But how to spread this work and these ideas? Strategies included:
- Intentional networking.
- Building infrastructure that mandates accountability.
- Building infrastructure that mandates community partnership.
- Journalism should be thought of as connective tissue.
- We need to tell the stories of change and disruption in a way that normalizes them.
- Facilitating communication and knowledge among stakeholders.
- Training in engagement and other kinds of holistic, community-powered practices.

What followed was a series of asks from individuals doing the work of places they were stuck, to troubleshoot obstacles and find possible collaborations among the people in the room. The organizers employed a "ProAction Café" format, "a space for creative and action oriented conversation where participants are invited to bring their call - project - ideas - questions or whatever they feel called by and need help to manifest in the world," according to a description of the structure.

Online News Association Session (Wednesday 2:30-4:30)

About 40 EE3 participants were joined by about 100 conference attendees from the Online News Association conference for a total of 144 people in the room for a World Café, a process designed to surface the collective intelligence of a group. They were caught up on the work we had been doing for the past three days and invited to join us in asking the question: "what does community-powered journalism that strengthens people, their communities, and democracy look like?" This question was followed by: "How do you put this paradigm into practice?" In these small groups (with at least one EE3 attendee at each circle of chairs), participants distinguished between typical norms and practices of mainstream journalism and the kinds of values needed for transformation of the industry. The themes in this session mimicked what had been

determined on other days with more concrete suggestions:

- Within community partnerships, ask the non-journalist to take the lead in co-creation in a true commitment to the collaboration.
- Returning to the immersion into the community after stories are published.
- Eliminate paywalls.
- Train editors and publishers in newsrooms to these values.
- Share best practices between media organizations as well as within newsrooms, especially intergenerationally.
- Create networks of community within popular social platforms, finding people where they are hanging out.
- Offer roundtables and in-person chats within different spaces of community.
- Move from a mentality of finding funding for a specific project with the hopes it will win an award to changing the intention and motivation behind the work.
- Develop templates for this kind of journalism, such as what a solutions-oriented story looks like.
- Clearly define community-powered values within public and private codes of ethics.
- Model the kind of behavior that celebrates community.
- Raise reporter salaries and give them time to build trust during the workday.
- Funders should amplify and encourage the work with broader vision and fewer restrictions.
- Build a corpus of mental health resources for reporters; talk openly about mental health.
- Integrate the work of community-powered journalism at all levels of organizations so it is not incumbent upon one person.

Follow-Up Survey

In all we had 72 participants complete the immediate post survey for a response rate of about 60%, which is really excellent. Keeping in mind that these percentages are based on this number of survey respondents and not the total number of people at the actual event, the demographics of the responses were as follows:

- We had a good geographic representation of the United States, with more, of course, from Pennsylvania (15) and surrounding states, but a good showing as well from California (12).
- **Age**: 46% (33) 18-35, 43% (31) 35-50, 19% (14) 51-65, 3% (2) over 75
- **Race**: 46% (33) White, 6% (4) Latinx, 5% (6) Black, 6% (4) Hispanic, 1% (1) Native American, 4% (3) Asian, 4% (3) Mixed Race, 3% (2) Other, 1% (1) North American/Middle Eastern, 1% (1) Tongan
- **Gender**: 35% (25) Female, 24% (17) Male, 3% (2) Non-binary, 1% (1) as She/They
- **Education**: 26% (19) Bachelors, 24% (17) Masters Degree, 11% (8) PhD or other terminal degree
- **Sexuality**: 8% (6) LGBTQ+, 50% (36) Not LGBTQ+, 4% (3) Kind of LGBTQ+, 1% (1) prefers not to say
- **Political Affiliation**: 11% (8) Democrat, 31% (22) Left Leaning, 10% (7) Independent, 3% (2) Not political, 8% (6) Other (Progressive)

■ **How long have you been working in the space of these new kinds of journalism (e.g. engagement, solutions-oriented, etc.)**
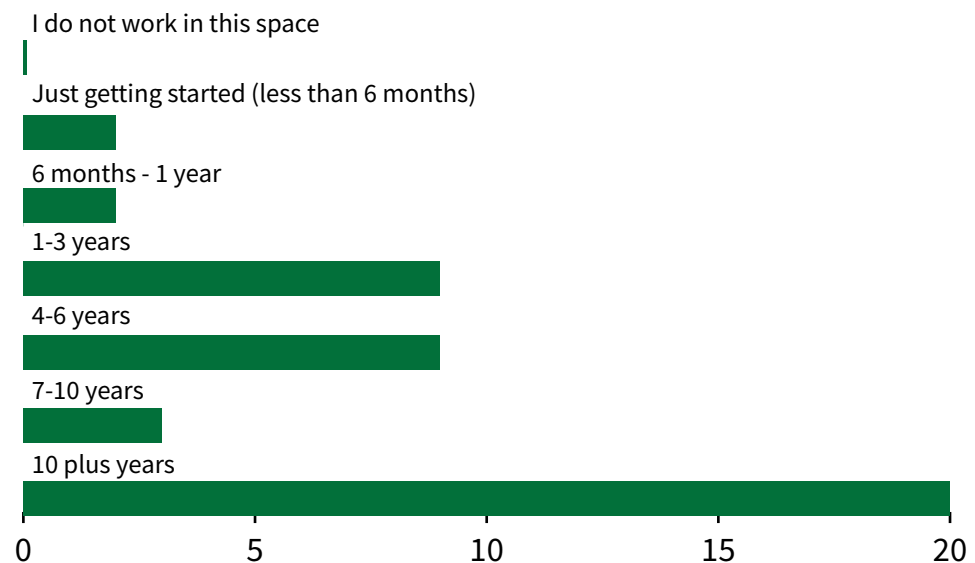
Source: Credit Goes Here

