

# crossroads connections

connecting research across communities

● volume 1, issue 2

## youth & legislation:

*We, the youth, believe abstinence-only is not acceptable.*

*Comprehensive sex education is not promoting sex but knowledge.*

*It's better to be aware, informed, and prepared instead of ignorant and fearful of change.*

*We are a new generation.*

*We are change, tolerance, and understanding.*

*No longer streets gathered of polychromatic lowriders and the competition of Macho Men stuck through cities and cries of 'no homo.'*

*We need purified love, acceptance, forgiveness, understanding, and bravery for change.*

*We, the youth, want love, no more ignorant love.*

— Enrique Garcia

*TYPS Poet & Nuestra Voz Racial  
Justice Summer Camp Participant*

changing  
conversations  
through  
action  
research

## Claiming Your Rights

In his poem, Enrique Garcia advocates for youth rights. He argues that youth have a right to be informed about sex and sexuality. We agree. As researchers in the Crossroads Collaborative, we are committed to work that promotes sexual health and healthy sexualities as well as racial, gender, and economic justice. We support youth access to education, knowledge, and resources, and we want to work with youth as well as with youth-allied organizations to co-develop research projects that:

- value youth as holders and creators of knowledge;
- explore solutions to problems youth identify and contend with; and
- address access to knowledge.

Together with youth, we want to change conversations and policies around youth sexuality, health, and rights by asking and sharing new questions and ideas. Our work is both qualitative and quantitative which means we want to bring stories and numbers together in order to pursue social change and justice for and with Tucson youth. ●

crossroads collaborative  
youth • sexuality • health • rights

We, the Crossroads Collaborative, want to hear from youth. We believe that youth have the right to information that helps them experience and achieve both healthy sexuality and sexual health. This information has been made scarce and not widely distributed to youth, families, and policymakers. We want to change that.

Whose research is it? *Ours!*

Who designed the questions? *We all did!*

Together, youth & adult-allies.

Who is it for? *Youth & adult-allies!*

# How recent laws are affecting youth and what we can do about them!

## Making Coalitions

Through youth-serving organizations like Eon Youth Lounge, Nuestra Voz, and Grrls Literary Activism (*for more information, see the coalitions mapped below!*), Tucson youth activists are working on important issues, such as racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. In many ways, the social justice work youth participants in these organizations are doing is connected to recent Arizona legislation. Youth from YWCA Tucson's Nuestra Voz Racial Justice Program created videos and slam poetry about HB 2281, the bill that bans ethnic studies, and SB 1309, the bill that requires parental approval to opt students into abstinence-only sex ed. In this section, we want to tell you a little bit more about each of these bills (and a few others) by taking a closer look at the bills and thinking critically about them. Mari J. Matsuda, an activist, lawyer, and law professor at Georgetown

University, helps us think critically about social justice by urging us to “ask the other question.” She writes, “When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where are the class interests in this?’” (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1189).

## What's Happening in Arizona

### Reading the legislation

As you read through the following descriptions of pending and passed legislation and follow the legislative links, we encourage you to ask Matsuda's “other question” and to let your ideas inform how you participate in the conversations that matter most to you and your communities. In other words, how might these bills affect different youth differently?



## INTERESTED? WANT TO DO SOMETHING?

Here's where you can go to learn more!

**YWCA Tucson's Nuestra Voz Racial Justice Program** worked with Tucson youth to cultivate knowledge and empowerment as tools to counter prejudice, racism, and intolerance and value youth voice at the lived intersections of racial justice and gender/sexuality justice.

**Kore Press's "Zone Zero: Sex, Text & The Activist Body,"** an 8-week-long workshop for girls and transgendered youth, explores the critical and creative use of language and the body's role in activism.

**Wingspan's Eon Youth Program's "Queer Monologues,"** a multi-media community event, will create a public performance space for gay, lesbian, bisexual, two spirit, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and straight ally youth to share their life experiences with particular regard to health, sexuality, and rights.

- **SB 1266, the bill that defines sexting:**

*How do you classify sexting? At what point does it go too far? When does flirting turn into sexting? - Ezra*

In July 2010, sexting among Arizona juveniles became a class 2 misdemeanor, punishable by up to four months in jail. Before this law, sexting was difficult to classify, and the legal consequences forced convicted sexters to register as sex offenders. But this new law is tricky. While it makes room for less harsh consequences, such as sending youth sexters to diversion programs (which keeps the charge off of juvenile records), it also ensures that many more sexting cases will be brought to law enforcement's attention.

- **SB 1309, the bill that establishes a parent's bill of rights:**

*Though it emphasizes parents' rights, the bill takes away young people's rights to take authority in their own sexual health education. - Tessa*

In 2010, this legislation established a parent's bill of rights including the right to decide whether or not youth can participate in sex ed classes, even abstinence-only classes, and in any class where sex and sexuality may be relevant topics. The bill restricts access to sexual information and resources (e.g., prescription contraception, pregnancy, and STI testing).

- **SB 1070, the bill that is considered anti-immigration and anti-immigrant:**

*Immigrants like me risk everything we know and love every time we walk out our doors. If our house gets robbed or we experience domestic violence, how are we supposed to report it without the fear of being deported by the same people who are supposed to protect us? - Alexia*

This 2010 bill gives local police officers the right to ask anyone considered "reasonably suspicious" about his/her immigration status. It initiated and inspired anti-immigrant and anti-immigration legislation in Georgia and across the US.

