



CRITICAL EXPOSURE

MISSION

Critical Exposure teaches youth how to use the power of photography and their own voices to become effective advocates for school reform and social change. Through partnerships with youth programs and advocacy organizations, we seek to create a connection between art and advocacy using a three-pronged approach that focuses on:

1. **Youth Empowerment** – Provide students with training in documentary photography, leadership, and advocacy; teach them how to document issues that impact their lives; and help them to use their images and voices to advocate for positive solutions to those issues.
2. **Public Engagement** – Inform and engage the public by using students' photographs and writing to create traveling exhibits that can be shown in galleries, libraries, coffee shops, and other public spaces to increase awareness of the issues facing young people.
3. **Policy Change** – Partner with advocacy and community organizations to implement creative strategies that use youth photography and voices to strengthen campaigns to improve our schools and our communities.

"The experience of being in Critical Exposure was very overwhelming because I had something as small as a black and white 35 mm camera, but to me it meant so much more. The opportunity to take pictures was my first time to finally be heard, not only by my friends and family, but by the media and public. Being a part of this program I learned that even the smallest thing such as the camera, can give you power and you need to use it in a way that benefits you and your society."

– Christina, 10th Grade, Philadelphia

IMPACT

To date Critical Exposure has worked with **more than 450 students** in D.C., New Orleans, Baltimore, Austin, Albuquerque, and three cities in Pennsylvania. Participating students have learned to use photography as both a vehicle for self-expression and an advocacy tool. Thousands of people have seen the students' images through public exhibits, community events, legislative hearings, and media coverage, including *Oprah*, CNN's *Anderson Cooper 360*, NPR, *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Perhaps most importantly, the students and their images have helped effect significant reforms in public education. Our largest and most recent victory occurred in Pennsylvania where, thanks to the work of our partners and the impact of the students' photographs and testimony, the General Assembly **increased funding for public schools by \$275 million and adopted a fairer system for distributing that funding.**

"As a legislator from Baltimore City, I believe that the compelling photographs and testimony from students working with Critical Exposure were an important factor in convincing my colleagues to support increased funding for public schools. In fact we were able to triple the amount of money we received this year in Annapolis thanks in great part to their efforts."

– Maryland State Senator Nathaniel McFadden

CRITICAL EXPOSURE IN D.C.

Critical Exposure is currently focused on the graduation/dropout crisis in D.C. Currently, nearly 50% of D.C. students do not graduate from high school, and only 9% of D.C. 9th graders go on to graduate from college. In order to address this issue and its implications for students and the community, young people themselves must have the opportunity to help shape the city's education policies.

For more information, please contact us at 202-745-3745 x20 or info@criticalexposure.org. You can also visit our website, www.criticalexposure.org, to see online galleries of students' photographs and captions.

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Picture Equality.