

Bold Ideas, Emerging Leaders

Roosevelt Network
Emerging Fellows Journal

2023

Foreword

Dear reader,

Have you ever found yourself saying: “Hopefully the young people will save us” while you’re watching the news or scrolling the internet for anything that makes the state of things seem less bleak?

I understand that impulse—young people can be inspiring. But young people are not a monolithic finished product. Each young person—like you, like me, like all of us—is on a journey. They’re trying to understand: What choices led to the world as they know it? Can they trust the narratives they’ve been taught about heroes and villains? Can they dare to have hope that anything they do matters?

If you’re reading this, it means that you are interested in the ideas that our Network’s young people have for the future of their communities. And if, as you’re reading this, you find yourself inspired by these ideas from our emerging leaders, then I ask you: What are you doing *now* to be in community with them in the long-term fight to rebalance power in our economy and democracy?

I have some ideas, of course.

The Roosevelt Network has been a moral and political home for progressive young folks for nearly 20 years. Our staff works every day to help each new cohort understand how we got here and how we can combine the power of bold new ideas with the power of a network. Building a moral and political home for people takes time and it takes trust—especially as we operate in an era of rapid change, misinformation, radicalization, nihilism, isolation (I could keep going, but I won’t). A political home might be the difference between a young person spending their career in the progressive movement versus burning out or giving up.

So after you read the ideas of our 2023 Emerging Fellows, perhaps you’ll want to sign up as a mentor for a young person. Maybe you yourself are a young person and you’ll want to apply to one of our fellowships and make the Network your political home. Maybe you’re someone who can donate to our work.

Whatever the choice is for you, I hope that you know we only go onward together. The young people might save us, but not without investment from all of us to make it possible.

Onward,
Katie Kirchner
National Director, Roosevelt Network