

TRIGGER WARNING

This Honors Thesis Portfolio focuses on topics of violence against women and girls, childhood sexual violence, and violence within the juvenile justice system that may be triggering to survivors.

If you or someone you know is in need of support, or you need to report an incident, resources are available to you.

National:

Darkness to Light

866-FOR-LIGHT (866-367-5444)

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673)

UMass Amherst:

Center for Women and Community

(413) 545-0800

If you are unsure of your state's laws on reporting, statutes of limitation, or other survivors' rights, please visit RAINN's State Law Database: <https://apps.rainn.org/policy/>

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States is home to many deep-rooted social issues which fuel violence and injustice in a variety of contexts. One such context is violence against women and girls, reinforced by patriarchal mindsets which have formed a society of an unjust, dehumanizing disregard for women. As articulated by Rutgers University's Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, "Perpetrators have a strong sense of entitlement and use power and control to commit acts of sexual violence. Most perpetrators adhere to rigid 'traditional' gender roles that focus on the inequality of women. This allows them to treat women and the targeted victim with no regard or respect" (Rutgers University VPVA, 2020). Victim-blaming also contributes to this prevalence, as it frames the survivor as responsible for their own abuse and does not hold the perpetrator responsible for their actions. This victim-blaming also contributes to the underreporting of sexual violence.

Child sexual abuse is a particularly prominent subset of violence against women. One-in-four girls experiences sexual abuse in their childhood, 91% of these experiences being perpetrated by someone the child knows (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Child sexual abuse can result in a variety of consequences that are specific to both the age when abuse was experienced and severity of abuse. These consequences can be behavioral, emotional, physical, and neurological (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2013), significantly affecting the physical and social development of survivors. The risk of long-term effects increases when survivors are not provided with intervention efforts, counseling, or medical attention.

Violence against women and girls is a social plague which presents unique barriers to supporting survivors. Current resources available to youth survivors are limited, as most incidents of child sexual abuse are not reported. 60% of child sexual abuse victims never disclose their abuse

to anyone (Darkness to Light, 2015). Of abuse that is disclosed, most is not reported to authorities. Children often do not report because they do not want to get in trouble, do not want to get the perpetrator in trouble, were threatened not to tell, or believe the abuse was their fault (Child Safe, 2020). If abuse is disclosed, parents or guardians must approve of their child seeking support, which may pose challenges if the perpetrator is a family member or family friend.

There is a specific gap in resources available for girls in the juvenile justice system who have been victims of sexual abuse. Juvenile detention centers (JDCs) are an environment of particular concern, as they can often re-traumatize survivors of sexual abuse and contribute to rates of recidivism. Girls in JDCs are disproportionately victims of sexual abuse, with particularly high rates for incarcerated girls of color (Epstein, Rosenthal, Saar, and Vafa, 2015). Survivors are often placed in JDCs because of their victimization, sentenced for offenses like forced prostitution, truancy, and running away. Though these offenses can be linked to abusive backgrounds, the justice system does not provide support to survivors who are incarcerated, limiting the extent to which they can heal from traumatic experiences. Instead, the degrading, cold structure of JDCs can exacerbate unaddressed trauma, spurring the cycle of revictimization and offending that entraps girls in the justice system.

Providing rehabilitative, supportive programming for survivors in JDCs have been proven to reduce these recidivism rates, though they are not prevalent in most current JDCs. Although the goals of the juvenile justice system are skill development, habilitation, rehabilitation, addressing treatment needs, and successful reintegration (U.S. Department of State, 2020), youth are too often exposed to correctional practices that resemble adult prisons and jails, such as solitary confinement, strip searches, and use of restraints (Juvenile Law Center, 2019). Knowing there is a

prevalent unsupported population of youth survivors in the juvenile justice system prompts the question: what can be done to break the cycle of revictimization and recidivism?