Referring to the above bar chart, we note that a majority of those who responded to the survey had been doing community-powered journalism for more than a decade. Survey respondents reported that they were creating networks of collaborations and partnerships with each other, with other news organizations, with civic organizations, with government, and with other journalism-adjacent groups. Some journalist survey respondents detailed how they were taking the necessary time to build relationships with communities (often marginalized groups), as in this statement,

> *We have intentionally centered much of our reporting around … tribal communities and Indigenous urban population over the past decade, taking time to build relationships and trust in those communities. That led us, for example, to report extensively on COVID and its effects on Native populations in the first year of the pandemic and state public education spending and how it continues to not reflect the hopes of those communities … In addition, we have hired Indigenous reporters to cover these communities and their issues.*

Many mentioned working with journalism-adjacent organizations that train newsrooms, provide technology for metrics or engagement avenues, understand what solutions journalism is, and implement other aspects of community-powered journalism. They talked not only about teaching and practicing the hard skills of traditional journalism production, but also providing "support for burnout, care, teaching empathy and other durable skills to help journalists become better managers and leaders," wrote Tony Elkins of Poynter. They are applying for grants to facilitate the work. They are reading books and listening to podcasts to train themselves. They are hosting listening sessions and reaching out to community organizers. They are both looking outside their own cities

and disciplines for inspiration and collaboration and also hyper-focusing on the communities' own specific problems and opportunities for improvement and change. They are experimenting and sometimes failing, but always learning.

In the follow-up surveys, participants detailed for us specific projects that show how relationship building had taken on priority and the myriad ways they are working *with communities* instead of for them.

> **In 2021, in response to the George Floyd murder, subsequent protests and focus on social justice issues, we created a video series ... We recruited a host and a panel of community members who were people of color to be a planning committee. Instead of us deciding on topics and guests, we asked them to take control of the content, and our contribution was our technical and staff resources. A few months ago, we worked with a paid consultant and a co-owner of a brewery to create a by-invitation event ... The brewery co-owner personally recruited 30 people from across the political/demographic spectrum. The consultant led a program designed to focus participants on community problem-solving. Our role was as the event convener, and we produced journalism out of the event as a way of telling this community's story. We plan to go back.**

They are doing community-based work like creating "archival exhibits about marginalized South Asian American groups." They are "...working on a statewide news collective that boosts our ecosystem and also provides more information to people in underserved communities." They are "reaching outside the university to lend our expertise in bol-

stering local media outlets and tending to the pipeline with high school programs. Also bringing new modalities into the classroom" (Deborah Douglas of The Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University). For these respondents, we noted a fundamental shift in thinking about the positionality for community-powered journalism, one that privileged regular people's voices and accepted a more proactive role in helping communities solve problems and convene together. As Eve Pearlman of Spaceship Media wrote, they are working "hard to deconstruct and reconstruct journalistic practices."

A Vision for Journalism

We asked, "What are your hopes for journalism in terms of where it needs to go? What vision do you imagine for journalism so that communities can thrive?" This is where we saw clear evidence that journalism as a profession is poised on a precipice, between survival and demise, between tired, traditional and problematic norms and routines and an emergent paradigm of community building. In these open-ended responses we heard keen determination to change with very clear ideas of what needed to happen, as revealed in these statements:

- "Consider citizens' news. Consider those in the corner office uninteresting." — **Peter Block** of *Designed Learning*
- "Journalists and newsrooms start to work with other civic info providers, like libraries and other orgs to strengthen trust, share the labor and ensure its sustainability. I think the more that newsrooms act like a help desk for the community at the core, the more likely they are to attract direct support." — **Jennifer Brandel** of *Hearken*
- "Expand language and terminologies beyond the realms of journalism. I hope to shift the power away from funders and prioritize listening— J**ulia Knoerr** of *Internews-South America*
- "Care awareness and social commitment to restore trust in the work journalists do." — **Luisa Ortiz Perez** of *Prooftype.com*
- "[Our] vibrant Indigenous communities offer a counter-narrative to mostly Euro-centric vision of how the world works, how communities live together, share public goods, etc. And that's just one example. This is a multi-generational endeavor, not a quick fix. As for a practical suggestion, I do think a small way to introduce these ideas into a local news system is perhaps a program such as a learning lab, where reporters and editors are exposed to people from traditionally underserved communities, and it is incorporated into the core work of newsrooms. This would take time and relationship building

especially for communities who don't trust the media after decades of perhaps well-intentioned but harmful coverage. But it's important enough to pursue, in my opinion." — ANONYMOUS

A tension also existed between those who believed traditional journalism needed to be completely blown up, throwing out all existing values and tenets, and those who advocated for evolution of the industry. The former wanted more transparency, more pluralistic coverage and sourcing, and more relevance to specific community groups through deeper listening and rigorous methods. The latter used phrases such as "community-minded public servant" to "lift up more voices." "Journalism needs to become a community-powered service for the benefit and improvement of the community's quality of life, loosely guided by principles of care, inclusion, transparency, accountability, service, justice and liberation," wrote Bernardo H. Motta of Roger Williams University and Communities of Hope Civic Media. And then there were some who walked a line between the two positions, as in this:

