

**PROJECT**

# VOYCE

Voices of Youth Changing Education

**2015**

## Annual Report

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# PROJECT VOYCE

## 2015 Annual Report

### Mission

Project VOYCE's mission is to insert youth voice into policy, with the vision that youth will be strategic partners in the crafting of systems that shape our collective future.

*PROJECT VOYCE INSPIRES YOUNG PEOPLE TO CHALLENGE SYSTEMS OF INEQUITY BY BECOMING THE CHANGE THEY WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD.*

*OUR THEORY OF CHANGE ASSERTS THAT CHANGE HAPPENS FIRST AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL, THEN AT THE SCHOOL/COMMUNITY LEVEL, WHICH BUILD UPON EACH OTHER TO OPEN THE DOORS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE.*

*OUR PROGRAMMING AREAS MIRROR OUR THEORY OF CHANGE.*

## Full Circle Leadership



Every year has been newsworthy in the life of Project VOYCE, this year especially! Nine years ago, I was a first-generation college student at the University of Denver. I was a Daniels Fund Scholar and Manual High School Alumna engaging in heated debates about the equity in one of Denver's first high school shutdowns. As a student who had been part of a reform experiment myself, I committed my studies and extracurricular involvement to supporting other

students like myself. A passion project evolved into the Youth School Reform Institute and later into Project VOYCE (Voices of Youth Changing Education). We are approaching our tenth anniversary and we have truly changed the game in obvious ways. Ten years ago "youth voice" was not a commonly understood concept amongst educators or those in the field of youth development. Ten years ago, youth membership on boards was a far fetched idea that perplexed most people. Ten years ago we weren't discussing "authentic" youth engagement, and ten years ago nobody would've thought to hire a young person to train an adult in a substantial content area. Today, Project VOYCE is proud to say that we laid the foundation in Denver and Colorado for youth to be strategic partners and consultants to individuals across sectors at every level of government and organizational hierarchies. From the Governor, to the Mayor, the Superintendent, to the teacher---youth are advising leaders and gaining credibility as experts in their own right at a rapid pace.

Returning to wrap up our ninth year and carry the organization boldly into the future has been nothing short of a dream. This opportunity was one of divine timing. In this role I am able to put all of my life learnings this far into uplifting this organization that I love so deeply.

Thank you all for the support in my first 6 months as Executive Director. We have so much in store and our commitment to "making youth voice REAL" is stronger today than ever before! Stay tuned for all the joy and transformation that will surely emerge in our "10-Year anni-VOYCE-ary" and beyond!

Peace & love,  
Candi CdeBaca  
Co-Founder & Executive Director



### SELF

Summer Leadership Institute is an 8-week intensive program designed to facilitate individual change, while training the trainer.

- Social justice
- Facilitation
- Public speaking
- Leadership skills
- Action research
- Social Emotional
- Community Organizing

**30 Students**  
**3,840 hours**



### SCHOOL

Chapter Teams occur throughout the school year and support school and community change while building on the individual development students achieve during SLI.

- Bruce Randolph
- Aurora Central
- Denver Justice
- Manual
- Cole DSST
- CEC

**120 Students**  
**72,960 hours**



### SYSTEM

Systems-change projects connect youth to pipelines to affect policy in their area of interest. Systems projects take on a variety of forms including participation on statewide, city, neighborhood, school boards, councils, youth-led teacher trainings, legislative, and policy work, workshops, and keynote speeches.



# STUDENT TESTIMONY

"I Went to 4 different schools in 2 years, my father was absent most of my life, I would see him around here and there and when I did it's like he never seemed to notice me. I am 1 of 12 children. I only see 4 of my siblings.

I use to argue a lot with my mom and had to move out at the age of 12. I have been raised around gangs all my life. When I moved out, I myself was gang banging and selling drugs. Because I didn't have much to provide for myself, drug dealing became my only option. It was wrong, but I know now how to take care of myself.

Last summer my older brother was shot in his stomach. This summer, he was stabbed 2 times and came close to dying because of his gang affiliation. I knew then I didn't want to follow that path.

It was harder to stay away from gang affiliation, selling drugs , and violence when i was on my own. For 6 months, I wasn't attending school, and when i did, I was 2 grade levels behind in my education. Last year, I realized that I needed to better myself and my life. I moved back with my mom and found Denver Justice High School, where I had the good fortune of getting introduced to Project VOYCE.