One opportunity to break this cycle is in the context of a sport-for-development program. Sport for development is the intentional use of sport, physical education, or play to achieve a specific goal of development or peace. Sport is viewed as a useful tool for achieving this social change because of its universal popularity, capacity as a communications platform, ability to connect, and potential to empower, motivate, or inspire (Right to Play, 2020). Nonprofit organizations and recreation centers provide these programs in a variety of formats for a wide range of unrepresented and unsupported groups. There are thousands of sport-for-development programs and sports-based youth development programs in the United States. Accompanying these programs are countless examples of the positive impact sport can have on society, bringing light to even the darkest of situations.

There is a variety of forms that sports-for-development programs can take with a broad range of goals. Some organizations work in advocacy, bringing attention to a pressing social issue to support a marginalized group. The Army Survivors is one such organization aiming to bring attention to the staggering number of student-athletes (7%, or over 560,000) who are sexually abused each year. Other goals include offering sport-based programming specific to the problem the organization wants to solve. Sports for Juvenile Justices in Philadelphia, PA developed sport programming to support youth in the juvenile justice system with the intention of reducing recidivism. Other organizations exist with the intention of fundraising to financially support an unsupported or underrepresented group in society. Regardless of the goals of an organization, efforts will be most impactful if they are intentionally backed by credible research.

The purpose of this Thesis Portfolio is to explore the potential of a sport-for-development organization aimed at supporting female survivors in the juvenile justice system. This organization will be named Rising Phoenix to represent the resilient rising of survivors out of a dark or unfortunate past. Research has been compiled to accurately shape a model for an effective, realistic sport-for-development organization. This research has been sourced from the W.E.B. Dubois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and includes statistics from national databases such as the CDC, WHO, and RAINN. The literature reviewed spans expertise on the impact of sport-for development organizations, survivors of sexual abuse, and juvenile detention centers. Intersectionality of these three realms of research has been analyzed with scrutiny to understand the specific needs of the target beneficiary.

It is the ultimate goal that this Portfolio develops a foundation of methods of confidence, community, and mentorship-building to cease the cycle of revictimization and recidivism prevalent among female survivors in the juvenile justice system.

II. CONTEXTURAL INFORMATION: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Founding a sport-for-development organization requires an understanding of multiple social, emotional, physical, and environmental factors impacting target beneficiaries' lives and development. It is also necessary to understand how these factors overlap, as this overlap creates an exacerbated impact on target beneficiaries. An intersectional approach was used to examine existing literature and understand how to best support female survivors in JDCs. Realms examined included literature on sport-for-development, childhood sexual abuse, and the structure of juvenile detention centers. These realms were first studied independently, then reviewed with an intersectional lens. All sources have been cited in APA format.

Why Sport?: Reviewing Literature on Sport-for-Development

Sexual abuse is physical in nature, which is what signals sport and physical activity as effective channels of healing for victims of childhood abuse. Researchers have warned against developing sport-for-development organizations without a solid foundation of research, as a lack of data proving a program's impact can hurt the efficacy and legitimacy of an organization (Coalter, 2013). An analysis of how sport-for-development creates value and impact is necessary in supporting the decision to support female survivors in the juvenile justice system through sport.

Sport is a particularly good environment for developing self-esteem, as it increases girls' positive feelings about body image, self-confidence, and motivation. In turn, it decreases symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression (Markowitz, 2012). As adolescent victims of sexual abuse typically exhibit lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depression (Kim, B., Park, S., and Park, M., 2017), and high self-esteem can prevent revictimization for survivors of sexual abuse (Engel, B., 2019), developing self-esteem is an important goal for a program like Rising Phoenix. Two main influences on self-esteem are perceptions of competence, or how capable one

feels at an activity, and social support, or how much one feels supported or encouraged by others. Structured sport activities focused on skill-building contribute greatly to increasing perception of competence.