> **We need to embrace involving our communities in shaping news coverage while maintaining our values of journalistic independence and not advocating for political candidates, issues or on behalf of special-interest groups. News orgs should explore ways to be community conveners not *necessarily* for the purpose of 'getting a story,' but with a goal of helping people come together to have politics-free civil discussions about problem-solving in their communities. Also, more solutions journalism!**

Some Challenges to the Vision

When we asked about challenges to the work and the things that need-ed to change to make these visions a reality, we heard overwhelming dismay with the mainstream, hierarchical structure of legacy news outlets and other organizations who continue to operate as if nothing has changed. They lamented the lack of training, the closed mindsets and cultures, the inability to find new revenue streams, the lack of identity awareness, the huge problematic institutions and institutional-ization of not only the press itself but also the sources journalists must engage with every day. "People don't want to acknowledge that the old ways are not sustainable. And speaking about sustainability, care aware-ness critics oppose it in terms of the cost of caring for people, losing productivity, losing the edge. Finally, a lot of onus is placed on BIPOC journalists to repair, heal, support and transforms newsrooms," wrote Luisa Ortiz Perez of Prooftype.com. They noted their own defensiveness in the face of criticism and wrote about the need for more reflexivity as a regular practice.

We heard an earful about funders in these surveys. Several wanted more flexibility and interest from funders of journalistic projects and pro-grams: "Funders are not caught up with where communities and imple-menters are at; requirements are often burdensome." They stated that they "see funders skip over the important community information as-sessment phase of our work in favor of peers creating more tech heavy solutions. Our experience has been tech only comes in handy once you have a clear understanding of a communities existing information habits." People also criticized funders for being myopic in their visions for journalism and also as not being great at giving feedback. And a few had ideas for how funders might change: "More money toward commu-nity-focused news outlets! Funders need to be less concerned with the number of people we're reaching and more concerned with the depth of that reach." And a few had an idea for how funders might change:

>*"…What would need to change in this scenario is HOW the big funders go about allocating and prioritizing resources. For exam-ple, instead of how they've traditionally doled out $$$ from their removed, program officer spaces perhaps they could form and empower a peer led group to come up with criteria, the RFPs, the funding amounts and decide who receives it."*

In addition, respondents wanted to change both the reality and the per-ception that journalists do not think of themselves as part of communi-ties. Everyone worried about limited resources and capacities, especial-

ly that of time and money. "It's one thing to say you want to get in front of people who don't already listen or read you; another to actually find those people and get it done. It's a slow, almost one-by-one process." Those in commercial newsrooms are seeing their subscription rates skyrocketing while wondering how to reach low-income people. Those who produced in conservative areas hear consistent cries of fake news and explicit expressions of hate. Furthermore, people feel they operate in silos because there seem to be few opportunities to share innovative thinking in the newsroom.

Their Strategies to Doing the Work

Their strategies to overcome these challengers represented innovative thinking and creative mindsets. Some recounted anecdotes of their own fallibilities with the lessons of doing their homework more, being persistent, and learning how to reframe community-based projects so as to be better received in more traditional newsrooms. Almost all the respondents indicated their

"Embrace the language of public and civic service, education and engagement to meet people where they are."

—Bernardo H. Motta

commitment to collaborate – something that many typical news outlets just a few decades ago would have considered to be contrary to an independent journalist. For these people, collaboration had become an essential part of the information flow in their communities:

Collaborating is baked into our identity and has been crucial to our success: We are seeing a major shift in attitude/ awareness about the topic we cover because newsrooms are relentlessly covering the lake together. Such coverage feeds a desire by the public to be part of the conversation and solution, which fuels engagement projects that we are initiating (plus many other engagement projects unrelated to us created in the community).

They talk about the work as a form of "slow journalism" or communication, as in this survey response from Tony Elkins of Poynter: "I am trying to pay attention to what people are saying in the space between their actual words. So much of how we talk about the industry is coded language and I want to find a way to hear the truth, so we can build better training for their needs." This offers a much different strategy than seeking the best soundbite, the fastest way possible. "I liked Joy Mayer [of Trusting News] saying it's important to offer an on-ramp to news to the unwoke," wrote Dan Froomkin of Press Watch. Think more expansively about what "journalism" could look like: "I was inspired by the different ways of engaging that I learned about and that tells me there are much deeper levels of engagement that could be meaningful that we could try. I was struck by the idea of shifting the concept of what journalism is from producing stories to informing the public in other ways (through events, art, etc.)."

They reassured people that nobody needs experience nor expertise to do the work. Start small, take your time, and be patient. Other pieces of advice for those doing the work include:

- "Let go of the language of journalism…Embrace the language of public and civic service, education and engagement to meet people where they are." — **Bernardo H. Motta** of *Roger Williams University and Communities of Hope Civic Media*

- "Look outside what we've built already, how are communities coming up with their own information solutions, and how do we support those spaces better." — ANONYMOUS

> "Listen, listen, listen to what your community is telling you they need and want from you."

