



ROOTS OF SUCCESS

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND WORK READINESS PROGRAM



Ten Year Report



2010 - 2020



**ROOTS
OF SUCCESS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY
AND WORK READINESS
PROGRAM**

Ten Year Report 2010 - 2020

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This report, and our work moving forward, is dedicated to one of our first Roots of Success students, our beloved Lawrence Dahu Harris, who went on to teach Roots of Success to youth in New York City for ten years.



Foreword:

A letter from our Founder and Executive Director, Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes, Ph.D

I created the Roots of Success Environmental Literacy and Work Readiness Program because I believe that youth and adults who come from communities most impacted by environmental problems and injustices must be empowered, prepared, and positioned (1) to play a leadership role in discussions about how we can create viable, equitable, socially, and racially just alternatives to our unjust and fossil fuel dependent economy and how this transition will be structured and (2) have access to the wide range of employment opportunities that emerge as this transition takes place.

The Roots of Success Environmental Literacy and Work Readiness Program provides individuals from front line communities, many of whom have been failed by the education system, with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the causes and consequences of environmental problems and injustices, envision effective solutions, work in the green economy, participate in decision making circles, and become activists who inspire others to become involved in the struggle to create a more socially and economically just and environmentally responsible economy and society.

We started the Roots of Success program in 2009, training 15 teachers in New York City to teach our curriculum in six job training programs and one vocational school. Ten years later we've worked with over 600 programs in 36 states and almost 25,000 individuals have gone through our course; more than 50% of students took our classes while incarcerated.

Over the past ten years we have been gradually accomplishing our goals of empowering people to become involved in the struggle for social, environmental, and economic justice and, preparing them to gain access to dignified, meaningful jobs that can provide them and their families with economic security and reduce environmental problems and injustices.

This Ten Year Report was completed while COVID-19 and the BLM movement impacted the entire nation and further exposed the structural racism, social and economic inequalities, and environmental injustices embedded in our nation's fabric. Moments of crisis force us to look at our values and identify what we need to do to improve society. Our nation must address the wide range of factors that contribute to social and economic inequalities and injustices and environmental degradation.

Now more than ever, programs like Roots of Success must be supported to ensure that individuals from frontline communities are provided with the knowledge and skills they need to: (1) understand the natural, social, political, and economic systems that effect their everyday lives and shape conditions in their communities, (2) access jobs and career pathways that can provide them and their families with economic security, and (3) participate in discussions and decisions about how our nation can transition to a more just and ecologically responsible economy and society.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raquel Pinderhughes" with a long, sweeping underline.

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Executive Summary: Broad Reach, Deep Impact

This Ten Year Report presents a detailed summary of the Roots of Success program and its impact over the past decade (2010-2020). To achieve its mission, Roots of Success works with prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, job training and reentry programs, schools and youth programs, and in other education and workforce settings. The report is based on an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected from instructors and students after every ROS class and interviews conducted with ROS instructors, graduates, program directors, and staff. The report provides information on our program, pedagogical approach, curriculum and teaching materials, impact, funding model, and growth over time. Throughout the report we include quotes from our students, instructors, and collaborators.

From 2010-2020 we worked with over 600 programs and served almost 25,000 youth and adults, 50% of who were incarcerated when they took the course. Highlights of our impact are summarized below:

Roots of Success Helps Programs Meet Their Goals

- 100% of program directors observed positive behavioral changes in participants
- 99.4% of program directors said ROS improved their student's academic skills
- 98% of program directors thought participants were better prepared for job interviews
- 98% of instructors said ROS helped them reach their goals
- 95% of instructors said ROS increased their ability to help students learn about environmental problems and solutions
- 90% of instructors would recommend ROS to other programs
- 89% of instructors said ROS improved student's communication skills
- 89% of instructors said ROS improved student's public speaking skills

Roots of Success Engages, Prepares, and Inspires Students

After taking the Roots of Success course:

- 98% of graduates had a better understanding of environmental problems and solutions
- 98% understand the root causes of environmental problems and injustices
- 98% are inspired and empowered to work to improve their communities
- 97% felt a shift in their perspective, an increase in self-awareness, and a heightened consideration of their relationships with others and their communities
- 97% deepened their sense of responsibility to make the world better
- 96% plan to share what they learned in the course with others
- 96% understand how green jobs fit into building a more just and healthier world
- 95% are excited to work in environmental and environmental/social justice fields
- 93% are more interested in community engagement
- 88% are more comfortable taking tests
- 86% strengthened their academic skills
- 85% feel more motivated in educational settings

Roots of Success Supports Student's Professional Development

After taking the Roots of Success course:

- 98% of graduates feel better prepared for job interviews
- 97% of graduates are more knowledgeable about green careers
- 96% of graduates are motivated to pursue employment opportunities they did not previously know were accessible to them
- 90% of graduates increased their professional vocabulary

- 85% of graduates feel more prepared for employment opportunities
- 87% of graduates feel more comfortable working in teams
- 75% of graduates found employment within 3 months
- 74% of instructors said ROS prepared student's for the job market
- 70% of graduates remained employed 6 months later
- 70% of graduates feel more comfortable speaking in public
- Among these graduates, 86% were making better wages than in previous jobs and were in jobs with greater upward mobility

ROS Supports its Staff and Walks its Talk as an Organization

- Staff are included in all levels of discussion and decision-making
- We operate with transparency and consensus-based decision-making
- Our Executive Director has worked in this role pro-bono for 10 years
- Our dedicated staff have worked with the program since its inception
- Fifty percent (50%) of our Advisory Board members serve while incarcerated
- We employ green business practices in all aspects of our operations
- We have inspired \$2,409,735 in professional pro-bono support (graphic design, legal, IT, etc.)
- We have created 10 customized versions of the ROS curriculum and teaching materials to meet the needs of diverse student population and settings
- We have created an instructor-led version of ROS course
- We created an online version of ROS course that individuals can take on their computer, tablet, or phone without an instructor
- We designed the ROS course in prisons to be taught by incarcerated instructors who are trained and paid to teach the ROS course to their peers



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Reentry Programs

Schools &
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Other Education &
Workforce Partners



Roots of Success Certified Instructors/Apprentices



Roots of Success Students/Pre-Apprentices



Roots of Success Graduates

Program Description

The “Roots of Success Environmental Literacy and Work Readiness Program” (Roots of Success) is an empowering environmental education and work readiness program that prepares youth and adults for environmental careers and, to improve environmental and social conditions in their communities.

The program was created by Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at San Francisco State University and an internationally recognized expert on the green economy and green workforce training. The curriculum was informed by Dr. Pinderhughes’ decades of experience working with and teaching underserved populations. The content was drawn from her textbook “Alternative Urban Futures: Planning for Sustainable Development in Cities Throughout the World”.

Roots of Success is designed for individuals who come from communities heavily impacted by poverty, unemployment, and environmental injustices, have been poorly served by the education system, and face barriers that make it difficult for them to access stable, family-supporting jobs.

Roots of Success strengthens individuals’ academic and professional skills, increases their environmental literacy, prepares them for 100+ careers in environmental fields, and inspires them to become activists who can improve conditions in their communities and in society more broadly.

Roots of Success is taught in prisons, jails and juvenile facilities, reentry and job training programs, schools and youth programs, and other settings throughout the United States.

The Roots of Success course is composed of 10 modules:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Fundamentals of Environmental Literacy | 6) Building |
| 2) Water | 7) Health, Food & Agriculture |
| 3) Waste | 8) Community Organizing & Leadership |
| 4) Transportation | 9) Financial Literacy & Social Entrepreneurship |
| 5) Energy | 10) Application & Practice |

There are 10 customized versions of Roots of Success for different populations and settings; they include versions for: in-school and out-of-school youth and adults, adults and youth who are incarcerated, Spanish-speaking populations, instructor led and online versions, and versions for programs teaching the course in countries outside the United States.

Classes are taught by instructors who are trained and certified to use Roots of Success teaching materials which include an: Instructor’s Manual, Student Workbook, Multimedia Content, and Green Jobs & Career Pathways Guidebook. There is also an online version of the course that students can access on a computer, tablet, or phone without an instructor.

