



STATES OF

INCARCERATION



**AN ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT
FOR PRESENTING PARTNERS**

STATES OF INCARCERATION

An Engagement Toolkit for Presenting Partners

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Any reproduction of the content should be credited appropriately. The authors hope that the information included within the Tool Kit inspire you to replicate, adapt and revise activities to suit your own communities and classes, but ask that you do not edit this Tool Kit PDF when distributing it for use during the States of Incarceration exhibit. Additional activities or dialogue ideas may be added through the [States of Incarceration website](#).

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Introduction

THE HUMANITIES ACTION LAB

The Humanities Action Lab (HAL) is an international hub, located at The New School, where faculty, students and community partners design and generate curricula and opportunities for public engagement with urgent social issues. Together HAL's partners aim to cultivate new public dialogue on contested, deadlocked social issues by exploring diverse local histories and current realities of shared global concerns. HAL's current project States of Incarceration focuses the past, present, and future of incarceration. There are currently 20 university campus and community partners involved in designing courses and exhibitions around the history of incarceration in the United States. The partners convened in a national launch of the exhibit at The New School in New York City in April of 2016. The exhibit will now travel to 20 other cities.

HAL Mission Statement

The Humanities Action Lab (HAL) is a collaboration of 20 universities, led by The New School, working with issue based organizations and public spaces to:

- Foster new public dialogue on contested, deadlocked social issues, through public humanities projects that explore the diverse local histories and current realities of shared global concerns.
- Open space for experimentation and innovation in how design and the humanities can help confront urgent social problems.
- Combine and connect the diverse local perspectives of communities around the world, to create widely applicable and flexible models.
- Create new public humanities prototypes that take on difficult issues and experiment with untested formats



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To learn more about the Humanities Action Lab and their projects, visit humanitiesactionlab.org

STATES OF INCARCERATION

States of Incarceration was created by over 500 students and others deeply affected by incarceration in 20 cities. Most of these students grew up in a United States that incarcerates more of its people, including immigrants, than any country in the world – and at any point in its history. Recently, they have witnessed a new bipartisan consensus that the criminal justice system is broken and the intense conflict over how to fix it.

In 2015, faculty, students, and community based partners came together to ask: How did this happen? What new questions does the past challenge us to ask about what is happening now? To find answers, they examined their own communities' histories. Through courses at 20 universities, local teams shared stories, searched archives, and visited correctional facilities. Each team created one piece of the exhibit.

Together, they created a diverse genealogy of the incarceration generation. It challenges all of us to remember our own past and use the insights of history to shape what happens next.



Photos from the States of Incarceration exhibit launch at The New School in spring of 2016.



About this Toolkit

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WHO WE ARE

We are seven graduate students in the Nonprofit Management, Urban Policy, and Design & Urban Ecologies programs at The New School's Parsons School of Design and Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy. As part of the Participatory Community Engagement class taught by Erica Kohl-Arenas, we partnered with The Humanities Action Lab over the course of two semesters in 2015-2016, exploring the process of creating effective dialogue around social justice issues in public spaces. We came together because we all believe that mass incarceration is an unacceptable and cruel reality that must be abolished, and that dialogue is the first step in affirming the lives of incarcerated people and imagining alternatives to incarceration.



The Participatory Community Engagement students who worked on this toolkit (left to right, top to bottom): Mesha Byrd, Hanna Campbell, Katherine Chang, Phyllis Ellington, Max Freedman, Carlos Rosales, and Myl Sanchez (not pictured).

PROJECT OVERVIEW

With States of Incarceration, HAL has created a network of students, universities, and community based organizations from 17 different states, all working directly to address the effects of mass incarceration. States of Incarceration will reach countless people, including those directly affected by mass incarceration as well as those who see themselves perhaps as unaffected by the issue. The exhibit itself reflects many of the issues surrounding mass incarceration that need to be resolved. The purpose of HAL isn't necessarily to solve those issues. Rather, it is to create a space for the conversations and creativity necessary to move forward.

Through our interviews, observations, and participation in States of Incarceration events, we learned the value of the relationships formed through HAL's network of universities and community based organizations. These relationships encompass diverse perspectives which are necessary for effective dialogue around mass incarceration. Because the States of Incarceration exhibit was launched and is hosted by institutions of higher education, we want to be sure to address some of the challenges and opportunities presented by initiating dialogue in universities. We also want to acknowledge that the SOI exhibit enters into a moment in time when a growing diversity of individuals, organizations, alliances, and social movements are organizing to end mass criminalization and incarceration of poor communities of color. Many people, communities, and organizations have been involved in this work for many years and will continue to organize long after the exhibit is over.

The [States of Incarceration exhibit](#) is an unprecedented opportunity for engagement and dialogue around mass incarceration. It is our hope that this document may guide others as they navigate the difficult and intimate discussion of mass incarceration and the themes presented in the States of Incarceration exhibit, and that it is respectful of the experiences and needs of those directly affected by the issues being explored.



Participating States



For more on the participating states and universities or to add your state, visit statesofincarceration.org/state-by-state

OUR RESEARCH APPROACH

For the first half of our class, we focused primarily on deep listening by reaching out to community based organizations and HAL-participating students and faculty both at our school and outside our institution to draw on their knowledge and opinions on the dialogue about mass incarceration within their various settings. To build on this collected knowledge, additional research, community discussions, and interviews were conducted in the second half of our class before finalizing this toolkit.

We interviewed the following professors and staff at The New School and HAL:

- Piper Anderson (Director of Engagement Strategies, HAL)
- Julia Bowling (Communications Assistant, HAL)
- Julia Foulkes (Professor of History)
- Cecilia Rubino (Assistant Professor of Theatre)
- Liz Sevcenko (Director, HAL)
- Radhika Subramaniam (Assistant Director of Art and Design History)

We interviewed people from the following universities and organizations:

- [University of New Orleans](#) (Ben Weber, Visiting Scholar, Department of History)
- [Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis](#) (Modupe Labode, Assistant Professor of History and Museum Studies)
- [The Center for Court Innovation](#) (Elise White)
- [The Correctional Association of New York](#) (Angelo Pinto)
- [Drive Change/Snowday Food Truck](#) (Jordyn Lexton)
- [The Fortune Society](#) (Benjamin Solotaire, Ronald Day, William Evans)



Max, Phyllis, and Carlos at a HAL student and faculty luncheon at The New School.

- [Vera Institute of Justice](#) (Fred Patrick, Mary Crowley)
- [Voices UnBroken](#) (Karla Robinson)

We attended the following events:

- Conditions of Confinement (The New School)
- [Hemispheric Institute Panel](#) on Activism in Face of Police Killings, Black Lives Matter, Systems of Mass Incarceration, Our Role as Practitioners, What it Means to be an Ally
- [Occasional Series on Research in Prisoner Reentry](#) (John Jay College of Criminal Justice)
- [Museums Respond to #BlackLivesMatter](#) (NYC Museum Educators' Roundtable)
- [Rikers Island: Reform it or Shut it Down](#) (The New School)
- [Theater of Social Action: Student Incubator on Mass Incarceration](#)
- CNYCA Panel on Rikers
- [Pinkerton Youth Justice Symposium](#): Hidden in Plain Sight - The Astounding Invisibility and Resilience of Children of Incarcerated Parents
- [Beyond the Bars](#) (Center for Justice at Columbia University)

In addition to these events, we developed several engagement activities to accompany HAL's New School launch. We also attended HAL's States of Incarceration National Conference.

Some questions we asked include:

1. How do you see your role contributing to the bigger picture of combating Mass Incarceration?
2. When you hear the idea of 'public dialogues around mass incarceration,' what do you imagine meaningful 'public dialogue' would look like? Who would be part of the conversation? What would they talk about?
3. What are the key factors to having conversations around mass incarceration?
4. When you have conversations about mass incarceration, what type of change or thinking are you hoping to trigger in participants?
5. What are (some of) the most urgent impacts of mass incarceration in the communities you work with?
6. What are some of the best tools and/or strategies for engaging in discussion around mass incarceration?
7. Where/from which groups do you feel like you encounter the most pushback against this work?

USING THIS TOOLKIT

In this toolkit you will find our working definition of dialogue, recommendations for language when discussing mass incarceration, principles and ground rules for dialogue, and suggestions for dialogue activities.

Because the partnerships between universities and community based organizations that form HAL are extremely diverse and include a range of stakeholders, we've designed this toolkit to be adaptable to many settings, facilitators, and audiences. From those new to the subject of mass incarceration to those who are already involved in the movement to end mass incarceration, we hope there is something here for everyone.

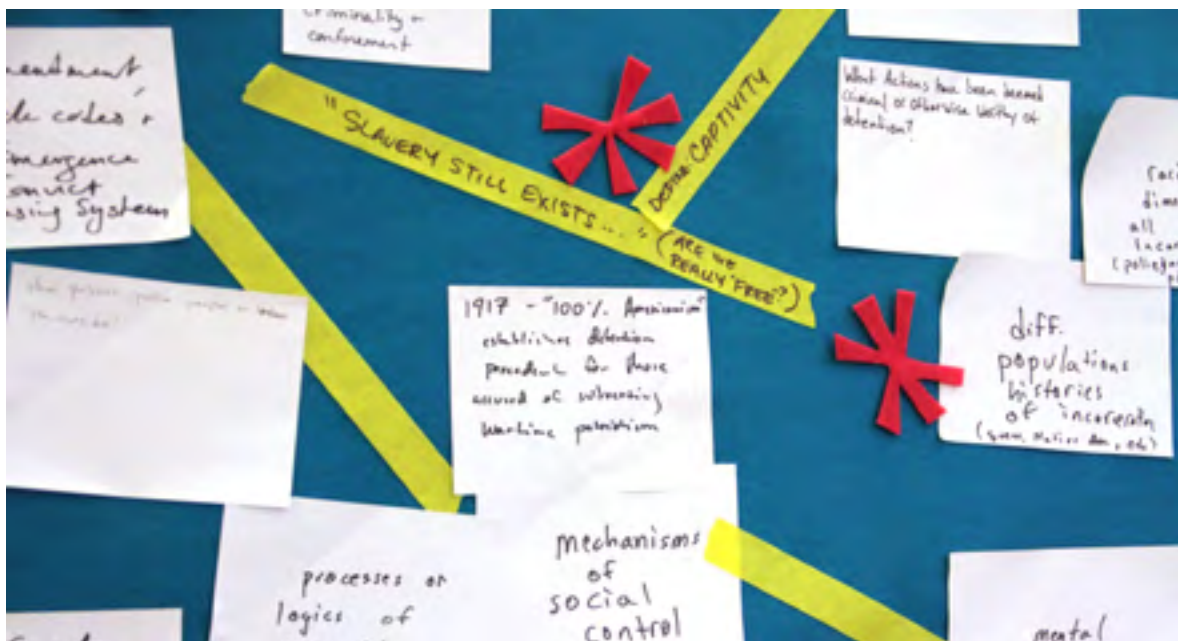


Photo taken at Humanities Action Lab Launch, January 2015. Courtesy of Red Dog Productions.