> "Step outside journalism! Immerse yourself in different industries and spaces, learn and share and iterate."
>
> —Megan Lucero

- "Embrace the idea of doing things differently than you've always done. Find the kind of engagement work, or collaborative work, or solutions work that resonates and is doable given your staff size. Then do that work, build on success, or try something different if you fail. More than anything, listen, listen, listen to what your community is telling you they need and want from you, and then bring your journalistic abilities to bear to do something about it." — ANONYMOUS

- "Keep asking "why" when you encounter "that's not how we do it," and don't be an asshole to those who aren't in a position to change. You catch more flies with honey. Find the people who are willing and don't waste time with folks who are far away from believing." — ANONYMOUS

> "Keep asking "why" when you encounter "that's not how we do it."

- "Don't let the haters win." — ANONYMOUS

- "The very time-consuming task of talking to regular people, not just to the usual suspects, is essential. Is there a way to scale that just a bit? People at the conference were adamant that there is not. But I do think that training community members (like Resolve Philly does) to be community voices is one way. (And databasing interviews is another.)" — **Dan Froomkin** of *Press Watch*

- "Step outside journalism! Immerse yourself in different industries and spaces, learn and share and iterate. Ultimately, open the doors to your newsroom, your audience, your process and be creative on how we serve." — **Megan Lucero** of *J+D / People's Newsroom*

> "Open the doors to your newsroom, your audience, your process and be creative on how we serve."

- "Share your wins so we can learn and build on each other's work." — **Elise Stolte** of *CBC Calgary*

- "Create local support groups." — **Bernardo H. Motta** of *Roger Williams University and Communities of Hope Civic Media*

- "Spend time up front understanding the fundamentals of the practice. Make sure there is a shared understanding of what it means and why it matters as you evangelize for its adoption and expansion." – **Megan Garvey** of *LAist*

- "Listening: do it, implement it, build from it, demonstrate its value — it's easier than it can seem." — ANONYMOUS

- "Pay attention to economics. Recognize that we are building a new economy, not just telling stories, important though that is." — ANONYMOUS

- "This work is important. But it can also be a trend where news outlets jump on to things like 'solutions journalism' because it sounds sexy or they think they'll get a grant out of it. I would say do your research when you're starting out using these approaches and be careful who you model your approaches on." — **Nissa Rhee** of *Borderline*

- "Keep going. Be fearless." — **Tim Lambert** of *WITF*

The surveys revealed a wide array of work being done in the arena of engagement, community-powered journalism, including collaborations with both other media organizations and community partners as well as solutions-oriented content. Here are a few of the answers we got when we asked about their own work:

- "We teach community engagement journalism practices to public media journalists in all 50 states and coach them as they execute new projects rooted in community engagement." — ANONYMOUS

- "We're baking engagement into each staffer's position so it becomes a way that we work, not a special thing we do. … We're working to create a "citizens' agenda" for election coverage – gathering thoughts from all of our engagement and literally creating a list of key issues that people are telling us they want us to report on. We'll be deciding on some guidelines and policies for our election '24 coverage, and we'll post those online, talk about them on air and be as transparent as we can about them. We're starting a weekly email newsletter that will bring readers inside the newsroom, explain our processes, and incorporate their voices (via our engagement work)." — ANONYMOUS

- "A couple of the newsrooms in my company have taken advantage of grants, specifically solutions journalism grants, to do this work. Personally, I was awarded a solutions journalism grant five years ago to tackle the topic of gun violence in [STATE] from the criminal justice, economic and public health perspectives. We have also participated

in several cohorts and research studies for Trusting News as my newsrooms are located in an area of the country (the South) where misinformation thrives and ring-wing conservatives regularly bash the media." — ANONYMOUS

• "I am trying to get a lot of interviews into a shared database, and also encourage reporters to record, transcribe and store their interviews." – **Dan Froomkin** of *Press Watch*

• "We've integrated engaged journalism into all levels of our assigning and workflow." – **Megan Garvey** of *LAist*

• "I am consulting with newsrooms to support this work. It starts with listening and reflection." – **Michelle Faust Raghavan** of *Claridad Media*

• "We focus on facilitating community conversations in the fields of racial, economic, climate, and health justice." — ANONYMOUS

• "We are working on a statewide news collective that boosts our ecosystem and also provides more information to people in underserved communities." — ANONYMOUS

"We focus on facilitating community conversations in the fields of racial, economic, climate, and health justice."

Notes about the Engaging Emergence Event itself

Feedback about the event, EE3, was overwhelmingly positive. Participants said they left the room with a feeling of "belonging," "solidarity," and even "hope." They found the space particularly useful as a place to vent and then to brainstorm workarounds to challenges in doing the work. They felt relieved to hear similar stories as theirs, to know they are not doing the work in a vacuum. They said they built networks and formed partnerships while attending. They also gained insights about the work at more meta level; for example, one was struck by how gendered and racialized the room was, hypothesizing that "as women and folks from marginalized communities have gained more power in the industry over the past decades, this empathetic and democratized approach to journalism is the natural outcome." While some worried that some of the ideas felt either too vague or too big to form action plans, there were also plenty of concrete suggestions they could run with. Others felt surprise at "how far the field has come." For several, the event offered the realization that "we are our own community of care within a larger community of practice." The content and interactions were relevant: "It's been helpful in thinking about how I might approach taking on a more senior leadership position back in local news," and, "It was very meaningful to have deep conversations with other people in this field--to learn from them and hear their successes and concerns."

