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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Social Justice Committee
Monday, October 24, 2022 – 6:30PM
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom***

MINUTES

CB8 Members Present: Bill Angelos, Sarah Chu, Saundrea I. Coleman, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Valerie Mason, Erica Bersin (Public Member), Wendy Machaver (Public Member)

1. Public Housing-to-Prison Pipeline Part 2: Presentation of Community ideas to address Public Housing-to-Prison Pipeline problem and Discussion of Possible Policy Solutions with speakers

1. Presenters:

- i. K. Bain, Founder & Executive Director, Community Capacity Development
- ii. Carlos Ivan Calaff – Intergenerational Specialist Columbia University
- iii. Dr. Brett Maricque, Professor, Washington University School of Medicine
- iv. Dieter Tejada - Policy Team Co-Manager NEC
- v. Van Tran - Associate Professor, Sociology and International Migration Studies, CUNY Graduate Center
- vi. Miguel Willis- Executive Director, Access to Justice Tech Fellows Program University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, NEC Policy Team

2. Key findings of the paper (Prof. Van Tran)

- i. Paper link: <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2123201119>
- ii. Recommendations from the paper
 1. Investments in NYCHA neighborhoods
 2. Improvements in NYCHA housing conditions
 3. Addressing root causes of mass incarceration
 4. Criminal legal system reform
 - a. Crisis management systems (CMS) in NYC
 - b. Cure Violence Model (Global): cvg.org
 - c. “Violence interrupters”
 - d. “Credible messengers”
 5. Data collection, integration, and access

3. Policy Discussion (Dieter Tejada)

- i. The National Executive Council’s (NEC) Community Capacity Development (CCD) program, a Human Justice and Healing organization with a mission to uproot the systemic challenges facing marginalized communities of color. Their service methodology is saving lives and building communities and CCD is the co-architect of

the Crisis Management System (CMS), anti gun violence initiatives and specializes in community led public safety. For more about CCD, see: <https://aboutccd.org/> .

- ii. NEC CCD - this is a time for everyone to get involved. And about ccd.org. We have an obligation to put the rubber to the road. Result oriented.
- iii. <https://aboutccd.org/>
- iv. Mr. Tejada provided an introduction of the NEC's work. The NEC supports communities simultaneously impacted by poverty and incarceration. The NEC uses an ecological approach to promote personal, community, and social change that supports life-long healthy, human development which is executed by bringing together neighborhood, business, and government leaders to co-design "community-centered" programming & policies around education, arts, economic mobility, and civic engagement.
- v. Four Main Policy Recommendations
 - 1. Investments in NYCHA neighborhoods
 - a. Disrupting the public housing to prison pipeline requires
 - b. Permanently redirect payments to NYPD from NYCHA back to NYCHA and can employ NYCHA residents to implement the CURE Violence program
 - c. \$1.25B cost of imprisonment in NYC could be redirected to community reinvestment
 - 2. Criminal legal system reform
 - a. Changing hyperpolicing and hypersurveillance policing like Stop, Question, Frisk (SQF). One examples is the Crisis management systems (CMS) in NYC/Cure Violence Model (Global): cvg.org
 - i. "Violence interrupters" and "Credible messengers" have been proven to improve community safety in NYCHA housing.
 - ii. Directs people to social services and resources
 - iii. Formerly incarcerated people can serve in these roles
 - iv. K Bain
 - 1. 2010-2011 - Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, in discussions about problems challenging communities of color, stated that if these same problems happened in other communities it would be considered an outrage.
 - 2. \$4.8M from Speaker Quinn to invest in violence reduction program. We are at \$120M of investment - how do we triple this investment?
 - 3. CMS program has been [proven to stop violence](#) and has been launched internationally. Notably, it was successful in one of the country's largest public

housing developments - the Queensbridge Houses which comprises 6 blocks and 26 buildings. In 2016-2018 there was not one shot fired. The program has been adopted across the country and is a part of the White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative (CVIC) that focuses on 19 different jurisdictions with the support of 54 organizations.

