

# PRO-CHOICE PUBLIC EDUCATION PROJECT (PEP)

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2012

### INTRODUCTION

PEP entered 2009 with the energy and optimism that the 2008 elections had reawakened in communities and individuals across the country. With the election of a new progressive President and Congress, we, along with the rest of the country felt sure that finally the voices of the most vulnerable would ring loudest on critical issues such as health care reform, climate change, and the economy. But we face challenges as well as opportunities. The acceptance of the Hyde Amendment in the health care reform bill coupled with the attempt to use the reform process to rob women of private insurance coverage for abortion, cast into high relief the need for new strategies and new leadership to promote reproductive justice.

In an effort to address the challenges and seize the opportunities before us, PEP embarked on a strategic planning journey, one that was driven by staff, our Board of Directors, and our Young Women's Leadership Council (YWLC) and that spoke to the needs, interests, and concerns of our stakeholders and constituents. As our country transitioned into a new administration, PEP was also going through a time of transition as our relationship with our fiscal sponsor came to an end, and we became a fully independent organization for the first time in our 13-year history. With our own Board of Directors and control over our own future we had the opportunity to thoughtfully evaluate our purpose, our values and our place in the fight for reproductive justice.

What we uncovered in this time of reflection is that the perspectives and experiences of young women, especially young women of color, remain in the shadows of the reproductive justice movement. Even the holistic reproductive justice framework tends to address the experiences of women, or of particular communities of women, as if there is not a dramatic difference in how a 16-year-old and a 40-year-old think about, talk about, and experience sexuality and reproductive health. PEP has worked for the past 13 years to bring the voices of young women to the center of conversations about reproductive health and rights. Our strategic plan re-affirms our belief that young women are the future leaders of the reproductive justice movement and that they must be present when decisions are made about their bodies.

Young women, however, are not the only ones who are disproportionately affected by gender injustice and reproductive oppression. Transgender and gender non-conforming young people face many of the same challenges to their reproductive health and sexual autonomy that young women face. Like young women, their voices and leadership are often missing from conversations about their reproductive health and rights. In addition, there is little information on the perspectives, needs or concerns of these communities, and few positive portrayals of them as sexual beings in mainstream movements. Initiated by our YWLC and with the support of key stakeholders, PEP has expanded our mission to include transgender and gender non-conforming young people as part of our constituency. We see their struggles for reproductive justice as parallel to those of young women and requiring the same shifting of power to ensure that people have the resources necessary to lead healthy lives.

Using this plan as a guide, PEP will define the communities of young people we work with more explicitly over the next three years and intentionally build relationships with those communities and the organizations that serve them. In addition to working with young women and transgender and gender non-conforming young people, PEP will continue to raise the voices of young women of color, including indigenous women, and begin establishing relationships with low-income and pregnant and parenting young people and the organizations that serve them so that we can include them as a part of our constituency in the coming years.

In order to best serve our constituencies, PEP looked at our programs and the strategies we use to carry out our work. As the only organization in the reproductive justice movement who listens to and raises young women's voices through research, we will continue to use research as the foundation of all of our programming and as a tool to achieve social change. Our movement-building activities will focus on lifting up the voices of young women, especially young women of color, as well as young transgender and gender non-conforming people in the reproductive health, rights and justice communities. Finally, developing young leaders is at the heart of our work, and we will continue to invest in our YWLC and other young leaders to build a stronger reproductive justice movement.

As a reproductive justice organization, PEP has worked in solidarity with many social justice movements throughout our existence, partnering with HIV/AIDS organizations, LGBTQ groups, and abortion rights advocates. Over the next three years, PEP will look more closely at the areas

where sexual and reproductive health and rights meet health care access and economic justice. We will enter these struggles for justice not as experts but as allies, asking questions and learning from young people what is most important to them where these issues cross paths with their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

PEP began this strategic planning process to help us figure out who we are, what we do and where we belong. What we came away with is not only a sense of identity and belonging, but a renewed commitment to working with young people to achieve a more just world. At the core of our plan is a determination to shift power and resources into the hands of some of the most under-resourced and under-recognized communities of young people in our movement. To raise the amazing work and contributions young people are making to their communities and to support them in doing even more. To continue to raise the voices of those young people most marginalized so that they have the ability to lead safe and healthy lives on their terms. Our mission, vision, values and goals over the next three years will bring PEP closer to creating a reproductive justice movement in which young people are at the helm.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to create our strategic plan, PEP developed a process designed to assess our current programs, strengths, and areas for improvement. In 2009, PEP convened a strategic planning committee composed of PEP staff, Board and YWLC members. We assessed our organization's work and mission by gathering feedback from current and former PEP interns and YWLC members, movement activists who are familiar with PEP's work, and program officers at foundations that support PEP. We also conducted a scan of reproductive justice organizations and existing programs in order to identify the needs of young women, transgender and gender non-conforming young people, how those needs are identified, and whether or how those needs are being met.

After our initial assessment was complete, Board and YWLC members gave feedback on and ideas for our mission, programs, constituency, and our role in the movement. In July, we hired Sunita Viswanath to facilitate the creation of the actual plan and lead the Strategic Planning Retreat. At the retreat, we clarified and updated our mission statement and goals and created vision and values statements, which we had not had previously. We also spent time discussing

how we would implement the strategic plan based on our capacity and resources. The retreat resulted in this strategic plan.

PEP's strategic planning process was staff driven and Board and YWLC supported. It was designed to be responsive to the feedback and needs of PEP stakeholders. All of our strategic planning templates are available at no cost to other organizations who are interested in undertaking their own strategic planning process at [pep@protectchoice.org](mailto:pep@protectchoice.org) or on our website at [www.protectchoice.org](http://www.protectchoice.org).