Nobody has impacted my life as much as my counselor, trainer, and mentor-a youth trainer at Project VOYCE. I may not even be here if not for her support.

Shelby and PV have provided the support and skills I needed to transform my life in the most positive way possible. Although I have had many challenges in my life I am learning how to deal with them from people who have been through the same things and made it through successfully. We trust each other at PV and we respect each other's experiences. We are experts at PV, we are valuable.

~J'rae Jordan, Denver Justice

**"PV HAS TRANSFORMED ME INTO SOMEONE WHO IS MORE APPRECIATIVE OF THE PRIVILEGES I HAVE AND HAS PREPARED ME TO SHARE MY PRIVILEGE TO BE AN ADVOCATE FOR OTHERS WHO DO NOT SHARE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES."**

**~ CARMEN CABRERA, ACHS**



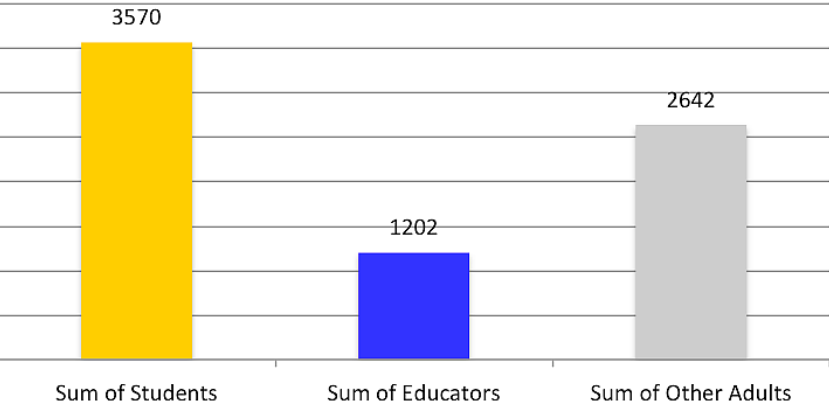
**"THE ONLY WAY TO CREATE CHANGE IS FOR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY HOW WE CAN FIX IT. WE ARE THE ONES WHO COME UP WITH THE IDEAS TO FIX THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON WITH INDIVIDUALS, SCHOOLS, AND THE SYSTEM."**

**~THOMAS CRAWFORD, COLE DSST**

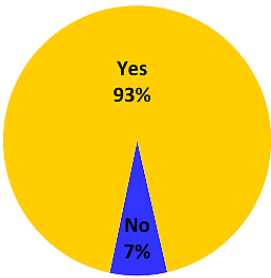


# IMPACT

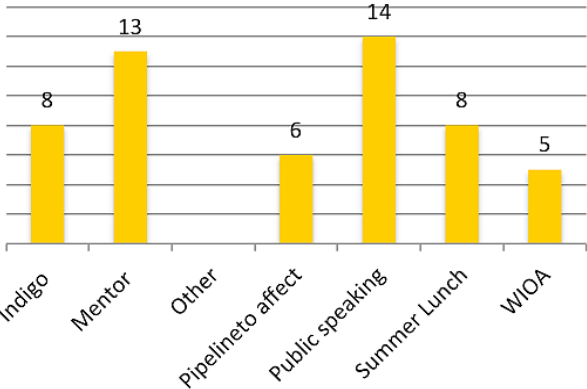
Individuals Served by Type



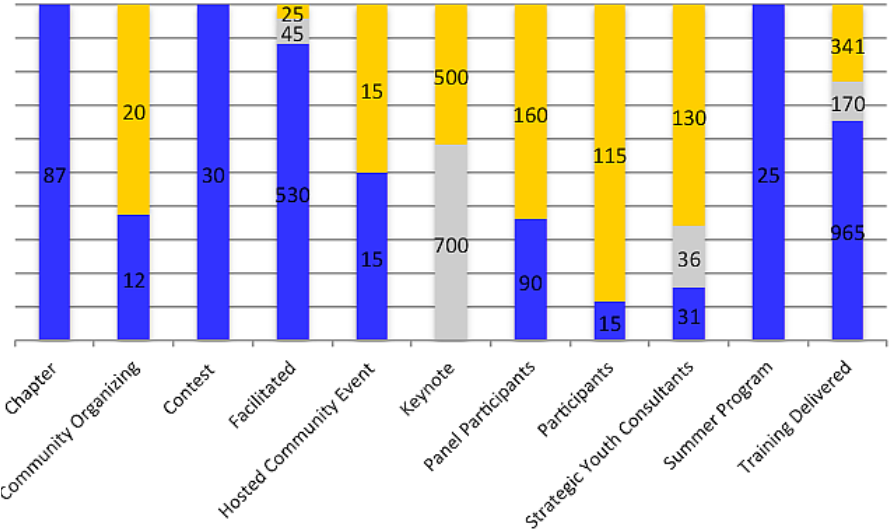
Participants Receiving Free & Reduced Lunch