Activities in this toolkit will be classified as appropriate for public settings, large group setting, small group setting, and individual activities:

- **Public Setting:** Audience is everyone and anyone. They are not necessarily part of your discussion groups, or involved in the Humanities Action Lab.
- **Large Group Setting:** Audience is the total of participants in your discussion or training.
- **Small Group Setting:** Audience is the participant population but divided into smaller groups.
- **Individual:** Audience is a single participant.

+ For an abbreviated list of materials we read and referenced, please see the [Resources](#) section of this toolkit.

Mass

Incarceration

AN INTRODUCTION TO MASS INCARCERATION

In the exhibit, you will find varying local histories of incarceration in the 20 cities represented by the university partners of HAL. In order to engage in truly meaningful dialogue, both facilitators and participants should have, at a minimum, a basic understanding of the issue in the United States. This section is designed to give the reader a brief overview of mass incarceration.

What is Mass Incarceration?

Incarceration refers to the imprisonment of a person after they have been convicted of a crime.

Mass Incarceration typically refers to the contemporary prison system, including the rapid expansion of the prison population and its overrepresentation of minorities.

This toolkit views **mass incarceration** as an outcome of the **prison-industrial complex**.

The **prison-industrial complex** refers to the intersection of government and private interests that uses surveillance, policing, imprisonment, and racially biased mass criminalization as solutions to social, political, and economic problems.

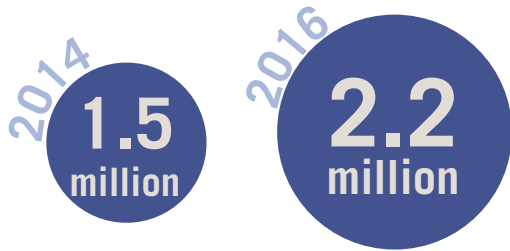
“How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own?”

—Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*



America has 4% of the world's population and about 25% of the world's prison population. We have the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Source: [vlogbrothers](https://vlogbrothers.com)

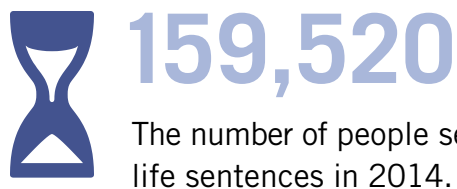
Basic Facts on Mass Incarceration in the United States¹



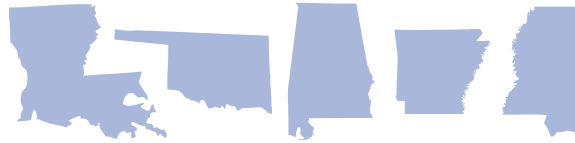
There are currently 2.2 million people incarcerated in the United States, up from 1.5 million people in 2014.

400%

The increase in the number of people in prisons and jails over the past 40 years.



The number of women incarcerated in the United States in 2014.



Louisiana, Oklahoma, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi have the highest incarceration rates.



The number of people in the United States who cannot vote because of state felony disenfranchisement policies.

50%

The approximate percent of those in federal prisons on drug-related offenses.



The likelihood of being incarcerated for a Black man in the United States is 1 in 3.



The likelihood of being incarcerated for a white man in the United States is 1 in 17.

Racial Disparities and the Impact of Mass Incarceration

In *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander takes us through the history of the United States to demonstrate how we arrived in the “era of mass incarceration,” or what she calls the “New Jim Crow.” By the mid-1990s:

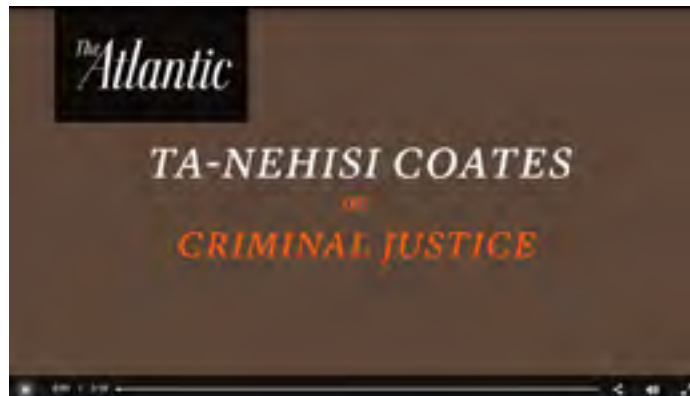
“More than 2 million people found themselves behind bars... and millions more were relegated to the margins of mainstream society, banished to a political and social space not unlike Jim Crow, where discrimination in employment, housing, and access to education was perfectly legal, and where they could be denied the right to vote.”²

As Alexander states, “We know that people released from prison face a lifetime of discrimination, scorn, and exclusion, and yet we claim not to know that an undercaste exists.”³

Mass incarceration has created a state of racial oppression unlike any other in our history. Our society is one in which mass incarceration has been normalized, and in which “all of the racial stereotypes and assumptions that gave rise to the system are now embraced (or at least internalized) by people of all colors, from all walks of life, and in every major political party.”⁴

The NAACP outlines the following statistics in its Criminal Justice Fact Sheet⁵:

- African Americans now constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million incarcerated population.
- African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites.
- Together, African American and Hispanics comprised 58% of all prisoners in 2008, even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately one quarter of the US population.
- According to *Unlocking America*, if African American and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates of whites, today’s prison and jail populations would decline by approximately 50%.
- One in six black men had been incarcerated as of 2001. If current trends continue, one in three black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime
- 1 in 100 African American women are in prison
- Nationwide, African-Americans represent 26% of juvenile arrests, 44% of youth who are detained, 46% of the youth who are judicially waived to criminal court, and 58% of the youth admitted to state prisons (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice).



For more historical context, watch [“The Enduring Myth of Black Criminality”](#) by The Atlantic.

[Redacted]

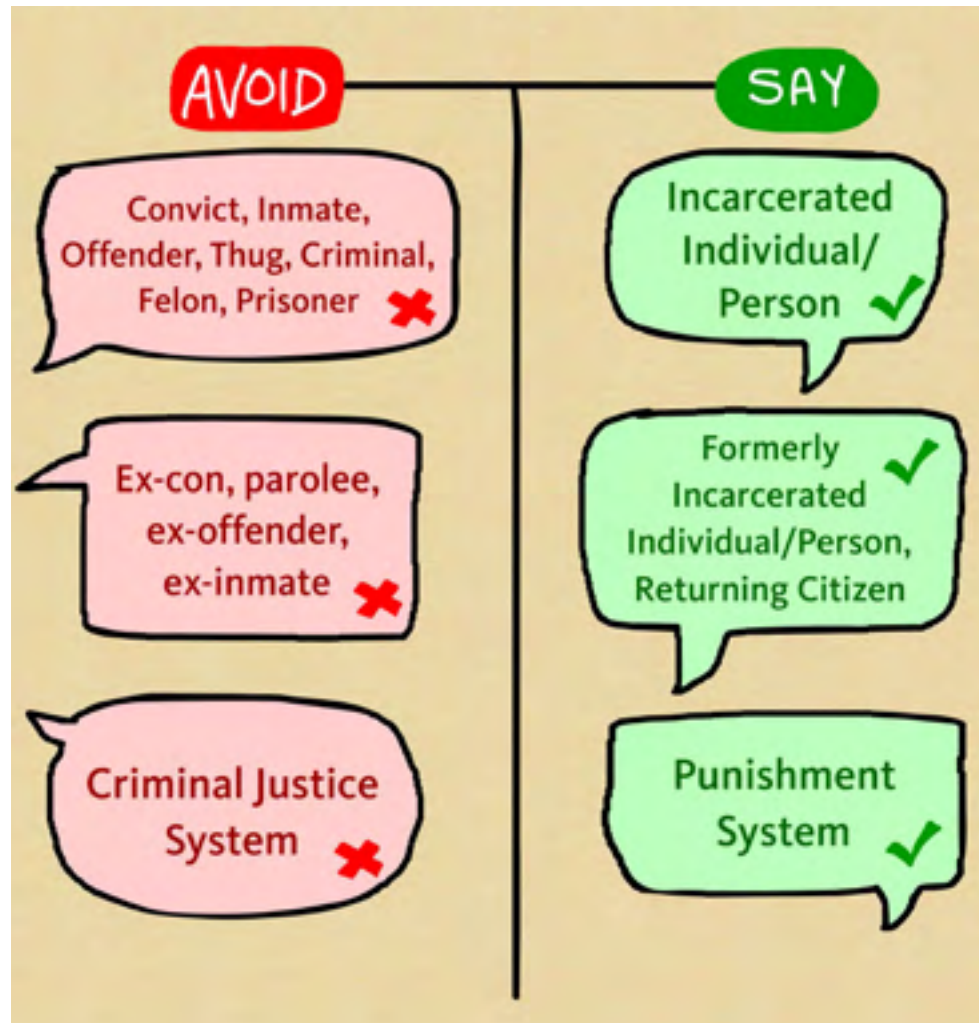
A Note on

Language

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“WORDS MATTER”

When approaching community engagement work, it is important to remember the language we use in framing issues related to mass incarceration and oppression. We believe that the language we use should be respectful and affirming of all voices, perspectives, and opinions. Given the university partnership context of States of Incarceration, your settings for dialogue and engagement will be very diverse and will include people who have direct experience with incarceration. You will likely find diverse experiences in your own classrooms, among university staff, and within partnering organizations. The language we use in facilitation should be inclusive, without harming or dehumanizing any participants.



