



# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:

Case Study and Learning Strategy

*Prepared by Andrew Blum and Nohelia Ramos*

*April 19, 2022*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Noema Aguilar for her research support and Rachel Locke for her feedback on an earlier draft. They would also especially like to thank the team at Youth Empowerment, particularly Arthur Soriano, Niki Martinez, and Steve Vigil, for generously sharing their time for their careful review of an earlier draft. The work on this case study was funded by Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, Department of Justice, Federal Award ID Numbers: 2019-GP-BX-0133, 2019-GP-BX-0016.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is invested in preventing violence and reducing recidivism. To achieve these objectives, PSN has committed to supporting lived experience mentoring, often called credible messenger mentoring, through grants made to community organizations in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Lived experience mentoring is an approach to youth development that uses mentors who have lived through the same experiences as their mentees. For instance, Credible Messenger Justice Center (CMJC) matches "justice involved/at-risk young people who have a higher risk of re-offending...with specially trained adults with relevant life experiences (often previously incarcerated, Returned Citizens) called Credible Messengers."<sup>1</sup> The Young Adult Peer Mentoring program draws on mentors who share "lived experience of mental health challenges with purpose and intent to inspire hope and motivation in a young adult who is struggling with similar concerns."<sup>2</sup> The basic premise of the model is summed up here by CMJC: "From the same background and speaking the same language, Credible Messengers are able to break through to these individuals [the mentees] and form powerful, transformative, personal relationships."<sup>3</sup>

As part of its commitment to lived experience mentoring, the PSN initiative has asked the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice (IPJ) at the University of San Diego to do two things:

- 1) Conduct research on lived experience mentoring with a particular focus on the work of Youth Empowerment, a leading and growing lived experience mentoring organization in San Diego.
- 2) Work with Youth Empowerment to improve their capacity to collect, manage and leverage data to both increase their impact and increase the ability of others to learn from their programming in the future.

This document consists of two separate research products that align with these two objectives. The first is a case study of Youth Empowerment. The case study has several goals: first, to document the work of Youth Empowerment and allow others to learn in a detailed way about lived experience programming; second, to place the lived experience work of Youth Empowerment in the context of other violence prevention and anti-recidivism programming; and, third, to provide an opportunity for Youth Empowerment and its stakeholders to reflect on its approach and ways it can continue to increase its impact in the community.

The goal of the learning strategy is to develop a plan to improve the ability of Youth Empowerment to collect, manage and leverage data in order to increase the impact of the organization and to demonstrate that impact.

While the two parts of this report, the case study and the learning strategy, can stand on their own, we have combined them in this document because of the close linkages between the two, particularly how the case study informs the learning strategy. For instance, the theory of change and outcomes presented in the case study are directly relevant to choices about what kind of data to collect in the learning strategy. Therefore, we believe it is useful to present these research products together.

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CASE STUDY

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CASE STUDY

## HISTORY

Youth Empowerment (YE) has provided reentry services for justice-involved youth and adults from the City Heights and Southeast San Diego area since 2015. There is a particular need for this work in these communities. In the last 10 years, the City of San Diego overall has experienced significant economic growth and reductions in crime and violence, although some of these gains have been reversed in recent years. But, during this time, the neighborhoods of City Heights and Southeast San Diego have lagged behind. Both neighborhoods have significantly higher crime rates than the city average, and gang-related crime and gun violence have taken their toll on these communities, especially among youth and young adults. Disproportionate numbers of young people from City Heights and Southeast San Diego have been involved with the justice system, and when they return from incarceration, they return to neighborhoods that lack both opportunities for meaningful employment and networks that support the unique needs of justice-involved individuals. In these neighborhoods, the significant influence of gang culture adds an element of heightened risk for reentry, and many returning young people find themselves drawn back into a continuing cycle of poverty, crime and incarceration.

Youth Empowerment's work to address these challenges began as a community response to cycles of violence in City Heights. From these informal beginnings, Youth Empowerment has evolved into a community nonprofit with 10 staff members (including part-time staff), a seven-member board of directors, and an annual budget of close to \$300,000.<sup>4</sup> The organization was founded by Arthur Soriano. Drawing on his own "lived experience" in the justice system and in prison, Arthur applied a lived experience mentoring approach to support justice-involved men and women and help them successfully reenter their communities in a positive and constructive manner. This is the core of Youth Empowerment's mission.

## *Arthur Soriano and Niki Martinez*

### **Youth Empowerment is led by Arthur Soriano, founder and CEO, and Niki Martinez, Chief Operating Officer.**

On a warm spring afternoon, Arthur Soriano is in his old stomping grounds — Teralta Park — a small urban park atop a sunken freeway in San Diego’s City Heights neighborhood. As a teenage gang member in the 1980s, Arthur roamed the park and the surrounding streets before spending the better part of two decades in prison. Now 40, he has returned for different reasons.

Upon his release from incarceration at 36, he found himself below the poverty line, struggling to obtain employment, and, more importantly, unable to reconnect with his community. Arthur decided it was time to make a change. He realized that he could use his own experiences to guide others down a different path than the one he had taken.

For three years, every weekend, and with no funding, Arthur, his wife Gabby and more than a dozen other volunteers went to the park to shoot hoops, barbecue and build connections with the young people of City Heights, a neighborhood where poverty, trauma and violence have intersected for decades. They also began running workshops on youth leadership and restorative justice at a neighborhood church. Youth Empowerment, as an organization, grew organically out of this work.

As Arthur was on the outside engaging with the community, Niki Martinez was on the inside engaging with her peers in much the same way. Niki was sentenced to 45 years in prison at the age of 17 and served 25 consecutive years inside of juvenile hall, county jail and the California Youth Authority and then served out the duration of her time in the largest women’s prison in the world at Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla, California.

In the final 10 years of her time in prison, Niki became aware that she wanted to do something different — she wanted to heal, and she wanted to make amends. She created two organizations, became a certified drug and alcohol counselor, and obtained her AA degree. One of the organizations Niki founded, along with three other women who were juvenile offenders, was the Juvenile Offenders Committee (JOC). Today the committee has 130 active members and a waitlist of up to two years. The organization was founded out of the belief of the founders that juvenile offenders — who had never had the opportunity to experience life outside of prison as an adult — had special needs and could provide special kinds of support to each other.

Niki was released from prison on March 14, 2019, and joined Youth Empowerment soon after. She quickly rose to the position of Chief Operating Officer. In that role, she guides the work of the organization, while at the same time continuing to guide and support those who have been impacted by incarceration.

## LIVED EXPERIENCE MENTORING

Youth Empowerment works with both youth and adults who have been or are at risk of being involved with the justice system. The majority of their beneficiaries are youth, particularly if one uses the United Nations definition of youth as persons between 15 and 24 years of age, although they also work with adults who are being released from prison. Youth Empowerment centers lived experience or credible messenger mentoring in their work with these individuals. The evidence supporting the effectiveness of mentoring in general is quite strong. Several evidence reviews have found mentoring has a positive effect, although often a small to medium-sized one, in a wide variety of contexts and with a wide diversity of youth.<sup>5</sup>

Lived experience mentoring is distinguished from other forms of mentoring primarily by the type of mentors used. As noted above, these programs use mentors who have lived through the same experiences as their mentees and can therefore reach them and connect with them more effectively than others may be able to do.