The “Roots of Success Green Jobs & Career Pathways Guidebook” familiarizes students with 100+ jobs and career pathways in the green economy. The Guidebook includes detailed information on job descriptions, basic qualifications, salary ranges, benefits, career ladders, and growth figures. It focuses on meaningful, dignified jobs that provide workers with family supporting wages and occupational mobility over time, most of which do not require a college degree.

Roots of Success graduates have been hired in environmental fields in multiple sectors of the economy, including graduates who were hired to work in sustainability programs within prisons. (see page 19 for an abbreviated list of where ROS graduates have been hired).

Our Mission

Our mission is to prepare youth and adults from communities with high rates of poverty and unemployment for environmental careers and post-secondary education and, to become activists and leaders who can improve environmental and social conditions in their communities and in society more broadly. We do this by providing education and workforce programs with an empowering environmental literacy and work readiness curriculum called Roots of Success.

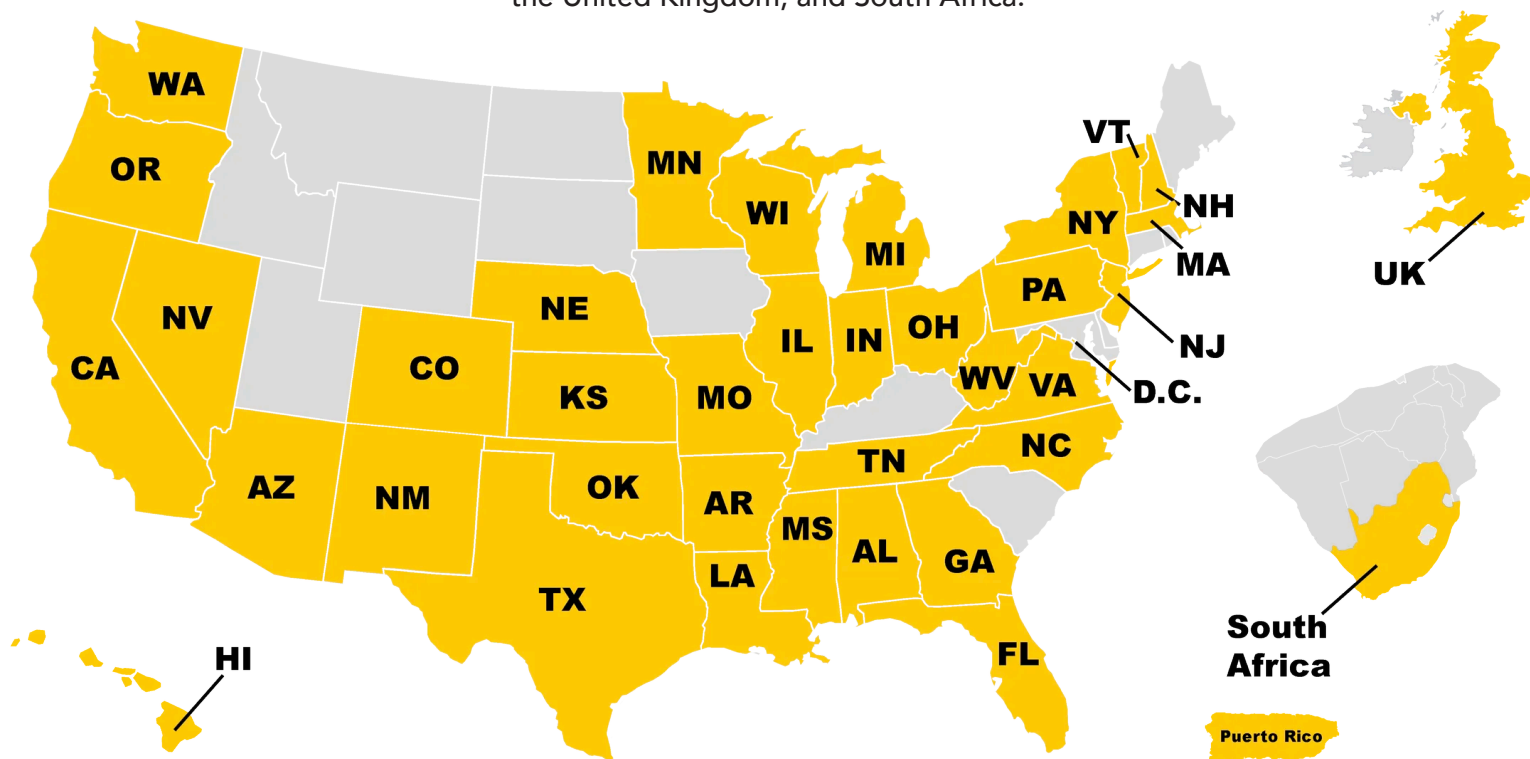
Our Values

- We define the environment as where we live, work, play, pray, learn, advocate and organize and including both the natural and built environment
- We recognize that socioeconomic inequality and environmental degradation are inextricably linked and must be addressed simultaneously.
- We believe that people who come from communities most impacted by environmental problems and injustices must be at the forefront of providing solutions to these problems.
- We promote social equity within our organization through equal pay, transparency, and consensus-based decision making.
- We nurture environmental leaders from the communities that most need them, both as graduates from our curriculum and as staff members within our organization.
- We employ green business practices in all aspects of our operation.



Who Roots of Success Serves

Between 2010-2020, Roots of Success has partnered with programs in 36 states, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.



ECONOMIC BACKGROUND: Almost 75% of students are low income and almost 50% have no income at all

AGE AND GENDER: 23% of students are under the age of 24; 21% of students are Female and 79% are Male

EDUCATION: Almost 25% of students have no high school diploma or GED. About 70% are at or below a 10th Grade reading and math levels

INCARCERATION RATES: over 50% of students had been or were currently incarcerated



Key Events

2009

Received startup funding from the Grove Foundation.

ELCP hires staff to distribute ROS in schools and job training programs throughout the United States.

2010

First training is held to certify instructors to teach ROS.