A [handy guide to language](#) from the Education from the Inside Out Coalition to use during your facilitation.

Eddie Ellis (1941-2014) was the President and Founder of the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions, an independent research, training, and advocacy think tank in Brooklyn, NY. A former Black Panther Party leader, Ellis served 25 years in prison (1969-1994) for a crime he did not commit. While in prison, he earned two Associate's Degrees, a Bachelor's Degree, and a Master's Degree. He wrote the following words in January 2013, reminding us of the importance of language:

“Words matter. They shape perceptions and understanding, both of past and present events and of future possibilities and, therefore, future events. Semantic and public acceptance of terms like ‘formerly incarcerated’ or ‘returning citizens’ (rather than ex-felon, ex-offender or ex-inmate) are of fundamental importance to the process of public opinion formulation, positive media images, effective social service delivery and, most importantly, progressive policy change...

All social justice and human rights advocates and criminal justice reform activists, academicians and others, must begin to revise their language – rethink what in effect has actually been law enforcement language that government agencies, individuals and organizations have adopted—when writing and speaking about our population.

The proper, progressive and visionary way to refer to the 25 million people in the United States who have criminal convictions and/or have spent time in prisons must now be as ‘returning citizens’ or ‘formerly incarcerated people,’ not ex-offenders, ex-felons, ex-cons or ex-anything. **We are not ‘ex-,’ we are human beings.** The derogatory and dehumanizing terms, formerly used so frequently, are no longer acceptable and, in fact, impede our process and progress towards human justice. If organizations and individuals of good will can

be convinced or compelled into creating and using a new terminology, the long term impact on public perception and understanding of people returning to the community after spending time in prison, and those with criminal convictions, will be profound and constructive...

The point here is not just to change the words we use, but to examine how changing our words changes what we can see. Changing the language will help point out what assumptions we might decide to hold onto and which ones to let go. We can agree, for example, that there is a fundamental difference between stealing a stereo or writing a fraudulent check and physically hurting another person, but saying ‘non-violent’ and ‘violent’ is only one semantic system for demonstrating that difference, one set up by the state through its laws. We validate that state action every time we use this distinction. We must create new terms and a new language that more properly expresses both our understanding of the present reality and our vision to challenge and change that reality for the future.”

Dialogue

WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

In its most basic definition, dialogue is two or more people talking about a topic.

What do we mean by dialogue?

Our take on dialogue is heavily influenced by Paolo Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire defines dialogue as “the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world.”⁶ That is, that in coming together and sharing our experience, we can describe the tangible and intangible things happening to us as individuals and as a collective. This process validates our experiences, gives us an opportunity to learn the language to discuss difficult topics, and allows us to “own our voices,” or have agency in how our lives and stories are represented.

From this approach, dialogue becomes a process for sharing information, and can be an effective, culturally competent tool when exploring difficult subjects.

Other Examples of Dialogue

Many organizations also use dialogue for improving relationships between individuals or groups of people that do not necessarily share the same opinion. Others use dialogue to motivate groups of people towards change.

For example, Public Conversations Project focuses on using dialogue to increase communication and build relationships:

“At PCP, we use the word “dialogue” to refer to a conversation in which people who have different beliefs and perspectives seek to develop mutual understanding. While doing so, they typically experience a softening of stereotypes and develop more trusting relationships. They often gain fresh perspectives on the costs of the conflict and begin to see new possibilities for interaction and action outside of the dialogue room.”⁷

“Dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression.”

—Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

WHY IS DIALOGUE IMPORTANT FOR HAL?

Mass incarceration does not exist in a vacuum. In every community where this exhibit will take place, mass incarceration is tied to issues such as those of poverty, health, or immigration. In an interview, Elise White of the Center for Court Innovation told us that she sees a steepening divide between communities directly affected by mass incarceration and communities who perceive that they have no relation to the issue. These two groups are becoming less and less understanding of one another.

Often, traditional exhibits or panels don't address the space between the observer and the issue. They allow alienation from the issue as opposed to engagement with it, which could exacerbate the divide between those directly impacted and those who see themselves as unaffected. Yet this divide is not always so clear cut, and we are all more connected to mass incarceration than we think. Dialogue amongst diverse participants then offers an opportunity to bridge these not always divergent experiences. As Piper Anderson said, dialogue and engagement allow us to “dynamize the space” of the exhibit and foster interaction with observers and audience members. Additionally, the exhibit itself will present a lot of information, all at once. Activities centered around dialogue will create intimate, meaningful experiences as participants take in the exhibit and after they leave the exhibit.

In a time when so many diverse entities are organizing to address the effects of mass incarceration, HAL serves as an invaluable link for community organizations, institutions, students, and neighbors. By engaging all of these participants in dialogue, we can collectively strengthen that link and make it more sustainable.

Dialogue is beneficial because it can:

- provide an opportunity for participants to feel agency in their own lives to create change around mass incarceration, whether it's talking to friends about the exhibit and the issue, or starting a community dialogue to change policing policies.
- help us build relationships, and see how we are all connected to this issue of mass incarceration. It encourages and allows us to hear from as many different perspectives as possible.
- require a commitment from its participants to engage in a process of transformation: to change the situation of the oppressed, and to create a new reality.

PRINCIPLES AND GROUND RULES FOR DIALOGUE

Raising awareness among people and communities who see themselves as not directly impacted by mass incarceration, and building capacity among people and communities who are, may seem like incompatible goals given limited resources, and different organizations may emphasize one over the other. But these activities can and should be complementary. All people are impacted by mass incarceration, and people with direct experience within the system exist everywhere, in every kind of institution, including in universities and classrooms. States of Incarceration challenges us to remember our nation's history of incarceration and to reflect on that history in order to shape what happens next. The exhibit serves to raise awareness around local issues of incarceration. When accompanied by dialogue, it can become a space for transformation. We hope our toolkit will enable HAL partners to be clear and explicit about the goals of their public programming, whatever they are.

However, even with clear goals and the best of intentions, public dialogue is not always easy, and if approached in unsafe settings by inexperienced facilitators, it can be more problematic than productive. Many of us have grappled with issues of power and privilege within institutions, such as universities, which are deeply embedded in and often reproduce systems of inequity. Many university spaces already exclude people that have been to prison (many do not admit returning citizens), and the rising cost of higher education makes those spaces not representative of the broader population. The issue of mass incarceration intimately affects many people. As a facilitator it's especially important to create a sensitive space for dialogue that does not humiliate participants, but encourages thoughtful inquiry and respectful discussion.

Our action research revealed that one of the most important aspects of dialogue in university or institutional settings is the inclusion of multiple perspectives and

“If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings.”
—Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

voices. The conversations that encompassed multiple points of view were often the most valuable and the most constructive. Whether intentionally or not, especially in private higher education, events like the States of Incarceration exhibit can be exclusive and homogenous. Through HAL, students at the 20 partnering universities have been urged to talk about mass incarceration, about how we are all implicated in the system and how we are connected - when normally they would never have such a conversation. In order to extend these conversations beyond our classrooms, we must make a proactive effort to diversify the spaces in which we hold dialogue.

Here are some suggestions for building a constructive dialogue space.

For Hosts

When launching a humanities exhibit like States of Incarceration, it is especially important to create space and time for dialogue. Thinking about these principles ahead of time and preparing for them will help you honor those spaces.

1. **Engagement:** Before undertaking “community engagement,” first decide which community or communities you want to engage, and identify what barriers might exist to their participation.
2. **Community:** Consider planning events that create as well as engage community, through music, food, and other socially bonding activities.
3. **Transparency:** Feed back the results of your engagement activities to your collaborators and to the wider community.
4. **Partnership:** Involve organizations and individuals directly affected by and working to address mass incarceration in creative and mutually beneficial ways.

Principles for Partnership with Formerly Incarcerated Individuals:

1. **Emphasize Personal Narrative:** Let formerly incarcerated individuals tell their own stories how they want to tell them.
2. **Focus on the Future:** People want to be honored in their fullness for where they're *going*, not where they've *been*.



The States of Incarceration exhibit launch at The New School in spring of 2016.

3. **Don't Forget Compensation:** Returning citizens need income. Pay for the time and labor that you ask of them.
4. **Let Them Lead:** Formerly incarcerated individuals should be offered leadership positions where possible. They should not be treated as accessories.

For Facilitators

1. **Ask for pronouns when doing group introductions.**
2. **Accessibility.** Take care to ensure accessibility for activities; spaces should be accessible for those who are mobility impaired, videos should have captions, and interpreters arranged when necessary.
3. **Admit you don't have all the answers.** As a facilitator you may not necessarily know all the answers to the questions participants may have. Embrace facilitation as a mutual learning process and share with your group that you hope to learn from them as much as they may learn from you.
4. **Have patience.** Reflection takes time. Dialogue takes time. When posing questions to individuals or groups, give them a moment to respond. Leave space for silence. As a general rule, wait at least 6 seconds before giving another prompt.
5. **Off topic conversation:** Sometimes participants have important things to say about the topic that might not already be built into the agenda. Before ending tangential conversation ask yourself some questions:
 - Is what's being discussed relevant to the larger issue, or has it wandered into other territory?
 - Is the tangent covering a discussion that will be brought up later in the agenda or activities? If so, feel free to have participants table the topic until it emerges later.
6. **Difficult topics:** Some participants may find the content of the discussion triggering. We advise providing participants a "trigger warning" before the topic starts when discussing these things:



The States of Incarceration exhibit conference at The New School in spring of 2016.

- Physical, sexual, or emotional violence or abuse.
- Hate crimes, genocide.
- Self harm, suicide, or homicide.
- Forced sterilization, unethical experimentation, and forced admission into mental institutions.