Rauscher (2016) outlines three models of youth-focused development programs. The positive youth development model views youth as full of potential and capacities. The sports-based positive youth development uses sport to build competencies and teach life skills. The new positive youth development model emphasizes building strength in all youth, which is not simply a task of providing sport participation but by implementing specific lessons and goals. There is an idealistic generalization made about sport-for-development programs that sport alone will provide youth with the skills and support they need to grow and stabilize. However, this is not true. As Markowitz (2012) and Rauscher (2016) present, specific life skills need to be identified and supported with a plan of how to teach them in order to be effective. Coaches, counselors, or any other adult responsible for delivering the curriculum must be intentional in the development of their program's curriculum.

The adults who are responsible for interacting with beneficiaries provide another benefit of sport-for-development programs. In programming for youth, there is tremendous value in the mentoring relationship of a sports-based-program coach, as they consolidate the roles of "peer" and "adult" (Markowitz, 2012). Beneficiaries are able to connect with a coach or counselor who has the authority and credibility of an adult, but who connects with them on more even ground. This mentoring relationship opens channels of dialogue, vulnerability, trust, and growth. In the context of a sport-for-development program designed for juvenile detention centers, the connection between youth and coaches would be particularly meaningful, as it would be one of the few non-authoritative relationships youth have with adults within their designated center.

It is important to ensure a sport-for-development program is not targeting the wrong factors in its curriculum. Creating programming that directly counters “at-risk behavior,” such as drug use, sexual activity, and truancy, frames sport participation as a method to control beneficiaries. Instead, the cultural and systemic infrastructure that disadvantages a population should be the target of programming (Markowitz, 2012). These infrastructural components, such as sexism, the epidemic of gender-based violence, homophobia, and racism, among others, must be addressed and emphasized to empower beneficiaries with the knowledge that they did not create the problem, but they can overcome it.

There is research suggesting the specific need and impact of girl-centered sport programming, as there are not as many sport opportunities provided to girls as boys. The Tucker Center (2007) describes girls’ participation sport as the “Triple Crown of Disadvantage.” This “triple crown” includes strict gendering practices present in our society that dictate what is “appropriate” for girls to participate in, tailoring of physical education classes to boys, and feelings of vulnerability that accompany comparisons based on appearance. In addition, Rauscher (2016) emphasizes the need for activity and learning to occur in a safe, empowering environment “that fosters leadership development and that involves supportive relationships.” Applied to Rising Phoenix, it is notable that not every girl released from a detention center will have access to a safe, empowering environment. In the development of Rising Phoenix, there should be options to account for this uncertainty.

In order to create the most successful program possible, researchers have suggested girl-centered sport programs be built on a feminist foundation to empower youth while bringing awareness to the structural disadvantages they are placed at (Rauscher, 2016). Success of the program should be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively, to ensure a holistic

understanding of the impact of sport programming is collected (Markowitz, 2012). Some results, such as self-esteem, are difficult to measure because every individual's context of self-esteem is different, though longitudinal studies can assess beneficiaries' levels of self-esteem before and after participating in a sport-for-development program.

Target Beneficiaries: Reviewing Literature on Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors

Understanding the effects of sexual abuse on childhood development and the known methods of healing, as well as treatment, is crucial in planning an effective sport-for-development curriculum. This component of research strengthens an understanding of what victims experience, how their experiences are damaging in both the short- and long-term, as well as what has been proven to aid in addressing trauma and preventing revictimization.

Experiencing sexual abuse as a child is a traumatic experience which can have a dangerous impact, such as increased involvement with the juvenile justice system and long-term health problems such as diabetes and heart disease (National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, 2020). People who have experienced sexual abuse are often affected for years after the abuse occurs. Such abuse takes on many forms, both physical and non-physical, though all abuse affects the wellbeing of the victim. Adolescent and child survivors are of particular concern, as sexual abuse can interrupt or distort their social, emotional, and physical development. Factors which exacerbate the negative impact of sexual abuse include a higher number of abuse incidences, younger age when the abuse occurs, and severity of abuse (Hall, M. and Hall, J., 2011).