The complaints centered on small things: some wished for an earlier night Monday and a better dinner after traveling all day. Another urged us to drop the whole "unconference" label. Some wanted us to "invite more people from outside journalism such as community organizers, public libraries, community centers." They also wanted: fewer topics for the breakout conversations, more whole group conversation and/or more time for sharing out from those breakouts, more guidance in how to lead the small-group discussions, especially the ones on Tuesday, and more of these gatherings held around the country. One had the idea for creating a visual of all the attendees, with QR codes for their contacts. This critique by Alexis Reed of Lede New Orleans seemed particularly useful:

> *In the future I would like to see the ONA pre-conference hosted at a venue that is not a college nor a major brand hotel, I.e. Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt. Honestly, I don't want to be in the energy of col-*

> "As women and folks from marginalized communities have gained more power in the industry over the past decades, this empathetic and democratized approach to journalism is the natural outcome."

> "We are our own community of care within a larger community of practice."

lege move in day nor college campus energy in general, especially not at a PWI. It's not a welcoming space. Hosting conferences and events at colleges reinforces the idea that one must attend an elite college or university to enter the field of journalism. I think conferences and events such as these should be hosted at venues where values are in alignment. Generally speaking, college staff in positions of power don't even care about engaging the students of color on their campus and protecting them so it implies to me as a visitor of a campus that I don't matter and that the values of this conference don't matter. Colleges, like hotels, are business and their leaders' main interest is keeping their stakeholders satisfied. I also think the catering should have come from a local Philadelphia eatery. Furthermore, I wish that someone else would have facilitated and given instructions to the larger group besides the pre-conference organizers because honestly the facilitators didn't keep me engaged. I wish there were more African-American journalists in the room, especially those who are freelancers and at non-profits newsrooms, such as staff from Capital B News. I would also like to see multimedia incorporated in the programming/run-of-show because it got monotonous at times to just sit in a group and talk. Finally, I think it might be interesting to do a hands-on activity during the pre-conference where participants interview locals, I.e. at coffee shops, a park, etc. to answer questions surrounding how much they trust their local news outlets and what topics they want to see covered. I think this could help get closer to answering the question, "how do we get the public to see non-profit newsrooms as a source?" I enjoyed the activity during the first night where we were able to get up and write on the walls. I do however wish that the first day's session were hosted earlier in the day. I traveled early in the morning from the Deep South (New Orleans) and it was challenging to fight fatigue and be fully attentive during the session late at night.

One major theme to the complaints involved more concrete planning time. "I kind of feel like we start over at each gathering - I think perhaps we could build on what we learned previously and start working to advance an agenda of some kind. I am looking for more concrete information and plans." Another wrote: "Give more time/space for people to share a success or project they worked on recently. Maybe a poster that people can read, then seek them out and ask them about? I have a hunger to learn more about what everyone else is trying and doing. It's my chance to come out of the wilderness and catch up." And finally, there were a few comments about the unusual language for the invite and the need to be more expansive in sending around the invitation: "Use fewer jargon phrases in the invitation to be more inclusive. Hon-

estly, I wasn't quite sure what this event was all about. I was skeptical. But it was so amazing, and I wish I would have sent the invite to more people. Try some practical framing about the purpose of the event and encourage people to invite others. It sounded like a secret invite at first, so maybe these are a few ways to make it more inclusive." Nissa Rhee of Borderline added, "Maybe having small grants available to folks who attend the conference to put into action some of the ideas they have gotten from their fellow attendees? Or even work with a new attendee to create something across newsrooms?" All of these seemed worthy suggestions.

Conclusions & Next Steps

Many respondents vowed to "continue" the engagement work they were already doing and also to "collaborate" or "reach out" to those they met at the EE3 event for tips and tricks to the work, as in this response from Jennifer Brandel of Hearken: "I'm working on realizing the idea from one session: how might journalism support orgs better collaborate?" We did have some very specific plans detailed in the survey that we can follow up with in six months:

- "Including care awareness in the news making, product building, newsrooms and communities where we belong." — **Luisa Ortiz Perez** of *Prooftype.com*

- "How to coach journalists." — ANONYMOUS

- "Ramp up community engagement reporting. Ramp up solutions-oriented work." — **Tim Lambert** of *WITF*

- "I plan to present a lot of the takeaways from the pre-conference at a company-wide summit in September. I then plan to focus on one newsroom where I can begin integrating some of the tactics I learned to see how they land. If it goes well, I plan to incorporate it into other newsrooms." — ANONYMOUS

- "We are trying not to view the things we do as one-offs, but instead, are trying to use them as a springboard to continue or deepen a relationship in a new way. For example, our climate collaborative is putting on a play this fall, led by our theater-company partner. Can we do another project together next year? What could that be?" — ANONYMOUS

- "I hate commitment! I'd like to explore what structures are needed in a news organization to align it to true DEI and community centered journalism. I would like to explore if there are business models that can support this outside of philanthropy and what they might be. I'll be looking for a structure under which to explore this or funding." — **Kate Myers** of *SEEDS Community Resolution Center*

- "I want to make sure we aren't being "askholes" --that when we ask for information from the community, we return to them and show what we learned and what we're doing with it. I could specifically do this with an audience survey and interviews that we conducted

earlier this summer. I was able to workshop one of my engagement ideas at the conference, so I am taking back that information to use as we develop curriculum for elementary schools. A big takeaway there is that I need to build in a plan for what comes next after the curriculum is developed and hopefully used. What comes next for that community of children that we have hopefully educated and inspired?" — ANONYMOUS