4. Combines CURE Violence and Human Justice - the core of this program is that the most impacted people have a leadership role, are included and involved.
 5. CMS community liaisons are trained professionals in diplomacy and de-escalation. NYCHA needs this more than anyone else. These pockets of poverty are impacted by an education gap, food apartheid, economic benefits, financial literacy, etc. Before the program begins, it starts with a needs assessment and development of trust. Anti-gun and anti-violence work comes in the form of community improvement work.
 - v. The goal is to make communities safer. NYPD is not the key to safety - communities are. The solution for communities is to redirect funds from policing to policies that employ, support, and invest in people in the community.
3. Data collection, integration, and access
 - a. Need data at the school zones, precincts, boroughs.
 - b. Allow for multi-level analyses and higher resolution geographic areas
 - c. Increase opportunities for individuals with experience in incarceration to be involved
 4. Improving public housing conditions / Addressing root causes of mass incarceration
 - a. Generational poverty, trauma,
 - b. Improve social services,
 - c. Invest in families and Early childhood education investments
 - d. Opinions of public housing recommendations. Need to have the people dealing with the issues dealing with the solutions.
4. Q&A (Summary of discussion)
 - i. Disinvestment and hyperpolicing of NYCHA over decades has been problematic. There is also a stigma attached to living in public housing and judgement about people who live there. The term “projects” is a derogatory term and it is important that we stop using it.

- ii. As part of human justice, we should understand that people make mistakes and we should support them as they grow. There are also many reasons why people become system involved - we don't demonize people for how they meet their needs - and should be aware that people take pleas for reasons other than guilt.
- iii. When crime is a concern, there is a knee jerk reaction to respond with more policing - but that hasn't been effective. We need to invest in people. This doesn't mean no police - it means that remedies and solutions should be generated and implemented by communities. We get different outcomes when we start by recognizing the humanity of communities. When we start with criminality as the starting point, we often don't get justice in the end.
- iv. Because CMS begins with a community dialogue, it is not a one size fits all - it is customized for each community. They ask: When do you feel safe? When do you not feel safe? What are your 10-15 year goals? Then CMS hires community members to do the work. In order to stop violence at Queensbridge, CMS worked not just in the development, but also in surrounding housing. NYC ultimately benefits from the rising tide of service delivery.
- v. A concern that was raised was NYCHA's history of paying NYPD to police its housing developments since the Housing Authority Police was disbanded. Both speakers and community members expressed the importance of allowing communities to have agency and resources to solve their own problems. Long term community solutions that will provide returns for long time to come. We don't demonize people for the way they meet their needs as we all have the same needs. It's a fight for rehumanization. When we have our way and work inside communities. Agencies to make good referrals. Advocating on behalf of returning citizens and making sure they are
- vi. Participants also discussed the need for community reinvestment. COVID disproportionately impacted disadvantaged neighborhoods and early education and early intervention programs are needed. Participants also raised the need to change the NYCHA rules so returning citizens can be reunified with their families. The support of families offer a powerful opportunity for people transitioning home and current rules preclude tenants from reunifying with their children. There is an overtone of fear to change these rules as well, but we need to meet these challenges if we are to bring about decarceration.
- vii. Jay Holder told a powerful story about a researcher who killed a young boy accidentally while working in Africa. Instead of punishing the individual, the community held him accountable by binding them permanently. NEC works on violence prevention at a personal and structural level. For example, NEC runs prison education programs and partners with Social Services to ensure that returning citizens have access to SNAP benefits as soon as they are released. They implement evidence-

based strategies for violence reduction. “If the research doesn’t stop someone in your community from harming someone else, it’s not worth it.”

viii. Prof. Tran took an optimistic view that we are in the midst of a tremendous movement to decarceration. The pandemic demonstrated that COVID releases from prisons didn’t increase crime. It was a unique pandemic experiment that demonstrated that incarceration doesn’t have to be the solution. There are still many people who have to be convinced of this fact, but the start of any movement begins with a ripple, human connections, and giving voice to the people behind the stories.

2. **Old Business** – None
3. **New Business** - None

This meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm

Saundrea I. Coleman and Sarah Chu, Co-Chairs