ROS works with the Consortium for Worker Education to roll out the curriculum in New York City schools and job training programs.

2012

ROS partners with Green For All to train and certify all fellows to teach ROS in job training programs, youth programs, and high schools throughout the United States

ROS begins working with Green Prisons Project to introduce ROS to prison administrators in the United States

2013

ROS partners with the Sustainable Prisons Project (SPP) to offer ROS in prisons throughout the United States.

ROS works with Blueprint to create the "Teacher's Platform" for ROS instructors.

2008

Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes creates the Roots of Success (ROS) Environmental Literacy and Work Readiness curriculum and course.

Roots of Success Advisory Board is formed.

Dr. Pinderhughes establishes the Environmental Literacy Curriculum Project (ELCP) as a fiscally sponsored project of the Ecology Center of Berkeley, California to distribute the ROS curriculum and course.

Roots of Success

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

Photo: Christina Stalaker / Sustainable Prisons Project

Curriculum Development

2009

Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes creates the first version of the ROS curriculum based on the content of her textbook "Alternative Urban Futures".

2010

ROS is rolled out in job training programs and vocational high schools in New York City.

Spanish language version of ROS is created.

2013

New High School version of ROS is created to align with Common Core standards.

New versions created for incarcerated populations and adults in South Africa.

2012

New versions created for High School & Youth Programs, Low Income Social Entrepreneurs, and adults in the United Kingdom.

ROS begins working with job training programs in South Africa.

2011

Spanish language version of ROS used in job training programs in Puerto Rico.

ROS begins working with job training programs and prisons in United Kingdom.

Timeline

2015

ROS works with Five Keys Charter School to teach ROS in California jails.

ROS works with American Prison Data Systems (APDS) to make the curriculum available on computers in jails.

2014

ROS receives funding from the Kendeda Foundation.

First group of incarcerated instructors are trained and certified.

ROS establishes a partnership with Step to College Program at San Francisco State University to offer college credit to students taking the ROS course in high schools.

2016

ROS begins working with juvenile facilities in Kauai, Hawaii.

2018

Incarcerated instructors are recruited to serve on the ROS Advisory Board.

2015

2015

New version is created for Youth in Juvenile Facilities.

2016

2016

New online version is created for adults incarcerated in jails.

2017

2019

Versions for Incarcerated and non-incarcerated adults are expanded and updated.

2018

2019

2020

Updated versions of ROS rolled out in prisons and job training/reentry programs in U.S.