- "I want to tell the story of my work to a funder I was introduced to here." — **Joy Mayer** of *Trusting News*

- "Organize my thoughts and consult with Ashley Alvarado — circle back in so wide as I heard." — **Megan Garvey** of *LAist*

- "Hopefully in a few months we have developed an initial series of worker voice." — ANONYMOUS

- "Moving from vision and strategy to tactics." — ANONYMOUS

- "I want to think more radically. Be open to journalism that supports but doesn't always publish." — **Irene McKisson** of *Arizona Luminaria*

- "I'll be crafting curricula using insights gained here." — **Deborah Douglas** of *The Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University*

- "Trying to go even deeper with partnership in our next project and be really thoughtful about how it will strengthen the connections and story-telling networks." — **Elise Stolte** of *CBC Calgary*

- "1- Rewrite our narrative within the language of community and civic service, education and engagement. 2- Realign our work with community partners doing work on that space instead of focusing narrowly on journalism. 3- Work with our new friends at Gather and in this conference to make sure we're all supported and accountable." — **Bernardo H. Motta** of R*oger Williams University and Communities of Hope Civic Media*

We will be asking the same questions in six months to gauge how the work is going and to document whether the seeds that were planted during the EE3 event sprouted, and if not, why not. The goal here will be to continue the networking of people working the same space of Advancing the Future of Journalism for All through "community-powered journalism."

One notable conclusion to come from this work is the essentiality that people operate in both spatial and temporal planes, at all levels of society to implement the practices outlined and augmented in this convening. Spatially, we need to be connecting within newsrooms, within the profession, and within communities to rebuild trust, to find meaningful relationships, and to remain relevant. We must bring people together into different kinds of spaces to listen and to learn. Temporally, we must remember our histories and understand the contexts of harm that came before as well as audit ourselves and our production to appreciate our own problematic presents. This kind of interrogation is the only way to plan for any kind of future, anywhere.

We decided during these three days that one major ingredient in this work are different kinds of caring – self-care, caring for each other, caring for communities. We must bake caring practices into the very institutions that we are trying to change. "When people feel listened to and cared for, they are more likely to participate in democratic efforts." This can come in many forms, but it must include intense reflexivity by ourselves. Also striking in these sessions and the survey responses was a sense of optimism and a sense of purpose as a major throughline. I end this report with one last quote from a post-event survey:

> **We'll need to dedicate ourselves to community engagement not as an occasional add-on, but as a fundamental pillar of how we work. We are going to have to give up some of the control we cherish as journalists and news orgs. We will have to find civic and other non-news orgs who we trust and who understand our boundaries (and we theirs) and figure out how we can work together to establish & build credibility and trust as community conveners and chroniclers. It will be tricky. But I think it is doable, and all but necessary in an age of declining trust in news organizations.**

And this sums up the three days that was the
Engaging Emergence: Advancing the Future of Journalism for All

APPENDIX

These are the aggregated answers to the two questions about what is currently being done and what steps will be taken post-event.

In what ways have you or your organization participated in propelling this vision towards realization?

- My editor has a strong grounding in environmental justice coverage which, for a region that has long experienced institutional and governmental marginalization within the state of California, has greatly contributed to its reemergence as a cultural and political force to be reckoned with. — **Sadie Scott** of *The Frontline Observer*
- Once we determine which vulnerable communities to work in, we enter our civic media design process. Our civic media design process is the most hands-on version of the work we do, and its where we partner deeply with a community from beginning to end. The three-steps of our process — listen, seed, cultivate — are always the same, but the contours of our engagement depend entirely on the specific desires and needs of the community we're working with. We can help them wherever they are in the pipeline. — ANONYMOUS
- Using mass media platforms to share community voices, creating newsroom processes that prioritize input from community members, host community conversations to increase the impact of reporting on an important community issue, manage a grant program that funds for local news. — ANONYMOUS
- I support, via volunteer work, pretty much any local news outlet that reaches out to me for info, coaching, or other kinds of help; 2) I'm part of the Future of Local News Network (FLN) that helped developed the recent "RoadMap for Local News" which highlighted the need for civic information hubs, and I'm exploring ways to pilot one through the community media center in my hometown. I also steward the FLN's Care Collaboratory, a lab for peer learning on ways to bring care into our journalism processes ; 3) I'm a community engaged journalism coach for America Amplified, a national initiative to support community-centered approaches to reporting in public media and Hearken; 4) I'm teaching a graduate course in Civic Media to support the next generation of engaged journalism practitioners. — **jesikah maria ross**
- Our collaboration works with all sizes of newsrooms and advocates for new models. We actively look for people open to change at any level within an organization and try to get into higher ranks with the help from our connections "on the inside" — **Eugene Sonn** of *Resolve Philly*

