

2021 Riverside County Budget Proposal: A Gateway to Change

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Saturday, December 5, 2020

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Acknowledgments

This paper and research behind it would not have been possible without the support of my supervisor, Jordana Wong-Omshehe and the team at Starting Over, Inc. and Riverside All Of Us Or None. I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my professor Tessa Hicks Peterson as well as our assistant professor Jessica Chairez for the opportunity to conduct this research. Your patience, expertise and guidance has encouraged me in not only the academic research but in life. Secondhandly, I would also like to thank my fellow classmates for creating a safe and positive learning experience. Without the support and encouragement of these people, this work would have been attainable. Thank you!

Introduction

Starting Over, Inc. is a community-based organization (CBO) serving the Inland Empire and parts of Los Angeles. The organization specializes in community health services, community living services, transitional housing, post-eviction relief, civil engagement, building strong communities, and leadership development (Starting Over, Inc., 2014). Its mission is to assist all incarcerated people and persons affected thereby, regardless of gender, age or race. Most individuals affected by incarceration require assistance and support after the trauma and upheaval resulting from incarceration. The needs include support in locating permanent housing, re-entry service, economic development, civic engagement, and leadership. The local justice systems have failed terribly to support the community in their need for resources, demand for change, and community organization, especially in the restoration from the incarceration process.

The organization has been incredibly busy during both the resurgence of the “Black Lives Matter” social movement and the coronavirus pandemic. Enabling me to have Zoom meetings with Vonya Quarrels and the rest of the Starting Over, Inc. staff has helped assess its performance and contribution to the American communities. The organization is committed to ensuring a stable society with the growth and development across the state. Under the umbrella of Starting Over is All of Us or None (AOUON), Riverside Chapter. AOUON national is situated in Oakland, CA. It is a common thread that has a common pledge and code of conduct. The organization is also devoted to fighting every form of human rights abuses and discrimination exposed to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

The economic recession has played a significant part in the organization’s concern. The state has witnessed vast unemployment, incarceration, and addiction. The organization rose to

assist people in recovering from these nightmares and getting stable housing and economic freedom.

In a state where one in three individuals falls as a victim of arrest, it is a worrying statistic that needs to be addressed. There is a significant concern for the criminal justice system that has acted as a battle of the contemporary ages. Abolitions and reforms are the key areas that the battle seems to take the root course for a significance, overcrowding and outnumbering Justice Reforms organizations. Some years back, the criminal justice system seemed powerless and could not reach today's point. Even the reform field was not broad and dominant since the culture was heavily influenced by who was incarcerated and formerly incarcerated. The concerning fact was that people failed to speak up about the injustices due to the traumatization caused by incarceration and discrimination. Almost everyone wanted to get over it and never tell anyone of their past experiences. After the establishment of the All Of US Or NONE Riverside Chapter sixteen years ago, the small group of veterans with such life experiences collaborated tremendously to address incarceration and raise the voice of those who were willing to speak up.

An individualistic technique could often reinforce the structures resulting in oppression or burnout. Additionally, marginalized people could require justice for their mishandling and the transformative movement that would help them handle historical trauma and intertwining oppression that led to suffering. These approaches could act as practices and frameworks for the whole-self, including emotional, physical, social, and mental conditions. A transformative approach to healing requires capabilities, for example, equanimity, compassion, mindfulness, and critical inquiry (Zimmerman and Quiroz 2016). These concepts are presented to influence changes and structuring a purpose engagement and inquiries that address the structural and purposeful interaction between the organization and the victims.

In 2009, Starting Over, Inc. (SOI) initiated operations in assisting individuals affected by the 2008 economic recession. During the time, economic challenges had stricken numerous individuals and families which had initially experienced homelessness and displacements. The organization sought to reduce the economic disparities by helping individuals connect to basic needs, communities, and appropriate resources. In this case, residents could develop a sense of leadership, economic development, civic engagement, and self-reliance. The success of the organization has been displayed by the improvement and settling of more than seventy-eight percent of the residents who were initially homeless, education continuity of school children who had initially stopped, and few arrests due to misconducts, meaning people have tried to be upright to stay away from prisons and jails.

