



# PRISON TRANSPARENCY PROJECT REPORT:

## *Polymathic Thinking: A Holistic Approach to Complex Problems*

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# POLYMATHIC THINKING: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO COMPLEX PROBLEMS

## **Understanding the Interconnectedness of Issues**

- Observation: The prison issue is not an isolated problem; it is deeply connected to broader issues such as the economy, education, mental health issues, trauma, broken institutional systems, and government policy failures. These problems are the result of a complex web of factors, many of which are created or exacerbated by the very systems that govern us.
- Problem: Traditional, siloed approaches to problem-solving have failed to address the root causes of the problems with America's law enforcement system: Instead, siloed thinking has often perpetuated or worsened the problems. To find effective solutions, we must adopt a Polymathic approach that draws on knowledge from multiple disciplines and holistic perspectives rooted in understanding and learning deeply AND broadly.

## **The Role of Government in Creating and Perpetuating Problems**

- Evidence: The government's role in creating and maintaining broken systems is evident in policies that criminalize poverty, addiction, and mental illness, impose mandatory minimum sentences, and prioritize punishment over rehabilitation. These policies have led to mass incarceration, systemic abuse, and high recidivism rates at extensive financial and human costs to the American people.

This report is part of a series produced by the Prison Transparency Project, aimed at uncovering and addressing issues within the prison system. For additional reports and recommendations, please visit our website at <https://prisontransparency.com>.