Online version was used during Covid 19 pandemic

2020

Pedagogical Approach

Roots of Success is designed to (1) increase student's academic literacy and (2) understanding of environmental issues, injustices, problems, and solutions; (3) prepare students for jobs and career pathways in the water, waste, energy, building, transportation, food, health, agriculture, and community organizing sectors of the labor market; and (4) inspire and prepare students to be activists and social entrepreneurs who can improve conditions in their communities. We:

- Define the environment as where we live, work, play, pray, learn, advocate and organize and including both natural and built environment
- Focus on understanding environmental problems, injustices, and solutions
- Connect education to employment
- Believe education should be liberating and inspiring
- Utilize a multimedia, activity based approach that engages students
- Encourage students to build on their existing knowledge and experience
- Prepare students to think critically, address challenges, implement solutions
- Emphasize teamwork by having students work in small groups throughout the course
- Ensure that content is relevant and culturally competent
- Teach to different learning styles and levels of literacy
- Strengthen academic skills
- Develop leadership skills
- Prepare, empower, and inspire students to address social and environmental injustice



Roots of Success Focuses on a Wide Range of Skills

Creativity
Critical thinking
Problem solving
Lifelong learning
Decision-making
Vocabulary
Natural science
Environmental literacy
Sustainability
Environmental justice analysis

Career development
Personal, social, and environmental responsibility
Advocacy
Civic engagement
Leadership
Financial literacy
Social entrepreneurship
Communication
Collaboration

Reading
Writing
Math
Research
Teamwork
Engagement
Retention
Information literacy
Data analysis

Policy analysis
Land use planning
Interpreting tables, charts, and graphs
Mapping
Public speaking
Digital Literacy
Test taking

Teaching Roots of Success During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Cyril Walrond, Roots of Success Instructor, Stafford Creek Correctional Center

Written July 2020

Roots of Success is unlike any class that is being made available during this time of social distancing. Meeting the academic and reintegrative needs of students while introducing socially relevant subjects to them is more critical now than ever before. Roots of Success's proven track record is linked to the curriculum's ability to reach far beyond the classroom and intersect with the complex realities facing our students and the world, especially, during this incredibly challenging time.

As conversations arise in the classroom related to current events students in the Roots of Success classes and guided discussions are given the opportunity to think about the intersection of the social and natural environments in their lives. They have a chance to learn about and examine the interconnection and complexity of natural systems, social inequalities, and struggles for environmental justice, health justice, and social justice.

We are living in a time when the whole world is able to see what most of our students have felt all along – that the people that matter the most, and who make up the vast majority of our nation's population, are regarded as the least, as evident in the reality of our most essential workers being viewed as nonessential up until the Covid-19 pandemic. This time also reveals a blatant disregard for the lives of those less economically privileged and the systemic willingness to sacrifice both people and the planet on the altar of consumption and corporate profit. This unsustainable throwaway mindset is not only ravaging the planet, it is ravaging communities and people, particularly low-income people of color.

The Roots of Success classroom is set up in such a way that through the peer-to-peer approach to education students transform their way of thinking and their lives as they share lessons learned from their life experiences and have the opportunity to think critically, self-reflectively, and collectively about how their life experiences are shaped by natural and built environments, systems, institutions, and public policies. Students begin to understand that although we may not all have the same experiences, we can learn from one another's experiences and grow in our understanding and compassion of our shared human experience. But importantly, students are not only given the opportunity to better understand systems, they are also being prepared to use what they learn in the Roots of Success classes to apply for jobs in the waste, water, energy, transportation, building, and food sectors.

In the context of teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic inside prison, the Roots of Success classes provide an opportunity for us to weave thoughtfully between personal experiences and systemic problems, and to talk not only about our fears and anxieties but also about what needs to be done to improve the systems that impact our lives. In Roots of Success classes students discover their voices as they discuss issues that they have rarely spoken out about. Not because of the lack experience or thoughtful perspectives but because traditional education systems that have failed them have conditioned them to believe that their stories don't matter and their voices don't count.

In addition to the pandemic, teaching Roots of Success in this time of the Black Lives Matter movement has allowed us to have helpful and healing conversations about issues of race and racism in an environment that has historically used discussions about race as a catalyst for promoting antisocial and divisive prison politics. Because the Roots of Success pedagogy and curriculum celebrates, honors, and builds on the diversity of students in the class, the classroom environment feels safe and supportive and produces a synergy that allows each of us to leave each class feeling more connected, liberated, and empowered than when we arrived.