Most child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows; this is typically a family member or close family friend. Children often do not disclose their abuse because they do not want to get in trouble, do not want to get the perpetrator in trouble, were threatened not to tell, or believe the abuse was their fault (Child Safe, 2020). As many survivors live in the same

household as their perpetrator, or are around them often, the traumatic experience of sharing the same space can cause many survivors to run away, which is one of the most common crimes which girls are imprisoned for (Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L., Saar, M.S., and Vafa, Y, 2015).

The long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse include higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorders, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems (Hall, M. and Hall, J., 2011). These feelings are often enveloped in a general feeling of worthlessness, as many survivors blame themselves for the abuse occurring. This is a particularly dangerous feeling, as it leads to higher rates of destructive behaviors and suicide ideation. Hall and Hall (2011) present a variety of counseling methods designed to counter these destructive effects of sexual abuse, including relationship-building techniques, empowerment, and skill development.

One particularly unique method of holistic community healing in response to child sexual abuse is provided by Payne, Olson, and Parrish's (2013) case study on Pathway to Hope. Alaska Natives, whose population experiences three times the national average of child sexual abuse, have implemented the Pathway to Hope program to address trauma in a supportive, community-driven method. This programming is implemented with the intention of being sustainable, information-driven, and beneficial to both victims of abuse and holistic communities.

PTH is structured around community histories, taking into account the context of marginalization, oppression, and genocide faced by indigenous populations throughout history. The program provides a variety of tools and information that Alaska Native communities can pull from to create their own personalized methods of intervention. Programming is embedded with principles from the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, allowing survivors, perpetrators,

and every other member of a community to understand trauma and its impact. In addition, safety, choice, and autonomy are emphasized to support survivors in a sustainable practice of healing.

The overall methods of PTH emphasize the need for collective accountability dedicated to the healing of survivors of child abuse. When a child is abused, it is the responsibility of the adults in that child's life to ensure the child is safe, then provide the child with what is necessary for them to heal. As is mentioned by Payne, Olson, and Parrish (2013), "Strengths-based solutions built on truth, honesty, compassion, and shared responsibility for healing and protecting today's children have been both profound and successful."

It is important to study methods of intervention like PTH that have proven successful, as any method that provides healing to a survivor is valuable to a sport-for-development program like Rising Phoenix. Just as the PTH curriculum is built upon community contexts, the Rising Phoenix program will need to consider the distinct backgrounds that every girl has. Accounting for factors like race, sexuality, and socioeconomic status will allow programming to provide the best possible platform for healing. Providing girls with a collection of resources, spanning a variety of intersecting identities, that they can navigate independently would empower girls to control their own healing. Methods like this will ensure that Rising Phoenix, just like PTH, is sustainably effective in providing methods of healing to survivors.

Regardless of the platform used to deliver support to survivors, providing care that is trauma-informed is most important. Trauma-informed care involves being considerate of any potential traumatic experiences a person has experienced by being communicative, reassuring, and sensitive to any potential triggers. As has been outlined by the U.S. Department of Justice (2014), "far too many survivors are harmed or retraumatized by insensitive, uninformed, or inadequate community and criminal justice system responses." Applied to Rising Phoenix, it is incredibly

important to supply coaches and counselors with training that encompasses trauma-informed care. Understanding the breadth and impact of sexual abuse on girls' development, as well as the techniques and programming that have been proven to best treat the effects of sexual abuse, is crucial in providing a meaningful curriculum for survivors in JDCs.

A Re-Traumatizing System: Reviewing Literature on Juvenile Detention Centers

Creating new rehabilitative programming requires understanding the current structure of rehabilitation and why it isn't working. JDCs do not often assess the risk factors which precede a detainee's sentencing. A lack of assessment, particularly for girls who have been victims of abuse, results in an increased risk of mental health disorders. This realm of research provides an analysis of current rehabilitative programming within JDCs and the negative impact that being incarcerated can have on a detainee's mental health.

