

Moving Forward: OJEN's Next Seven Years

The Ontario Justice Education Network was established in 2002 to promote an inclusive and responsive justice system through education and dialogue. In its first five years, OJEN developed programs and resources targeted at teachers and students to enhance their knowledge of the justice system and to provide opportunities for meaningful interaction with justice sector professionals. During this period, OJEN identified various communities of youth who have barriers to positive interaction with the justice system and education system. Outreach initiatives have adapted OJEN's programming to reach out to these young people and their families. This evolution of OJEN activities has highlighted the critical value of opportunities for dialogue and interaction with marginalized communities to not only provide information about the justice system, but also provide a forum in which all Ontarians can learn about and debate the issues facing our justice system.

OJEN's Mission
 OJEN is dedicated to promoting understanding, education, and dialogue to support a responsive and inclusive justice system.

OJEN is a unique organization that strengthens civil society by encouraging dialogue on difficult issues. Participation in that dialogue is enhanced when people understand existing systems and feel empowered to assist, critique, and defend these institutions and ideas. The justice system is a forum for protecting individual and collective rights, for resolving disputes and for promoting changes in society. This potential to improve the circumstances of people's lives depends on active citizen participation. People who understand the operation of the justice system, and its critical role in democracy will be able to effectively use the justice system to manage disputes in their own lives, and to participate in civil society. Between now and 2015, OJEN will build on its reputation, partnerships and successes to further these important objectives.

Our Seven New Priorities (2009-2015)

OJEN has adopted seven areas of priority activity and identified strategies to achieve each of these priorities. An action plan for implementing each priority, based on secured funding and resources, will guide implementation. Each priority is outlined in more detail, with a brief description of OJEN's rationale for adopting the particular priority.

Nos Sept Nouvelles Priorités (2009-2015)

Le ROEJ a adopté sept secteurs d'activités prioritaires et a identifié des stratégies pour atteindre chaque priorité. Un plan d'action qui s'étend sur une période de sept ans, en se fondant sur du financement et des ressources assurés, va guider la mise en œuvre de ces sept priorités. Chaque priorité est décrite en plus de détails avec une brève description de la raison d'être du ROEJ pour adopter chaque priorité. Le texte complet du plan stratégique est disponible en français au site web du ROEJ à www.roej.ca.



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| BUILD ON STRENGTHS | 3 | MISER SUR NOS FORCES |
| INVOLVE YOUTH STRATEGICALLY | 4 | IMPLIQUER LES JEUNES DE FAÇON STRATÉGIQUE |
| STRIVE FOR DIVERSITY | 5 | ASPIRER À ATTEINDRE LA DIVERSITÉ |
| RAISE OJEN'S COMMUNITY PROFILE | 6 | REHAUSSER LE PROFIL COMMUNAUTAIRE DU ROEJ |
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A Plan for Growth

The past years of success have positioned OJEN as a strong organization that facilitates collaboration between the justice and education sectors towards the goal of public understanding of the justice system. This collaborative approach to program development and delivery is attracting a wide range of new partners



coming to OJEN with ideas for innovative approaches to justice education. The involvement of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Attorney General has been critical to OJEN's development. The strong relationship with individual teachers, teachers' professional bodies and school boards allows OJEN direct input into the education sector. Lawyers, Court staff, judges, justices of the peace and other professionals in the legal sector continue to deliver OJEN programs as part of their *pro bono* contribution to the community. As a result of OJEN's partnerships and successes, there is demand for more programming and pressure to respond to time-sensitive situations. At the same time, OJEN is being recognized as a leader in justice education in Canada, with more organizations looking to share or replicate OJEN's model.

OJEN has determined that there is a need for programming expansion that falls within OJEN's existing mandate and is not being met by other justice sector institutions. Growth will occur both in the range of programs and resources offered, and the replication of existing models in more parts of the province. OJEN will undertake this growth in collaboration with its partners, careful to maximize resources, assist efficient replication, and avoid duplication.