Before establishing updated methods of participation in the community activities, the majority of initiatives entailed knowledge streamed from the professional setting to the society, where the community involvement was limited. The establishment of community-based participatory research (CBPR) symbolized a shift in the focus by providing a valued research approach directed and based on health equity. The organization establishes a clear approach that outlines individuals' re-entry to the society that seemed to alienate them initially. Under this circumstance, the organization had to establish a unique budget to assess and fulfill the needs that have to be incurred. By witnessing incarceration cases in my history, I feel the importance of highlighting and evaluating the organizations' undertaking, their role in the establishment of justice, and designing people's budget. Notably, the organization has highlighted the best practices for budget creation and education, focusing on Starting Over, Inc. and Riverside All Of Us Or None. The utilization of community involvement and participation influences the action

and knowledge to reduce community challenges and economic, health, and other societal disparities.

Research Gap

Over the years, communities witness social injustices across their population, arising from social and criminal injustices, discrimination, and incarceration. Such mistreatments have resulted in various impacts on the victims and their families. Recognizing these lifelong impacts may help establish ways that would help mitigate further damage or traumatization that the majority has faced. SOI has been concerned by the rate of incarceration that most individuals and families have faced. There is a worrisome tendency whereby most families abandon and isolate those who have been imprisoned. They extend these mistreatments by failing to welcome them back to their home after being released from jail. It is also evident that most individuals are struggling with unemployment, substance abuse, and poor education. Due to these issues, individuals tend to feel alienated, thereby increasing the possibility of reoffending or becoming homeless.

The organization has played an impact on these individuals' lives by offering a helping hand in raising them and organizing their community re-entry. However, operations have been to be budgeted for and funded. The research extracts the holistic approach and commitment that community-based organizations offer to eliminate the impacts of community challenges and incarceration on the individuals and their families. There are vast issues that are yet to be addressed, especially on the public budgeting in these organizations. SOI is assessing these approaches and impacts on society. Their mission is to end inequity and strengthen communities in fighting the grassroots for deviation from civil rights. The efforts to end inequity have

necessitated further administrative adjustments such as change of Riverside County policies and holding the Riverside District Attorney responsible for standards of equity and transparency.

I undertook research in Riverside County and assessed the proposition of the residents on the anticipated budget. I designed a survey that will be presented to the Board of Supervisors where participants will give their verdicts and offer insight on the budgeting making. These views are to be used to allocate revenues on initiatives that the residents feel are most important and should be prioritized.

Literature Review

Starting Over, Inc. has been designing a people's budget, highlighting the best practices for its implementation. Through an evaluation of RAOUON, it is important to highlight critical areas addressing the organization's establishment and implementation of public budget education. This section seeks to identify and address crucial empirical sources and evaluate them critically through a literature review. A set of themes have been applied to organize content relevant in evaluating budget education across the public and community-based organizations. These themes revolve around community-based organizations, their practices, and People's Budget in establishing and designing public budgets. In essence, there is an excellent link between these organizations and social justice throughout society. Communities defiling harmonious and social living have given rise to establishing organizations willing to defend social living. Starting Over, Inc. has played a vital role in implementing its goals and ensuring a harmonious living by organizing the socially alienated individuals' re-entry into the community.

Theory of People's Budget

A People's Budget is the proposal of liberal government or the community-based organization that introduces exceptional taxes in a community to fund their social welfare

programs. According to Bräutigam (2004), it can also be defined as a participatory budget or a budget that gives the ordinary people's decision-making and deliberation a chance to form a foundation. Additionally, Williams et al. (2018) contemplate that people's or participatory budgeting replicates a process that offers an opportunity for non-elected citizens to participate in the conception, distribution, and allocation of public finances. The practice of people's budgeting ascended in Brazilian cities in the 1960s and later spread to the rest of the countries worldwide (Su 2017). The concept of the people's budget has required the communities and its individuals to volunteer and participate in the budgeting making process. Wampler (2012) indicates that participatory budgeting objectives to empower non-elected citizens enhance the degree of democracy, and improve the community's well-being.

Community budgets are mostly responsive to systematic discrimination perpetrated by the state in which the authorities deem essential issues less so, from the perspective of the community members (People's Budget LA). Since it involves soliciting the community members' input on their priorities towards where they come from, improved ways in which resources can be utilized. According to Boehmer (2019), the people's budget establishes a blueprint for a government that invests in the best interests of the communities. Bräutigam (2004) reveals that participation in people's budgets has a set of limits. Principally, the scholar highlighted it necessitates the executive branch to work collectively with civil society, while individuals' priorities are most likely to serve as survival concerns such as income and job creation. This assessment collaborates with Waglé and Shah's (2007) illustration that the emphasis on the procedure of governance, is a concerted trajectory to the improvement of delivery through scaling transparency, efficiency, and accountability while fighting corruption.