In a 2014 study, a questionnaire was administered to both male and female juvenile detainees assessing their home lives, traumatic events in their upbringing, and other key characteristics of their lives (Bhatta, M.P., Jefferis, E., Kavadas, A., Alemagno, S.A., and Shaffer-King, P., 2014). Using this background information, connections were made to the youths' history of suicide ideation, suicide planning, and suicide attempts. Juvenile girls entering the justice system were found to be at a significantly higher risk for suicide ideation and suicide attempts, as well as were more likely to report an adverse life experience such as sexual abuse. In a 2018 study, rape was found to be the health-risk factor most strongly correlated with suicide ideation. 50% of female youth assessed in the study reported being raped, and 40% of youth assessed reported having attempted suicide within a year prior to incarceration (Hatcher, S.S., King, D.M., Nordberg, A., Bryant, D., and Woolen, C.C., 2018).

These findings emphasize the need for rehabilitation that addresses risk factors and provides protective factors. Risk factors are anything that increases an individual's probability of suffering harm, whereas protective factors are anything that decreases potentially harmful effects of a risk factor (Youth.gov, 2020). Risk and protective factors exist in several domains, including the individual domain, family domain, peer domain, and environmental domain. These domains are beneficial to the development of rehabilitative programming, as they outline causes of harm and methods of mitigating harm.

Risk factors within the individual domain include poor cognitive development. In the family domain, they include maltreatment and abuse, as well as exposure to repeated family violence. In the peer domain, risk factors include limited exposure to positive social opportunities. Environmentally, risk factors include enrollment in schools that fail to address the social and emotional needs of youth. Protective factors in the individual domain include positive social skills and club affiliations. In the family domain, protective factors include being provided the forum to discuss problems and issues with parents or guardians. In the peer domain, having positive and healthy friends, as well as engaging in healthy and safe activities with peers, are protective factors. Environmentally, protective factors include having a community that promotes and fosters healthy activities for youth (Youth.gov, 2020).

Probation officers and parole officers' assessments of risk factors typically impact a judge's decision to place a girl in a juvenile detention center. Girls with high risk factors are most commonly placed in a JDC (Pasko, L., 2010). Once in a juvenile detention center, many girls' identities are not respected or validated. In particular, correctional staff are reluctant to accept lesbian, bisexual, and queer identities within detention centers because non-heterosexuality is typically attributed to sexual abuse (Pasko, L., 2010). In this circumstance, sexual abuse is easier

for correctional officers to accept than homosexuality. Poor responses from a detention center regarding homosexuality, such as punishing a detainee for being in a homosexual relationship, creates an environment where a juveniles' peers are empowered to show homophobia and hate. Invalidation of sexuality is greatly attributed to further mental health shortcomings within the juvenile justice system.

JDCs, or any external organization like Rising Phoenix which is designed to support juvenile detainees, must have a clear understanding of risk and protective factors in order to provide effective rehabilitative programming and mitigate mental health disorders. Regardless of the risk factors a child is exposed to, everyone is capable of resiliency. JDCs must ensure they are giving their youth the opportunity to prove their resiliency by providing opportunities to build community, develop skills, and increase self-esteem.

Understanding the extreme emotional consequences of both juvenile detainment and the events that preceded detention is critical in providing support to the most at-risk segment of Rising Phoenix's participants. Because of the increased likelihood of suicide ideation, planning, and attempts amongst juvenile detainees, intervention is of high significance to rehabilitative programs, though rehabilitative programming in response to sexual abuse is not prevalent in JDCs. Although Rising Phoenix's primary focus is on sexual abuse rehabilitation and community building, not mental health intervention, the intersectionality of the issues creates a dramatic need for programming that addresses mental health. Girls released to the general public will maintain their status as higher-risk for suicide ideation and attempts, emphasizing the need for effective, lasting programming once a girl is released from her JDC.