Make it explicitly clear that a participant is welcome to leave at any time if a topic becomes upsetting, and show where the exits are.

7. **Dialogue does not equal debate.** Dialogue is an opportunity to learn about different perspectives and experiences around an issue. Participants should feel safe and comfortable expressing their own opinions, including uncertainties, without feeling attacked or threatened.

For Participants:

Establishing ground rules will likely be one of the first items you facilitate with your group. Jot down some basic rules before starting and review them with your group. Make sure they're comfortable with the rules being set. Here are some examples of rules you can set:⁸

- Each person gets a chance to talk.
- One person talks at a time. Don't cut people off.
- Speak for yourself, not as the representative of any group. Remember that others are speaking for themselves, too.
- It's okay to disagree, but be sure to show respect for one another.
- Some of the things we will say in the study circle will be private (personal). We will not tell these stories to other people, unless we all agree that it is okay.

Before moving on, ask participants if they'd like to add on to the ground rules. This helps the group gain a sense of ownership of the space and discussion as well as encourages trust amongst group members.



For additional ideas, check out the [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#).

Tools

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire outlines the process of transformation. First, he says, the oppressed must unveil their reality, which banking education and other forms of oppression have hidden. In order to see this reality, the oppressed must gain situated knowledge, knowledge of their reality and the realities of those around them. Then the oppressed can begin to transform their oppressive reality through reflection and action, through dialogue.

The tools that follow in this section are based on the components of Freire's arc of transformation, beginning with listening. Listening encourages us to withhold our own biases and opens us to different perspectives. Seeing, observing, and learning from those perspectives reinforces our collective understanding of one another, and of the issue at hand. Analyzing prepares us to work toward change and action. Personalizing creates spaces where experiences are shared and where we acknowledge our commonalities. In these spaces, the issue becomes more relevant and important to us, and can link us to shared feelings of humanity. This process of transformation helps us as communities to move forward creatively.



To start us off, we've created a sample agenda (see [page 1 in the Appendix](#)) based on a longer community stakeholder event around dialogue that we hosted at The New School, which incorporates some of these activities. From our action research, we learned that it would be useful to convene people in the region who care about the issue of mass incarceration, and who are actively involved in addressing the effects of mass incarceration in the area, before launching the exhibit. Such an event produces an opportunity to learn from a variety of perspectives, builds and attracts a diversified audience, and enriches the dialogue space. We recommend hosting a version of this conference before States of Incarceration comes to your city or university, so that you can lay your own foundations of how and where dialogue takes place when the exhibit arrives.

All of the activities or tools that follow can be used to complement the exhibit and any events surrounding the States of Incarceration initiative. Mass incarceration is a broad topic that can elicit strong emotions for discussants, and these activities are simply suggestions on how to start a conversation or dialogue. Facilitators should adapt these activities to their contexts, and pare down the focus of the activities into specific themes. In [Anatomy of a Dialogue](#), you'll find an even broader template for dialogue activities that can be tailored to specific topics and audiences.



Photos from the States of Incarceration exhibit launch at The New School in spring of 2016.

“Our histories never unfold in isolation. We cannot truly tell what we consider to be our own histories without knowing the other stories. And often we discover that those other stories are actually our own stories. This is the admonition ‘Learn your sisters’ stories’ by Black feminist sociologist Jacqui Alexander. This is a dialectical process that requires us to constantly retell our stories, to revise them and retell them and relaunch them. We can thus not pretend that we do not know about the conjunctures of race and class and ethnicity and nationality and sexuality and ability.”

—Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*

RIPPLE EFFECT

Recommended Setting: Individual

Picture two sets of shoe prints on the floor, facing each other. Visitors can step into the shoe prints in pairs to talk to each other, using the prompts provided (see below). A facilitator is present to explain the activity and/or guide the dialogue, or to partner with a solo visitor.

Materials Needed:

- Shoe Prints (see [page 6 in the Appendix](#))
- Tape
- Prompt cards (see [page 7 in the Appendix](#))

The Set Up:

Tape 2 sets of footprints on the floor, near or in the exhibit. Set up the station with the prompt cards easily accessible. Instructions can be printed and posted (from the text below), or a facilitator can stand at the station and explain the activity to participants.

Instructions:

How will you multiply the impact of this exhibit beyond these walls?

With a partner, stand in the shoeprints (look down!) and use these prompts to practice your next conversation with a friend or family member who needs to know what you've learned here today.

Step 1: Find a partner!

Step 2: Read one of the character descriptions below.

Step 3: Step into the shoeprints and work with your partner to try to answer the following questions:

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation with them about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful not to say?

Step 4: Repeat Steps 2-3 for each character.

REALITY CHECK

Recommended Setting: Public

Use the Reality Check to investigate the local histories of incarceration presented in the States of Incarceration exhibit. This activity is for a public setting, but encourages individual participants to pay a little more attention when attending the exhibit.

Materials Needed:

- Reality Check Scavenger Hunt (See [page 8 in the Appendix](#))



States of Incarceration exhibit. Photo credit: Chris Hyun Choi, 2016.

Instructions:

Encourage participants to fill out the survey as they go. Alternatively, provide the Reality Check surveys after participants have already gone through the exhibit.

Adapting This Activity:

Large Group Setting: Bring participants together in a large group circle after the exhibit. Ask each to share a fact that stood out to them. Once each participant shares a fact, open the circle up for dialogue and ask:

- What facts do you wish were represented in the exhibit that you didn't see?
- What do you think needs to happen to change these facts for the better?
- How can we as individuals start to make that change happen?

Small Group Setting: Once the participants are done going through the exhibit, break them off into small groups. Each group member should share a fact that stood out for them, and explain why. Once each member shares, instruct the small groups to think of a way they would like their chosen fact to change and what would need to happen/what could've happened to make that possible.

Individual Setting: No changes needed.

QUOTES

Recommended Setting: Large Group

The States of Incarceration Exhibition presents a lot of information and material on mass incarceration. This activity allows participants to reflect on their own reactions to the exhibit and any experiences they may have had with mass incarceration. Participants can then share these reflections with the group in order to begin exploring different perspectives on the issue.

This activity is loosely modeled after the Site of Conscience activity titled [Front Page Dialogue: Race and Policing](#).

Materials Needed:

- A wall
- Something to write on: white boards, flip chart paper, butcher paper

The Set Up:

Pick some quotes from the exhibit to use as a starting point. Copy down the quotes on large paper and hang them around a room where all the participants can see them.

Instructions:

Invite participants to read each quote and choose one quote that they had a strong reaction to. They should “vote with their feet” by standing next to the quote they choose. First, they will have a small conversation with the others that chose the same quote.

Participants answer the following questions in their small groups to get the conversation going:

1. What was your reaction to this quote?
2. When you first came to the exhibit, what did you know about mass incarceration? What was your opinion about it? Do you have experience with mass incarceration?
3. How might that have affected your reaction?

Everyone can then come together, sitting in a large circle. Pose the following prompts to the group, allowing participants to answer each one before moving on.

1. In your small groups, did people generally have knowledge about mass incarceration prior to coming to the exhibit?
2. Did the quote you chose reinforce what you previously thought/understood about mass incarceration, or did it make you question what you thought?
3. What purpose do these panels serve in the exhibit?
4. What is the importance of different perspectives in an exhibit like this?

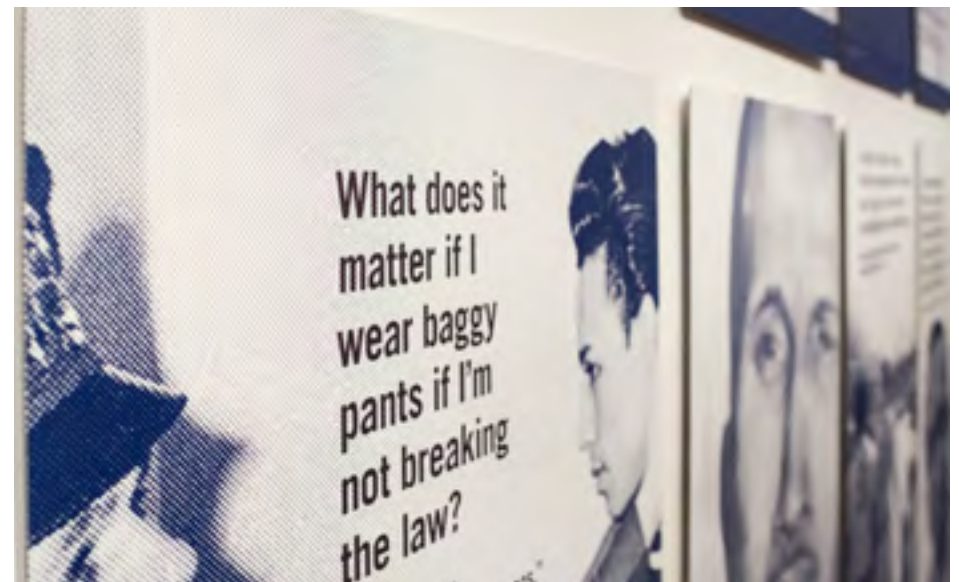
Adapting This Activity:

Public Setting: This activity can be opened to the public by providing stickers/post-its to each participant and allowing each to place a sticker under the quote they like most. Ask participants to initial each sticker/post-it, and if they want to write down one word that comes to mind when they think about their chosen quote. Keep in mind that by opening this activity to the public, participants' familiarity with the topic will be very diverse. To address this, we advise having this activity available at the end of the exhibit, to ensure the best information absorption and time to consider the themes in the exhibit.

Small Group Setting: Divide participants into small groups. Each group should be given given index cards, with each individual card having a quote on it. Each small group participant will pick a card from the bunch and explain to the group members why they chose it. Each small group should have more cards than participants so each person can choose a quote; for example, if you have 5 people in a group there should be at least 6 quotes to choose from.

Individual: From a group of 5 quotes provided for all to see, invite participants to make a numbered list of quotes they most agree with to least. 1 will be the most agreeable, and 5 will be the least agreeable.