Unlike corporate heads in which bold investments in education, infrastructure, health, and other disparities are addressed, the government and community-based organizations tend to strive to invest in the people's budget (Boehmer 2019). The government tends to slash funding to facilitate the funding of crucial cornerstones for society, thereby under-financing activities that do not benefit most society. A people's budget establishes a path that places people and families' interests first to facilitate the prosperity of the middle and low-level individuals. Most community-based organizations design their people's budget in various ways, including People's Budget LA and People's Participatory Budget Chicago. However, Bräutigam (2004) raises more problems about the people's budgeting though they might not reflect the truth. With the implementation of the community initiatives to ensure a successful re-entry, the various measures had been taken by the government. They include early releases, transparency of people's budgets implementation, and corrective budget tracking.

People's Budget LA

People's Budget LA exploits a participatory approach to incorporate the opinions and propositions of the people living in Los Angeles, California. This type of budget approach developed from draconian spending by the city mayor in places like fire and police stations and recreation centers, taking a more significant proportion of budgetary allocation with a racially discriminatory tone to the spending. The community-based organizations have been chipping in the establishment of this budget. The major areas where the organizations have been interested in pushing for change in implementation permanently guarantee additional investments to community investments and other alternatives. They have been pushing for changes to ensure substantial investment and public safety for alienated individuals, including Black and Brown communities in society.

The ideals of the People's Budget LA emerge from systematic discrimination to urge city leadership to divest from conservative forms of community policing and universal needs. The approach to the people's budget has involved fifty organizations and over three thousand participants who took up a survey and social media campaigns. The goals of improving public health, environmental judgment, improved housing, public transport, and child youth development. The budget organization is led by the coalition of "Black Lives Matters LA" (BLMLA) and allies who raised the alarm over the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The overspending seemed to implicate negative impacts on the community, with more than six hundred people by the department during that time (Melkers & Willoughby (2001). People's budget focuses on four crucial priorities. They include built management, law enforcement and policy, universal aid and crisis management, and reimagined community safety.

People's Participatory Budget Chicago

The Participatory Budget (PB) was first established and implemented in Brazil in 1989. PB is widespread, with more than 1,500 participatory budgets worldwide. Despite being applicable across many pots of money, it is mainly implemented for municipal budgets at the city level. The establishment of the PB involves five significant steps, which include idea proposition and collection, project development, project expos, community vote, and implementation and monitoring (About PB Chicago, 2016). "About PB Chicago" (2016) also outlines the PB's objectives, which include equity, community and coalition building, inclusion, and sustainability. Community-based organizations work together to facilitate these objectives, especially excluded residents, mostly on political matters. They call them to join through education, civic engagement, outreach, and dialogue. Collective working assists in learning about available resources, identifying the needs and making better budgeting decisions.

With the history of Tammany Hall-style politics, the Chicago City Council perpetuated power through rigged and biased leadership. Most leaders favored and reigned throughout the politicians and planners. The PB Chicago then sprouted from the people who needed to engage in their neighborhood infrastructural needs and institutionalizing changes within the municipal government. Despite the difference in the experiences in different cities, most PB follow a necessary process. The leaders will implement the ideas that the residents of Chicago take as their priorities. The community representatives and agencies will facilitate this idea to identify the idea that will emerge into a budget that is majorly recommended by the community. This idea and brainstorming will be voted for the most popular project, where money will be exhausted downward on the list after completion of initial projects.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

CBOs are local non-profit organizations or groups whose objectives are to generate improvements within a society. Wilson et al. (2012) postulate the claim that community-based organizations are essential stakeholders in the community and specifically in the health care systems that seek to establish an improved livelihood across the community. They offer a wide range of basic facilities, programs, and services most valuable to the vulnerable members. The CBOs tend to explore the most overlooked and alienated areas in the community (Rezei et al., 2019). An evaluation of the need for public health improvement forms part of the sphere relating to public affairs. They dedicate themselves to serve in the promotion of community-wide responsibility in protecting the most vulnerable communities.

