



UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

**BUILDING OUR CASE: How Can Grassroots Organizations  
Using Restorative Justice Frameworks Demonstrate Their  
Impact on Incarcerated and At-Risk Populations?**

by

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## **Abstract**

Every year, the United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other country on the planet. As part of recent legislation to reduce prison populations, new re-entry policies prioritize rehabilitative programming. Throughout the country, thousands of volunteers working with grassroots organizations are part of this effort; however, the impact of their services is largely unknown. This report addresses barriers that organizations may encounter in evaluating their programs and offers recommendations for working with partners in the Criminal Justice system, while maintaining values that reflect a Restorative Justice paradigm. This report creates a program evaluation model for small, under-resourced organizations that focuses on leveraging opportunities, checking capacity, and remaining Mission-centric. As an example, the report highlights the growth and vision of Yoga for All Movement (YFAM), an all-volunteer organization in Santa Cruz California that uses trauma-informed principles to provide accessible yoga for incarcerated and at-risk populations. Three methods of research are utilized. First, the report explores the history of the incarceration crisis with an emphasis on the law and policy that got us here today and recent efforts to curb the trend. Second, primary data from 92 class evaluations are analyzed, and the results of 14 semi-structured interviews with experts, volunteers, and survivors of trauma are presented and synthesized. The report finds that further research is needed to hold community-based yoga programs to the standards of evidence-based practices. It presents a model that grassroots organizations can use to evaluate their work, setting themselves in the direction of developing evidence-based practices.

**Keywords:** Recidivism, Re-entry, Restorative Justice, Trauma, Yoga

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## **Section 1. Introduction**

### **Why Teach Trauma-Informed Yoga to Inmates?**

Trauma-informed, or trauma-sensitive sensitive yoga, is an adaptation of contemporary yoga practice that helps victims heal from traumatic events by regaining control of their body. The idea behind this “Psychomotor” therapy is that trauma is the result of experiencing a traumatic event in which our natural mechanisms to fight or flee failed to keep us safe. When we lose control of situation it becomes traumatic. These experiences are internalized in the body, converting it into the perpetrator of the traumatic experience (Van der Kolk, 2014).

The people we lock up in jails and prisons are among the most traumatized segments of our population. They often experience chronic trauma through homelessness, domestic violence, street violence, police violence, rape, and substance abuse. Incarceration in itself is traumatizing and can be so “stark and psychologically painful that it represents a form of traumatic stress severe enough to produce post-traumatic stress reactions once released” (Haney, 2001).

Culturally, there has been a shift recognizing trauma and its effects on behavior and social functioning, specifically with regard to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD was first entered into the American Psychological

Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1980. After soldiers from the War on Terror began returning home, the term came into common use. What is more, the number of veterans serving time began to drop (Compared to post Vietnam-era numbers) as "veterans courts," which provide treatment and programming in lieu of jail time were being implemented all over the country (Friedmman, 2007). Courts recognizing the medical health needs of return soldiers is certainly a step in the right direction, however the general prison population has yet to benefit from such progress. It may be up to the nonprofit sector to take the lead.

Trauma-informed yoga is an emerging therapeutic practice. The volunteers at Yoga for All Movement, the focus organization of this report, feel compelled to teach yoga to incarcerated individuals based on their personal experiences as former inmates, persons in recovery, social workers, and advocates of social justice. They are experienced yoga instructors who use trauma-informed principles (e.g. specific poses, language, class structure, etc.) to break down some of the commercialized narrative about what yoga is and who it is for. Traditional therapies involve talking about through the event, sometimes over and over again, in effect re-creating it until the patient is desensitized (Emerson and Hopper, 2011). However, this may not be the best approach, or best first step, for healing patients who have experienced serious or ongoing trauma. By offering a welcoming, healing, environment, and teaching inmates

tools to help them manage previous and reoccurring trauma they hope to not only ease the pains of incarceration, but aid former inmates in a successful reentry into society.

