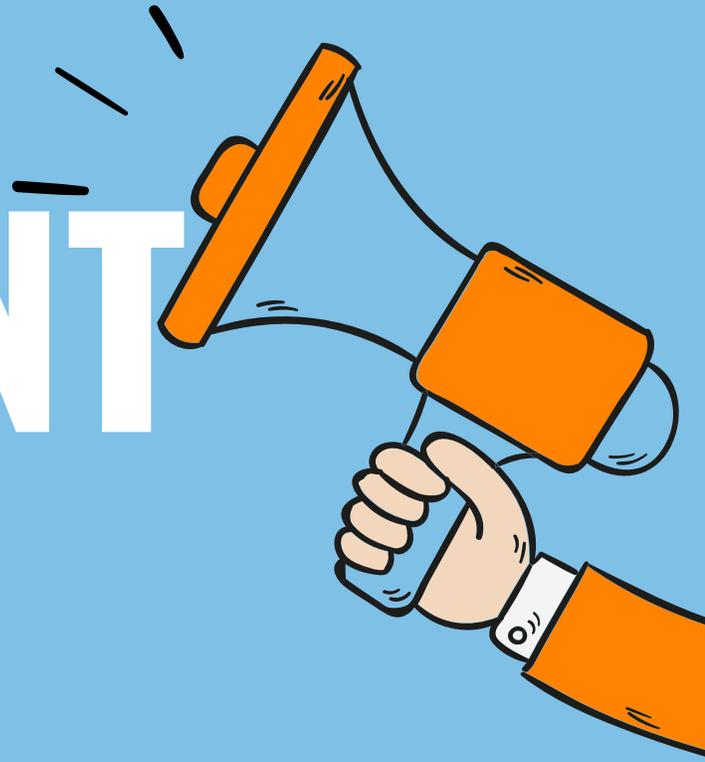


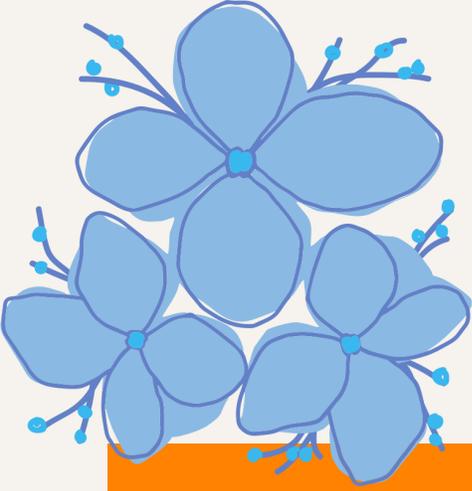
Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice

RESILIENT VOICES PROGRAM



Post immigration detention, migrants are faced with a multitude of issues including unemployment, mental and physical health concerns, and trauma. This report will provide an overview of the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice's Resilient Voices Program, a program that seeks to assist formerly detained migrants settling into their communities to develop autonomy, leadership, and knowledge on their journey to post detention life. The results of this report show the success of the first Resilient Voices cohort, including what aspects of the program were successful and the gaps that exist between resources provided and resources needed for participants in their post detention journeys.

BY ICIJ INTERN: JACQUELINE ZAVALA



WHO IS ICIJ AND ACLU SOCAL?

The Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice was founded in 2008 by Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Rutililio del Riego who assembled leaders in the Inland Empire to fight for justice for immigrants. They collectively created the Justice for Immigrants Coalition of Inland Southern California (JFIC). In 2015, after assessing the key issues in the community and evaluating progress, the JFIC changed its name to the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ) a name that represents the regional identity and goal of the organization. ICIJ has spearheaded several projects toward immigrant justice including advocating for immigrant rights through the passage of the California Trust Act (AB 4), limiting the cooperation between ICE and local law enforcement, and pushing toward the Driver Licenses for All (AB 60) which provided 1 million drivers licenses to undocumented Californians. One of the campaigns ICIJ is currently working on is the Shut Down Adelanto Campaign working with partners such as ACLU SoCal and Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice for their Adelanto Toxic Tour, an ongoing video series that addresses the environmental racism in the Adelanto community through poor air quality and water contamination (Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice).

