

PRISONS.... SHUT'EM DOWN!

DID YOU KNOW...

*Despite the fact that there is little to no evidence supporting the idea that prisons increase public safety, the use of imprisonment is on the rise.

*The majority of prisoners are often low-level offenders who could be dealt with in non-custodial ways.

*Prisoners often experience forms of punishment that go well beyond the removal of liberty e.g., overcrowded conditions, underfed, poorly clothed, poor medical supports and restricted access to their children and family members.

*Imprisonment is counterproductive for those charged with minor offenses as well as vulnerable populations.

*Prisons are incubators for various diseases such as AIDS and tuberculosis.

*Data shows that prisoners are disproportionately taken from the poorest and most marginalized groups.

*Most of the goals of imprisonment can be successfully achieved using non-custodial methods.

SHUT'EM DOWN NOW!

DID YOU KNOW...

*People that are caged are more likely to reoffend versus those who are not caged by the state.

*Imprisonment makes it harder for people to readjust to life on the "outside," which contributes to reoffending rates.



PRISONS... SHUT'EM DOWN!

*Around the world, roughly "nine million people are in prison or detained in conditions below applicable international human rights standards" (as quoted in the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Handbook, 2007: 5), which works against a productive reintegration process upon release.



WHAT DO WE NEED?

*According to Penal Reform International (as cited in the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Handbook, 2007: 5), we need informed public debate, prison as last resort approach, diversion, reduction in pre-trial detention, development and consistent implementation of alternatives, reduction in sentencing lengths, solutions to keep youth out of prison, treatment versus punishment for vulnerable groups.

GLOBAL REALITY...

*"The vast majority of prisoners will return to the community, many without the skills to reintegrate into society in a law-abiding manner" (UN Office on Drugs and Crime Handbook, 2007: 7).

ALTERNATIVES

*"STRATEGIES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE [...] CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL PART IN DECISIONS ABOUT DIVERSION" (UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME HANDBOOK, 2007: 14).

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Handbook of Basic Principles and Promising Practices on Alternatives to Imprisonment (2007).