Within San Diego and Imperial Counties, there are five organizations that we know of implementing lived experience mentoring programs: Youth Empowerment, Project A.W.A.R.E, Restoring Citizens, Paving Great Futures, and Oceanside Resilience.<sup>6</sup> In terms of effectiveness, while less research has been conducted on lived experience mentoring than on mentoring in general, the research that has been conducted is largely supportive of the effectiveness of this approach.<sup>7</sup>

### *Lived Experience Mentoring in Support of Youth Development and Adult Reentry*

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The lived experience approach taken by Youth Empowerment aligns with important current trends in youth development. Two trends in particular are worth highlighting. The first is the emergence and growing popularity of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach. Previous youth development approaches often focused on the negative — identifying poor performers, disciplining bad behaviors, creating consequences for antisocial behavior, and so on. PYD approaches, in contrast, focus on leveraging the resources and assets all youth have, building their agency, and creating ways for them to make a positive contribution.



The Youth Power Initiative notes: “In a single generation, the field of adolescent health has experienced a profound shift in both inquiry and emphasis — moving from questions focused almost exclusively on risk to seeking an understanding of what promotes well-being and protects against harm...”<sup>8</sup>

The second important trend in youth development is a broad consensus regarding the importance of “caring adults” or “youth-adult connectedness” in the lives of youth. One research report from the Department of Health and Human Services concluded that:

*Adolescents thrive in safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with supportive adults, whether those are parents, coaches, neighbors, grandparents, teachers, program leaders, or mentors. These types of connections are important for all teens and may be difficult for at-risk youth to find and sustain.*<sup>9</sup>

Lived experience mentoring aligns with both of these trends in youth development. In line with a PYD approach, lived experience mentors focus on building skills, resources and efficacy as well as creating opportunities for mentees to make positive contributions. The approach does not ignore the problems that mentees have had or the bad decisions they have made but focuses primarily on what mentees have to offer, regardless of their background. In addition, lived experience mentoring, almost by definition, allows mentees to connect with a caring adult — an adult who, because of their own experience, has a deep understanding of what the mentee is going through.

## ADULT REENTRY

There has been less programming and less research focused on lived experience mentoring for adult populations. However, both the research and our discussions with those working in adult reentry programs indicate that such mentoring is a promising intervention for both youths and adults for similar reasons. In regard to the trend toward PYD, for instance, one research study noted that, for both adults and youth, “peer mentoring...aligns with a strengths-based practice, repositioning criminalised people as ‘community assets to be utilized rather than liabilities to be supervised’.”<sup>10</sup> Regarding “caring adults,” based on our conversations with those working in the reentry field, returning citizens of all ages need someone on whom they can rely, who can help them navigate all the challenges of reentry, who is simply there consistently to support, not to demand or to judge.<sup>11</sup>

Overall, the limited amount of research that has been done regarding lived experience mentoring in adult populations shows the approach is promising. One study concluded, for instance: “The significant prediction of lowered recidivism in the mentored group is consistent with research literature suggesting programmed peer mentorship for returning citizens as a promising avenue for community reentry.”<sup>12</sup>

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT'S APPROACH AND THEORY OF CHANGE

### Approach

In internal documents, Youth Empowerment describes its approach as follows:

*Youth Empowerment transforms communities and builds public safety through community mentoring, systems engagement, and advocacy. Our primary activity is mentoring formerly incarcerated and at-risk young people in San Diego, and providing individualized, wraparound services to facilitate reentry into their communities, reduce recidivism, overcome trauma, and offer viable alternatives to gang affiliation. Youth Empowerment embodies credibility and trust for the young people we serve because our mentors share many of the same lived experiences and truly understand their needs and challenges. We work to reform the criminal justice system and empower young people with the skills, confidence, and support network they need to end cycles of violence and poverty in San Diego.*

This is a clear and concise description of the organization — an organization that uses a lived experience approach both to create positive outcomes for formerly incarcerated and at-risk individuals and to create change within the justice system and in society more broadly.

### Youth Empowerment's Theory of Change: Two Pathways<sup>13</sup>

A theory of change needs to do two things. First, it needs to show the pathway or pathways from activities to short-term results and then to the desired long-term results. A simple linear theory of change is illustrated below.



Second, and equally important, it needs to provide an explanation, some type of mechanism, for why these particular activities lead to the short-term results identified and why these short-term results lead to the desired long-term results. Each arrow in the theory of change is a set of assumptions regarding how the world works. An arrow that points, for instance, from job training to decreased unemployment contains an assumption that obtaining more skills leads to more employment. Assumptions like this need to be justified with evidence as part of the development of the theory of change and/or tested as part of the programming that is based on the theory of change.

Youth Empowerment's theory of change can best be understood as containing two pathways. One pathway leads to change in individuals — the participants in Youth Empowerment's initiatives. The other pathway leads to system-level changes within the criminal justice system in San Diego County. Most of Youth Empowerment's current work falls within the individual change pathway. There is some work being done within the systems change pathway, but the advocacy and systems change goals remain more aspirational at this point. The staff of Youth Empowerment acknowledge this and are working to build up this part of the organization.

## INDIVIDUAL CHANGE PATHWAY

Youth Empowerment's work to create positive outcomes for individuals aligns closely with the strategies used by other lived experience mentoring programs and organizations. This is not surprising, as Youth Empowerment identifies strongly with the national lived experience community and has drawn heavily on the work of those promoting lived experience approaches.<sup>14</sup> This also means that it is relatively easy to articulate the activities, short-term outcomes and long-term outcomes that are part of this work.

### *Activities*

In their programmatic work focusing on individuals, Youth Empowerment undertakes four types of activities:

- Group activities focused on reflection, building life skills and addressing trauma.
- One-on-one mentoring sessions for more intensive support and coaching.
- Meetings with parents, family members and others who are supporting the mentees.
- Support for mentees in obtaining needed social services through playing the role of navigator and advocate.

It's also important to note that many of Youth Empowerment's activities fall outside their structured programming. There are two aspects to this. First, Youth Empowerment provides ongoing support to youth and adults within their program and those who simply walk through their door. This can mean providing a bus pass at just the right time it will make a difference, making a phone call to get a place for someone to sleep, reaching out to parents and family members, or just having an impromptu problem-solving conversation. Within the field of criminal justice, these are often called "big, little things." They are important to get individuals through a crux moment but also to help build the trust that is needed for engagement over the longer term. This approach to work, or ethos, to do whatever is necessary, when it is necessary, is largely the result of the fact that Youth Empowerment, as an organization, evolved from the informal community outreach efforts of Arthur Soriano.

There is a second set of activities that falls outside Youth Empowerment's formal programs, which one staff member referred to as engaging in the "politics of the streets." Youth Empowerment is embedded in the community and therefore has deep knowledge of virtually everything that is happening in the community. So, for instance, Youth Empowerment may do informal outreach to a recently released individual who could be a problem or could be an important asset in helping them reach their goals. It may conduct informal conversations with community leaders, on both sides of the law, to encourage them to either support or, at the very least, not undermine their work. By its very nature this work is rarely documentable, but documenting it is also essential to the success of Youth Empowerment.