Strategic Impacts

Broad and ambitious, OJEN's goals for a dynamic civil society align with the goals of many of OJEN's partners, offering the potential for OJEN's activities to contribute to the positive development of society, particularly:

- Increased access to justice
- Engaged citizens
- Empowered youth
- Collaborative Leadership in the field of Justice Education
- Innovation
- Transparency through effective evaluation
- Better understanding of the justice system
- Inspired volunteer base
- Enhanced community capacity



Strategic Planning Process

In order to guide OJEN through the upcoming period of growth, the Board of Directors has undertaken a comprehensive strategic planning process throughout 2008, consulting with stakeholders around the province. Demands for existing



programming and the potential for new partnerships and collaborations have reinforced the sentiment of volunteers, students and teachers that OJEN should expand to meet the unmet needs for justice education. The OJEN Board of Directors adopted this plan *Moving Forward: OJEN's Next Seven Years*, in January 2009.

OJEN's Activities in 2008

Many people are familiar with the OJEN program in their community, courthouse or school. Here is a snapshot of the activities taking place around the province:

- **12** regional OJEN Committees
- over **1000** active volunteers (Judges, Justices of the Peace, lawyers, probations and bail officers, librarians, police, paralegals, court-staff, law students, clerks and educators)
- Over **57,000** students visited Ontario courthouses
- **2000** students in 12 communities attended a Law Symposium
- **200** youth attended English as a Second Language programs
- **770** youth in high-risk neighbourhoods participated in Justice 101 or mock trials
- **2400** argued a case in one of 30 mock trial tournaments around the province
- Over **450** criminal codes distributed
- **152** schools matched with local lawyers through the Adopt-a-School program
- **283** students debated the Charter Challenge online and prepared appellate facts
- **900** students and their teachers participated in the Charter Survey
- **600** Grade 5 students entered the Poster Challenge
- **70** people from around Ontario attended the **Justice Education Symposium**
- **600** copies of *Making the Case: A Toolkit for Mock Hearings* distributed
- **1600** copies of *Justice and the Media* sent to schools
- **250** copies of seven new *Landmark Cases* distributed
- **1000** copies of *Combating Hatred* DVD distributed
- **555** teachers and principals attended OJEN professional development workshops
- The OJEN website averaged **4325** hits per day



1. PROMOTE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Rationale

Civic Engagement is premised not only on an understanding of our civic institutions, but also on participation in dialogue and debate about social justice issues. Inviting students to discuss legal issues and advocate for change builds the skills for democratic participation and identifies the justice system as one of the pillars of democracy that both protects citizens and provides an avenue for reform. Promoting civic engagement as a part of justice education exposes citizens to the vital role the justice system plays in democracy and invites them to rely on the justice system as a relevant, evolving institution integral to the governing of society.

Current Activity

OJEN has developed a strong track record of supporting Civics teachers through the production of classroom resources and the development of professional training programs. The Active Citizens program for Grade 10 students highlights the connection between legal reform and social change and



identifies strategies for youth to pursue social justice through the justice system.

Strategies

The success of these programs warrants expansion and replication. Civics teachers continue to rely on OJEN for

assistance integrating the justice system into classroom discussions of democracy. Interest in the Active Citizens program from newcomer organizations and youth from community organizations has also identified an opportunity to provide a similar opportunity for students beyond Grade 10 Civics, or for those disengaged from the education system.

OJEN's leadership role in bridging the education and justice sector environments has attracted the attention of other provinces' legal education organizations. By collaborating nationally, OJEN can promote education for citizenship that includes a robust understanding of the justice system.