+ If you don't want to use the quotes in the exhibit, you can use you can use this handout from the Sentencing Project to pull out statistics instead: [Facts About Prisons and People in Prisons](#).



States of Incarceration exhibit. Photo credits: Chris Hyun Choi (top).

BIRDCAGE

Recommended Setting: Small Group

The purpose of this exercise is to reflect on what we collectively know and have learned about mass incarceration in this country. It's important to name and address the systems of oppression that intersect with incarceration and ultimately keep people in that system. One way we can imagine and describe the intersectionalities of mass incarceration and how it traps whole communities is through the birdcage metaphor.

Materials Needed:

- Paper, cut into shapes that make up a birdcage (see photos on the next page for an example)
- Pens or markers
- Scotch Tape

The Set Up:

In your meeting room, set up a few stations with enough materials at each to make a birdcage. Arrange chairs in a circle in the middle of the room to begin the activity.

Instructions:

Read the following quote (from Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*, referencing Iris Marion Young): "If one thinks about racism by examining only one wire of the cage, or one form of disadvantage, it is difficult to understand how and why the bird is trapped. Only a large number of wires arranged in a specific way, and connected to one another, serve to enclose the bird and to ensure that it cannot escape."

Instruct participants to break out into small groups. Each group should apply the birdcage metaphor to the system of mass incarceration, using the provided supplies to create an actual birdcage. Each group should have a designated note-taker and/or facilitator. Use the following prompts if group members are unsure:

1. If you were to name the bars on the cage, what would they be?
2. What systemic injustices lead individuals to becoming incarcerated?
3. What contributes to recidivism?

Everyone can then return to the large circle, and individuals from different groups should share out the composition of their birdcages. Facilitators can lead a discussion on the birdcage activity, using the following suggested prompts:

1. How do we work to understand the issue of mass incarceration and its intersectionalities? (How can we work to improve the

process of coming to that understanding in settings where people come with different kinds of knowledge?)

2. How is mass incarceration being talked about, and how can we work to using/developing language that honors both the communities/victims affected, and the humanity of those incarcerated?
3. How can we bring people to understand how mass incarceration is not a system of corrections, but a system of marginalization, racism, and oppression?
4. We are all part of the fabric of these birdcages. Taking a look at the birdcages in the room, where do we see ourselves among these bars? How can we, as part of the system, work to dismantle it?



Examples from *The Birdcage Activity*

Adapting This Activity:

Public Setting: Place this quote prominently on a wall: “If one thinks about racism by examining only one wire of the cage, or one form of disadvantage, it is difficult to understand how and why the bird is trapped. Only a large number of wires arranged in a specific way, and connected to one another, serve to enclose the bird and to ensure that it cannot escape.” Underneath the quote provide a station of strips of paper and writing materials; the station should be prominently marked with a sign that says: “If you were to name the bars on the cage, what would they be?” Instruct participants to write down what they believe are the societal obstacles that contribute to mass incarceration, and to place them vertically on the wall under the quote. Keep in mind that by opening this activity to the public, participants’ familiarity with the topic will be very diverse and those who do not understand prison reform or are opposed to it may not be able to remark on this topic. To address this, we advise having this activity available at the end of the exhibit, to ensure the best information absorption and time to consider the themes in the exhibit.

Small Group Setting: Omit large group discussion from instructions provided.

Individual Setting: Invite participants to write a list of things they believe contribute to mass incarceration, and to number each item. Hand out blank pieces of paper to each participant and ask them to draw a bird cage with the number of bars corresponding to the number issues on their original list. Finally ask the participants to write about who they think is trapped in this cage and who is on the outside of it.

MORALITY IN THE LAW

Recommended Setting: Large Group

When someone commits a crime what should happen? How do we determine what's an appropriate consequence, and in what ways do these consequences help rehabilitate a person and a community? Further, when, if ever, does a punishment become unhelpful in deterring crime and healing wrongdoing? These themes are explored through this activity.

Materials Needed:

- Article: [Is Breaking the Law Bad? Practical vs. Moral Approaches to the Law](#) (Also available on [page 12 in the Appendix](#))
- Morality In the Law Handout (See [page 14 in the Appendix](#))

The Set Up:

Every participant is handed out a copy of both the Wade article and the handout.

Instructions:

Instruct participants to read the article and then fill out the handout individually. Once done, participants should come together into small groups and discuss their choices. After 15 minutes, bring the small groups back together into a large group circle.

To begin the large group discussion, you can provide the following prompts:

1. Do you agree that these listed consequences help rehabilitate criminal behavior? Why or why not?
2. Did any of you choose “none” as a consequence? If so why?
3. Every single one of the crimes listed carry the possible consequence of prison and loss of federal benefits, as well as loss of opportunity to find employment or enroll in higher education; why do you think this happens? Is it fair?

Adapting This Activity:

Public Setting: This activity can be opened to the public, inviting all people to share their thoughts. To do this, make the copies of the article available for reading but not necessarily mandatory for participation. Keep in mind that by opening this activity to the public, participants' familiarity with the topic will be very diverse and those who do not understand prison reform or are opposed to it may not be able to remark on all three categories provided.

Small Group Setting: To make this activity work in a small group setting, pass out the activity handout first and ask each participant to fill it out. Allow 10 minutes to complete the worksheet. Once completed, have participants break into small groups to read the article together and discuss their handout choices. The small groups should go through each question and see how each group member answered the questions differently, and how their choices are similar or dissimilar to the ideas presented in the article

Individual setting: Pass out the worksheets to participants to fill out on their own. Ask them to circle each of their choices from the list. Allow 10 minutes to complete the worksheet. Then pass out the article, and allow an additional 10 minutes to read the article. Once done, participants may be invited to write a paragraph on whether they agree or disagree with the author. Offer them the chance to change their answers on the list by putting a star next to the new options they may want to choose, making it clear that participants are not obligated to change their answers if they're satisfied with their choices.



States of Incarceration exhibit.

IMAGINE A WORLD...

Recommended Setting: Large Group

Our capacity to imagine a reality different from our present one is one of the most vital and basic social justice tools we have. Being able to envision a better future is a source of hope and motivation for all people. When considering the issue of mass incarceration, many different things may come to mind. In this activity we ask participants to build in their minds what a world without prisons may look like.

Materials Needed:

- A wall
- Something to write on: white boards, flip chart paper, butcher paper, post its
- Pens, markers, pencils
- Music (optional)

The Set Up:

On a wall create four distinct sections, each designated to one of the below titles:

- When you imagine feeling safe and supported, what do you see?
- Can you draw a picture of a safe and nurturing world?
- If we had no prisons, what would it look like to solve problems?
- What might a system look like that helps people heal and learn new skills when they make mistakes or hurt others?

Provide writing utensils and a comfortable place for participants to write or draw.

Instructions:

Invite participants to take a moment to imagine a world without prisons. Then invite them to write their thoughts down as they consider the different aspects of the world they imagine: what is good; what is bad; how the good and bad can exist together. Thoughts can be written directly onto a writing space mounted on the wall, or participants can be provided post it notes to be placed under the appropriate section. Participants should be welcomed to convey the message in however many or few words they feel necessary, and should feel free to draw their answers if they'd like.

When the activity closes, consider the gathered answers as a group. Explore the common themes and questions/comments that are striking.

Adapting This Activity:

Public Setting: This activity can be opened to the public, inviting all people to share their thoughts. To do this you may choose to omit the post-activity discussion, or make it the object of discussion for a separate event. Keep in mind that by opening this activity to the public, participants' familiarity with the topic will be very diverse and those who do not understand prison reform or are opposed to it may not be able to remark on all three categories provided. To address this, we advise having this activity available at the end of the exhibit, to ensure the best information absorption and time to consider the themes in the exhibit.

Small Group Setting: To make this activity work in a small group setting, we advise turning it into a small group discussion. With your small group take a moment to imagine a world without prisons. Ask them to think about what is good about this world and what is different or what might cause harm. Set aside a minute for contemplation and encourage them to jot down notes. Begin the group conversation by asking how to reconcile what's good and what might cause harm in this new world. Take the conversation one step further by asking whether we are prepared to move toward that world, and what needs to change in our current world in order to get there.



States of Incarceration exhibit.

ANATOMY OF A DIALOGUE

Ready to create your own dialogue? Here's how to get started:



1. GOALS

First, establish your goals for the dialogue. Why are you bringing people together? What will you learn? What will participants take away from the event? For example, a goal for your dialogue could be learning about how people in your community are affected by mass incarceration.



2. SPACE

Then, choose a space. Will the dialogue take place in a classroom as part of a course? Will it be a public dialogue in the local library? Is it a dialogue for a meeting with a community partner? Or will it be for a certain group of people visiting the States of Incarceration exhibit?



3. PEOPLE

Next, recruit participants. Who will you invite to the dialogue? University students, staff from community based organizations, people affected by mass incarceration... be inclusive of many voices and different perspectives.



4. DIALOGUE

It's dialogue time! Welcome everyone into the space. Set some agreements or ground rules for the activity, and get ready to ask some questions.

Brainstorming Template

- Introduction
- Small group idea brainstorm
- Large group share-out
- Analyze ideas
- Re-form ideas
- Conclusion

Past/Present/Future Template

- Introduction
- Small group discussion: What have we noticed in the past regarding this topic?
- Large group share-out
- Large group discussion: What is our present? What's happening today?
- Brainstorm for the future
- Conclusion



5. NEXT STEPS

Don't forget next steps. What are we going to do with the information we learned in the dialogue? Participants in the dialogue should be encouraged to brainstorm ways in which we can create change with what we learned.



For more ideas, see the Public Conversations Project's [Dialogue Tool Box](#).