### *Short-Term Outcomes*

It is useful to divide the short-term outcomes that Youth Empowerment seeks to achieve into five categories:

- Skills: Problem-solving, goal-setting, decision-making and self-advocacy.
- Attitudes: Self-efficacy, motivation, taking responsibility for action, humility and patience. One Youth Empowerment staff member said participants had to have "confidence in society" — that is, confidence that society will reward good decision-making and doing the right thing.
- Behaviors: Avoiding problematic situations, fulfilling commitments and stopping behaviors that self-sabotage.
- Relationships: Developing supportive and positive relationships with individuals (family, peers, community members) and institutions (school, social service agencies, community organizations).
- Navigation: Improved ability to navigate social service agencies to access needed services and navigate the justice system to meet requirements, resolve issues and prevent new issues from arising. Of particular importance to Youth Empowerment is accessing services that help address trauma and support healing.

While Youth Empowerment would say all of these are important, in discussions with the staff, it is clear the organization has a particular focus on attitudes, behaviors and navigation.

### *Long-Term Outcomes*

Within the field of mentoring, there is relatively widespread agreement on a set of important, longer-term outcomes. These include the following:

- Decreased criminal behavior, justice involvement and recidivism.
- Improved performance in school or university.
- Reduced substance use/abuse.
- Increased ability to gain employment and to get better-paying and more fulfilling jobs.
- Increased prosocial behaviors and engagement with the community.
- Emotional well-being.

Again, while Youth Empowerment would say all of these are important, it particularly focuses on decreasing justice involvement, decreasing substance abuse and creating stability for participants by ensuring they have, for instance, a good job and stable housing.

### *Mechanisms: The Assumptions behind the Arrows*

As was discussed above, any theory of change contains a set of assumptions, represented by the arrows, about how outcomes are achieved. What are some of the assumptions about how lived experience mentoring activities produce the short-term outcomes?

#### **Activities to short-term outcomes:**

Based on a review of Youth Empowerment documents and discussions with Youth Empowerment staff, the following mechanisms appear to be connected to the five categories of short-term outcomes described above:

Participants develop their skills and more constructive attitudes and behaviors because a lived experience mentor:

- Cares, is committed and is someone on whom the mentee can rely.
- Models more positive, productive attitudes and behaviors.
- Provides support to stick to plans and creates mechanisms for accountability.
- Provides positive messages — that success remains a possibility — based on experience in a similar situation.

Participants develop improved relationships because a lived experience mentor:

- Models caring relationships.
- Shows individuals they are worthy of caring relationships.

Participants are better able to navigate services because a lived experience mentor:

- Helps overcome an oppositional culture that makes young people reject services.
- Provides real guidance from someone who understands systems from the inside, as well as barriers to access and how to overcome them.

It is important to remember that all these statements are assumptions. Below we will discuss the extent to which Youth Empowerment is collecting data to test these assumptions underpinning their work.

### **Short-term outcomes to long-term outcomes:**

The assumptions about how the short-term outcomes lead to the long-term outcomes in the individual change pathway are relatively straightforward, although underneath them lies all the complexity of human behavior. The assumptions are that youth are successful, they thrive, when:

- They have certain skills, attitudes and behaviors. For instance, they have a sense of responsibility, they have self-efficacy, and they have the ability to stop self-destructive behaviors.
- They have relationships with individuals who care about them.
- They are able to access the social services they need.

These assumptions underpin the work of Youth Empowerment to create longer-term outcomes for the individuals they work with — outcomes such as reducing recidivism, reducing substance abuse, getting a good job, and so on.

## **SYSTEMS CHANGE PATHWAY**

Youth Empowerment's theory of change focused on systems change is less fully fleshed out than that focused on individual change. In fact, at the time this case study was being written, a strategy for the advocacy and systems change work was being developed by the organization. That strategy document will be key to articulating the theory of change for Youth Empowerment's systems change work.

To date, the activities within the pathway have largely consisted of Arthur Soriano's individual advocacy efforts through the relationships he has built and the networks he has developed. The work to promote the Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct (TICCC) for organizations providing substance abuse services is one of Youth Empowerment's first, more formal, system change efforts.

In regard to short-term outcomes, it is clear that a core part of the theory of change will be producing leaders with lived experience who can advocate for change from within and outside the system. So, for instance, as part of the TICCC, Youth Empowerment will prepare a cohort of 10 youth leaders with lived experience to train 100 organizations. The youth leaders will also serve as advocates for the TICCC. A parallel goal is to develop leaders who go to work within agencies like the probation department and bring their lived experience lens to their work there.

The desired long-term outcomes center on creating a system that removes the stigmatization of those who have been justice-involved and incarcerated and provides sufficient support for formerly incarcerated individuals to thrive once they re-enter society.

As noted above, the theory of change for systems change efforts is currently a work-in-progress at Youth Empowerment. Once that work is completed and a strategy is developed, this case study will be updated with a more detailed theory of change.

## THEORY OF CHANGE AND DATA COLLECTION

The theory of change laid out above, particularly the individual change pathway, will be used to inform the learning strategy developed for Youth Empowerment. First, a theory of change describes the short-term and long-term outcomes an organization is trying to achieve. These are also the outcomes on which Youth Empowerment should be collecting data.

Second, a theory of change articulates a set of assumptions about how the world works, informing the mechanisms by which the outcomes are understood to be achieved. Data should be collected by Youth Empowerment on its programs to help test those assumptions.

Finally, the learning strategy will also articulate the need to leverage external research to assess Youth Empowerment's theory of change. In order to assess the effectiveness of its programs, Youth Empowerment can supplement data collection on its programming with external research that shows its programming model has been effective (or not) elsewhere.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: CURRENT PROGRAMMING

The theory of change described above currently informs several Youth Empowerment programs focused on youth and parents and a recently launched initiative focused on promoting trauma-informed practices within the justice system. These initiatives are summarized below.

### *Overview of Programs and Curricula*

#### GENERAL PROGRAMS

##### *County of San Diego Probation Department Resilience Community Mentoring Program*

- Where: Central Region of San Diego
- Who: Youth referred by the San Diego Department of Probation
- How many: 60 youth total, 20 new youth per year
- How: Mentoring, assessment, case management, groups (including Forward Thinking), therapeutic treatment, family support and wraparound support of youth
- When: 2018-present
- Funders: San Diego County Probation Department
- Partners: SAY San Diego, Project Aware

##### *The Community Mentors Adult Reentry Program*

- Where: Central Region of San Diego
- Who: Individuals 18-60 years of age on Post-Release Community Supervision after exiting the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) system, formally referred by Probation or informally referred by members of the community
- How many: 150 mentees (over a three-year term), approximately 50 new mentees per year (across six eight-week cohorts annually)
- How: Mentoring program (90 minutes per week for eight weeks) that includes comprehensive wraparound services, case management with a trauma-informed service approach (Seeking Safety), various curricula (including Seeking Safety and Parents on a Mission), career readiness, and job placement
- When: 2019-present
- Funder(s): Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)
- Partners: Project Aware, Community Wrap Around