The American Civil Liberties Union SoCal (ACLU SoCal) assists and represents people in the Southern California region of Los Angeles, Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernadino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Venture Counties. It was founded in 1923, just three years after the ACLU was created. With the help of writer Upton Sinclair, who was already a member of the ACLU, the ACLU SoCal chapter was created as a result of a labor dispute when the Los Angeles Police Department attempted to ban longshoremen in San Pedro from holding meetings. Since then, the organization has focused on protecting individual rights that are guaranteed by the constitution. In their focus on immigrants' rights, they recently won a historic settlement of \$5.3 million going to immigration legal specialists. This settlement came after a decade-long lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for unlawful detention of migrants in ICE detention. Additionally, ACLU SoCal has pushed towards educating immigrants on their rights in detention, the courtroom, and beyond to protect their constitutional rights.

IMMIGRATION IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

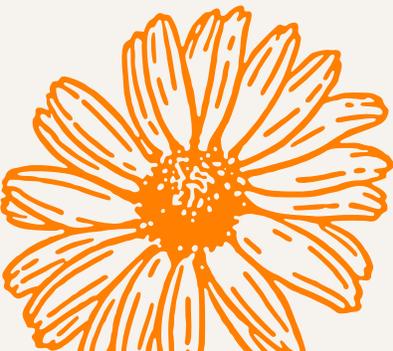


The Inland Empire is located in Southern California and comprises San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. In the past decades, it has witnessed a drastic increase in immigrant population growth. A combination of suburban sprawl and an increase in immigration has resulted in the region being home to over 1 million immigrants, with one in five residents in the Inland Empire being immigrants (Center for Social Innovation - the University of California Riverside et al. 3) **According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are 127,000 migrants in San Bernadino county who are “unauthorized” or undocumented** (Migration Policy Institute). This region is significant in immigration because of the large immigrant population and the location of the Adelanto Detention Center, the largest detention center in the United States. This detention center is known for abuse and is shown yearly as the top facility with the most complaints from 2010 to 2016 (Detention Watch Network4). This makes immigrant rights organizing efforts in the region all more crucial.

Residents waiting for Immigration Court Hearing

- **Riverside County... 7,437**
- **San Bernardino County... 7,421**

(TRAC Immigration)





ICIJ'S FOCUS ON DEPORTATION DEFENSE

The Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice has an intended campaign and focus on Deportation Defense that collaborates with advocacy clinics and legal service providers to assist immigrants from the Adelanto detention center. Deportation Defense is the multiple ways people can be defended from deportation including legal and community organizing. Legal defense deportation is typically when attorneys can find a legal strategy to support someone in granting asylum or a means to stay in the country. Community organizing for defense deportation is when a community comes together to urge the halt of deportation from occurring.

An example of this is the story of Resilient Voices Participant Jose Marco Topete. Topete was eager to collaborate with immigrant rights organizations to share his personal story and his documented evidence of abuses. Working alongside Topete, ICIJ released the #FreeJoseTopete campaign but shortly after came the COVID-19 global pandemic, which exacerbated conditions in detention. ICE & GEO's failed attempts to control COVID-19 inside the detention facility led to nosebleeds, skin rashes, respiratory issues, and vision problems with people who are locked in their cells for over 23 hours due to a toxic pesticide called HDQ that was being used by the detention center. Jose was documenting these abuses and reporting the wrongdoings of the GEO group. Through this report and testimony, a congressional inquiry was followed that was later confirmed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The GEO Group and ICE were infuriated by Topete's actions, and they pushed for his immediate deportation. With ICIJ's infographics provided to their followers and partner organizations through social media, the deportation of Jose was halted after 5,000 people emailed the ICE director. This is a significant story of community organizing which shows that solidarity within the community can be an effective strategy for deportation defense.