Strategies for Promoting Civic Engagement

- Develop Active Citizens program for provincial replication, including web resources and ESL and Workplace Law adaptation
- Develop resources on "Democracy and the Justice System"
- Promote the development of a national framework for citizenship curriculum, in partnership with other provincial organizations and educators
- Assist educators and volunteers to engage students in discussions on controversial subjects, as preparation for democratic participation
- Focus on resources for and professional development of Civics teachers.
- Promote civic engagement as a tool of justice system participation amongst Network and national partners and supporters



2. ADDRESS EMERGING NEEDS

Rationale

One of the strengths of OJEN's collaborative model is the ability to respond to requests and partnership ideas to address the needs of different communities or to adapt existing programs to reflect different learning styles, histories of justice sector involvement or levels of knowledge. In particular, OJEN has been able to work with a variety of partners with specific mandates to broker a justice education solution to meet the needs of particular youth. Given that people's understanding and interest in the justice system stems from a variety of sources, it is critical that OJEN remain committed to addressing emerging needs that might arise because of current events, changes to available services or the identification of new communities without access to justice education. This approach ensures that OJEN first assesses the activities of its partners to considering whether there is a better situated organization to meet a particular need before undertaking a new activity.

Current Activity

In establishing relationships, programs and a credible reputation in its work with Aboriginal, Newcomer and Francophone communities, as well as with youth who are disengaged from the education system, OJEN has developed strong partnerships. These partners express a need for OJEN to expand existing programming into new areas.

Strategies

OJEN will continue to rely on the expertise of its partners to identify communities that do not have access to effective justice education. In developing or adapting programming to meet these needs, OJEN will respect the areas of programming and funding pursued by other organizations and work collaboratively to avoid duplication and to foster cooperation between institutions and organizations.



Strategies for Addressing Emerging Needs

- Consult with educators and community organizers
- Review existing resources and research
- Develop new resources and programs to incorporate relevant expertise
- Respond to time-sensitive requests
- Develop and promote web-based discussion boards and information to promote efficient communication
- Develop justice education programming for younger children, Newcomers, Aboriginal youth and others
- Create new resources on subjects requested by teachers

3. BUILD ON STRENGTHS



Rationale

OJEN has developed a strong reputation for high quality resources and programming, positive impacts in communities and rewarding experiences for justice sector professionals delivering OJEN programs. New projects will be developed, while maintaining existing programming and ensuring that these successful programs thrive.

Current Activity

OJEN's classroom resources have been developed through the professional knowledge of educators and legal professionals. The review process to ensure both legal accuracy and curriculum links will continue. The plain language review conducted by Grade 10 students has ensured readable, age appropriate materials.

The regional OJEN Committee model has fostered diverse participation and brought together educators and those in the justice system to plan justice education that suits the needs of the specific community. New ideas and programs developed in any of the regions are shared with the provincial office and developed into templates with associated materials, to assist other locations interested in replicating a specific event.

Strategies

By formalizing the curriculum review process and developing more replication templates, OJEN will continue to rely on the expertise of local educators and those involved in delivering justice education to build a toolkit of best practices available around the province. OJEN will provide coordinated support to collect and redistribute best practices and to assist with cost-efficient program replication and expansion. OJEN will develop opportunities to train lawyers and judges on best practices developed in various locations in order to maintain high quality programming. OJEN will continue to respond to new ideas and innovation from existing partners, OJEN Committees and individuals, allowing current successes to evolve in a timely and responsive way to meet the needs exposed by current programming.

Strategies to Build on Strengths

- Formalize resource review process
- Formalize replication templates
- Strengthen regional OJEN Committees
- Develop web-based communication of best practices
- Promote information and idea sharing through centralized hub of program examples
- Support volunteer committees and individuals to initiate new programs based on templates and best practices
- Offer training to build the capacity for expanded justice education programming
- Increase responsiveness to opportunities



4. INVOLVE YOUTH STRATEGICALLY

Rationale

OJEN's commitment to dialogue as a tool to strengthening civil society requires committing to meaningful involvement of youth. Most youth remain excluded from the dialogue about the justice system, and about democracy in general. Comfort with the topic and format of discussions allow youth to arrive as equal participants in debates about our justice system and about social justice issues. OJEN's justice and education sector professionals also gain valuable insight into youth perspectives and are able to deliver justice education that is based on the opinions and experiences of youth.