### *Parents on a Mission*

- Where: San Diego
- Who: Parents of participants in Youth Empowerment's other programs, other community members
- How many: Unknown at this time
- How: Training program for parents focused on topics like parental personal growth, earning respect for parental authority, and the proper use of parental discipline
- When: 2020-present
- Funder(s): Department of Justice, Project Safe Neighborhood under the U.S. Attorney's Office through The Children's Initiative

### *Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct (TICCC)*

- Where: San Diego County
- Who: Organizations providing substance-abuse services
- How many: 100 organizations
- How: Development of a cohort of justice system-impacted youth who will serve as trainers and advocates of the TICCC and outreach to encourage 100 strategically chosen service delivery organizations to adopt the TICCC
- When: Fall 2021-present
- Funder(s): The Center at Sierra Health Foundation, Elevate Youth California (originally funded by the California Department of Health Care Services [DHCS])

## **SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS**

### *I.M.A.G.I.N.E*

- Where: Southeast San Diego
- Who: City Heights Middle School students and parents
- How many: Roughly 60 students plus parents
- How: Provide opportunities to heal from COVID-related trauma through weekly activities, including training in trauma-informed approaches and restorative practices, community activities and field trips
- When: 10-week summer program, June-August 2021
- Funder(s): San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD), in collaboration with The San Diego Foundation

### *Restorative Justice Practices*

- Where: SDUSD schools
- Who: Students, parents, SDUSD staff and teachers
- How many: TBD
- How: Group mentorship in trauma-informed approaches, restorative sessions using a cognitive-behavioral approach
- When: Fall 2021-present
- Funder(s): San Diego Unified School District

## **CURRICULA USED**

In the programs described above, Youth Empowerment uses a variety of curricula and intervention strategies. These include the following:

### *Parents on a Mission*

Parents on a Mission is a 12-session course that provides parents with the principles and practices they need to support and create healthy relationships with their children, so their children can thrive.<sup>15</sup>

### *Seeking Safety*

Seeking Safety is a counseling model designed to help mentees find safety from trauma and substance abuse. Seeking Safety covers a wide variety of issue areas, and its emphasis is always on creating a safe environment for mentees, where they do not have to relive their trauma. During Seeking Safety, mentors cover a wide range of issues within four primary areas: interpersonal topics, cognitive topics, behavioral topics, and combination topics.<sup>16</sup>

### *Moral Reconnection Therapy*

Moral Reconnection Therapy (MRT) is a cognitive-behavioral program that uses structured exercises designed to foster moral development in mentees. MRT is a widely-recognized behavioral program for criminal justice offenders, batterers and substance abusers.<sup>17</sup>

### *Forward Thinking*

Forward Thinking is a cognitive-behavioral approach that uses an interactive journaling methodology designed specifically for adults involved in the justice system.<sup>18</sup>

Each of these approaches has been developed and used by others and therefore has undergone some vetting. In reviewing research on these curricula, we found that the evidence for Seeking Safety and MRT approaches is relatively strong. There is evidence in support of the Forward Thinking approach, but it is somewhat weaker. We could find no rigorous research that focused on the Parents on a Mission approach.

## SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

It is useful to look beyond specific programs and assess what successes Youth Empowerment, as an organization, has achieved and the challenges it still faces. A summary of these successes and challenges are described in the table below. Often a success and a challenge are two sides of the same coin. Where that is the case, we have put them across from each other in the table.

### ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

#### SUCCESSES

Youth Empowerment has successfully transitioned from a community effort to an organization implementing multiple programs.

It receives funding from multiple sources and has established relationships with many important funders in the San Diego region.

#### CHALLENGES

Funding has primarily been for programs (~90 percent). Only ~10 percent of funds are unrestricted. It is difficult for an organization to survive, never mind grow, without having unrestricted funds to invest in organizational functions.

Youth Empowerment is experiencing expected growing pains as it works to raise funds, manage programs, manage its finances, and manage organizational functions such as hiring and IT, all with a very small staff.

Lived experience mentoring programs require hiring individuals who can serve as mentors but also effectively contribute to a programmatic team. This has proven challenging for Youth Empowerment. There has been high turnover within their team of mentors as they look for individuals who can both mentor youth and help administer programmatic activities and fulfill funder requirements.

An additional hiring challenge is the need to hire mentors, preferably on a full-time basis, as opposed to expecting them to serve as volunteers. Although mentors in various fields are often volunteers, this model often does not work in lower-income communities.

## PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS VERSUS BREADTH

### SUCCESSSES

Youth Empowerment is using a strong, tested programmatic model, that of lived experience mentoring. This model has been developed, implemented and validated by other organizations around the country.

### CHALLENGES

Programming is already expanding beyond this core model to include efforts such as the Parents on a Mission program, the Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct work and the cognitive-behavioral work in schools. There is no doubt that these programs are on-mission, but there is still a risk that the organization will try to implement too many kinds of programs.

There is an ethos within Youth Empowerment to do whatever is necessary for the individuals who walk through its doors. This is admirable — but at some scale becomes unsustainable. It will be necessary to develop partnerships with organizations that can help Youth Empowerment deliver wraparound services without compromising the commitment to providing the help that is needed, when it is needed.

## COMMUNITY CREDIBILITY VERSUS SCALE

### SUCCESSSES

Youth Empowerment is deeply knowledgeable about and credible in the community where it works. It has very strong social capital to leverage. It also has strong relationships with those who are currently incarcerated, meaning when individuals come out of prison, they already know about Youth Empowerment.

At the same time that it has established and maintained credibility at the community level, it has also developed strong relationships with politicians, city and county agencies, and social service providers.

### CHALLENGES

It is an open question whether Youth Empowerment can operate effectively in other communities. It is not clear to what extent its programming relies on the social capital it has in its home community — or whether its programs can be equally successful independent of that social capital.

Another path to scale would be to train and support other community-based organizations in other communities who wish to use the lived experience model. Going this route, however, would require adding other capacities to the organization, such as community outreach and training staff.

## SERVICE DELIVERY VERSUS SYSTEMS CHANGE

### SUCCESSSES

Youth Empowerment has a clear vision and strategy that combines micro-level service delivery to individuals with macro-level systems change initiatives.

### CHALLENGES

Although the work on the Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct has now been launched, the systems change work remains more of an aspiration than a reality. Funding for service delivery is often easier to obtain than funding for advocacy work, so there is a danger that the advocacy work will play a more minor role in the organization.

## DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

### SUCCESSSES

### CHALLENGES

The data collection and management systems currently in place are donor driven and for the most part not helpful for improving the effectiveness of Youth Empowerment's programs. The data reporting the organization does is fragmented, and the indicators it reports on are selected by the donors and may or may not be directly relevant to their programming.

### *From the Organization's Perspective...*

When discussing challenges, the leadership of Youth Empowerment immediately emphasized the operational challenges. In particular, they raised the issue of the lack of core funding and the problems this creates for having the resources necessary to be a functioning organization. As with any nonprofit, resources are needed to manage finances, to fulfill hiring and human resources functions, to do fundraising, and so on. Youth Empowerment has grown just enough that this challenge is now their central one. As one Youth Empowerment board member said, "Our number one priority is, how can we better serve the community? But long-term, how are we going to exist?"