A study by Adebayo et al. (2020) suggests that community-based organizations play a very significant role in eliminating social disparities at the national and local levels globally. The scholars also contend that CBOs are crucial in forming part of modern-day healthcare and social

work practices. What makes these organizations effective in transforming social work is the perception that they partner with experts in moving their agendas forward. They outline that academic and scientific entities play an important role in promoting health and social improvements. They partner with general community members, researchers, and other business entities to ensure they attain the set objectives. However, Claussen et al. (2016) had acknowledged the postulation about the organizations by stating that their roles are not always swift as an individual would think. They state that despite their outstanding performance, they face adverse obstacles such as lack of programming consistency, coordination difficulty, and diversity of the society in the state and municipality. Additionally, Kegeles, Rebchook, and Tebbetts (2005) highlighted that evaluating helps measure the performance and increase in CBOs capacity.

CBOs and Their People's Budget

Diversity in the community across the municipality reveals the need to invest highly in society-based initiatives. Most of the organizations' programs require the impending costs and distribution of the risks and obstacles to be highlighted. Rajan et al. (2016), who writes for the World Health Organization, establishes a more targeted evidence-based knowledge on the CBOs, and how they interact with people's budget practices. They reveal that only a few countries have introduced the people's or participatory budget, where targeted citizens for the program participate in the priority-setting process for the budget either at the national or regional level. A further study by Wetta-Hall et al. (2004) reveals that people's budgeting can also be identified as shoestring budgeting. They postulate that the severity of the challenges present in the organization's implementation of the budget can be lessened through proper planning. However, Bilinski et al. (2017) contend that during the preparation and implementation of the people's

budgets, analysis is fundamental since it provides the basis for short-term costs and savings that are to be incurred by the payer. While the researcher claims less accountability of the CBOs, it makes the firm make optimal budget outcomes.

Riverside All of Us or None Vs Budgeting

Different reports try to analyze how Riverside All Of Us Or None establishes and runs its people's budget. Based on an article established by a companion of the organization - CURB (2020), RAOUON usually sets out a press release where it invites community members on a set day to provide their presentation and participate in brainstorming. They discuss the local and state corrections budget levels and their propositions. The report generally acknowledged RAOUON's belief that a budget can make or break a country, state, or community. This sentiment proposes the need for the entity to ensure an overall presentation of the people's budget. Another press release dispensed by RAOUON indicates that most decisions implemented concern freedom, strategies, or events that are likely to advance America to higher levels.

The oversight to ensure appropriate implementation of the people's budget is implemented by the community agencies. The University of California, Riverside (2020) offers extensive insight into RAOUON program budgetary tools. The institution states that this organization strives to advocate for state and local budgeting policies and the budget. The organization's basic approach to an essential people's budget approach is that RAOUON implements a budgeting process in a way that invites the relevant stakeholders, irrespective of their authorities, to offer opinions and suggestions of the nature of the budgeting guidelines that the organization should adopt. Evan's study (2016) elaborates these views by claiming as a benchmark for not-for-profit making entities. RAOUON operates a shoestring budget that incorporates different inputs from volunteers. As a result of this elaboration, it is expected that

community-based organizations in question are enough to adhere to the dominant practices highlighted across the research.

Methods and Methodology

Setting

The complexity of this topic addressing the impacts of the budgeting system into a broader perspective necessitated a critical approach to selecting the sample size and data analysis to establish a concrete conclusion on the topic. The research was approached in two ways: through a microscope and a birds-eye view. The Inland Empire area is unique in comparison to other portrayals of California. De Lara (2018) describes it as a distant place, a harsher California haunted by Mojave beyond the mountains. The region is described to be found in-between rural desert and economic wealth that is a potential industrial hub. Most of the population residing in this region tend to commute to Los Angeles for work. A significant part of the Inland Empire, Riverside is industrially based. Riverside County diversifies in the economy, where fifteen percent are in production while about twenty-five percent work from offices and managerial positions. The standard form of activities undertaken by the society includes social services and business, which help analyze how the tax income is allocated and implemented. Assessing the potential causes of high incarceration (The California Sentencing Institute), thereby justifies the need for community-based organizations and RAOUON in fighting this tendency. As a result, people's budgeting and participatory budgets help in assessing these allocations across the communities.

