Focus: This working group grew out of an interest in finding examples of where culture changed from systems of incarceration—the custody, control, and suppression models—towards a focus on human dignity and a human rights approach.

Goal: Identify specific examples of innovation and new intervention points to reduce violence and bias within the culture of justice.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

We must define human dignity and recognize it in practice as much as in law. Key components include:

- Recognizing the innate dignity of all humans, regardless of income, mental health status, or role as victim vs perpetrator,
- Enabling humans to define their own needs, collectively and individually, and
- Aspiring to balance the needs of an individual and a community.

Our systems often fail to deliver human dignity, despite existing legal frameworks.

- Failures include custodial conditions and delays inherent to the criminal justice system
- Formal recognition of human dignity, e.g. ratification of UN conventions or modeling on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), doesn’t guarantee that conditions reflect the legal framework

The custodial experience strips away dignity, which must be rebuilt.

- Particularly important for youths
- Dignity and rehabilitation assume a level of personal responsibility, which must also be rebuilt

The power a government exerts must be legitimated and the purpose of the criminal justice system examined.

- If criminal justice is more than social control, e.g. a healing process, it requires public participation
- Participation is made difficult by the inequities present in other systems, e.g. education
- A broader approach to transformation, focused upstream of the criminal justice implications yields better outcomes

Finally, language plays a key role. It affects how people are:

- perceived,
- treated by others, and
- afforded appropriate dignity.

KEY EXAMPLES

- **Boston, Massachusetts** and **Glasgow** (public health response to gang/violence reduction)
- **UK** (Virtual courts)
- **Brazil** (self-managed prisons),
- **Georgia State, U.S.** (local-level reforms, job placement in welfare system/universities)
- **South Africa** (Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Child Justice Act)
- **Spain and Portugal** (reforms in the 1980s following the end of Francoist dictatorship)

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- *Dark Ghettos* (Chaps 1 & 2) by Tommie Shelby
- *Amend*, a Netflix documentary
- “Don’t Move On Just Yet: Could a truth and reconciliation commission help the country heal?” by Quinta Jurecic in The Atlantic
- “Social Control and the Gang: Lessons from the Legalization of Street Gangs in Ecuador” by David Brotherton, R. Gude
- *American Homicide* by Randolph Roth
- “In O.C., Young Adult Court offers a path to clear felony convictions” by Lilly Nguyen
- “Punishing Kids in Juvenile and Criminal Courts” by Barry Feld
- *World Prison Brief* by the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research
- “Burking: Police told not to register crimes” (PPT) by Shailesh Gandhi*
- “Colombia’s ex-combatant children and adolescents” by Stephany Armas Contreras
- “Procedural Justice, Legitimacy and the Effective Rule of Law” by Tom R. Tyler
- Khary Mason on Shoot Wisely the Content Creators Podcast with Amir Ebrahimi
- “Police Reform in Georgia / LAD Case Study” by Daniel Kharitonov