## CONCLUSION: THINKING ABOUT IMPACT

Credibly demonstrating impact in fields like youth recidivism or violence prevention is very difficult. In the evidence review on mentoring and lived experience mentoring that Kroc IPJ conducted,<sup>19</sup> several research reports on lived experience mentoring were cited. Two reports, one assessing the AIM program in New York City<sup>20</sup> and the other assessing the Arches Program in New York City,<sup>21</sup> took over two years to complete and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Arches research included 279 participants who were enrolled in the Arches Program and 682 participants in a comparison group that began probation at the same time as the Arches participants but did not participate in the Arches program. All of this was to produce reports that are the best existing research on lived experience mentoring programs but still not as rigorous as many researchers would like in terms of credibly demonstrating the impact of the programs.

Summarizing this other research helps establish realistic expectations with respect to what is needed to credibly demonstrate impact. Currently Youth Empowerment collects data that allows it to inform its programmatic decisions and to point to some positive outcomes for its participants. Appendix 1, for instance, provides data from the Adult Reentry Community Mentors Program.<sup>22</sup> This is probably the best data that Youth Empowerment currently collects. One could use this data to inform programming. For instance, the data show they need to do more to enroll younger individuals in the program. One could also point to certain positive outcomes, such as the fact that recidivism among participants is low. But it remains the case that Youth Empowerment is simply not operating on a scale or collecting sufficient data to rigorously demonstrate the impact of its programs. Nor is there funding in San Diego currently to support the kind of large-scale, multi-year research that was conducted in New York. This is the bad news.

The good news is that Youth Empowerment is using a strong, tested programmatic model: lived experience mentoring. This model has been developed and implemented by other organizations around the country. As we discussed in the Kroc IPJ evidence review, the evidence for the positive impact of mentoring is quite strong. The evidence for lived experience mentoring is not as strong but positive and growing. Additionally, Youth Empowerment is not simply copying this model from afar but is engaged directly with the national community of lived experience and credible messenger organizations. Arthur Soriano has been mentored by the leaders of that community and has modeled Youth Empowerment's approach directly on the approach of other organizations in that community.<sup>23</sup>

The success of other lived experience programs, such as AIM and Arches, provides support for the proposition that Youth Empowerment is at least potentially capable of having an impact at scale. In particular, the research shows that it is possible to hire and train a significant number of lived experience mentors. This in turn helps assuage the fear, which arises with many young organizations, that the impact of the organization depends on the energy and charisma of its leader. This is a well-founded fear, and Arthur Soriano is a high-energy, charismatic leader, but he is also using a model that has demonstrated that it is possible for Youth Empowerment to have an impact beyond the impact that Arthur himself has on Youth Empowerment's beneficiaries.

Thus, there are two key ways in which Youth Empowerment can demonstrate its impact in the short term. First, it should demonstrate it is implementing its initiatives in line with the lived experience model that has been tested through the research of others. Second, it should show that its programs are producing both short-term and long-term outcomes that are aligned with the broader lived experience theory of change and the related, but more specific, Youth Empowerment theory of change. Taking these two steps would allow Youth Empowerment to make credible claims about generalized impact. To use an analogy: If a doctor knows research supports the effectiveness of a treatment, and they have seen their patients benefit from the treatment in expected ways, they would have reason to believe that the treatment will be of general benefit to their patients. The learning strategy for Youth Empowerment that accompanies this case study is aligned with this two-fold approach to demonstrating impact.

In the longer term, to more rigorously demonstrate impact, relevant San Diego stakeholders should seek to initiate a multi-year, multi-organization research study on lived experience mentoring in the region.

# Three Stories

## *Keep the Door Open*

"T" was affiliated with the Mexican mafia and served time in prison with Arthur. He was fully immersed in the criminal life — drugs, sex, money, guns. He'd be out for six months, then back in. Based on his relationship with Arthur, he had started working with Youth Empowerment but was still in bad relationships and still doing drugs. He ended up being on the run and was eventually caught by federal law enforcement. T is now facing 25 years in prison.

Arthur is still in touch with him, asking him, "Are you ready or not?" According to Arthur, "Everyone goes through all these stages. You never know when it will happen, but there will always be a turning point for everyone." He adds, "We need to be present, no matter what. Waiting for that moment. When are you going to make that decision? Took me a long time. Took me a lot of times. Everybody's got their time. Why the door's always open."



### *An “Aha Moment”*

“J” was running the streets with Arthur Soriano when both were teenagers. Both were in gangs. His background was one of violence and trauma. As half-Filipino and half-Mexican, he was always needing to prove himself, to prove that he belonged. He constantly battled drug addiction and was in and out of prison many times since 1996. During his last time in prison, he began the process of getting clean and heard about the work that Arthur was doing with Youth Empowerment.

Arthur ran into J, who’s now 46, at the Community Transition Center. According to Arthur, even during the worst of times, it was clear J had a good heart. He would look out for women, for instance, making sure they stayed safe even in dangerous situations. J started with Youth Empowerment two months after his release from prison in February 2021. He has now completed the Seeking Safety program, consistently shows up for his Youth Empowerment meetings, and is working full-time. Arthur says that J wants to stay clean for his kids and his grandkids, that “J was one of the true dope fiends from the past, but I believe he’s had his aha moment.”

### *From a Mexican Prison to Mentoring Youth to the Marine Corps*

“H” became involved with gangs when he was 12 years old. Before he was 18, he was serving time as a juvenile and later served almost three years in a Mexican prison. H was released from prison in Mexico in 2021 and returned to the United States to regain custody of his daughter. He had been in touch with Arthur Soriano off and on over the years and reconnected with Youth Empowerment when he returned to the United States. In three short months, he completed the Parents on a Mission program and began training to be a youth mentor and a youth trainer for Youth Empowerment’s Trauma-Informed Care Code of Conduct program. “I was ready to make changes, become a positive role model to my daughter, my younger brothers, and my nephews and nieces. I met Arthur and he became my mentor. I saw how he changed his life. He treats me with respect and I respect him.” H is currently preparing to enlist in the United States Marine Corps.

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT LEARNING STRATEGY

# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT LEARNING STRATEGY

## INTRODUCTION

Youth Empowerment has evolved from a community-based effort into an organization. Growing as an organization involves increasing the capacity to collect, manage and leverage qualitative and quantitative data. Having such a capacity would serve two purposes:

- 1) Increase Impact: Allow the Youth Empowerment team to reflect on their work in a more systematic, evidence-based way in order to improve what they do and therefore create greater impact.
- 2) Demonstrate Impact: Allow Youth Empowerment to credibly demonstrate to external stakeholders, including partners, funders and other community stakeholders, the effectiveness of their work and the impact it is having.

This learning strategy will first assess what data is currently being collected and how that data is being managed and leveraged. Second, we will assess what data should be collected. This section will be informed by the theory of change discussed in the Youth Empowerment case study. Third, we will outline a strategy to develop the capacity and systems within Youth Empowerment to gather, manage and leverage the data it needs to increase impact and demonstrate that impact.

## CURRENT DATA COLLECTION

Currently, Youth Empowerment collects data in a variety of ways using a variety of systems. Some of this data is included in formal reports to funders, some remains within the organization.