### **The Incarceration Crisis**

Mass incarceration is no secret in the United States. Three decades of so-called “Tough on Crime” policies created an unprecedented boom in prison and jail populations. While those convicted of crimes were serving longer sentences, the enormity of the boom created a system where at least 600,000 former prisoners are released back into society every year (Vera.org, 2017). The success of those who re-enter is dependent on many factors, and each person who re-enters is unique. Criminal history, familial ties, peer networks, education, abstinence from substances, and education are examples of the factors experts and policy makers take into consideration when assessing how likely an inmate is to recidivate. What is more, under the U.S. Constitution and judicial system incarceration as punishment is the loss of liberty. The experience of being incarcerated is not the punishment, and the ability of institutions to rehabilitate, not further damage inmates, is in the interest of not only those who are convicted but public safety as a whole.

## **Prison and Jail Programs**

To that effort, the 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 901 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails, and 76 Indian Country jails participate in a range of mandatory and voluntary programs while they serve their time (Vera.org, 2017). Some will earn credit toward early release, or transition into camps, group homes, or sober living environments to finish their sentences. Participation in some programs will have no effect on the length of time served. While resources, approaches, and administrative practices vary widely among the heads of state and local systems, typical program areas include substance abuse, mental health, literacy, occupational skills, English as a second language, parenting, and library services.

Under the Obama administration, the National Institute of Justice launched CrimeSolutions.gov to research the effectiveness of the myriad of prison and jail programs. Their directive was to foster the use and dissemination of evidence-based practices in crime reduction. From its inception in 2011, CrimeSolutions.gov has evaluated 487 programs, and found that only 3% of programs administered in prisons and jails were effective at reducing recidivism (CrimeSolutions.gov, 2017). National recidivism numbers reflect these findings, with over two-thirds of state-released prisoners arrested for a new crime within 3 years, and three-quarters arrested within arrested 5 years (Durose, Cooper, and Snyder 2004).



### **Evidence-Based: Getting to Step One**

While criminal justice decision makers may be paying greater attention to the outcomes of official prison programs, there are thousands of community and faith-based programs in institutions across the country whose impacts are unknown. They may be supporting an official program, or entering facilities under the auspices of “recreational” or “religious” activities. Institutions in state and local correctional systems (where the vast majority of inmates are held) are managed by discretion of wardens, superintendents, and other jail officials, creating the opportunity for more diverse types of activities and programming. Additionally, both federal and state prisons, local jails, and juvenile facilities typically welcome volunteers and volunteer organizations. Many have programs such as mentoring, arts, and religious services where they actively recruit community volunteers. However, participation, much less outcomes and impacts may never be evaluated.

Without reporting issued directly from institutions, it may be impossible to quantify the people and organizations that volunteer in the thousands of prisons and jails across the country. One could start with a laborious search of each state’s charity directory (usually managed by the Office of the Attorney General) and produce a list of those active organizations incorporated with the explicit goal of reducing recidivism. Unfortunately, this number would not reflect the number of programs carried out in prisons or jails by organizations incorporated under a

broader or related mission, for example organizations that provide legal assistance, financial education, or family services in multiple sites including corrections facilities. To offer an idea of the number of organizations involved in this work, in 2014 George Kayer from *Prison Legal News* published *The Best 500 Nonprofit Organizations for Prisoners and Their Families*, a directory of over 800 organizations working in the field. Additionally, only looking at incorporated public charities would not include a large swath of volunteers. Faith-based volunteer groups, who often have the most access to inmates due to their historical presence in corrections facilities. Drawing on longstanding cultural norms of providing inmates opportunities to practice religion have created an avenue for independent and groups of volunteers to easily obtain clearance.

As mentioned earlier, traditional programing is failing to reduce recidivism to a significant degree. Among the thousands of programs, practices, and approaches delivered every day by volunteers, faith-based groups, and nonprofits organizations, there could be hidden solutions and interventions that successfully break the cycle of recidivism. Without the administrative support of government and corrections facilities to track, much less assess these program, it's up the organizations themselves to prove their impact.