Resources



For more information on mass incarceration:

- [*The New Jim Crow*](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [*The House I Live In*](#), a film by Eugene Jarecki
- [*Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*](#) by Beth Richie
- [*Queer \(In\)Justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*](#) by Joey Mogul, Andrea Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock
- [*Teaching Histories of Race and Incarceration in the Prison Capital of the World*](#) by Benjamin Weber
- The Foundation for Economic Education's [4 Things You Should Know About Mass Incarceration](#)
- PBS's [*Race - The Power of an Illusion*](#)

For further research on community engagement and dialogue:

- The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's [5 More Ways to Overcome Barriers to Youth Engagement](#)
- The National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's [Best-of-the-Best Resources](#)
- Public Conversations Project's [Fostering Dialogue Across Divides](#) (free with registration)
- Animating Democracy's [The Art of Dialogue](#)
- Education From the Inside Out's [Ban the Box in Higher Education: Student Organizing Toolkit](#)

For additional ideas on tools and activities:

Public Conversations Project's [Dialogue Tool Box](#)

The Work Group for Community Health and Development's [Community Tool Box](#)

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience's [Activity on Race and Policing](#)

The Knotted Line's [Curriculum Guide](#)

And don't forget, always take a moment for self care:

Farrah Khan's [Caring for Yourself is a Radical Act: Self-Care Guide for Youth Working in Community](#)

Notes

1. All facts come from The Sentencing Project, [Fact Sheet: Trends in U.S. Corrections](#), Washington, D.C.: November 2015.
2. Alexander, Michelle. (2012). *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. All statistics come from The NAACP, [Criminal Justice Fact Sheet](#).
6. Freire, P. (2013). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury.
7. Herzig, M. and Chasin, L. (2006). [Fostering dialogue across divides: A nuts and bolts guide from the Public Conversations Project](#). Public Conversations Project.
8. Examples come from the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, [Sample Ground Rules for D&D Processes](#), December 2008.



Appendix

Sample Agenda for a Community Engagement Event: Dialogue within the States of Incarceration Initiative

Event Description

The purpose of this event is to bring together stakeholders involved in the movement to end mass incarceration beyond the HAL partners, including universities, CBOs, community members, formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. These stakeholders are the people in the area mobilizing to address the massive negative impacts of mass incarceration in the past fifty years. Humanities Action Lab staff and faculty would benefit as participants in this event since they will have opportunities to engage with other stakeholders and preview tools that can be utilized in and around the exhibit. Central themes surrounding this event will include how we are working together as stakeholders, and what we can do together to bring about change. Through storytelling and dialogue, our aim is to foster an environment that recognizes truth in each stakeholder's past and present experiences with mass incarceration. This event should be a safe and democratic space, inclusive of those most affected by mass incarceration, where we can create a vision for dialogue that allows for honesty, compassion, and creativity.

Below, find a sample agenda and script for the day, including suggested times for each activity.

Event Goals

- Foster relationships between stakeholders, between community based and university based projects that aim to build a movement to address the effects of mass incarceration.
- Exchange knowledge and experiences with regards to mass incarceration.
- Identify pain points within the movement and conceptualize a framework for stronger partnerships.

Participants

We suggest an event goal of 15-30 people.

Sample Agenda (3 or 4 hours suggested)

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Birdcage Activity
3. Break
4. Quotes Activity
5. Where do we go from here?
6. Conclusion

Introduction 30 minutes

Welcome everyone to the space. Say something like:

We've all been through this one-of-a-kind project which brought so many amazing experiences across different communities who now have had the opportunity to dig deeper into the system of mass incarceration that touches us as individuals and communities, though in different ways. Regardless of how we touch or are touched by mass incarceration, we have all chosen to enter this space with a commitment to move forward in solidarity. Before we dive in, I would like us to all introduce ourselves.

Ask everyone to introduce themselves by stating their name, the gender pronoun they use, the organization or class they come from, and why they're here today.

State your goals for the community event. For example:

- 1. We will express/share what we saw and heard through the preparation of the States of Incarceration exhibit so that we can lift successful moments even higher and learn from lessons experienced by all of us.*
- 2. We will work to understand the bigger picture in the movement to end mass incarceration. By critically examining our experience thus far, both in the movement and in our partnerships, we will suggest ways in which HAL can support us in our work.*
- 3. We will envision how we can move forward as individuals, as partners, as a community, and how we can continue to do work together.*

Birdcage Activity 45 minutes

Introduce the activity. Say something like:

*We'd like to talk about the issue that has brought us all here together, and we'd like to take an intersectional standpoint when talking about mass incarceration. Before reflecting on how you engaged in dialogue through your own experiences and how we want to build partnerships in the future, we feel that it's important to grapple with the other systems of oppression that intersect with incarceration and ultimately keep people in that system. One way we can imagine and describe the intersectionalities of mass incarceration and how it traps whole communities is through the Birdcage metaphor, which Michelle Alexander references in her book *The New Jim Crow*: "If one thinks about racism by examining only one wire of the cage, or one form of disadvantage, it is difficult to understand how and why the bird is trapped. Only a large number of wires arranged in a specific way, and connected to one another, serve to enclose the bird and to ensure that it cannot escape."*

Small Group Breakouts 20 minutes

Each group should apply the birdcage metaphor to the system of mass incarceration, using the provided supplies to create an actual birdcage (see photo on page 31 of this toolkit for an example). Each group should have a designated note-taker and/or facilitator. Use the following prompts if group members are unsure:

- 1. If you were to name the bars on the cage, what would they be?*
- 2. What systemic injustices lead individuals to becoming incarcerated?*
- 3. What contributes to recidivism?*

Group Sharing & Discussion 20 minutes

Groups should share out the composition of their birdcages and facilitators can lead a discussion on the birdcage activity. Depending on your own goals for the day, some suggested prompts are:

1. *How do we work to understand the issue of mass incarceration and its intersectionalities? (How can we work to improve the process of coming to that understanding in settings where people come with different kinds of knowledge?)*
2. *How is mass incarceration being talked about, and how can we work to using/ developing language that honors both the communities/victims affected, and the humanity of those incarcerated?*
3. *How can we bring people to understand how mass incarceration is not a system of corrections, but a system of marginalization, racism, and oppression?*
4. *We are all part of the fabric of these birdcages. Taking a look at the birdcages in the room, where do we see ourselves among these bars? How can we, as part of the system, work to dismantle it?*

Break 30 minutes

Quotes Activity 55 minutes

Introduce the activity. Say something like:

In curating the States of Incarceration exhibit, the Humanities Action Lab set out to foster a new public dialogue on the social issue of mass incarceration. The next part of our conversation here is to unpack the purpose of dialogue, specifically a public dialogue, and see how we do that work effectively.

We will spend the next twenty minutes in small groups reflecting on our own experiences with public dialogue - the HAL conference can be your reference point or you can bring in others. After that, we will engage in exercise that has us reflect on different perspectives of dialogue,

listening, or community conversations and then discuss how that deepens our individual understandings of dialogue. We'll then come back together for a whole group reflection. In addition to being thoughtful about our individual approach to dialogue in our work with communities, this conversation will hopefully also generate various perspectives and ideas on public dialogue for you to consider in your city's exhibit or conference.

Quotes Used

“Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming-between those who deny other the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them.” - Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

“If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings.” - Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

“Our histories never unfold in isolation. We cannot truly tell what we consider to be our own histories without knowing the other stories. And often we discover that those other stories are actually our own stories. This is the admonition ‘Learn your sisters’ stories’ by Black feminist sociologist Jacqui Alexander. This is a dialectical process that requires us to constantly retell our stories, to revise them and retell them and relaunch them. We can thus not pretend that we do not know about the conjunctures of race and class and ethnicity and nationality and sexuality and ability.” - Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*

“How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own?” - Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Small Group Breakouts 10 minutes

Quotes should be set up in different corners of the room, but hidden from view (with another piece of chart paper over it, or laying facedown on a table or the floor). Participants should divide into small groups (5-10 people per group) and discuss their personal definitions of dialogue, its purpose, and how they experienced dialogue through the States of Incarceration exhibit or conference. Each group should have a designated note-taker and/or facilitator. Small group facilitators can ask:

1. *What is your understanding of dialogue?*
2. *What does dialogue mean?*
3. *What is the purpose of dialogue?*
4. *How can dialogue contribute to an exhibit like States of Incarceration?*

Reveal Quotes 10 minutes

The quotes can then be revealed after this initial discussion. Staying in small groups, participants can share their reactions to and understanding of the quote. Some suggested questions are:

1. *What about this quote resonates with you? Why?*
2. *Does this quote change your understanding of dialogue?*
3. *Using your personal experience or the HAL conference as a reference, in what ways can power and privilege show up in community conversations?*
4. *What does dialogue look like in a classroom/library/gallery/public space?*

Large Group Discussion and Brainstorming 30 minutes

Come back to a large group facilitated conversation. First ask the small groups to share back a few things that came up in their conversations. As a group, attempt to come up with a core set of principles for dialogue. A designated note-taker should take notes on a whiteboard or on paper that is visible to all participants.

Where do we go from here? 65 minutes

Introduce the final activity of the day. Say something like:

For the last part of the community event, we will focus our attention on understanding how we can move forward as individuals, as partners, as a university project, as a community, and how we can continue to do work together. This is an opportunity to lay the foundation for what's coming, to ensure that we build dialogue into the States of Incarceration exhibit, to ensure that all voices are heard. Where does HAL fit within the movement, and what opportunities does HAL present for developing coalitions and future initiatives around this and other issues? With this next activity, we will brainstorm around the challenges of generating and sustaining momentum in our partnerships, hopefully emerging with a vision of what we want our partnerships to look like through this process.

Breakout Group Activity 20 minutes suggested

Participants can break into small groups (or stay in a large group if time is running out). Facilitators should ask participants to think of the challenges to partnerships between institutions and communities/CBOs. Some suggested prompts are:

1. *Communities, community organizers, and partner organizations were excited about the Community-Institution link developed through the HAL initiative. What can HAL do to further this link?*
2. *What are the challenges in creating partnerships between communities, community based organizations, and universities? (For example, one issue that came up for us was compensation. People who were not affiliated with an organization or a class wanted to help with our programming, but could not afford to take the time to do that unless they were being paid.)*
3. *How can we create open spaces for creativity, dialogue, and sharing of difficult concerns among our various communities (students, cbos, invited publics, etc.) within the sometimes limited parameters of an academic semester and the tightly paced framework of launching an exhibit?*

of Incarceration project and their future initiatives? How can HAL support our coalition/partnerships/network?