### *Formal Data Collection*

## COMMUNITY MENTORS ADULT REENTRY PROGRAMS

- Data collection system: Case Manager
- Frequency: Quarterly
- Who does data entry: Youth Empowerment staff and mentors
- What: Data on participants, including demographic information, activities participated in, and completion of program or not, including reasons for non-completion (see Appendix #1 for one quarter of that data)
- Reports to: Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)

## COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO PROBATION DEPARTMENT RESILIENCE COMMUNITY MENTORING PROGRAM

- Data collection system: ETO reporting system
- Frequency: Monthly
- Who does data entry: Youth Empowerment staff and mentors
- What: Data on participants, including contact made, progress reports during the programs and program completion
- Reports to: San Diego County Probation Department

Note: The progress reports during the program are collected using a journaling approach with the participants. This qualitative data is not reported to the Probation Department.

## PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS: PARENTS ON A MISSION PROGRAM

- Data collection system: Bureau of Justice Assistance, Performance Measurement Tool (PMT)
- Frequency: Quarterly
- Who: Youth Empowerment staff
- What: Data on how the program is contributing to Project Safe Neighborhood Goals
- Reports to: U.S. Attorney's Office and The Children's Initiative

Note: The questions on the PMT reports are framed as if the organization answering is either on the PSN Task Force or a law enforcement agency. As a result, the reports do not collect very much relevant data on Youth Empowerment's programming itself. Youth Empowerment collects additional data on the Parents on a Mission program, for instance, through attendance sheets at events, but that data remains internal to the organization.

### *Internal Data Collection*

## SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES

- Data collection system: Spreadsheets
- Frequency: Ongoing throughout program
- Who: Youth Empowerment staff
- What: Data on participants, including contact information and other ad hoc information
- Reports to: N/A

## INTERNAL REPORTING FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Data collection system: Salesforce
- Frequency: Quarterly
- Who: Youth Empowerment staff
- What: Financial and accounting data
- Reports to: Board of Directors

## *Data Management Systems*

As can be seen from the summaries above, there are four systems Youth Empowerment is currently using to collect and manage data:

- ETO - The firm that developed it describes ETO as “a comprehensive outcomes and case management tool for large nonprofits, government agencies, and community collaboratives.” It is used by various San Diego County social service agencies.
- Case Manager - Case Manager is a case management software for nonprofit organizations. Case Manager was developed and is managed by the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership (LCCL).
- Salesforce - Salesforce is a leading customer relations management system (CRM), used widely in the government, nonprofit and private sectors.
- Spreadsheets and Files - In addition to dedicated data collection systems, such as those described above, Youth Empowerment uses spreadsheets and forms saved in their file systems to collect and use data.

## *Challenges with Current Data Collection*

As Youth Empowerment has grown and solidified as an organization, it has made progress with its ability to collect and manage data, but large challenges remain. The most important is that a great deal of the data collection and management to date has been donor-driven. For Youth Empowerment’s largest programs, funders determine the data to be collected, the system that data is to be managed in, and the reports to be developed with that data. This approach creates siloed data systems within Youth Empowerment where, for instance, some data flows through ETO and some data flows through Case Manager. This would be a problem for any organization, but it is particularly acute for Youth Empowerment in that many of their participants are participating in, or have connections with, multiple programs. For instance, parents of children in the SDUSD program may participate in the Parents on a Mission program.

Moreover, what the funder requires Youth Empowerment to report is often not fit-for-purpose for Youth Empowerment. For instance, a key metric for the Community Mentors program is whether the participants completed the program. In discussions, Youth Empowerment staff lamented that if a participant does not complete the program, it is often because they got a job and are doing fine, and this is considered a failure based on that metric. There are other challenges. The questions in the Project Safe Neighborhoods PMT reports, for instance, are largely irrelevant to the day-to-day work of Youth Empowerment, as some questions are posed as if the organization is the PSN Task Force and others as if it is a law enforcement agency. In addition, funders provide very little ability to report qualitative data such as participant journaling or progress reports written by mentors. For lived experience mentoring in particular, this qualitative data is extremely important.

The siloed, donor-driven reporting creates an additional, important challenge, which Youth Empowerment staff raised repeatedly. Namely, there is an enormous amount of effort that goes into work with mentees and other support provided by Youth Empowerment that is not tracked anywhere — or, if it is tracked, it is tracked in various spreadsheets saved on various computers and therefore is not leveraged in the way it could be. So, for instance, a parent of a youth might stop by for a conversation with Youth Empowerment staff and then sign up for Parents on a Mission. That successful interaction is not tracked anywhere at the moment. As one Youth Empowerment staff put it, “How do you track the hustle?” Meaning, how do you track all the extra effort that Youth Empowerment staff are putting in to help those in their community? As discussed above, Youth Empowerment, as an organization, is much more than just its programming. But right now, beyond spreadsheets and other ad hoc documents, there is not a data collection and management system that exists independent of its discrete programs.

## IMPROVING COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA

### *Data Management - Youth Empowerment’s Vision*

When asked about what kind of data collection and management system they need, Youth Empowerment’s staff provide a clear vision. From their perspective, they need a system that belongs to Youth Empowerment and is independent of individual programs. Such a system would allow them to collect the type of data they believe is most important, as well as data that funders are requiring them to collect. It could collect data from their programs but also from work they do outside of the formal programs. It could track all interactions with individuals, whether inside a program or not, and could track individuals across different programs. Finally, it would produce reports that funders require but could produce a variety of other reports useful for the organization.

The organization has made some small steps toward this vision. For instance, in addition to the formal reporting it does in Case Manager for the Community Mentors program, it is also tracking data from the SDUSD Restorative Justice Practices program and Parents on a Mission in Case Manager as well. Based on the experience to date with these small steps, it appears likely that the best platform on which to build an organization-wide data collection and management system is Case Manager.

### *Data Collection Needs*

If a fit-for-purpose data collection system were to be put in place, what data would be collected? The data collection strategy of any organization is driven by its theory of change. As discussed in the Youth Empowerment case study, a simple theory of change consists of activities, short-term outcomes and long-term outcomes.

## ACTIVITIES

For activities, the basic data to be collected is 1) What was done? and 2) Who participated? Data on what was done, for formal programs, includes things like what sessions were implemented, how many participated, what activities were used in the session, and so on. For non-programmatic activities, it consists of brief descriptions of the interactions that Youth Employment staff have with those they are helping. Data on who participated includes straightforward details like contact information but also a broader profile that includes intake information, background, needs, key relationships, other services being accessed and so on.

The goal of data collection in this category is to be able to say clearly, and in detail: This is what we have done, this is how we have succeeded (or not) implementing activities, and this is who participated. In addition, collecting this type of data is the foundation for all other data collection.

This is the easiest data to collect, but it requires consistency, attention to detail, capacity among a broad range of staff to do basic data entry, and the proper systems to store and access the data collected. Case management software, such as Case Manager, is well suited to collect this type of data.

## SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

The short-term outcomes described in the theory of change in the Youth Empowerment case study are the skills, attitudes, behaviors and relationships of participants, as well as their ability to successfully navigate the social service and justice systems in San Diego.