Methods

A significant method that was implemented and incorporated is archival research. Prisons and other similar organizations hold significant data and stances that would help the state and

county generate important information once evaluated collectively. These community-based organizations have been in place for a period now, giving rise to the establishment of the Starting Over, Inc. and the Riverside All Of Us Or None organization to cater for the community affairs that are under-addressed despite their significance. Since these organizations hold essential records and information, their contacting provided a lump of research-related and relevant materials to assist in generating tangible facts. The county also has critical databases and records that helped develop the research upon being availed. This assessment of the data in these institutions will be analyzed and evaluated qualitatively on the organizations and the people's budget.

The research also comprised focus group interviews with staff members to illuminate the stories and experiences that have, in some instances, been impacted by the Riverside County practices and policies. While RAOUON and the SOI appear to be underserved or under-heard, they served as important data sources. Most of the founders and staff members are former incarceration victims, and therefore, their elaboration acted to induce a high motive and impact on the research. The community within Riverside County also contributed to collecting data through simplified interview questions and the responses recorded for later analysis. In addition to the primary sources of data, secondary data sources were also utilized through assessment of the previous works and related researches to grab relevant concepts that helped in building upon the topic of interest. Open-ended and semi-structured questions are more favorable in researching and, therefore, preferred during the data collection through interviews.

To gather the relevant insight on the concept addressed by the topic, the research examined Riverside County, digging deeper into the incarceration rates, educational attainment, and poverty level about the individual racial identity. The secondary data was juxtaposed with

two focus groups, first, twelve participants with real-life experience on incarceration and had recently been released from the criminal justice system and currently living in transitional housing. The second focus group is the five staff members who work and live in transitional houses. In participatory community-based research, the community dictates and directs the purpose, research question and gets involved in the step by step research process (Katz, 2004). These participants represent a sample of a large group of respondents, filtered out qualitatively to generate the right sample size that would provide relevant and adequate information for the research. In this regard, interviews were also conducted on the residents of Riverside County to assess their views and proposition in anticipation of the people's budget. A sample of ten interviewees was selected based on the population composition, including gender, incarceration victims' families and former victims.

Research and Positionally

Articles and Databases

Riverside County categorizes the prisons as part of the "safety budget." The correctional division, responsible for the handling, treatment, and responding to prisoners, have been operated from five correctional facilities. These facilities are alternatives to the sentencing program and other in-custody treatment programs (Carter 2019). Interestingly, the county establishes that participation from persons held in custody has been challenging. The reason for this is because many who qualify to elect needed to wait for the federal releases centrally to the continuation of their sentence under electronic monitoring (Carter 2019). However, this does not address the management of electronic devices and parole, especially for those who originated from low socio-economic backgrounds. Various concerns have been raised by the community-based organizations on public health issues, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Riverside

County has established a raise of more than \$2 million in funding to cater to public welfare during the outbreak. However, the action will not be attained, primarily if the participatory and people's budgeting is not based on public opinions and affairs.

The danger imposed by the social pandemic and outbreaks necessitates the organization's improvement in the evaluation of critical entities that need to be addressed to solve social problems. More injustices in the county have been causing more woes in the budgeting since it implies more need and allocation of available resources to the arising issues. This allocation will also imply the divestment of alternatively structured funds for other uses. Evaluation of the impending danger caused by COVID-19 by the incarcerated highlights the need to reorganize the budgeting, which will contradict the 2021/22 Riverside County Budget Final Proposal. The revision of the budget needs to be revised to include the housing of the inmates. Since the disease is spread through close contact with an one who is infected, it is essential to distance them while in their cells to safeguard their health.

California and Los Angeles have a large budget for incarceration and other services supporting incarceration. The 2018-19 budget provided \$14.3 billion from the general fund for criminal justice and judicial programs. They also include the support for capital outlay and program operations outlays (Taylor 2018). This indication reveals that the Sheriff's department controls the budget spent in prisons, under some regulations that may be overlooked. The realignment of the laws has facilitated the distinction on what the Sheriff can or cannot since the funding can be abused by the Sheriff's department and the counterparts (Pohl & Gabrielson 2019). The county and the departments also target the inmate programs that mainly revolve around criminal thinking and behaviors, re-entry and transitional services, vocational education, and substance abuse. (Carter, 2019). There are many gaps under these categories that are not

addressed and do not necessarily request direct attention. However, the county budget does not mention how many programs are present or allowed inside jails or prisons, the requirements for taking part in the programs, locations with the programs, and the extent to which the programs have been staffed to attain their objectives.