## VISION

PEP is working to create a society where all young people have access to the resources they need to live healthy and empowered lives. PEP works to ensure that young women, transgender and gender non-conforming young people are represented and play leadership roles where their lives intersect with sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## MISSION

PEP is a national reproductive justice organization that works to engage and inform organizations, young women, transgender and gender non-conforming young people, ages 16-25, especially those whose voices are not heard in spaces where sexual and reproductive health and rights are addressed. We do this through research, leadership development, movement building, raising unheard voices, and changing the conversation.

## VALUES

- 1 We identify as a reproductive justice organization because of its holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
2. At the core of our work is the belief that young people are experts on their own lives who can be trusted to make decisions about sexual and reproductive health and rights.
3. We are committed to developing the leadership of young people within our organization as well as the reproductive justice movement.

4. Our work is driven and informed by the organizations, young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people that we are accountable to.

5. We strive for our organization to be internally reflective of the community of young women and transgender and gender non-conforming young people that we engage with.

## PRIORITIES

### 1) RESEARCH

Conduct research which gathers the voices and concerns of young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people, related to PEP's reproductive justice priority issue areas. Create programs and tools that are guided and informed by the data that this research yields.

- Design research projects which address our current reproductive justice priority issue areas with a view towards deepening our engagement with our core communities.
- Develop programs which bring data and analysis to the reproductive justice and other social justice movements and policy arenas.
- Share data and analysis with young people in the communities we prioritize through the media, our tools and programming.
- Create tools which young women, transgender and gender non-conforming young people can use for their own activism and advocacy.
- Integrate the findings into all of PEP's programming and infrastructure.
- Provide technical assistance to other organizations who want to conduct their research.

### 2) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Build the leadership of young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people within PEP and in the reproductive justice movement.

- Integrate YWLC members into all programming.
- Increase representation of core constituencies in YWLC.
- Train and support YWLC members to represent PEP at meetings, conferences, and other public events and in the media.

- Continue to provide support to young people around the country fighting for reproductive justice.

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### 3) MOVEMENT BUILDING

Build collaborations with reproductive justice organizations and other aligned movements so that young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people are at the center of the reproductive justice movement and related cross-movement work.

- Continue work with communities we have made deep investments in specifically, young women of color and young queer people.
- Continue leadership roles in key coalitions including: Expanding the Movement for Empowerment and Reproductive Justice (EMERJ), the Training and Access Working Group (TAWG), and Causes in Common.
- Identify and build relationships with organizations and coalitions that serve key communities and focus on PEP priority issue areas.
- Challenge allies to prioritize concerns of young people by encouraging their inclusion in all aspects of the reproductive justice movement and being a model organization which embodies its values.

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### 4) RAISING UNHEARD VOICES

Deepen engagement with the following marginalized communities in our constituency: young women of color, low-income young women, queer young people, and pregnant and parenting young people, and thereby raise unheard voices wherever their lives intersect with sexual and reproductive health and rights.

- Reach out to organizations and individuals that work with or are part of these communities.
- Conduct research around needs and concerns of these communities.
- Develop programming that is clearly defined as engaging or representing these communities.
- Create trainings around the needs and concerns of these communities for PEP stakeholders as well as other organizations.

- Establish strategic alliances and collaborations with organizations representing these communities.
- Integrate these communities into PEP at the staff, YWLC, and Board levels.

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## 5) CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Contribute to the larger cultural discussion about reproductive and sexual health and rights by raising the voices of young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people as agents of change and advocates for their own rights and the rights of all young people.

- Launch RISE Initiative to bring together qualitative research, leadership development, and movement-building strategies to increase the visibility and engagement of young people around reproductive justice issues.
- Train and support staff and YWLC members to speak on critical issues being addressed in our research and other programs.
- Increase media presence including PEP website, social networking sites, and blogs, to highlight the perspectives of young women, transgender and gender non-conforming young people in discussions around sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION

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### 2010

- Complete RISE focus group research
- Distribute research findings prior to United States Social Forum (USSF)
- Coordinate Young People's Assembly on Reproductive Justice at the USSF
- Produce report from USSF
- Develop young people's reproductive justice agenda
- Provide briefings and trainings on young people's reproductive justice agenda
- Create tools for organizations on inclusion of young people
- Build collaborations with organizations committed to elevating perspectives and leadership of young people
- Increase online presence through website and social media platforms
- Build leadership and skills of staff and YWLC

- Integrate priority communities into PEP infrastructure
- Secure funding from youth development, leadership development, civic engagement sectors
- Hire additional program staff to carry out the objectives of the RISE Initiative

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2011

- Publish RISE Toolkit on how to include young people into reproductive justice movement
- Conduct trainings on inclusion of young people into reproductive justice movement
- Conduct trainings on use of focus group research to support inclusion of young people into reproductive justice movement
- Train RISE Partners to conduct trainings on including young people
- Bring RISE Partners together for one in-person meeting to share resources and build collaborations
- Redesign website to include more interactive elements and forums to raise the voices of young women, transgender, and gender non-conforming young people.
- Invite young women, transgender and gender non-conforming writers and bloggers to write for the PEP website and newsletter
- Develop original content for prominent websites that cover sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Conduct quarterly conference calls with bloggers, writers and media makers to raise awareness about our issues and constituencies
- Increase representation of young people on PEP's Board of Directors
- Secure funding from youth development, leadership development, civic engagement sectors

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2012

- Launch PEP Institute to institutionalize PEP's leadership development and research curricula to build young people's leadership around sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Develop principles for the inclusion of young people in the reproductive justice movement

- Scan current research on key constituencies to identify potential unmet needs for research
- Review past PEP research for themes, emerging trends and trends for new research
- Draft concept paper outlining proposed research project
- Conduct new YWLC membership drive