This is in many ways the hardest data to collect, as much of it has to do with what is going on inside the individuals working with Youth Empowerment. For things like skills, attitudes and behaviors, qualitative data like journaling and mentor progress reports can be very useful. It is also possible to gather data on these through periodic check-ins with participants, including interviews or surveys.

Their relationships can be assessed through network analysis techniques that track their relationships over time to see if they are forming more constructive relationships and fewer harmful relationships. Their ability to navigate systems can be assessed by tracking the successes and challenges they have had in regard to those systems.

## LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The following are the long-term outcomes described in the theory of change in the Youth Empowerment case study:

- Decreased criminal behavior, justice involvement and recidivism.
- Improved performance in school or university.
- Reduced substance use/abuse.
- Increased ability to gain employment and to get better-paying and more fulfilling jobs.
- Increased prosocial behaviors and engagement with the community.
- Emotional well-being.

This is often easier data to collect than that for short-term outcomes, as it often involves indicators that are tracked by other institutions (justice involvement, school performance) or are easy to see (a good job). For outcomes like emotional well-being, Youth Empowerment could rely on longer-term follow-ups with participants. For outcomes like increased prosocial behaviors, Youth Empowerment could interview members of the community to assess how well a participant is doing in regard to more general integration into the community. Youth Empowerment is well situated to collect this kind of data given their very strong community relationships.



## ***Additional Data Collection Considerations***

The theory of change presents a useful framework to describe the categories and types of data to be collected. However, in order to describe the actual data to be collected and the specific strategies that will be used to collect that data, much more detailed conversations with Youth Empowerment are needed. Making these decisions requires detailed analysis of a range of issues, including organizational capacity, feasibility of data collection, potential negative impacts of data collection on programming, what data would actually be useful and meaningful and which would not, and so on. We will describe a process for answering these kinds of questions and developing a plan for a data collection and management system in the implementation section below.

Finally, it is important to understand the distinction between data collection and research. The data collection described above will provide the foundation for more rigorous research on the impact of Youth Empowerment's work but will not by itself demonstrate that impact. To do this, the data collected will have to be integrated into a rigorous research design that can produce credible conclusions about impact.

## ***External Research***

There is a final piece to the learning strategy for Youth Empowerment that is independent of their data collection and management systems. In the case study on Youth Empowerment, we noted that Youth Empowerment uses a programmatic model — lived experience mentoring — that has been developed, tested and validated by others. As a result, in order to both maximize their impact and demonstrate that impact, it is advantageous for Youth Empowerment to keep track of and integrate into their programming the latest research findings on lived experience mentoring. This idea is also included in the implementation plan below.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The learning strategy described above provides a foundation for developing a system for Youth Empowerment to collect, manage and leverage data. The strategy is not worth anything, however, if it is not implemented. In this section, we outline a set of steps and a six-month timeline for implementing the strategy. Each step will consist of a meeting with Youth Empowerment staff and work before and after the meeting, as needed. At the time of publication, this plan was being implemented in collaboration with Youth Empowerment.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME
1	Kick-off discussion: Confirm overall plan. Decide on a data management system to be used. Develop a plan to customize the data management system selected.	December 2021
2	Assess capacity of staff. Develop a plan to build capacity where needed.	January 2022
3	Decide what data is to be collected and how that data will be collected.	February-March 2022
4	Develop weekly plan — a detailed to do list for staff of what needs to be done each week to manage the system. Develop a plan to monitor research on lived experience mentoring and make the findings of that research accessible to Youth Empowerment staff.	April 2022
5a	Follow up to check progress. Gather feedback from Youth Empowerment staff. Make adjustments.	May 2022
5b	Follow up to check progress. Gather feedback from Youth Empowerment staff. Make adjustments.	June 2022

## CONCLUSION

Developing and implementing an organization-wide data collection and management system that is both useful and used will be a significant challenge for Youth Empowerment. As is the case with most small nonprofits, Youth Empowerment lacks sufficient unrestricted funding, its staff is stretched thin, and it already has to manage the often-unhelpful data collection and reporting requirements of its current funders.

While these challenges are real, the organization is also at a stage in its development where creating such a system is essential. To increase its impact, Youth Empowerment needs to maintain what makes it special — its strong relationships and deep connection to the community — but also increase its effectiveness as an organization. As Arthur Soriano put it in one of our interviews, “We’re building an organization that cares, but also building a business.” A fit-for-purpose data collection and management system that will allow the organization to track its activities and the outcomes it is creating is an essential component of that vision.

The following is one quarter of data for Youth Empowerment's Adult Reentry Community Mentors Program. The information was collected by Youth Empowerment staff and mentors and reported to BSCC through the Case Manager reporting platform. This data is provided primarily as an illustration of the most detailed data Youth Empowerment is collecting, not in an effort to answer questions about the impact of Youth Empowerment's programming.

## PLEASE SEE WORD DOC FOR SECTIONS 1 - 6

## SECTION 7: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Total number of active participants reported at the end of the previous quarter:

32

B. Total number of active participants that left the program and were disenrolled during the current quarter (enter into table below):

Reasons for leaving program	
1. Refused Services	
2. Left without reason given	
3. Re-Arrested	
4. Moved from jurisdiction	
5. Graduated/Completed	3
6. Lost contact	6
7. Other: Describe*	
Total:	9 (This number will auto-populate using data from the table)

\*Describe "Other" (if applicable):

We had one participant get off Probation successfully.but hasn't been discharged.

C. Number of new participants enrolled or reenrolled in the program:

# of Participants	
Enrolled	23
Reenrolled	
Total:	23

D. Total number of participants served this quarter (A - B + C = D)

A	B	C	D
32	9	23	38

## SECTION 8: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Of those admitted in the grant program/services this reporting period, provide the total number of participants (unduplicated) for each age group:	
a. Participants between ages: 17-18	0
b. Participants between ages: 19-21	0
c. Participants between ages: 22-25	2
d. Participants between ages: 26-44	15
e. Participants between ages: 45-64	6
f. Participants: 65+	0

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Documents submitted to the BSCC are considered public and may be subject to a request pursuant to the California Public Records Act. (Gov. Code, §§ 6250 et seq.)

2. Of those new participants admitted in the grant program/services this reporting period, how many are:	
a. Female	0
b. Male	23
c. Non-Binary/Third Gender	
d. Prefer to Self-Define	
e. Prefer Not to State	
f. Other	
3. Total number of admitted participants (unduplicated) who identify as a single ethnic origin, ethnicity, or race that received first-time services this reporting period:	
4. Total number of admitted participants (unduplicated) who identify as having multi-ethnic origin, ethnicity, or race that received first-time services this reporting period:	0
5. Total number of admitted participants (unduplicated) who declined-to-state their ethnic origin, ethnicity, or race that received first-time services this reporting period:	0
6. Please provide the total number of NEW participants for each ethnicity group that were admitted in the program during the reporting period.	
a. Black or African-American	2
b. Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish	10
c. White	6
d. American Indian or Alaska Native	
e. Asian	
Chinese	
Japanese	
Filipino	4
Korean	
Vietnamese	
Asian Indian	
Laotian	
Cambodian	
Other	
f. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	
Native Hawaiian	
Guamanian	
Samoan	
Other	
g. Middle Eastern or North African	1
h. Other identified ethnic origin, ethnicity, or race	

## SECTION 9: IDENTIFICATION, OUTREACH, & ENROLLMENT PROCESS

### 1. Identification, Outreach, & Enrollment Process

Process for identifying, conducting research, and enrolling participants into program intervention.