- Our programming is designed for young, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people ages 18-25, regardless of whether they're in college and we increase accessibility by offering transportation assistance to fellows for the duration of their fellowship cycle and provide access to equipment and hands-on coaching. In my role, I'm intentional about outreach to promote our fellowship application by reaching out to staff at nonprofit organizations and Black churches, for example. I also have a background in racial justice and young advocacy so I'm connected to community members and movers and shakers and invite them into the room for community events based around the community issue our fellows are reporting on for the duration of their fellowship cycle. — **Alexis Reed** of *Lede New Orleans*
- We founded Borderless because we were unhappy with how Chicago news outlets were covering immigration. — **Nissa Rhee** of *Borderline*
- We have intentionally centered much of our reporting around New Mexico's tribal communities and Indigenous urban population over the past decade, taking time to build relationships and trust in those communities. That led us, for example, to report extensively on COVID and its effects on New Mexico's Native populations in the first year of the pandemic and state public education spending and how it continues to not reflect the hopes of those communities despite a landmark 2018 court ruling that the state has failed to sufficiently educate many of its children. In addition, we have hired Indigenous reporters to cover these communities and their issues. — **Trip Jennings** of *New Mexico InDepth*
- We work in bringing care awareness and duty of care in all the work that we do. This is the era of human made journalism. — **Luisa Ortiz Perez** of *Prooftype.com*
- We have been involved with Trusting News since 2017. We have worked with America Amplified for several years on community engagement strategies. Ahead of the 2022 midterms, we were part of Democracy SOS training to reimagine election/political reporting strategies. — **Tim Lambert** of *WITF*
- Giving voices to the people in the community, while reporting the topics that the community chooses. — **Trevon Cole** of *Lede New Orleans*
Poynter, and myself, is focused on providing up-to-date training for the future leaders of news organizations. We're teaching the hard skills we always have, but are now beginning to provide support for burnout, care, teaching empathy and other durable skills to help journalists become better managers and leaders. — **Tony Elkins** of *Poynter*
- We built Reach to power our engagement efforts — and others. — **Nation Hahn** of *EdNC.org*
- A couple of the newsrooms in my company have taken advantage of

grants, specifically solutions journalism grants, to do this work. …
We have also participated in several cohorts and research studies
for Trusting News as my newsrooms are located in an area of the …
where misinformation thrives and ring-wing conservatives regularly
bash the media. — ANONYMOUS

- We… resource community members to create their own archival
exhibits about marginalized … groups. — ANONYMOUSIn 2021, in
response to the George Floyd murder, subsequent protests and
focus on social justice issues, we created a video series … We recruit-
ed a host and a panel of community members who were people of
color to be a planning committee. Instead of us deciding on topics
and guests, we asked them to take control of the content, and our
contribution was our technical and staff resources. A few months
ago, we worked with a paid consultant and a co-owner of a brewery
to create a by-invitation event …. The brewery co-owner personally
recruited 30 people from across the political/demographic spec-
trum. The consultant led a program designed to focus participants
on community problem-solving. Our role was as the event convener,
and we produced journalism out of the event as a way of telling this
community's story. We plan to go back. — ANONYMOUS

- Hearken has been involved with a lot of experiments around en-
gagement, collaboration and working in untraditional ways with
partners. — **Jennifer Brandel** of *Hearken*
Through teaching the required skills and values and supporting
people in doing this work. — ANONYMOUS

- [Our organization] supports community-based media, civic media
actors, and other members of civil society, with funding, technical
capacity support, and other resources to continue the work they are
doing. We also share these stories more broadly, and connect this
work to the international community through our parent organiza-
tion. — ANONYMOUS

- Launched and ran Bureau Local which is a power shifting, grassroots
and participatory investigative network in the UK, the People's
Newsroom which is supporting non journalism organisations to
learn, develop and launch storytelling/info/journo services esp for
those harmed by the media, and also working on J+D community
networks program which partners with community colleges to
design new and diverse local hubs for training and creation of news.
— **Megan Lucero** of *J+D / People's Newsroom*

- Earlier in my career it was working on the initial engaging journal-
ism. Now in my news organizations I've focused on community
partnerships - outside of journalistic entities-to understand and
meet community needs. As I am briefly outside of journalism I am
in a really great place to learn about how conflict transformation
and restorative practices (as well as revolutionary principles) can be

applied to journalism. — **Kate Myers** of *SEEDS Community Resolution Center*

- Our news collaborative was created to focus on collaboration, solutions journalism and engagement. … The grant applicants chose a topic to focus on … and gathered initial partners including newsrooms and other civic organizations who committed to work together on the journalism and the engagement of the community. The engagement work is lead by what the partners are able to do/ their strengths. One example: One of the partners is a community writing center and so we created a community anthology so the public could tell their stories about their connection to the topic. Regarding solutions journalism: The partners were required to be training in the pillars of solutions journalism to participate in the collaborative. And we have set goals for numbers of solutions stories. … We include a dozen newsrooms that share content around one topic and collaborate on joint journalism projects. — ANONYMOUS

- I've participated into propelling my vision forward by digging deep into my research for stories to cover angles that are nuanced. This includes covering impoverished communities and spotlighting lesser known perspectives. — **Cole Cummings** of *WHIP Radio*

- [Our organization] holds equity at its core and works toward greater community power from the way its board operates to its daily editorial process. — ANONYMOUS

- We have an engagement department, have run Operationalizing Engaged Journalism, and regularly share our learnings across the industry and with students. — **Ashley Alvarado** of *LAist/Southern California Public Radio*

- … I've tried to work from academia to do collaborative research with some newsrooms and some community-centered projects. — **Andrea Wenzel** of *Temple University*

- We're experimenting. We're listening at scale to people on a tight budget through topic-based campaigns like cbc.ca/transit; and we're listening in-depth through workshops like cbc.ca/tellingyourstory. We don't yet have a way to bring these practices into the broader newsroom outside of specific projects. — **Elise Stolte** of *CBC Calgary*