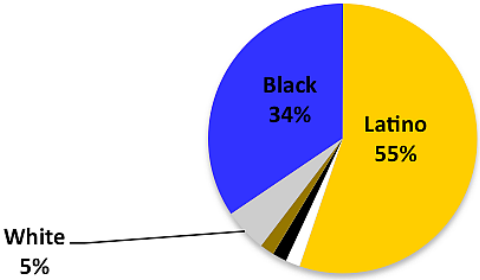
Support & Opportunities Provided to SLI Participants



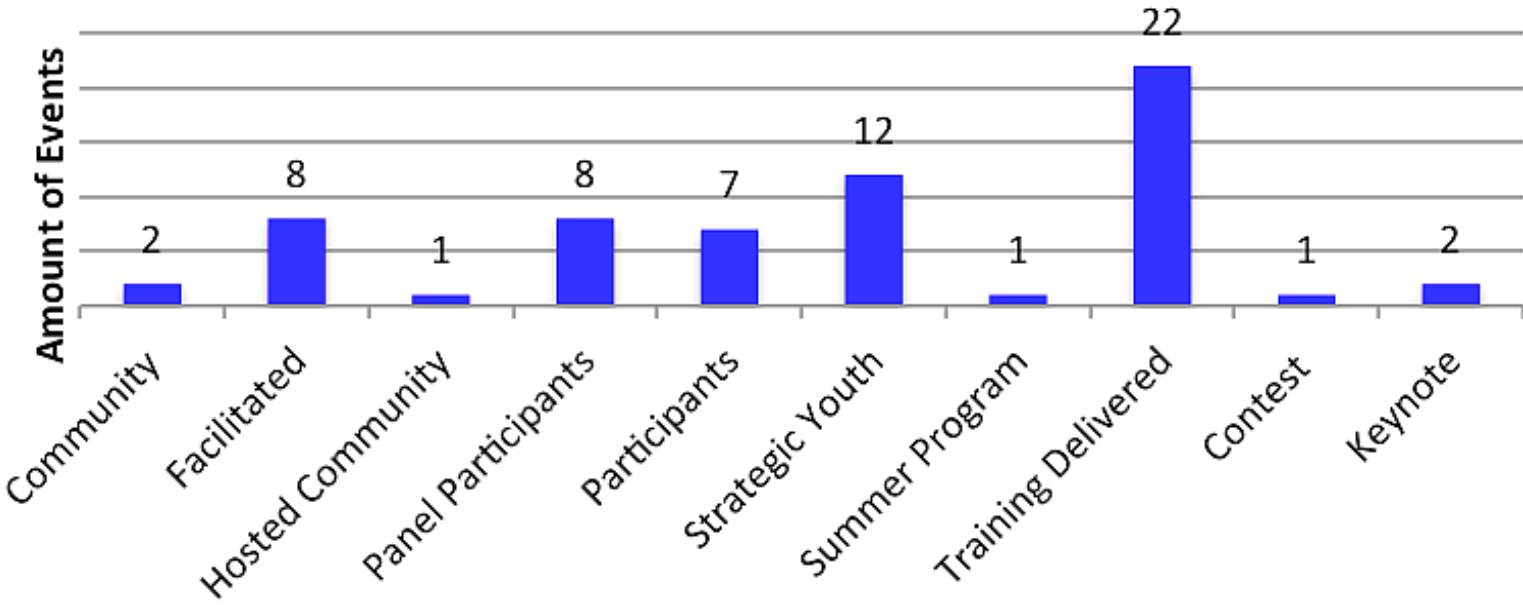
Type of Individuals Served per Activity Type