Current Activity

OJEN's programs create opportunities for dialogue by bringing youth together with members of the justice sector in informal settings, in which discussions can be directed by the concerns of young people. Some of OJEN's programs allow youth to set the agenda for community development and share their expertise with adults and other youth in their neighbourhoods. OJEN's Active Citizens Program, linked to the Civics 10 curriculum, exposes youth to the ways that the law has been used to change society, and provides planning tools for youth to take on projects in their own communities. OJEN has maintained an advisory or consultancy role with individual youth and groups of youth who are building on the knowledge acquired through OJEN programs to undertake projects on their own.

Strategies

OJEN will develop formal advisory roles for youth to advise in OJEN's governance and programming, providing the expertise of young people, and ensuring program relevance and responsiveness. OJEN will work with existing groups of youth to pursue mutually beneficial partnerships. Youth involved in OJEN's training of professionals will highlight the competence and perspectives of young people and challenge conventional expectations of youth as the recipients of programming. OJEN will continue to partner on efforts to collect the opinions of youth and participate in research about youth perspectives.

Strategies for Involving Youth Strategically

- Develop formal youth advisory roles on OJEN Committees
- Provide existing volunteers and Committees resources and training on ensuring meaningful consultation with youth
- Expand OJEN programming that invites youth perspectives
- Collect information and conduct research into youth perspective on the justice system
- Create paid positions for youth
- Involve youth in adult training models



5. STRIVE FOR DIVERSITY

Rationale

Incorporating the perspectives of culturally, linguistically and economically diverse people, as well as those who are familiar with the needs of newcomers, people living with disabilities, gender and sexuality issues and other marginalized perspectives, will enhance OJEN's responsiveness, relevance and credibility. The justice sector does not yet reflect the diversity of Canadian society. A concerted effort to diversity in OJEN's governance structures, staff resources and programming will help to bridge this gap and create additional opportunities for dialogue.

Current Activity

OJEN's outreach activities have built relationships with community organizations and individuals whose members have historically had a negative relationship with the justice system. OJEN's staffing, governance and volunteer base need to reflect that diversity. Lawyers and judges are recruited for programs with the cultural complement of the youth in mind, creating role modelling and mentoring opportunities whenever possible. Newcomer programs rely on the expertise of professionals who immigrated themselves, allowing youth to see a viable career path for a new Canadian. OJEN's staff includes a variety of cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds.



Strategies

The Network, Board of Directors and OJEN Committees are governance structures where diverse perspectives could be given higher profile by designating representative seats or recruiting from a more diverse pool of experts. Efforts will be made to continue to diversify the staff complement. Training in the importance of, and barriers to, diverse participation in governance can ensure that these strategies are successful and meaningful.

Strategies for Diversity

- Establish Board Diversity Committee
- Help OJEN Committees assess local diversity issues / resources
- Expand policies promoting diversity
- Review governance structures to identify vacancies
- Adopt diversity training as a part of the orientation to governance roles
- Partner with culturally specific organizations
- Facilitate discussions on the need for a justice system that reflects the diversity of the community it serves

6. RAISE OJEN'S COMMUNITY PROFILE



Rationale

OJEN activities are one of the proactive ways that the justice system is addressing barriers to accessing justice and is positively impacting the community. The contribution of time, expertise and role modeling is significant, but rarely highlighted to the public. Those embracing justice education as part of their *pro bono* contribution to society often do not receive acknowledgement from their employer or colleagues. Promoting the positive impact OJEN is making will help to expand justice education in Ontario and in the rest of Canada.

Current Activity

Many educators and justice sector professionals, as well as members of the public do not know about OJEN or its programs and resources, nor about its efforts to foster dialogue and encourage participation in civil society. OJEN's collaborative model, emphasizing quality programming, has not devoted resource to promotion, downplaying OJEN's successes and the individual contributions of the legal professionals.

Strategies

OJEN will develop new opportunities to highlight the impact of justice education, relying on its partners, while also developing new communications tools. Increased profile at provincial and national conferences on citizenship will raise OJEN's profile and develop new opportunities for collaboration. Celebrating the success and leadership of individuals will allow the public, as well as the profession to hear about and appreciate the significant contribution of OJEN volunteers.