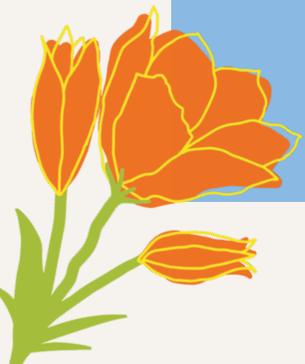
LIFE AFTER DETENTION

& THE CREATION OF THE RESILIENT VOICES PROGRAM

Post Detention, immigrants face a multitude of challenges including mental and physical health, unemployment, and homelessness, all while some are still navigating their legal cases. The journey many migrants face coupled with the prison-like setting in detention centers results in severe impacts on their mental health. A systemic review study published in 2018 shows that anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are the most common mental health problems for people released from detention. (von Werthern et al.) In addition to mental health, immigrants face other challenges such as finding housing, securing a job, and an attorney -- because immigrants do not have the right to government-appointed counsel.

The Resilient Voices Program was created as an effort by the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice to assist migrants in navigating post detention life. This program is a six-week program that aims to empower formerly detained migrants in sharing their experiences, becoming leaders in their communities, and healing the trauma of detention. This is done by holding space for one another and following the Community Resiliency Model IC4IJ has adopted, created by the Trauma Resource Institute, to teach leaders how to facilitate trauma-informed spaces and increase resiliency through skills.

"Along with the emotional effects of detention, there are also the practical consequences: Affording bond, finding housing, accessing medical care and an attorney, and getting work authorization "
(Militare).



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Case Management

When participants are first enrolled in the Resilient Voices program, they are walked through an intake form that is used to assess their personal needs from the program and long-term goals. This intake will ensure that program staff is aware of the participants' needs. Additionally, towards the end of the program, they are presented with a wellness plan that details resources including programs, economic resources, educational steps, etc that were addressed throughout their intake form and time at resilient voices.

Community Resiliency Model & Therapy

A significant aspect of the Resilient Voices program is the community resiliency model that emphasizes healing for migrants throughout the program. This can look like presentations on stress management or it can also include the group therapy sessions the RV programs provide. The group therapy sessions allow participants, who have all been in detention, to hold space with each other and be guided by a professional.

Leadership Development

Among the most notable pieces of the curriculum is leadership development. It is significant for participants to learn leadership skills to become more confident in telling their stories, organizing, and communicating effectively. Throughout the program, participants receive training on leadership such as how to communicate their stories to the media to tell share stories in a clear and impactful manner. This leadership curriculum is crucial for participants who are seeking to organize but may first be timid but are yearning to share their experiences.



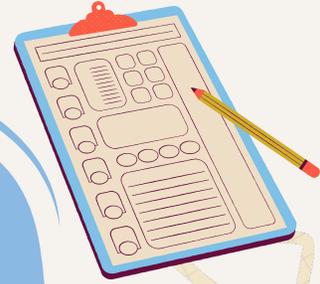
PROGRAM STRUCTURE

WEEKLY SESSIONS

- 01** Introduction to Resilient Voices Program
- 02** Post Detention Life and Resources
- 03** Telling Your Story and Zine Making
- 04** Organizing for Justice, Organizer 101
- 05** Trauma & Healing Session
- 06** Trauma & Healing Session 2
- 07** Mentorship Introduction & System
- 08** Graduation & Next Steps



RESEARCH & RESULTS



To gather results to make recommendations for the Resilient Voices Program, I engaged in Community Based Participatory Research. This involved gaining input in the community this program is engaging with and affecting the most, the participants and staff. I created two separate evaluation forms for the Resilient Voices program- one for participants and the other for staff. The goal of the questions presented was to grasp the impact of the RV program based on their curriculum and ability to implement leadership, autonomy in finding resources, providing community resources to know in what ways the program could further support participants.

"In what ways do you feel supported by the RV program?"

100% of participants said...

- They have a greater sense of the immigration system after the RV program
- RV gave them a better sense of understanding their next steps in their goals
- Would be willing to participate in the program again

- "This program feels like family"
- "Economic support through stipend & resources"
- "I feel safe because I see the help they offer us"

Among the evaluations, the results were widely similar. These are the most common results:

- Participants feel supported by having a safe space, stipend, & free group therapy
- Training on organizing & speaking to the media were top favorites
- Participants would like to see workshops on how to get a job post detention
- Both participants & staff suggest presentation & workshop on intersection of immigration & criminal law including workshops on removing criminal records
- Would like to see more individual time with participants
- Both participants & staff believe there could be improvement in resources including more personalized resources assistance or a guide provided



RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend changing the weekly session times from one hour & a half to 2 hours. This additional hour would allow the structure of the program to include a debrief of the sessions' presentation to be followed by a workshop on practicing the presentations' topic. I am basing this recommendation on evaluation responses that stated participants would benefit from a review of presentations and workshops to allow participants to reflect on the presentation. This implementation is crucial to acknowledge different learning methods and to see participants apply the knowledge they just gained to something that could benefit them or their community.