The state of the Riverside County incarceration centers such as jails and prisons have been dismal. In 2016, the County jail incarceration rate was expanding at a higher rate while the funds to ensure these facilities' maintenance remained constant (The California Sentencing Institute). The county's selection of the board of supervisors' position is varied, although they have not been supporting major reforms across Riverside County and its incarceration system. The departments have failed to address and support significant reforms that are intended to cater for the improvement of incarceration and social welfare in the community. This neglect has raised concerns by the community-based organization to improve the welfare of the groups of the society. The isolation and treatment of the inmates who are in danger of the pandemic had been thwarted by the minimal space in jails and prisons, leaving the stakeholders in a dilemma on whether to continue detaining the inmates or to offload some and at what criteria.

Coding and Thematic Analysis

Table 1.1: Coding

Concept Overview/Theme	Code
Community Injustices	Mass Incarceration Discrimination Criminal injustices Poorly Enacted Laws Irresponsible administration

	Responsiveness of Departments
Discrimination	Inmates Alienation Race Education Background Substance Abuse
Addressing the injustices	Community-Based Organizations Enacting Laws Arrangement of Re-entry Economic Restoration Collective Roles
Community Welfare	Housing First Basic Needs Humanizing Approach Nowhere Else to Go
People's Budget	Establishment Early Releases Budget Tracking Transparency Family connections and Involvement

Thematic Analysis

Over three weeks, 5 staff and 12 residents of transitional houses in the Starting Over, Inc. organization contributed to the informal focus groups that reflected their background, experiences, and goals. Two focus groups were established where two residents illuminated on the following themes and are excerpted in the following section incorporating meeting basic needs, community, housing first, and humanizing approach. In ensuring the community takes part in the research, other residents responded to the intended outcomes. Confirmation of these themes and experiences enhanced building trust, collaboration, and guaranteed we had the relevant and accurately interpreted voices of each focus group. The following discussion will outline the manifestation of themes and codes in congruence with Pyles' (2018) "Healing Justice framework."

Mass Incarceration

Community injustices have been a significant concern for Riverside County that has facilitated some collective responsibilities to address them. Mitigation of these injustices has grown to the support of the county administration, departments, and community-based organizations who work closely to eliminate the injustices in our social living, especially in Riverside County. From the data collected, mass incarceration has operated a highly networked system of policies, institutions, customs, and laws. They operate jointly to uphold the subordinate status primarily defined by race, educational background, and substance abuse (Alexander 2010). Oppression through mass incarceration in Riverside County has been rampant, according to the RAOUON organization.

The definition of the vice has seeped into a core of the community, administration, and the government systems that operate within the county and across the US. Oppression can be

stated as any practice of social injustice that happens to an individual or social group while subordinated as others are privileged. It is upheld through different forms of mechanisms such as typecasts, formal groups, and social norms. A key feature in the oppression is the perpetuation of and its effects on social groups (Taylor 2016). With the focus on establishing a stable organization that would address the disparities and injustices now stabilized after the establishment of Starting Over, Inc., investigation of the injustices has been simplified and redefined from the Sheriff's Department and Riverside County. Several thematic codes embedded in this conceptualization of oppression have risen from the definition of how mass incarceration affects communities. These themes are empathy, early releases, and transparency.

Discrimination

The theme of discrimination can be defined as the act of establishing unjustified distinctions amongst human beings about classes, groups, and other categories to which they are alleged to belong. Discrimination arises in terms of age, sexual orientation, gender, or race. Human beings are born unrestricted in both rights and dignity. It has been a leading factor in the alienation and isolation of different groups, thereby affecting them negatively. Sometimes, it has been the root cause of mental illness development for different individuals. As explained by the residents, some of the impacts include poor mental condition, poor relationships, and developments. It is a damaging, demeaning, and derogatory factor, causing mental illness individuals to develop further health and social complication.