Strategies for Raising OJEN's Community Profile

- Develop volunteer recognition awards
- Promote successes
- Develop capacity to share success stories online
- Profile OJEN's leadership in justice education at conferences
- Develop collaborations to raise profile justice education nationally
- Promote a national strategy for justice education



7. ENHANCE OJEN'S ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY



Rationale

Develop exciting programming that responds to the needs of its constituents must not come at the expense of the existing OJEN programming or the existing staff and volunteers. Enhanced administrative capacity ensures that OJEN remains a stable, efficient and transparent organization with sound operational procedures.

Current Activity

OJEN has developed effective governance policies and recognized accounting practices, in accordance with its reputation for transparent and reliable programming. OJEN's volunteer base is committed and enthusiastic. OJEN's staff complement has grown alongside the program expansion and includes a range of skill sets and expertise.

Strategies

OJEN will expand staffing levels as programming expands, recognizing the added administrative burden of new initiatives and ensuring that there is support for local volunteers. As part of the expansion of the staffing model, OJEN will pay particular attention to the administrative capacity required by a larger organization and will address the need for expertise in communications, fundraising, volunteer management and human resources when appropriate. OJEN will keep up with technological changes and periodically review alternatives to allow staff to work efficiently. OJEN will develop a web-based platform for operations that allows for regional staff and volunteer access, efficient data collection and management, and future integration of new uses of technology.

Funding of OJEN activities is an obvious precondition to the planned growth. OJEN's Funding Strategy includes a diversity of avenues for funding including government support, foundation funding, private donations and fundraising events. OJEN values its ongoing relationship with the Law Foundation of Ontario and will develop it to pursue overlapping goals of promoting justice education, facilitating sector-wide collaboration and access and raising the profile of both organizations.

Strategies for Enhancing Administrative capacity

- Develop web-based content management system for all data
- Expand staff complement
- Explore non-paid staffing options
- Diversify funding sources
- Review use of technology



Learning More, Providing Ideas and Getting involved

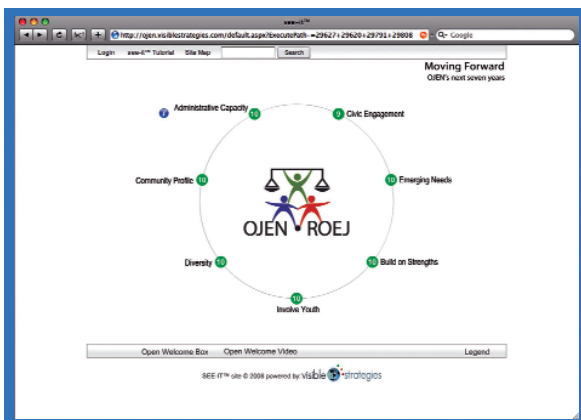
OJEN success over the past seven years is due to the innovations, generosity and commitment of its individual volunteers and organizational partners. In order to undertake each of these new areas of growth, OJEN will be looking for an even broader base of support. To indicate your interest in participating in a specific program, initiating something in your community or connecting with existing OJEN programs, simply email OJEN at info@ojen.ca. To learn about a program or to download any of the hundreds of resources available in French or English, visit www.ojen.ca.

To suggest a new approach to justice education, contact the OJEN office directly. New ideas are always welcome.



Monitoring Our Progress

OJEN is committed to high quality programming from the perspective of participants and users of OJEN resources, as well as from the experience of its volunteers. Evaluation will focus on measuring the impact OJEN is having on youth and citizens and on the benefits of involvement with OJEN. OJEN is open to feedback on all of its activities with the continued commitment to make improvements and avoid inefficient or ineffective models.



OJEN is also committed to transparency. A new component of the OJEN website has been added to allow all of our stakeholders to keep track of our progress. The new Visible Strategies page is an interactive site that outlines the priorities and activities set out in this strategic plan, and sets concrete targets in each priority area. Information links and scorecards allow any of our community partners, volunteers, funders or members of the public to see how a particularly project or goal is progressing. OJEN has been able to develop this site as a result of the generous donation of hosting and development time from the staff at Visible Strategies.