Additionally, in my experience as a mentor at the Reintegration Academy, a program for formerly incarcerated individuals, the program structure was presentations first. Followed by individual time with a mentor that could assist participants in working on something similar to the presentation that benefits participants.

Example:

First half:

- **presentation on how to get a job post detention**

Second half:

- **Reflect on the presentation. What are the participant's biggest takeaways?**
- **Get into groups depending on participant needs: getting identification for the job, applying to work permits, creating a list of jobs to apply to, finding what is necessary for a specific job**



RECOMMENDATIONS



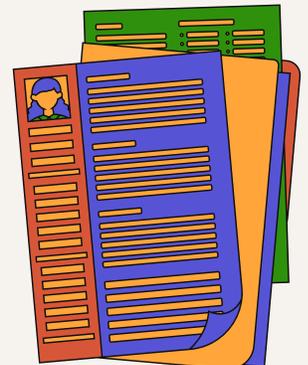
I recommend RV to implement a workshop on how to navigate criminal cases. Some immigrants often struggle to navigate dealing with past criminal cases on their record which are crucial to remove and manage for a stronger immigration case. This workshop would give tips on where to find attorneys with that skill and experience.

I recommend the RV program implement set times for case management for individual participants. Many participants shared they'd like to know about additional resources that could apply to them directly while others are too timid to ask for assistance in calling organizations for assistance programs.



I recommend the RV program to incorporate a lesson on different methods of self care and healing. These methods can include things that participants may have access to at home including coloring, meditation, journaling, yoga, or other forms of exercise. Incorporating these forms of healing for a couple of minutes every other week could be beneficial for both participants & staff.

Many participants suggested having workshops on how to get a job post detention. This would entail what challenges they may face such as obtaining identification, work permits, resumes. Additionally, participants are interested in a job fair to see what jobs are available and how to start their own business.





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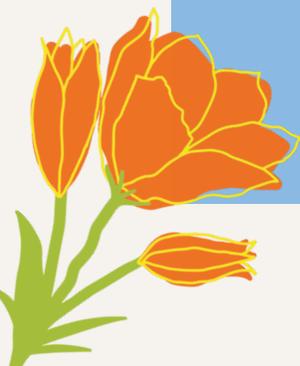
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Positionality:

The feminist motto: The personal is political has reflected my work throughout this program. When I was eleven years old, my father was detained for five years and then deported. This grueling experience has informed my research today. Although my family has experienced this, I have the privilege of being a citizen, which is something critical to note when working with people directly impacted by discriminatory immigration laws and actively organizing against them with fears of repercussions. I have experience in post-incarceration programs including the Reintegration Academy, a program where I served as a mentor for formerly incarcerated individuals and assisted them with guidance in college applications, job search, etc. Additionally, as a member of Pitzer Advocates for Survivors of Sexual Assault, I have received trauma-informed training for peer support on campus. All of these experiences have deeply shaped the way I perceive the effects of detention and the way I approached the Resilient Voices program in a critical trauma-informed way. Additional methodologies in this research can be found [here](#).

Literature Review:

The literature review for this research surrounded the history of human rights violations in detention specifically in the Adelanto detention center, the largest detention center in the United States. There are studies that show the detrimental effects and correlation between post detention and mental health. There is limited literature was found on the challenges immigrants encounter through post detention which makes the feedback of the Resilient Voices participants more critical. The literature review for this research can be found [here](#).

Results:

I gained the results of this report through a combination of community-based participatory research by evaluating both staff and participants of the Resilient Voices program, reviewing existing literature on immigrant detention and post detention experiences, and speaking individually with participants about their needs as a case "manager" to assist in guidance with what they need. The results of the Resilient Voices Evaluations are similar across both the participant and staff evaluations. The analysis of the research results can be found [here](#).