- Communities of Hope was created with the purpose and goal to exemplify all of these principles and practices and to educate and train people in them. Since its inception in 2021 to its official launch in 2022, we have been educating, hiring, working, and thinking within this paradigm, taking small steps in opening space for more reflection and more engagement with other stakeholders. — **Bernardo H. Motta** of *Roger Williams University and Communities of Hope Civic Media*

- We are guiding newsrooms through asking that question through our Dimensions of Difference work. — **Joy Mayer** of *Trusting News*

- Building an engaged journalism team, laying groundwork… — ANONYMOUS
- We focus on facilitating community conversations in the fields of racial, economic, climate, and health justice. — ANONYMOUS
- We are working on a statewide news collective that boosts our ecosystem and also provides more information to people in under-served communities. — ANONYMOUS
- We do information ecosystem research to center community listening and are participating in a funding model experiment with partners and private funders. — ANONYMOUSWe have built a nonprofit news organization built on these principles. — **Irene McKisson** of *Arizona Luminaria*
- We're reaching outside the university to lend our expertise in bolstering local media outlets and tending to the pipeline with high school programs. Also bringing new modalities into the classroom. — **Deborah Douglas** of T*he Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University*
- Spaceship Media works hard to deconstruct and reconstruct journalistic practices. — **Eve Pearlman** of *Spaceship Media*

Please articulate your next steps here for this work going forward. We want to check in with you in a few months to see how it is going and what, if anything, has been accomplished. What has changed for you?

- I would like to begin collaborating with non-journalistic organizations and to see how interdisciplinary collaborations could increase our collective power. — **Sadie Scott** of *The Frontline Observer*
- I've already been following up with a myriad of folks I met through the conference to share some of our strategies and materials, and to see if there were collaborations that made sense moving forward. Exciting to have some no faces and projects to explore partnering with. — ANONYMOUS
- Bring information from this gathering into the design for America Amplified's upcoming community engaged journalism training for ~60 public media newsrooms and into my on-going newsroom coaching work. Consider continuing to lead the FLN Care Collaboratory and/or start a new Collaboratory on Civic Media Hubs and create spaces and opportunities to share info and build power among us to achieve our visions for journalism going forward. — **jesikah maria ross**
- We have individual newsrooms that track sources. But I want to do that for all our new Collab stories. — **Eugene Sonn** of *Resolve Philly*
- The insights and ideas I came away from the conference will inform

how I coach journalists ... — ANONYMOUS

- Moving into a different role at my job. More of a directing role. My next step is to create more avenues for voices within the community. — **Trevon Cole** of *Lede New Orleans*
- We will continue to keep researching information vulnerable communities in the US, and fundraising to help local partners fill key information gaps in their areas. We'll reach out to folks we met at the conference to get advice, collaborate… — ANONYMOUS
- I want to study the outcomes and find ways Poynter can add to our teaching catalog that might address these needs. — **Tony Elkins** of *Poynter*.
- I plan to present a lot of the takeaways from the pre-conference at a company-wide summit in September. I then plan to focus on one newsroom where I can begin integrating some of the tactics I learned to see how they land. If it goes well, I plan to incorporate it into other newsrooms. — ANONYMOUS
- [Our] next steps as an organization involve continuing to work with community members, increasing our media presence and collaborative work with journalists, and implementing recommendations from the Listening Post Collective's consulting work on how to share our work more broadly. — ANONYMOUS
- We'll keep working on our citizens' agenda and election-coverage guidelines. We'll keep planning and executing public events where we're trying to attract at least some people who don't already know us. We'd like to go back to [CITY] both to do journalism and to convene another gathering. We'll keep developing the ways we do engagement now, and look for new opportunities. We are trying not to view the things we do as one-offs, but instead, are trying to use them as a springboard to continue or deepen a relationship in a new way. For example, our [XXX] collaborative is putting on a play this fall, led by our theater-company partner. Can we do another project together next year? What could that be? — ANONYMOUS
- Connect with folks I met through the conference and continue building trust and professional relationships. — ANONYMOUS
- I have made connections on my J+D work and hope to follow up in these with potential collaborations. — **Megan Lucero** of *J+D / People's Newsroom*
- We're working to build capacity for community-serving media in central Virginia. — ANONYMOUS
- Trying to go even deeper with partnership in our next project, and be really thoughtful about how it will strengthen the connections and story-telling networks. — ANONYMOUS
- Maintaining and improving our series of community listening sessions with focus on our four service communities, strengthening integration with wider newsroom. — ANONYMOUS

- Hopefully in a few months we have developed an initial series of worker voice. — ANONYMOUS
- I would like to be back in a local newsroom and see if I can provide real support for staff and contributors. — **André Natta** of *Document-Cloud MuckRock Foundation*
- Moving from vision and strategy to tactics. — ANONYMOUS
- I am planning to follow up with a lot of individuals about their specific projects and will try implementing facilitation methodologies.
- I'll be crafting curricula using insights gained here. — ANONYMOUS

About the Organizers of Engaging Emeregence

The Agora Journalism Center at the School of Journalism and Communication (SOJC) is the University of Oregon's gathering place for innovation in communication and civic engagement. Agora works to create and support transformational media innovations in service to civic engagement, and civic engagement that informs media innovation.

Journalism that Matters is a nonprofit that supports and equips the adventurers who transform relationships between communities and journalism for a strong, inclusive democracy. We believe journalism matters most when it is of, by, and for the people. Find us at *journalismthatmatters.org*.