Despite an agreement that human beings belong to the same species, various forms of discrimination are subjected to different people. Racial discrimination has been the most common form of discrimination. It is defining individuals based on their color. It has been a common form of social injustice in Riverside County, where police have been reported to use

excessive force against blacks compared to the whites. The exercise reveals the injustice in the authority and administrative system in the county. Racial discrimination has been the most common factor that facilitated the establishment of Riverside All of Us or None in improving the social and cohesive living between the groups conflicting on the advocacy of “Black Lives Matter.”

Other forms of discrimination include inmates alienation, discrimination on education background, and substance abuse. Inmates are subjected to ridicule and insults where they are regarded as criminals by society and even their family colleagues. Some of the transitional houses residents found it more difficult to join their families after the end of their jail term. It has been a tormenting experience being rejected by the families you belong to despite the weakness (Evans, 2016). Some respondents attested to the discrimination after failing to attain the level of education expected or slow learners. Despite the less reflection in society, the research reveals that it is a significant challenge for some community members who feel they are not blessed intellectually as their colleagues.

On the other hand, substance abuse has facilitated breakups in many families and relationships. This vice’s impacts have been evidenced in the undertakings of Starting Over, Inc. as a rehabilitation and collection center for most individuals through their transitional houses. According to the respondents, discrimination has played a significant role in persuading them to seek refuge and alternatives in the organization.

Addressing Social Injustices

The concept or theme of addressing social injustices has been undertaken by various stakeholders who seek and strive for society’s well-being. The question on the social injustices was addressed by the staff and evaluated relative to the organization and departments responsible

for handling them in the county. Various players seek to address the issue to help restore socially stable communities in the state. According to either staff, community-based organizations tend to comprehend the appropriate measure to influence the transition and re-entry efforts. Such initiatives provide individuals with opportunities to restore dignity while giving them hope despite their experiences. The respondents ascertain that different administrative groups have started collaborating in ensuring a humanizing, just, and holistic performance for social change. However, the study reveals the need for widened and comprehensive practices and approaches to facilitate development. These approaches will also incorporate people's budget and organizational or departmental management.

Various measures have been established by the administration of Riverside County, thereby enabling soliciting to accomplish the objectives. A collective role has been established among the federal government, Starting Over, Inc. management, and the volunteers. The government has dedicated itself to enacting laws to help victims of social disparities such as incarceration adjust quickly back to the social norms. The laws facilitate the extinction of discrimination in society. The organizations responsible for developing these individuals, such as RAOUON and SOI, have been financed to ensure they accomplish missions as outlined. They establish a people's budget that will cater for the arrangement of the re-entry and successful transition in the society. The budget also aims to restore the individuals' economic conditions by linking them to employment and investment opportunities.

Nowhere Else To Go

Housing First Strategy embraced by Starting Over, Inc. has gained a lot of importance in providing supportive housing for those gaining entry into society from prisons. This strategy's significance is to address the essential needs of those who find themselves with limited options

for housing (Collins et al., 2012). Most of the residents arriving at these transitional houses come from the environment because they face discrimination or stigmatization that craft barriers for their basic needs housing (Heidemann et al., 2016). Starting Over, Inc. has created a favorable environment for every individual by providing footing for each of their different needs and challenges. For some individuals in transitional centers, it is expressed that if they were not Starting Over Inc. they would be back to the action that resulted in imprisonment, or most likely, they could have been homeless.

Meeting Basic Needs

From the housing challenges, residents expressed countless other challenges they face in meeting basic needs. These challenges count on the healing process that an individual need to advance new pattern and lifestyle adoptions for successful integration and refinement of sense of hope (Pyles 2018). SOI has provided a safe stay for many residents. A 55-year-old man discusses how he has struggled with soberness for twenty years. He stated that Starting Over, Inc. (SOI) has saved his life and would have been homeless if not for transitional housing (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). In addition to food and housing, individuals at SOI can access education and other health services, enabling them to ascend their identity (Couloute, 2018). The more settled the victims, the more they will be composed and willing to get back to their normal lives.

Community

Starting Over, Inc. has been identified as a community by many residents as they feel connected. Successful integration has been brought through sharing food, encouraging each other, and hanging out together. Residents feel associated with each other living in the open together and sharing experiences of challenges each encountered. Staff and residents also interact freely as some staff came from the same backgrounds and are one of the main factors

contributing to residents feeling loved in SOI. The founders of SOI, Vonya, and Charles originated from a similar background.