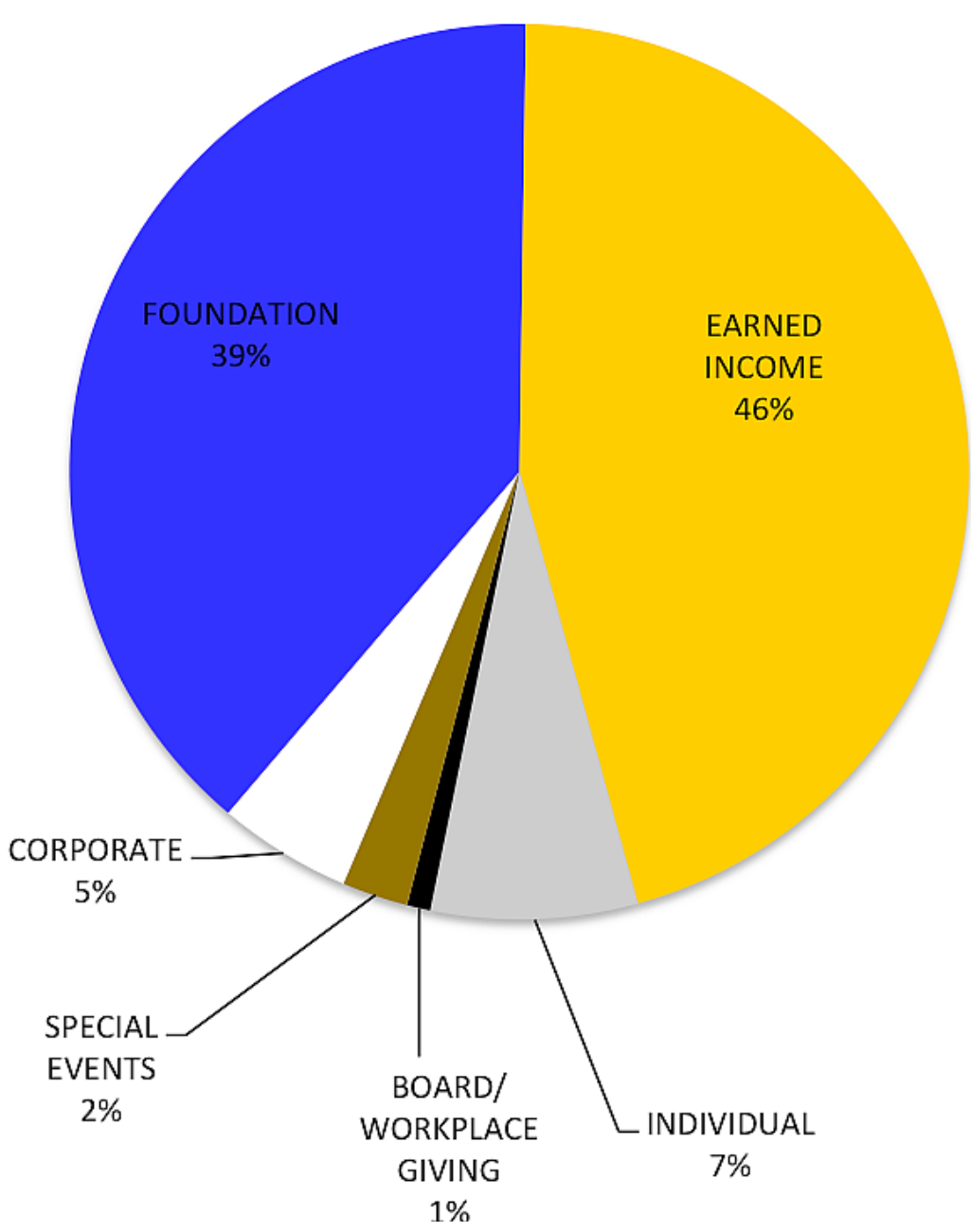
Participant Race & Ethnicity



PV Engagement by Type



# SOURCES OF INCOME



Increased Net Assets

**704%**

\$9,515 in 2014 to \$76,534 in 2015.

Increased Earned Income

**36%**

from \$73,181 in 2014 to \$99,687 in 2015.





# SPECIAL THANKS

## Program Staff

Candi CdeBaca  
Brea Zeise  
Shelby Parker-Gonzales  
Shontel Lewis  
Uche Ohaya  
Giselle Cummings  
Sir Martin  
Brea Harris  
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Cassandra Rodela, Alexis Alcala

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Sonja Chapman  
Tara Whitterholt

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