



THE CHANGE AGENT

Adult Education for
Social Justice: News,
Issues, and Ideas

The Change Agent CALL FOR ARTICLES Prisons and Justice? (Issue #40)

Since 1970, there has been a dramatic increase in the U.S. prison rate. Although we have only 5% of the world's population in this country, we have 25% of the world's prisoners. Mass incarceration in the U.S. has had a dramatic effect on the whole society, and so we plan to explore this important topic in the next issue of *The Change Agent*. We particularly invite adult learners to share their experiences in writing or with illustrations. Use one or two (not all!) of the following prompts to guide your writing. Instead of long and general essays, we would like to see stories that are specific and detailed. Limit the scope of your story, but tell it fully. Suggested length is 200-1000 words.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Share a personal experience you have with imprisonment – either directly or indirectly. What effect did it (or does it) have on you and your family?
- Tell a story from your experience that shows the reader what it is like to be in prison or to visit someone in prison. Use details that help show or reveal your experience to the reader.
- Do some research and write a short essay or create an illustration or cartoon (please include your sources!) that explores:
 - o the history of the War on Drugs and how that has affected the incarceration rate.
 - o the racial disparities in the criminal justice system.
 - o the relatively new phenomenon of privately owned, for-profit prisons.
 - o the idea of punishment vs. rehabilitation. Do studies show that incarceration helps prevent crime? Are there other countries or other times in history where people have tried other approaches besides imprisonment? If so, describe them and say what you think about them.
 - o the idea of restorative justice.
 - o the prison abolition movement. What is it? What do prison abolitionists advocate for?
- Read *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander. Summarize her findings and write your opinion of her argument. (Or read and summarize another book or essay on the topic.)
- Write a story from your own experience about restorative justice. Perhaps you were the victim of an injustice or the perpetrator of an injustice. What way did you find to make amends and healing? (This can be about an actual crime, but it does not have to be. Focus on any experience where a wrong was done and made right.)
- Explore the differences in how our justice system deals with “white collar” crime and “blue collar” crime.
- Write an opinion piece about mass incarceration in the U.S.

All articles must be received by November 3, 2014. Include in *all* articles and emails the contact information for the student and/or the teacher. Final decisions are made by *The Change Agent* editorial board. A \$50 stipend will be paid to each adult education student whose work is accepted for publication.

Please send material (preferably by email) to: Cynthia Peters, World Education, 44 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210 Phone: 617-482-9485 fax: 617-482-0617; email: cpeters@worlded.org. [The mission of *The Change Agent* is to provide news, issues, ideas, and other teaching resources that inspire and enable adult educators and learners to make civic participation and social justice concerns part of their teaching and learning.]