Humanizing Approach

SOI has developed hopes through creating non-judgmental approaches and supporting the realization of the resident's goals (Collins et al., 2012). At SOI, a set of guidelines focus on advancing the residents and not generating power dynamics. The guidelines demand that residents be out of the house from Monday to Friday between 10 am and 2 pm. It allows the residents to seek employment, education services, or work on something for their well-being. The set of rules are meant to reprogram, recreate stability sense and independence. Residents have identified how first house approaches have enabled them to move away from harmful practices and get equipped with healthier ways of coping with life challenges.

People's Budget

The incorporation of a budgeting process ensures that communities' needs are catered for equitably based on the necessity. For the establishment of the people's budget, a comprehensive analysis and community participation is relevant. Public participation is relevant and accustoms the intended impacts of social disparities. The SOI and RAOUON organizations have been concerned by the rate of injustices geared by the police departments, under the watch of the Sheriff Department such as LAPD. The residents propose a reduction on the allocation of these funds to the department, and divest it to other community needs. As revealed by the respondents, various processes accompany the implementation of the budgets after its establishment. They include Establishing early releases, budget tracking, transparency, and family connection and involvement.

Budget Tracking

County budgets are essential for community members to facilitate decoding, interpretation, and analysis since they mainly keep track of where the organization aims to spend its resources most. At the county level, the county manager wrote the budget, currently, George Johnson, elected by the county. “The county manager prepares the annual budget for the board consideration” (California Budget and Policy Center, 2018). The budget is then approved by the county Board of Supervisors after public participation at the community hall on what they would like to be included in the budget. At the dawn of George Floyd’s murder and the Black Live Matters movement, many counties have advocated for a reduction in police funding due to their mistreatment of the public. However, the government intends to allocate more funds towards public protection, including the District attorneys, public assistance, and Sheriff’s department. Despite their participation in the development of the budgeting, tracking the progress is limited to a few. Access to information about the implementation can only be accessed on the websites after a search, a comprehensive and unsummarized though, which might consume a lot of time to assess.

Transparency

According to Webster, transparency means “free from deceit or pretense.” It is manifested in the availability and accessibility of information about the performance of a government or organization. Based on the research, implementing the budget in an organization is an essential element in the description of transparency. Revealing the budget implementation progress helps in evaluating whether the public proposals are adhered to without compromise. However, most complications drawn by the management tend to hinder the assessment of the implementation's transparency. The inaccessibility of the documents on the website or any other

prescribed location hinders the residents from evaluating tax money usage on government projects.

Early releases

The office of the Sheriff in Riverside County is responsible for offering early releases. In the economic strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, more woes have been evident among the communities. The transitional houses have been a significant part of the residents' survival, mostly due to their alienation and discrimination from other society members. The government has advocated early releases in light of the impact of the pandemic. It is a move by the government to set free prisoners who are about to finish their jail term and those with minor prosecutions and mistakes, including thirty to sixty days and transitioning about 3500 non-violent inmates. However, California has been taking unprecedented and aggressive steps in criticizing this move. The act signifies the state's unwillingness to administer a free and socially integrated community through the re-connection with their loved ones. According to Johnson (2020), the elimination of federal releases will allow the inmate program to rise and allow alternative sentencing.

Conclusion

This research shed light on the knowledge about various issues relating to the people's budget. The review indicates a cooperative agreement among the scholars and researchers according to their understanding, perception, and knowledge about participatory budgeting. Additionally, the research reveals some gaps from the secondary research outcomes in matters of participatory budget productivity. These gaps are unfavorable, bearing in mind that organizations like Starting Over, Inc. and Riverside All Of Us Or None may perceive doing the right thing but

end up counting losses due to lack of impact measurement criteria. These two organizations need to be cautious in determining achievements through the evaluation of community satisfaction.

My research was based on accountability, responsiveness, and transparency in county governance to assure community and standards of improved living conditions. Budgeting is a practical tool of concern for the public. I learned that all stakeholders' input needs to be noted and evaluated based on priority during public engagement. The public contribution is essential in all four budgeting phases, including drafting, legislation, implementation, and audit. Although the study was quite extensive, I managed to collect and analyze data. In conclusion, the Riverside County residents preferred the diversion of funding in the incarceration system and law enforcement to other public initiatives such as crisis management and community mental management.

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Appendices

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