## **The Yoga for All Movement and the Charitable and Voluntary Sector**

For this project, *Yoga for All Movement* (YFAM) was selected as an example of grassroots organization working in this arena. YFAM is public charity that provides yoga and meditation services based on therapeutic, trauma-informed principles. They serve incarcerated men, women, and youth, as well as at-risk populations including victims of domestic violence, women in recovery, and youth in the foster care or probation systems. YFAM services show volunteer services are under and improperly counted in prisons and jails. 54% of their services evaluated in this report were categorized as “Buddhist Activities” by Salinas Valley State Prison, and Rountree Medium facility they are “Religious Services”. Another 34% of services were categorized as “Physical Education” in Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall. YFAM curriculum neither acknowledges nor teaches any religion, and the majority of their classes are sedentary.

In summation, it is safe to assume that while exact numbers would be difficult to prove, the charitable and voluntary sector plays a major role in the criminal justice system. Additionally, the importance of evaluating and determining the impacts of programs so that we can address the mass incarceration crisis with the most public benefit is becoming increasingly important to public policy. Further, the trend is likely to continue. For example, *The Second Chance Reauthorization Act* was introduced in June of 2017 with bipartisan support. This piece of legislature funds community-based organizations

working to reduce recidivism using evidence-based practices. In its first four years, organizations in 49 states served 137,000 through federal grants issued under the bill (Council of State Governments, 2017).

The purpose of this project is to look at the growth and vision of the Yoga for All Movement and create an evaluation roadmap flexible enough to be used by other grassroots organizations and individuals working within the criminal justice system. The intent is to design an evaluation system that produces data pertinent to short and longer term organizational goals. It addresses the barriers and opportunities they and other organizations may encounter in evaluating their programs and offers recommendations for working with Criminal Justice institutions.

The premise of this project is that by garnering the buy-in of institution decision makers, an organization will be on better footing to access important program data. In turn, the more program data available for analysis, an organization becomes better positioned to articulate their impact. The report suggests a circular relationship with criminal justice institutions, and highlights the importance of demonstrative program value as a basis for those enhancing those relationships. It asserts that community based organizations can more successfully solicit the financial support they need to better serve their clients and impact more lives by effectively building the case for their programs.

To articulate how nonprofits like YFAM can turn their daily activities into a narrative that supports their programs, this report begins with the context in which these organizations work. A review of literature including some recent historical background on mass incarceration, and trends in the criminal justice field are offered. It identifies reports issued by government agencies as well as advocacy groups and other nonprofits. The report provides examples of peer-reviewed studies on related therapies. It looks at the methods and approaches used to gather primary data from YFAM's programs, and provides analysis of that data. The report concludes with recommendations.

## **Section 2: Literature Review**

### **Mass Incarceration: The Scope of the Problem**

Since the 1970s, incarceration rates in the United States have exploded. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report issued in December of 2016, estimated that there were more than 1.5 million prisoners in state and federal correctional facilities at the end of 2015, versus less than 300,000 in 1978 (Carson and Anderson, 2016). However, prison reform groups such as the Vera Institute of Justice argue that incarceration rates are much higher, between 2 and 2.3 million and (Vera.org 2017). This discrepancy may be due in part to reporting practices that do not include individuals in pretrial detention. County judicial systems are overburdened with caseloads that have severely outpaced the ability of courts to handle them. The International Centre for Prison Studies claims there

are about 480,000 Americans in pretrial imprisonment (Walmsley,2014) whereas Prison Policy Initiative reports 630,000 –or two thirds of inmates in local jails (Rabuy, 2017). According to Human Rights watch, the number of people locked up (who are disproportionately men of color) is compounded by the effects of a “money bail” system that prices low-level arrestees out of freedom. Regardless of their potential dangerousness to society, poor people may spend long periods of time in pretrial detainment. (Fellner and Raphling et. al, 2017) While government and advocacy groups may not agree on the extent or the underlying causes, the practice of incarcerating American citizens has grown dramatically in the United States over the last 30 years.

### **How We Got Here**

Three kinds of law enforcement policy have got us where we are today. The Nixon Administration’s so-called 1971 “War on Drugs” dedicated unprecedented amounts of federal and state resources into on-the-ground law enforcement, resulting in more arrests for non-violent drug offenses. Mandatory minimum sentencing legislation of the eighties and nineties took away the power and discretion of the judicial system to sentence those convicted of drug offences in favor of harsh federal guidelines. One of the most contentious policies were federal minimum sentencing guidelines for possession of crack cocaine. Those convicted were sentenced to five or ten years for possession of as little as five grams. The guidelines for multiple petty convictions was life imprisonment.