- **HB 2281, the bill that bans ethnic studies:**

*What they call racism are the teachings of this country's past injustice. Truth comes in every shape, age, size, color, good, and bad; and if it is left out, we will not have the capacity to love this nation unconditionally. - Alexia*

The text of HB 2281 treats ethnic studies as racist and prohibits any K-12 course in an Arizona public or charter school from "promoting the overthrow

of the United States government," "promoting resentment toward a race or class of people," and "advocating ethnic solidarity." This bill started a heated and ongoing battle over Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American Studies program, leading the program's advocates and allies to identify the bill as fundamentally racist. ●

## Crossroads Collaborative At Work in Our Communities

Here are some examples of our ongoing research projects to change conversations and inspire community action:

The "**Let's Get Real Anti-bullying Video Program**" and "**School Climate Survey**" that youth helped to design and participate in use qualitative and quantitative analyses to evaluate and highlight teens' feelings, experiences, and informed opinions on bullying, racism, and justice.

The "**Safe Schools Policy Project**" continues to interview youth-allies involved in anti-bullying, safe schools policy implementation initiatives across the United States.

"**My Pregnancy Story Project**" is being developed to get a better understanding directly from pregnant and parenting teens about their feelings, experiences with stereotypes, and insights about sexuality, pregnancy, and parenting.

The "**I'm on the Map!**" project is a digital, social networking space where youth can use text, audio, video, and photography to locate meaningful places, record their stories, and identify their activism around sexuality, health, and rights. The youth-informed map will locate youth-serving organizations as sites where youth and adult-allies are collaborating to make meaningful social change. [Check us out online!](#)

The "**Poetry Can Change Your World Project**" analyzes and uncovers the policy-changing potential of youth spoken word performances where youth use poetry to express awareness and outrage at local and global injustices regarding youth, sexuality, health, and rights. Raise your voice at Tucson Youth Poetry Slam (TYPS). For more information, visit <http://www.TucsonYouthPoetrySlam.org>.

# KNOW THE LINGO!

**Action (Oriented) Research** is meant to support and act on the need for change. It values lived knowledges, is interested in particular, everyday practices, is committed to a collaborative approach to interactive inquiry and learning, and seeks to identify problems and collaborate on action-oriented solutions. It encourages “growth and development in participants’ capacity for action, including direct and substantial collective action that is well justified by the demands of local conditions, circumstances, and consequences” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 287).

**Community Action Research** includes, and is primarily informed by, community participants and perspectives in the identification of the need for social change, the development of questions, and the seeking of solutions.

**Feminist Action Research** works to intervene in inequality, including but not limited to sex and gender, especially as inequality has been made to appear natural or normal.

**Participatory Action Research** is interested in social transformation and is participatory in that it includes and values people’s own ideas about their lived practices and the local conditions which constrain or enhance those practices. It understands the community researcher not as a subject of research but as a collaborator in the process of research. According to the editors of *Traveling Companions: Feminism, Teaching, and Action Research*, “Feminism and PAR complement one another as approaches to research that are liberating, transformative, and that—if we act with care and are honest—contribute to new ways of relating, new criteria for what is valued in society, and new directions for imple-

menting research processes that lead to just social change” (Brydon-Miller et al., 2004, p. xvii).

**Youth Action Research** promotes learning and action, involves youth participants, and values their lived perspectives in the discovery and development of questions and solutions around which to inquire and act—especially around issues that affect them the most.

**Policy-Relevant Research** intervenes in policy that restricts access to knowledge and is identified by researchers and/or youth and youth-serving organizations as in need of change.

**Qualitative Research** is informed by the stories people tell about their lives and the issue/s being investigated. It requires a curious observer who pays attention and inquires about what’s going on in a given context. “It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4).

**Quantitative Research** is a systematic approach to gathering data to uncover the prevalence of patterns, trends, and directions of relationships. Quantitative research involves forming hypotheses of expected outcomes, testing these hypotheses by analyzing numerical data, and presenting findings through various types of interpretations, evaluations, and analyses.

**Decolonizing Methodologies** are practices that are informed by the past historic abuses of research done without regard for the dignity and perspectives of non-researchers particularly in indigenous contexts. Practitioners value the everyday, voice, and collaboration (Smith, 1999).

**The Crossroads Collaborative**, funded by the Ford Foundation, brings stories and numbers together through action-oriented research with academics, youth-serving organizations, and youth from the community to develop knowledge, increase understanding, amplify youth voice, and share what we learn with the broader community.

## Sources

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## Research Connections 1.2

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\*The Crossroads Collaborative also includes: Amanda Fields, Ray Moody, Stephen Russell, Shannon Snapp, Madelyn Tucker, Jenna Vinson & Ryan Watson.

For more on the Crossroads Collaborative:

<http://mcclellandinstitute.arizona.edu/crossroads>

For more on the Ethnic Studies:

<http://azethnicstudies.com>

For more on Immigrant and Immigration Rights:

<http://www.nomoredeaths.org>



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