<input type="checkbox"/> Not started	<input type="checkbox"/> Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Working on it	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete/ Established	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
We are connected in the community by our lived experience. We know our population.				

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Documents submitted to the BSCC are considered public and may be subject to a request pursuant to the California Public Records Act. (Gov. Code, §§ 6250 et seq.)

2. Record the number of new participants enrolled this quarter that fall into the referral sources below

Points of Entry	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Total
Self-Referral	12	11	23		46
Referred by Parole					0
Referred by Probation					0
Referred by Social Services					0
Referred by Behavioral Health					0
Referred by Referral by Another CBO					0
Referred by Other Participants					0
Referred by SUD Program					0
CDCR					0
Active Outreach					0
Internal Program Referral					0
Referred by Public Defender					0
Referred by Family Member					0
<b>Total:</b>	12	11	23	0	46

3. How many prerelease participants did you contact this reporting period?

0

4. Identify length of time between release from prison and enrollment in your program for each participant who enrolled in your program during this reporting period:

	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Total
Immediately upon release from prison	1	1			2
Within 24 hrs. of release from prison					0
Within 72 hrs. of release from prison		6	2		8
Within 1 week of release from prison	1		1		2
Within 2 weeks of release from prison			2		2
Within 1 month of release from prison	1	1	4		6
Within 2 months of release from prison	1	2	4		7
Within 3 months of release from prison			3		3
Within 4 months of release from prison					0
Within 4-6 months of release from prison	2	1	3		6
Within 6-9 months of release from prison	2		1		3
Within 1 year of release from prison	1				1
Within 2 years of release from prison	3		2		5
Within 3 years of release from prison					0
Within 3-5 years of release from prison					0
Within 5-10 years of release from prison					0

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Documents submitted to the BSCC are considered public and may be subject to a request pursuant to the California Public Records Act. (Gov. Code, §§ 6250 et seq.)

10 + years from release from prison			1		1
<b>Total</b>	12	11	23	0	46

### SECTION 10: PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Record the number of participants participating in each activity or service listed below for the reporting period. The same participants may be reported across different activities and services and quarters.

	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Total
Assessment of Risk and Need	12	11	23		46
Ongoing Individ./Family Support Services	12	1	1		14
Referral/Linkages to other services	5				5
Mentoring	12	11	12		35
Educational Support	0				0
Vocational Training/Placement	0		1		1
Job Placement	3	1	1		5
Transportation	0				0
Housing Navigation	1				1
Food	12				12
Case Management	12	11	23		46
Emergency Services	0				0
Social Services	0				0
Behavioral/ Mental Health Care	0				0
Substance Abuse Disorder Tx	4	2	19		25
Transitional Services	0				0
System Navigation	0				0
24-hour Response	0				0
Primary Care	0				0
Land Lord Mediation	0				0
Financial Literacy	0		1		1
Legal Assistance	0				0
Legal Documents Support	0				0
Other, please list: Restorative Practice Circle, Service		4	2		6
<b>Total:</b>	73	41	83	0	197

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Documents submitted to the BSCC are considered public and may be subject to a request pursuant to the California Public Records Act. (Gov. Code, §§ 6250 et seq.)



- 1 "The Credible Messenger Approach," Credible Messenger Justice Center, accessed November 4, 2021, <https://cmjcenter.org/approach/>.
- 2 "Young Adult Peer Mentoring (YAPM) Practice Profile: Overview," CBH Knowledge Center, accessed April 26, 2021, <https://www.cbhknowledge.center/young-adult-peer-mentoring-overview>.
- 3 "The Credible Messenger Approach."
- 4 Youth Empowerment, Form 990, 2019.
- 5 Andrew Blum, "Evidence Review: Mentoring and Lived Experience Mentoring," Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego, May 21, 2021. <http://catcher.sandiego.edu/items/peacestudies/PSN-Evidence-Review-Mentoring-FNL.pdf>
- 6 These organizations were identified by Youth Empowerment staff as their peer organizations within the lived experience mentoring community. There are undoubtedly other organizations that use elements of this approach in their programming.
- 7 Blum, "Evidence Review."
- 8 "Positive Youth Development," Youth Power, accessed November 4, 2021, <https://www.youthpower.org/positive-youth-development>.
- 9 Office of Adolescent Health, "Positive Connections with Supportive People," TAG Research Reviews, accessed February 25, 2022, <https://youth.gov/sites/default/files/essentialresearch1-positiveconnections.pdf>.
- 10 Gill Buck, "Mentoring and Peer Mentoring," HM Inspectorate of Probation, April 2021, <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/04/Academic-Insights-mentoring-and-peer-mentoring.pdf>.
- 11 This conclusion is based on discussions with those working in the reentry field. It is difficult to find research on this aspect of mentoring for adults in particular. Almost all the research on "caring adults" comes out of the youth development field and therefore focuses on youth. This is an opportunity for future research to make an important contribution.
- 12 Dave Sells et al., "Peer-Mentored Community Reentry Reduced Recidivism," *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 47, no. 4 (2020): 449. The study being reported on in this article used lived experience mentors. See also, Buck, "Mentoring and Peer Mentoring."
- 13 The theory of change described here was constructed through a review of Youth Empowerment documents and discussions with Youth Empowerment staff.
- 14 Rev. Ruben Austria, "Change from Within: Transforming Juvenile Justice through Community Mentors - A Report from the Community Mentor Planning Institute of the San Diego Alternative to Incarceration Collaborative," September 2018, <https://cc-fy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/FINAL-San-Diego-Community-Planning-Institute-Report-1.pdf>. Youth Empowerment was one of the lead organizers of this institute.
- 15 Parents on a Mission, <https://parentsonamission.org/>.
- 16 Lisa M. Najavits, *Seeking Safety: A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse, The Guilford Substance Abuse Series* (New York: Guilford, 2002).
- 17 Correctional Counseling, Inc., "Moral Reconation Therapy Programs," accessed February 2, 2022, <https://www.ccimrt.com/>.
- 18 The Change Companies, "Interactive Journaling," accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.changecompanies.net/interactivejournaling/>.
- 19 Blum, "Evidence Review."
- 20 Lindsey Cramer et al., *Evaluation Report on New York City's Advocate, Intervene, Mentor Program* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2018), [https://www.urban.org/research/publication/evaluation-report-nycs-advocate-intervene-mentor-program/view/full\\_report](https://www.urban.org/research/publication/evaluation-report-nycs-advocate-intervene-mentor-program/view/full_report).
- 21 Mathew Lynch et al., *Arches Transformative Mentoring Program* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2018), [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96601/arches\\_transformative\\_mentoring\\_program.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96601/arches_transformative_mentoring_program.pdf).
- 22 For the best data that Youth Empowerment currently reports, see Appendix 1.
- 23 Austria, "Change from Within."



University  
of San Diego®

**KROC SCHOOL**

*Institute for Peace and Justice*