(Temple Law, 2015). Later, “Truth in Sentencing” laws curbed early release for good behavior programs by withholding federal grants for states that opted for letting non-violent offenders finish lengthy sentences on parole. States like Idaho and Nevada passed laws eliminating some parole options completely, while others set thresholds of 75% (O’hare and Wheelock, 2015).

Bolstering the new incarceration system are high rates of recidivism. In a report commissioned by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, they found that two-thirds of population growth in jails from 1995 to 2005 was attributable to pretrial detention. Put another way, of the 12 million estimated admissions and releases, only 9 million represented unique individuals (Durose and Cooper, 2014). Those being convicted for “serious” crimes were serving longer sentences, and those released were being rearrested.

### **Prison Overcrowding**

An immediate outcome of these influences was the unprecedented amount of prison overcrowding. “Tough on Crime” initiatives were easily passed by both Republicans and Democrats. Under the Clinton Administration more Americans were imprisoned than any other president (DuVernay, 2016), however allocating sufficient resources for the droves of new inmates was less popular and a burgeoning prison population remained in the existing infrastructure. At the height of prison overcrowding, prisons and jails throughout the nation where as

much as 200% of capacity. In California, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation reported in 2007 that nearly 325,000 inmates were crammed into facilities designed to hold just over 165,000 (Department of Corrections, 2007). Overcrowded prisons compromise the ability of corrections institutions to provide rehabilitative services, maintain health and safety, and prevent violence. Prisoners in overcrowded facilities are not only less likely to receive educational and therapeutic services, but they are more likely to contract HIV (Bollini, 2002), be gang-affiliated, pick up additional convictions, or return to prison within a few years after their release. (Hanely, 2006)

While no states were able to keep pace with the massive influx of prisoners, California is considered the worst example of overcrowding. In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled that California's prison system violated constitutional laws and ordered the state to address prison overpopulation. California Assembly Bills 109 and 117 were enacted, with the goal of reducing the number of inmates in the state's 33 prisons to 137.5% of design capacity by shifting newly-convicted, low-level offenders to local jails (Office of the Governor, 2011). By 2017, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation institutions and camps had a combined population of just under 234,000 inmates, or about 133% of capacity (Department of Corrections, 2007).



In national prison reform efforts, US Attorney General Eric Holder launched a “Smart on Crime” program in 2013. The initiative refocused resources, acknowledged disparate impacts of the criminal justice system and the punishment of low-level criminals, bolstered prevention and reentry efforts, and created protections for vulnerable populations. Specifically, Holder’s office issued policy memoranda to the heads of Department of Justice components and U.S. Attorneys reprioritizing federal prosecutions and discouraging perusing mandatory minimums (Office of the Attorney General, 2013)

Many states and municipalities followed suite, such as California’s reentry legislation, Proposition 47. Under 2014 law, those convicted of 6 different drug crimes were given an opportunity to renegotiate their sentence for shorter terms. The bill was written to redirect tax revenue saved by releasing prisoners to programs that will keep them out. The state spends on average more than \$50,000 annually per inmate (Ulloa, 2017). New Proposition 47 programs included resentencing, rehabilitation, and crime prevention. Of those, many will be contracted to nonprofits directly, or through agencies like Health and Human Services. California is not alone. Since 2013, several states have enacted or proposed legislation that diverts resources from incarceration to rehabilitation creating room for innovation and new community partnerships.

### **Section 3: Methods and Approaches**

This report used four methods of data collection, a literature review, collection of primary data from YFAM volunteers, semi-structured interviews with volunteers and field experts, and secondary data from reports created by various justice agencies, advocacy groups, and nonpartisan research organizations. The approach was to involve key stakeholders and balance official government reporting with outside agency data from within the charitable sector. Further, a participatory element was built in by beginning with volunteers, including them in the design process, and modifying the project as it unfolded. Due to the type of clientele served by YFAM, access to those served was not possible for this project. In fact, how to address this barrier became one of the main focuses in the recommendations and conclusion section of this report. The standpoint of this project is rooted in the principles of Restorative Justice, and the author comes from a background of familial and professional experience with the criminal justice system.