The Whole Picture: Review of Intersectional Resources

The intersection of physical abuse and incarceration for female youth is historical. In the 1800s, girls who were being abused were sentenced to reform school as a means of protection (Brenzel, 1983). In the early 1900s, 70% of girls who were victims of incest were institutionalized (Pasko, L., 2010). In the mid-1900s, 78% of girls were brought to court for offenses associated with sexual victimization such as running away, truancy, and curfew violations. Girls have historically been sentenced more harshly than their peers for such offenses. Understanding the ties that sexual abuse and juvenile detention have solidifies the validity of the longevity of the issue, as well as the need for an adjustment to be made within the juvenile justice system.

To develop a meaningful and effective sport-for-development program, a holistic review of the intersection of rehabilitative programming, survivors of sexual abuse, and juvenile detention centers is needed. The Center for Poverty and Inequality at Georgetown University Law Center (Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L., Saar, M.S., and Vafa, Y, 2015) provides one of the few discourses on the intersection this thesis' themes in "The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story." Using a foundation of statistics on childhood sexual abuse, mental health, and juvenile detention centers' lack of support for trauma victims, this report proposes multiple policy changes to better address the sexual abuse to prison pipeline.

The need for such a report stems from the cyclical overlooking of youth survivors in the justice system. Although exact statistics are not available due significant underreporting of child sexual abuse, it is known that girls in juvenile detention centers are disproportionately victims of sexual abuse, with particularly high rates for girls of color. Girls are often placed in juvenile detention centers because of their victimization; crimes like truancy, running away, substance abuse, and forced prostitution are often why victims of abuse enter the juvenile justice system.

Despite sexual abuse being “one of the primary predictors of girls’ entry into the juvenile justice system,” most detention center programs do not assess victims of trauma. Instead, the dehumanizing quality of the juvenile justice system can exacerbate unaddressed trauma. Seclusion and restraint—which are both components of the juvenile detention system—have been proven to be inefficient means of rehabilitation, often furthering trauma within an abuse victim (National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, 2020). The moment a girl is sentenced, punishment has been prioritized over the support that may be more rehabilitative if it was identified and treated effectively. The retraumatizing experience of being imprisoned significantly increases a survivor’s likelihood of offending again upon her release, as well as her chances of being victimized again (Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L., Saar, M.S., and Vafa, Y, 2015).

Rehabilitative programming rooted in trauma-informed care has been proven to reduce recidivism rates. Sports-based programming in particular has been found to decrease rates of juvenile delinquency when presented as a crime prevention program for at-risk adolescents (Spruit, A., van der put, C., van Vugt, E., and Stams, G.J., 2017). Gender-specific care is beneficial in providing girls a space to explore their healing authentically and collaboratively.

As the 2015 report proposes, there is a need for physical and mental health care for survivors in juvenile detention centers, which could come in the form of a sport-for-development program like Rising Phoenix. The Center for Poverty and Inequality provides several quotes of former incarcerated girls who express their need for community and support, which is the exact intention of the Rising Phoenix curriculum. As one formerly incarcerated youth, Nadiyah Shereff, expresses, “At that time, what I needed was to talk to folks about all I had been through, to feel connected to people—to feel useful, so that I could find my own direction in life” (pg. 14).

An organization like Rising Phoenix functions in several intersecting realms to support a niche group of survivors in the most effective way possible. To be the most effective, a curriculum cannot account for these realms individually, but as intersectional factors impacting the healing and rehabilitation of the program's beneficiaries.