3. *What coalitions can we build here for future partnerships and continuation of the current work being done?*

Give participants a chance to air out their ideas, then bring the conversation back around to the movements and communities that already exist. Some suggested prompts are:

1. *How do we find our place as individuals or collective groups of people, and create ways in which we can strategically address issues and complications brought on by the system of mass incarceration?*
2. *Where does HAL fit into the movement?*

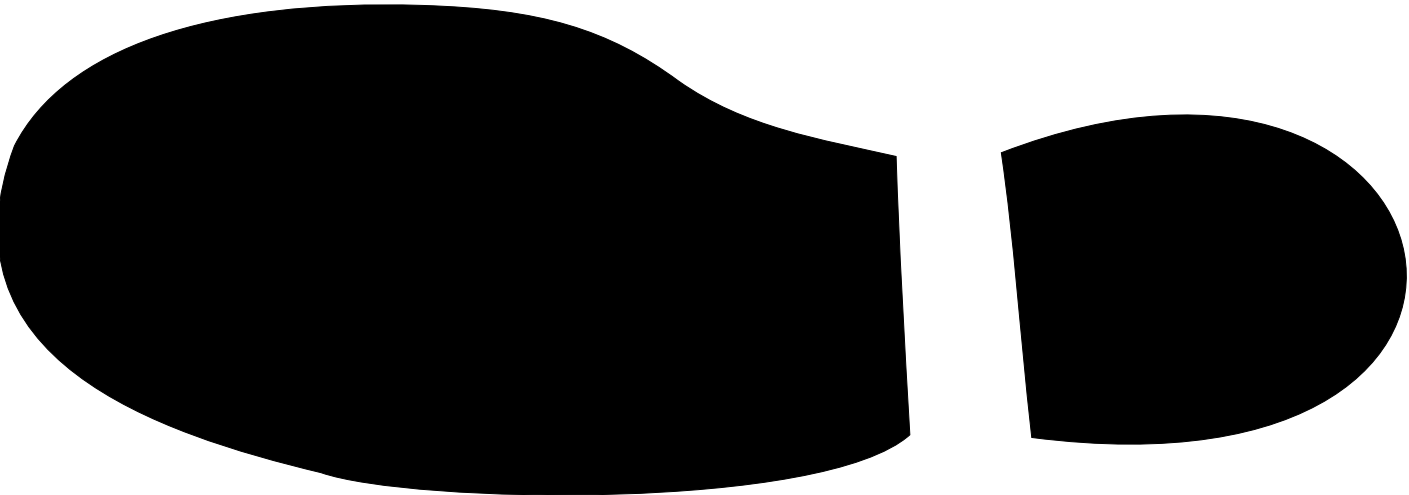
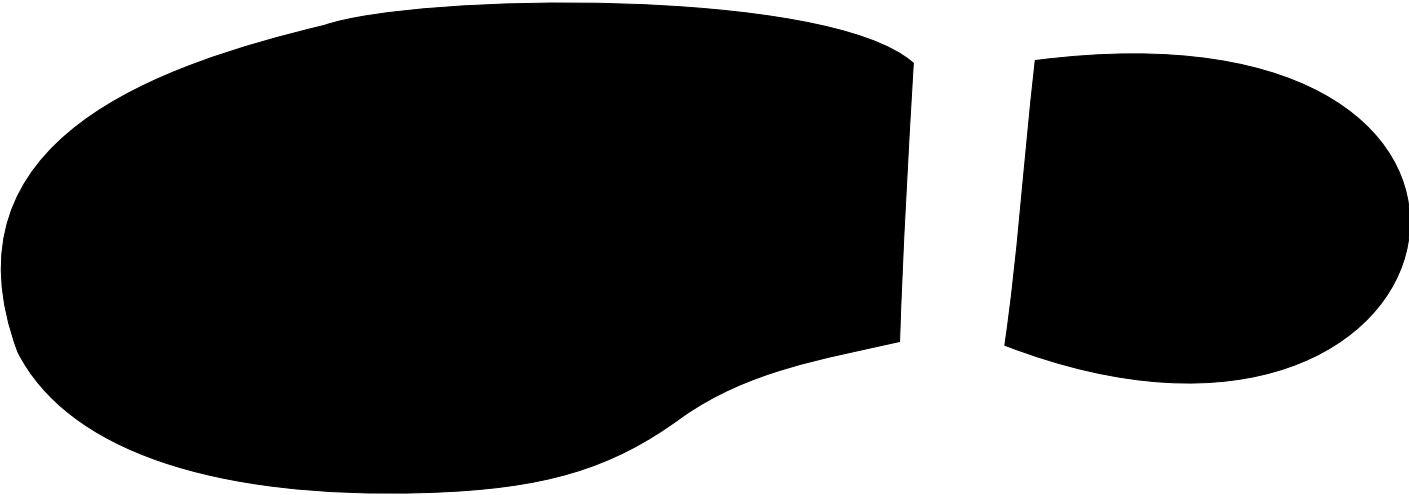
Conclusion

Close out the day by thanking everyone that came. If participants are not in circle formation, circle up (standing or sitting) and go around the circle, having each participant state one word that represents how they are feeling after the community event today. Alternatively, have each participant state one concrete thing they will do strengthen a partnership or relationship they created today.

Facilitated Conversation 40 minutes suggested

In order to address the challenges named in the small groups, bring the conversation back to the larger group and encourage participants to think about how we can build our partnerships. Some prompts for ideas are:

1. *How can we develop leaders who work/exist in the spaces in between the internal/external relationships? (For example, someone who works as a network administrator, connecting students and faculty to CBOs, connecting CBOs to one another, connecting universities to one another, etc.)*
2. *In terms of partnerships, what are some best practices for HAL in their States*



Ripple Effect

*How will you multiply the impact of this exhibit beyond these walls?
Use these prompts to practice your next conversation with a friend or family member who needs to know what you've learned here today.*

The Curious might ask...

What is this community's history of incarceration?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Challenger might ask...

What's wrong with mass incarceration? It keeps me safe.

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Detached might ask...

What does mass incarceration have to do with me?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Unaware might ask...

What is mass incarceration?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

Ripple Effect

*How will you multiply the impact of this exhibit beyond these walls?
Use these prompts to practice your next conversation with a friend or family member who needs to know what you've learned here today.*

The Curious might ask...

What is this community's history of incarceration?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Challenger might ask...

What's wrong with mass incarceration? It keeps me safe.

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Detached might ask...

What does mass incarceration have to do with me?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

The Unaware might ask...

What is mass incarceration?

- Who is this person in your life?
- How will you begin a conversation about mass incarceration?
- What is the most important point you want to make?
- Is there anything you want to be careful *not* to say?

Reality Check (part 1)

Use this form to investigate the local histories of incarceration featured in this exhibit.

1. North Carolina Population, 1920

69% _____ 32% _____

North Carolinians on chain gangs, 1927

68% _____ 32% _____

2. By 1950, **New Jersey's** Seabrook Farms was the largest agribusiness in the United States. Of its 6,000 laborers, approximately _____ were American citizens and immigrants of Japanese descent incarcerated in camps.
3. In 1972, Marion Penitentiary in **Illinois** instituted _____-hour-a-day isolation cells called Control Units. Across the country, other prisons adopted this “_____” model developed at Marion.
4. From 1981 to 1990, _____ Haitians were interdicted and processed at facilities like Krome North and South in Miami, **Florida**. Yet only _____ were even eligible for asylum in the U.S.
5. The Vernon C. Bain Center, an _____-bed processing facility servicing all five boroughs of **New York City**, is currently the largest prison ship in the world. The purpose-built jail barge has been permanently docked in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the South Bronx since _____.
6. With more detention centers than any other state, **Texas** can imprison an estimated _____ migrants daily. The majority of these centers have been built since _____.
- 7. Minnesota** Incarceration Rates by Race / Ethnicity, 2010:
_____ White (per 100,000)
_____ American Indian / Alaska Native (per 100,000)
8. In 2015, one in every _____ residents of **Louisiana** was behind bars: the highest rate of incarceration in the world. A study found that black Louisianans are _____ times more likely than whites to be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for non-violent crimes.
9. In 2014, the Correctional Corporation of America made \$_____ in gross revenue from more than _____ facilities across the U.S., including _____ in **Tennessee**.
- 10. North Carolina:** Between 1984-2015, the state of North Carolina executed _____ people. As of 2015, _____ men had been exonerated from North Carolina's death row.

Reality Check Scavenger Hunt B

1. In medieval Europe, peasant captives were placed in _____, while the elites received preferential treatment and were housed in _____.
2. In 1923, a student at Whittier State School in Whittier, California was identified by fieldworkers as “_____,” and at age 15 was committed to Sonoma State Home, where inmates were routinely, legally sterilized.
3. In 1931, a group of “lifers” at the Norfolk Prison Colony formed the Norfolk Prison Debating Society. _____ later wrote that his time on the debate team gave him his first taste of public speaking.
4. The 1994 closure of Indiana’s first mental hospital, Central State, was part of a nationwide process called _____ that began in the 1960s.
5. In the 1990s, a new prison opened every _____ days.
6. In 1982, chaplain Peter Young introduced New York’s first _____ program to the state prison at Mount McGregor. In 2014, the prison (and the program) were shut down.
7. Hawa Jama, a 26-year-old asylum seeker from _____, was the lead plaintiff in *Jama v. Esmor Correctional Services*, the first time immigrant detainees were given the right to sue a private corporation. Jama and _____ other plaintiffs were awarded damages in 2007.
8. _____ are the fastest-growing incarcerated population in the United States. Their numbers have increased by _____% since 1977.
9. Portion of all military helmets, ammunition belts, bullet-proof vests, ID tags, shirts, pants, tents, bags, and canteens produced by the federal prison industry: _____%.
10. Portion of African American men denied the right to vote because of felony convictions, 2010: _____ out of _____

Reality Check (Part 1) Answers

Use this form to investigate the local histories of incarceration featured in this exhibit.