#### **Primary Data Collection: YFAM internal data**

From February to June 2017, 92 evaluations were collected from volunteer yoga instructors immediately after teaching their class. One hour classes (with a few exceptions discussed later) are held on a weekly basis in various locations throughout Santa Cruz County, and one in Soledad California. The locations and groups are:

- Crossroads Group Home, Foster youth up to age 24
- Janus of Santa Cruz Perinatal Services, In-patient group home for recovering women and their children up to age 3
- Juvenile Hall; Unit A aged 12-15, and Unit B aged 16-19
- Juvenile Probation Evening Center, Youth on probation up to age 19
- Rountree Medium Facility, Men's and Women's groups
- Salinas Valley State Prison, Level-4 male inmates (located in Soledad)
- Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Center, Drop-in center for victims of domestic violence

Evaluation responses were collected using Google Forms and imputed to a spreadsheet. Volunteers typically used a smart phone or other mobile device.

They responded the following series of questions:

1. Name and email
2. Location, date, time, and duration of class
3. Number of student participants
4. What was successful about today?
5. What was challenging about today?
6. If anything, what will you do differently in the future?

Qualitative responses varied greatly in length, with the shortest response only two words and the longest 140. There were barriers in implementing this data collection. Two groups were never reported on, Siena House, a group home for expecting mothers in crisis, and another Men's group at Roundtree Jail. There were also challenges for some volunteers with using Google forms, and others had difficulty consistently submitting. Another factor was the addition of new sites in April, Walnut Ave. and Probation Evening Center.

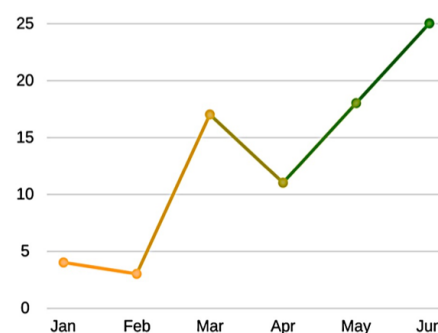


Figure 1 Number of Classes Reported per Month

### **Volunteer Interviews**

The responses from each volunteer were aggregated to create individual semi-structured interviews. Questions were site-specific, but focused on trauma-informed practices, program needs, and volunteer insights. During the interview, the aggregated responses were shared with the volunteer, for further reflection on strengths, weaknesses, and trends. Volunteers were informed of other interviews scheduled for the project and invited to share what they thought would be important to ask their site managers or other field experts.

The results of these interviews were used to create profiles of each site. The profiles were created to serve the dual purpose of orienting board members and other organization members, and to create a SWOT analysis from the perspective of YFAM's position to conduct a program evaluation.

### **Primary Data Collection: Expert Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with the following program heads of YFAM service sites and other field experts. Taking into consideration the interviewees area of expertise and affiliation with YFAM, there were three main objective areas. The first was to determine if the site agency tracked or monitored YFAM classes. Second, how could YFAM work with partner sites to record individual attendance (through inmate id numbers, etc.) and what processes would need to be in place to conduct a survey of services that protected the identity of

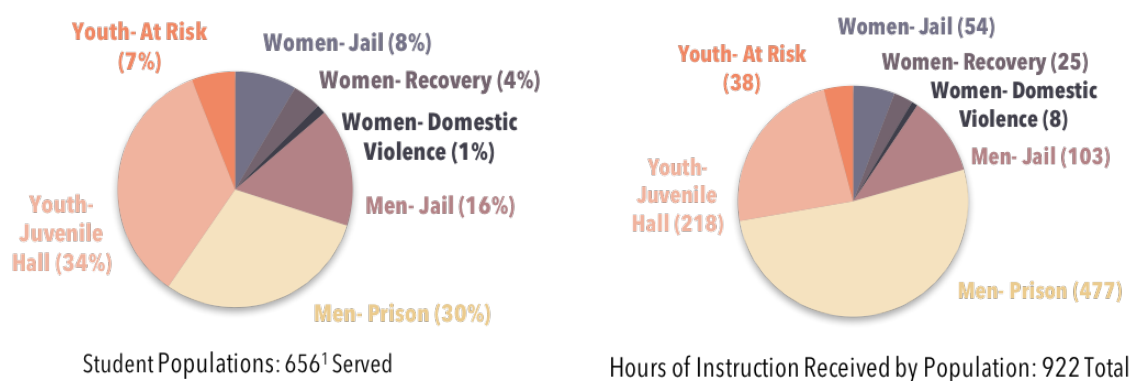
respondents while reporting their individual attendance? The last goal was to look at successful agency practices and what was considered to create the greatest impact. Additionally, how (if at all) their agency measured success.