III. PROCESS

The key components of my work included bringing awareness to my previous research and finding ways to continue the building of my own knowledge in an attempt to ideate components of an effective sport-for-development program. Using the research I conducted in the Fall 2020 semester, I was able to create content about the need to provide sport-based programming for girls in the juvenile justice system. Launching on Instagram on February 11th, 2021 under the handle @risingphoenixprogram, the branding of Rising Phoenix has developed as I've shared statistics, definitions, policies, and empowering quotes. The style of the Instagram content I've developed aligns with the style of my primary artifact: a slide deck. The slide deck is intended to clearly and professionally give background to the intersection of childhood traumatic experiences and the juvenile justice system, explain why sport is the best method of supporting girls in the justice system, and be an introduction to my original brand: Rising Phoenix Sports Program.

The archival inquiry and investigation conducted in Fall 2020 served as the foundation for further research and curriculum development in Spring 2021. In addition to the research already compiled, investigation into the perspectives and experiences of individuals who currently work with my target beneficiaries was necessary. These perspectives emphasize the specific areas of need for youth survivors in juvenile detention centers. To conduct this research, I contacted juvenile detention centers, sport-for-development programs, and individuals who specialize in supporting youth survivors of sexual abuse, among other professionals. Interviews were conducted via a phone or video call and typically lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. Without the support and shared knowledge of these individuals, my research would lack important depths that come from first-hand experiences with the juvenile justice system.

Interview questions for juvenile detention centers included:

- How many girls would you estimate have endured sexual abuse?
- Do the girls who you know have experienced sexual abuse have any trends in behavior or emotional expression?
- What current recreational or therapeutic programs do you currently offer your youth?
- Do you have any program that is specific to girls who are survivors of sexual abuse? If so, how are these programs structured? If not, why aren't there any in place?
- Would your center be interested in providing rehabilitative programming for survivors through a sport-based curriculum?

Interview questions for sport-for-development programs included:

- How do you best incorporate life lessons and skills into a sport-based platform?
- How have you increased the number of people you're able to help?
- How do you measure the success of your program?
- How do you ensure your programming is not static? In other words, how can you ensure your program has lasting positive effects?
- How did you get funders to buy into your organization?

Interview questions for centers supporting youth survivors of sexual abuse included:

- What is the most important thing to keep in mind when working with a population with a history of trauma?
- What types of programs are most beneficial to survivors of sexual abuse?
- How do you involve family members in a girl's healing?
- What role does building community and relationships with peers play in a girl's healing?
- How do you frame things optimistically when approaching such a dark, hidden, or upsetting topic?

These perspectives provided me with the context needed to create an effective sport-for-development program, as researching via reading is not enough to generate a full understanding of how to work with youth in the justice system. The diverse perspectives I was able to hear from enabled me to understand the many different layers of creating an effective program. I was able to pick out the most common themes and ideas from my interviewees and make decisions around them. One perspective which I was unable to capture was that of girls who are or who have previously been incarcerated. I will look to capture these perspectives in the future, as they are undisputedly the most important in the curation of a sport-based youth development program. It's important to take beneficiaries' thoughts into account in the development of any service organization.

IV. REFLECTION

When I was choosing what to do for my thesis, I wanted to make sure I picked something meaningful to me and that I could continue to work on post-graduation. I decided to take the opportunity of a thesis to explore an idea I had always had, but didn't have the setting to begin: developing a sport nonprofit. I have always seen sport as one of the best delivery vehicles for social impact and know that there are many people who do not currently have sport programming who could greatly benefit from it. My early research within this scope pointed me directly towards wanting to serve girls in the juvenile justice system, as the trauma they have endured mixed with a lack of programming from the institutions they are involved in calls for some type of intervention.

Throughout my work on Rising Phoenix, I have developed a number of important and meaningful skills. One of the most tangible skills I've developed is my content curation skill. On social media and in my slide deck, I've cultivated unique branding that is consistent across all platforms. I wanted to ensure that my slide deck was professional, as I intended to be able to pull slides from it for pitches to potential partners or contributors. My social media content is designed to be easily consumable, but also understandable to people who have no knowledge about sport, juvenile justice, or the impact childhood traumatic experiences. I have not always been able to clearly convey information to people who have no knowledge about a topic, as I often forget that some things are not common knowledge. This portfolio gave me significant practice in breaking down concepts and ideas so they are explained thoroughly, yet simply.