- 1. North Carolina** Population, 1920
69% **White** 32% **Black**
North Carolinians on chain gangs, 1927
68% **Black** 32% **White**
2. By 1950, **New Jersey's** Seabrook Farms was the largest agribusiness in the United States. Of its 6,000 laborers, approximately **2,500** were American citizens and immigrants of Japanese descent incarcerated in camps.
3. In 1972, Marion Penitentiary in **Illinois** instituted **23**-hour-a-day isolation cells called Control Units. Across the country, other prisons adopted this "**Supermax**" model developed at Marion.
4. From 1981 to 1990, **22,940** Haitians were interdicted and processed at facilities like Krome North and South in Miami, **Florida**. Yet only **11** were even eligible for asylum in the U.S.
5. The Vernon C. Bain Center, an **800**-bed processing facility servicing all five boroughs of **New York City**, is currently the largest prison ship in the world. The purpose-built jail barge has been permanently docked in the Hunts Point neighborhood of the South Bronx since **1992**.
6. With more detention centers than any other state, **Texas** can imprison an estimated **34,767** migrants daily. The majority of these centers have been built since **2005**.
- 7. Minnesota** Incarceration Rates by Race / Ethnicity, 2010:
216 White (per 100,000)
2,646 American Indian / Alaska Native (per 100,000)
8. In 2015, one in every **86** residents of **Louisiana** was behind bars: the highest rate of incarceration in the world. A study found that black Louisianans are **23** times more likely than whites to be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole for non-violent crimes.
9. In 2014, the Correctional Corporation of America made **\$1.6 billion** in gross revenue from more than **60** facilities across the U.S., including **seven** in **Tennessee**.
- 10. North Carolina:** Between 1984-2015, the state of North Carolina executed **43** people. As of 2015, **nine** men had been exonerated from North Carolina's death row.

Reality Check (Part 2) Answers

Use this form to investigate the local histories of incarceration featured in this exhibit.

1. In medieval Europe, peasant captives were placed in **dungeons**, while the elites received preferential treatment and were housed in **towers**.
2. In 1923, a student at Whittier State School in Whittier, California was identified by fieldworkers as “**feebleminded**,” and at age 15 was committed to Sonoma State Home, where inmates were routinely, legally sterilized.
3. In 1931, a group of “lifers” at the Norfolk Prison Colony formed the Norfolk Prison Debating Society. **Malcolm X** later wrote that his time on the debate team gave him his first taste of public speaking.
4. The 1994 closure of Indiana’s first mental hospital, Central State, was part of a nationwide process called **deinstitutionalization** that began in the 1960s.
5. In the 1990s, a new prison opened every **15** days.
6. In 1982, chaplain Peter Young introduced New York’s first **Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment** program to the state prison at Mount McGregor. In 2014, the prison (and the program) were shut down.
7. Hawa Jama, a 26-year-old asylum seeker from **Somalia**, was the lead plaintiff in *Jama v. Esmor Correctional Services*, the first time immigrant detainees were given the right to sue a private corporation. Jama and **nine** other plaintiffs were awarded damages in 2007.
8. **Women** are the fastest-growing incarcerated population in the United States. Their numbers have increased by **832%** since 1977.
9. Portion of all military helmets, ammunition belts, bullet-proof vests, ID tags, shirts, pants, tents, bags, and canteens produced by the federal prison industry: **100%**.
10. Portion of African American men denied the right to vote because of felony convictions, 2010: **1** out of **8**

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGES

Is Breaking the Law Bad? Practical vs. Moral Approaches to the Law

Lisa Wade, PhD on April 8, 2016

Flashback Friday.

Americans tend to conflate the law and morality. We believe, that is, that we make things illegal because they're immoral. While we might admit that there are exceptions, we tend to think that our laws generally reflect what is right and wrong, not a simple or arbitrary effort to control the population in ways that people who influence policy want.

This is why changing laws can sometimes be so hard. If it isn't just about policy, but ethics, then changing a law means allowing something immoral to be legal.

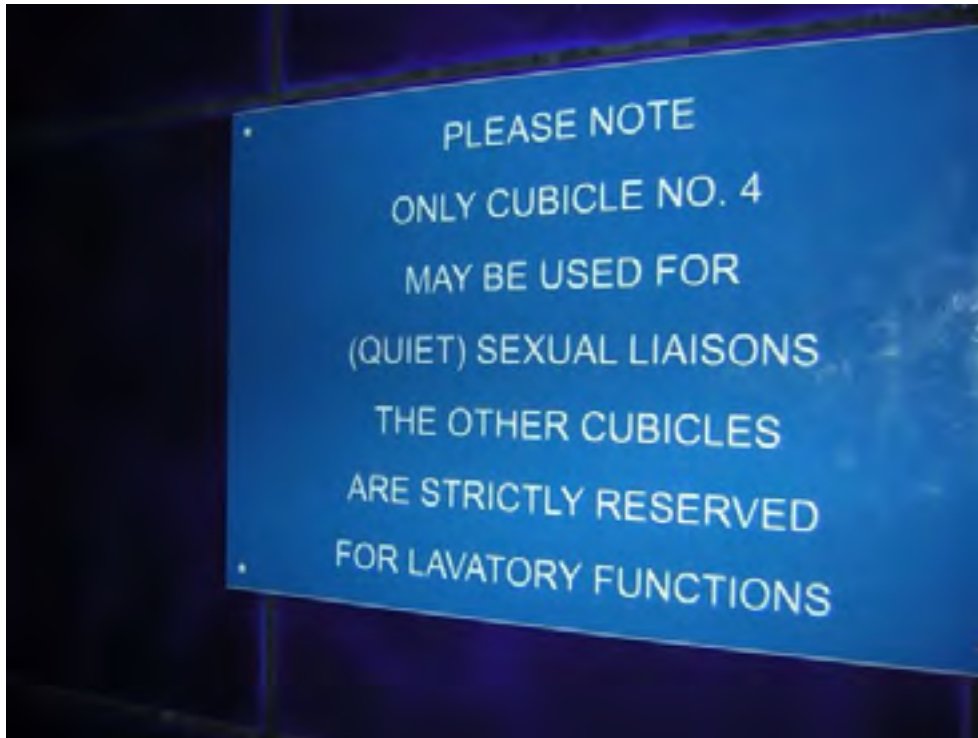
In some other countries, people don't think like this. They see law as simple public policy, not ethics, which leads to a different attitude toward enforcement.

In Amsterdam, for example, possession and cultivation of marijuana is a misdemeanor. Despite the city's famous and deserved reputation for the open use of marijuana and the "coffee shops" that sell it, it's illegal. The city, though, decided that policing it was more trouble than it was worth, so it has a **policy of non-enforcement**.

An even more fascinating example is their approach to street level sex work. While prostitution is legal in Amsterdam, "streetwalking" is not. Still, there will always be sex workers who can't afford to rent a work space. These women, some of the most economically deprived, will be on the streets whether the city likes it or not.

Instead of adding to their problems by throwing them all in jails or constantly fining them, the city built a **circular drive** just outside of town equipped with semi-private stalls. In other words, the city decided against enforcing the law on "streetwalking" and instead spent tax money to build a location in which individuals could engage in behavior that was against the law... and they considered it a win-win.

I thought of this when Julieta R. sent in this picture, shot by her friend at the Aberdeen Pub in Edinburgh, Scotland. Sex in the bathroom, it appears, had begun to inconvenience customers. But, instead of trying to eradicate the behavior, the Pub just said: “Ok, fine, but just keep it to cubicle no. 4.”



Americans would never go for this. Because we think it's *immoral* to break the law, not just illegal, we would consider this to be hypocrisy. It doesn't matter if enforcing the law is impractical (marijuana), if doing so does more harm than good (sex work), or if it'd be easier and cheaper not to do it (cubicle no. 4), in America we believe that the person breaking the law is *bad* and letting them get away with it is letting a bad person go unpunished.

If we had a practical orientation toward the law, though, instead of a moral one, we might be quicker to change laws, be more willing to weigh the benefits of enforcement with its costs, be able to consider whether enforcement is ethical, feel more comfortable with just letting people break the law, and even helping them do so, if we decided that it was the “right” thing to do.

This post originally appeared in 2010.

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Morality in the Law Handout

Action	Do you believe this is immoral?	Which of the following do you think are appropriate consequences?	How long should the “consequences” last?
<p>Possessing Marijuana</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service <input type="checkbox"/> Going to prison <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty finding employment <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to vote <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to go to college <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to receive financial aid <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling or Psychiatric Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Lose food stamp benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lose medicaid benefits <input type="checkbox"/> No Punishment or Consequence <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own: _____	
<p>Sex Work</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service <input type="checkbox"/> Going to prison <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty finding employment <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to vote <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to go to college <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to receive financial aid <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling or Psychiatric Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Lose food stamp benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lose medicaid benefits <input type="checkbox"/> No Punishment or Consequence <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own: _____	
<p>Paying a fee in exchange for sexual conduct</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service <input type="checkbox"/> Going to prison <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty finding employment <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to vote <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to go to college <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to receive financial aid <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling or Psychiatric Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Lose food stamp benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lose medicaid benefits <input type="checkbox"/> No Punishment or Consequence <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own: _____	

Continued on next page...

Action	Do you believe this is immoral?	Which of the following do you think are appropriate consequences?	How long should the “consequences” last?
Shoplifting		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service <input type="checkbox"/> Going to prison <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty finding employment <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to vote <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to go to college <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to receive financial aid <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling or Psychiatric Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Lose food stamp benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lose Medicaid benefits <input type="checkbox"/> No Punishment or Consequence <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own: _____	
Assault		<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service <input type="checkbox"/> Going to prison <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty finding employment <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to vote <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to go to college <input type="checkbox"/> Being unable to receive financial aid <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling or Psychiatric Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Lose food stamp benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Lose Medicaid benefits <input type="checkbox"/> No Punishment or Consequence <input type="checkbox"/> Add your own: _____	