Interviewees included:

- Kristie Clemens, Program Director, Rountree Medium Facility
- Lisa Russel, Director of Research and Evaluation, Janus
- Martha Weldon, Director of Advocacy and Prevention Programs, Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Center
- Melinda Brown, Program Director, Janus Perinatal
- Sara Ryan, Superintendent, Santa Cruz Juvenile Hall
- Sarah Emmert, Community Organizer, United Way of Santa Cruz County
- Shandara Gill, Foster Youth Engagement Coordinator, Encompass community Services and Founder of Yoga for All Movement
- Terrell Merritt, GRIP Graduate and Program Facilitator

## Section 4. Data Analysis

In order to create an evaluation of program services, agencies must have a good understanding of who they are serving.



**Figure 2 Results of Evaluation Data, Students Served and Hours of Instruction Received**

<sup>1</sup> Student Population Served included all attendance, i.e. the number of unique individuals was not determined in this report. Depending on the partner site, students may participate for several days or several months.

There is a sizable increase between the number of prison students YFAM serves and the number of hours of instruction that population receives in comparison to the other groups. This is due to the larger class size (the prison group class size in an average of 17 participants versus 6 agency-wide) and longer classes. YFAM was part of a “retreat” where prisoners were lead in yoga and meditation for an afternoon. After being presented with this data, the YFAM prison volunteer began collecting sign-in sheets from the classes in order to track individual participation. From an evaluation perspective, this highlights an opportunity to administer a survey to a larger sample size. Further, that building relationships with prison administration should be made a priority.

By analyzing the site profiles and interview responses, and comparing them to each profile, a SWOT analysis was conducted. The purpose was to determine YFAM’s position at each site with regards to its ability to administer a deeper evaluation of program services and what areas will need to be addressed in order for that effort to be successful.

Results of the analysis conclude that the greatest strengths included Agency Support and High Participation, and the greatest threats were Volunteer Burnout and Communication and Collaboration with Agency Partners. When presented with these findings, YFAM volunteers were most surprised by Continuing Services as an opportunity. This showed a lack of communication

from agency staff and their long-term plan to provide highly-motivated YFAM students with case-management style services which include yoga apprenticeships. Diversity as a weakness was not seen a surprise. YFAM has taken steps to create a more diverse Board of Directors and staff, however there is an acknowledged gap in their ability to serve many of their Latinx clientele with bi-lingual and bi-cultural volunteers.

	Strengths	Weaknesses		Opportunities	Threats
<b>Youth-At Risk</b>	<b>Agency Support</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	Client Engagement	More Volunteer Training	<b>Volunteer Burnout</b>
<b>Juvenile Hall</b>	Volunteer - Site Report		Informal Orientation	Client Engagement	
<b>Women-DV</b>	<b>Agency Support / Referrals</b>	Low Turnout	Drop-In Class	<b>Continuing Services</b>	Availability of Specialty Trained Volunteers
<b>Women-Recovery</b>			Bi-Weekly vs Weekly Schedule		
<b>Women-Jail</b>	Volunteer Availability	No Spanish Bi-Lingual Volunteers		Program Expansion in 2018	Changing Site Policies
<b>Men- Jail</b>	Experienced Volunteers	Site Culture, Administrative Norms, Bureaucracy		Increase Stakeholders Buy-in	<b>Communication / Collaboration with Site Administration</b>
<b>Men-Prison</b>	<b>High Participation</b>			New Partnerships / Retreats	

Table 1 Position of YFAM to Evaluate Services, SWOT Analysis

## **Section 5: Recommendations and Conclusions**

As discussed earlier in this report, the charitable and voluntary sector has a role to play in rehabilitating the hundreds of thousands of former prisoners released back into society every year. As recidivism remains a major challenge for the criminal justice system, recent trends in legislation show an interest in government officials and agencies to support effective programs. However, as the push toward evidence-based practices grows, grassroots organizations could be further marginalized to the detriment of their growth and vision, stifling the sector's ability to customize and innovate solutions.