Although I already enjoyed speaking with people, this process developed my ability to convey information concisely while asking specific, meaningful questions. I found that my time and the time of my interviewees was best spent when I dove right into questions whose answers I could not find on the Internet or on a LinkedIn profile. My delivery of what Rising Phoenix is and

why it's important has condensed from a paragraph of research into a short elevator pitch that typically prompts whoever I'm speaking with to ask follow-up questions. Being able to maximize my time while speaking to others allowed me to soak in the most possible information as I was in the ideation phases of how I want Rising Phoenix to operate. Networking is a skill that took many months to develop, but I now feel confident in my ability to share ideas and ask insightful questions to anyone I cross paths with.

One of the most important things I've learned this past year is the power of feeding your ambitions. I am incredibly fortunate to have continuously been supported by family, peers, and professors during my work on this project. To my advisors, no idea I had seemed too out-of-the box. I first had the idea to start a sport-for-development program my freshman year of college. If I had not fed my ambitions through research, conversations with academics and industry professionals, and creative ideation of an organization, I cannot say that I ever would have started one. I took the opportunity that I saw to learn, ideate, and connect with others, and I greatly value the skills which my honors portfolio has developed in me. I hope to keep taking these opportunities in the future.

My honors portfolio was designed with the intention of growth after my graduation from UMass. Going forward, there are several things my program will need to continue to grow. It will be important to continue growing relationships with juvenile detention centers in my region, as they determine which programs are allowed to come into their facilities. I want to be able to mold my programming to the needs of each individual institution. Another major next step which will boost my organization's credibility, as well as give a more solid foundation for securing grants or other contributions, is reaching 501(c)(3) status. Credibility is a key component for any

organization working with detention centers, as programs are thoroughly vetted prior to being allowed to interact with any youth.

In addition, I am eager to begin networking with potential coaches who can be changemakers within my organization. Hiring volunteers—and hopefully being able to secure funding which can pay them—is a crucial step in the development of my program. These coaches will need training on trauma-informed care, background checks to ensure they are suitable to work with youth in detention centers, and must have warm, inviting demeanors. It is not always easy to find coaches who meet all of your needs as a sport-for-development program, but beginning the process early will hopefully be beneficial to me once Rising Phoenix is ready to offer tangible programming. I will also be sure to stay up-to-date on research, insights, and policy changes within the realms of juvenile justice, family violence, and sport-for-development.

Many people throughout this process have asked why I chose the Phoenix as a symbol for this organization. Most know the mythical bird as one who has risen up from the ashes and been reborn into fire. In other words, the Phoenix rises up from darkness into a brighter, new future. As youth are full of potential, regardless of what they have done or experienced, I believe they all have the capacity to be a Phoenix. It is my biggest hope that the Rising Phoenix Sports Program can help them on their journey to become one. The symbol of the Phoenix will guide and inspire me as I continue to develop my program beyond graduation in an effort to make a positive impact through sport.

Ultimately, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to develop something that can live and grow past my time at UMass. As a member of the Mark H. McCormack Department of Sport Management and of the Commonwealth Honors College, my professors, mentors, and peers have empowered me to pursue my greatest endeavors. The culture that I encountered at UMass has

always been one that has celebrated revolutionary thinking, and I am optimistic that the Rising Phoenix Sport Program can be a revolutionary program in the future. There are no limits to where my organization may lead, and I am eager to get my boots on the ground and begin programming as soon as I can. One of the program coordinators of a juvenile detention center in Madison County, IL mentioned to me that I have the potential to set a national standard for sports programming for girls in the justice system. Whatever lies ahead for Rising Phoenix, I am grateful that it started at UMass, because I wouldn't be nearly as supported, motivated, or knowledgeable without my fellow Minutemen.

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