This report looked at the historical context of the incarceration crisis, and the role of nonprofits and volunteers to fill in the gap where government institutions are largely failing. It examined YFAM's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of its ability to evaluate programs, and compared those findings with the insights of experts. Taking the challenges, resources, and vision of YFAM as an example, this report recommends using the following model and principles to design an evaluation plan that makes sense for their goals and growth.





Figure 3 Evaluation Planning Model

## How to Use This Model

### *Start Where You Are.*

Every organization has its own beginning and its own path. When thinking about your evaluation plan, look for alignment with your current efforts. You may be able to double your efforts. Your organization might start with one group of activities, or it may already be engaged with several simultaneously. Think about your current focus and interests, and where your volunteers are already engaged.

***Look for Opportunity.***

This is your organization's work and the landscape in which it exists. At best, an organization has recently conducted an impact assessment of their programs. If not, a program evaluation, annual report or some other audit of services may be within reach. Compare this information with recent legislation and policy changes. Also, look for the research justifying any changes. This is an important step to consider when working with the Criminal Justice System. Stay current on legislation and policy and monitor reports that are publically available. There may not be much reporting coming out of the specific institutions in which you work, however following the more readily available state reports will give you an idea of what to look for, or the questions to ask.

Depending where you work, your programmatic wisdom may be supported by science or policy. Or, you may gain a better sense of your critics and avoid making assertions that could compromise partner relationships. Looking for opportunity is an opportunity mindset. Whatever your organization has not yet built is an opportunity to create something inclusive, innovative, or efficient.

***Check Your Capacity.***

What data could be reasonably collected? What systems and procedures make sense for your volunteers? Prisons, jails, and other facilities may be capturing data relevant to your program, and building communication and

relationships may be a wise investment of time. They may have more access to your clients or be willing to share information, or they may just have some tips on how to survey their populations, etc. Think about who among your organization is the best person to leverage a relationship. Make sure they are well prepared and clearly understand the goals of your evaluation. An easy to read and email, one page document can be a useful tool for preparing volunteers and board members.

***Remember Why You Are Here.***

Always return to the Mission. How can your organization best serve your clients? What are your values? Are the partnerships you choose (outside of correctional facilities) the best fit? What is your strategy for continuing serving your clients in the future? Think about your organization's long term goals and how you want to impact your clients lives in the long term. Listen to your clients. What wisdom can they offer?

***Do it Again.***

This model is not a checklist or a singular process. It is an ongoing cycle intended to help organizations learn about themselves from relevant stakeholders so that they can articulate the benefits of their work in a way that will be heard.

As the criminal justice system and the charitable sector lean towards evidence-based practices grassroots organizations will have to find creative solutions to capture, analyze, and present data in ways that are within their capacity. For organizations like Yoga for All Movement who are using and developing emerging practices, their burden of proof lies squarely on them. Not only is it up to them to determine their impact for the growth and sustainability of their programs, but they ethically must peruse an understanding of their impact.

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### **Author's Biography**

Roxanne has followed her passion for social and economic justice as an AmeriCorps service member, a grass roots facilitator, a volunteer organizer, and a free tax clinic coordinator. Her deepening stand against inequality, and her skills in the sector lead her to co-found Yoga for All Movement, an all-volunteer organization that provides trauma-informed yoga for incarcerated and recovering youth and adults. Today, she serves as the organization's Chief Financial Officer.

Before finding her home in the nonprofit sector, Roxanne worked as a tractor operator for wildfire rehabilitation, an independent radio DJ, and was an entrepreneur in Antigua Guatemala. Roxanne's diverse experience prepared her for the dynamic, hands-on nature of community-based work, where she believes passion becomes impact through creativity and collaboration.