During this incredibly challenging time, the Roots of Success program has further solidified itself as a critical community building space and educational experience that empowers the voices of the once voiceless.



1) The **Fundamentals of Environmental Literacy Module** serves as an introduction. It helps students think about the interconnectedness between natural systems, biological systems and social systems and the connection between human activity and the environment. The focus is on the economy, natural and built environments, institutions, extraction and use of natural resources, global warming, climate change, bioaccumulation, synergistic effects, how decision makers evaluate environmental issues, understanding cost-benefit analysis, the precautionary principle, how environmental decisions affect communities differently, climate justice, and how people advocate to improve environmental conditions in their community. The job readiness exercise focuses on understanding career pathways and ladders.

2) The **Water Module** introduces students to basic concepts and issues relevant to water extraction, management and use, the characteristics of water, how water is used in different settings, the importance of water for humans and other species, the water cycle, water use in agriculture, modern water management approaches, the inequitable distribution of freshwater, ground water extraction, wastewater management, and water contamination. The job readiness exercise focuses on students identifying their professional strengths and weaknesses and developing a plan for improving professional weaknesses. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the water sector.



3) The **Waste Module** introduces students to a range of issues related to waste management and resource recovery. Students learn about the waste stream and how it has changed over time, bury and burn strategies, problems that stem from the way institutions and individuals dispose of products and materials at the end of their identified lifecycles, alternative waste management approaches, resource recovery, appropriate technologies, and the 4 Rs. The job readiness exercise focuses on job search skills and strategies, including identifying and responding to job listings. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the waste recovery sector.

4) The **Transportation Module** helps students understand land use planning, the development of transportation systems and infrastructures, diverse transportation modes and transit systems. The module focuses on renewable and nonrenewable resources, the role of fossil fuels in modern transportation systems and vehicles, problems stemming from urban sprawl, greenhouse gas emissions, and air contamination, policies that promote transit-oriented development, alternative fuels, and transportation justice. The job readiness exercise focuses on resume writing. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the sustainable transportation sector.



5) The **Energy Module** helps students understand diverse energy sources, the principles of electricity, the role of energy in the world and in our lives, and the economic, political, environmental, and social factors that influence energy decisions. Students are introduced to the characteristics of energy and electricity, basic concepts and issues relevant to energy systems, the role of fossil fuels and nuclear energy in modern electricity systems, greenhouse gasses and their impacts, problems associated with the burning of fossil fuels, approaches and technologies that reduce energy use, renewable energy sources and policies, and climate justice. The job readiness exercise helps students write a cover letter to an employer. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the sustainable energy sector.

6) The Building Module introduces students to land use planning, building, and green building concepts. The focus is on built environments, building design and construction, building materials, building systems, embodied energy, indoor air quality, energy and water consumption in buildings, environmental and public health impacts of conventional building practices, green building principles and practices, improving building efficiency, and resource conservation in the construction, operation, and deconstruction of buildings. The job readiness exercise focuses on preparing for a job interview and mock interviews. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the building sector. The module supports students studying for the Building Performance (BPI) exam.



7) The Health, Food & Agriculture Module focuses on human health, food systems, and agricultural production. Students learn about health, nutrition, local and global food systems, sustainable agricultural practices, industrial agriculture, factory farming, GMO crops, processed and fast food, food deserts, how to increase health and food justice, local food systems, urban agriculture, backyard and community gardening, and health education. The job readiness exercise has students envision their local food system and think about how new businesses and initiatives could improve health and food access in their communities. In addition, students learn about career pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities in the sustainable food, agriculture, and public health sectors.



8) The Community Organizing & Leadership Module introduces students to civic engagement, advocacy, community organizing, and leadership approaches, strategies, and skill sets. The module helps students understand the roles and responsibilities of an effective advocate and organizer. Students identify the root causes of problems, build a community-based organization, craft a mission statement, identify organizational goals and values, strategize campaigns, and simulate door-to-door campaigns. The job readiness exercise has students think about career pathways in advocacy, community organizing, and civic engagement.

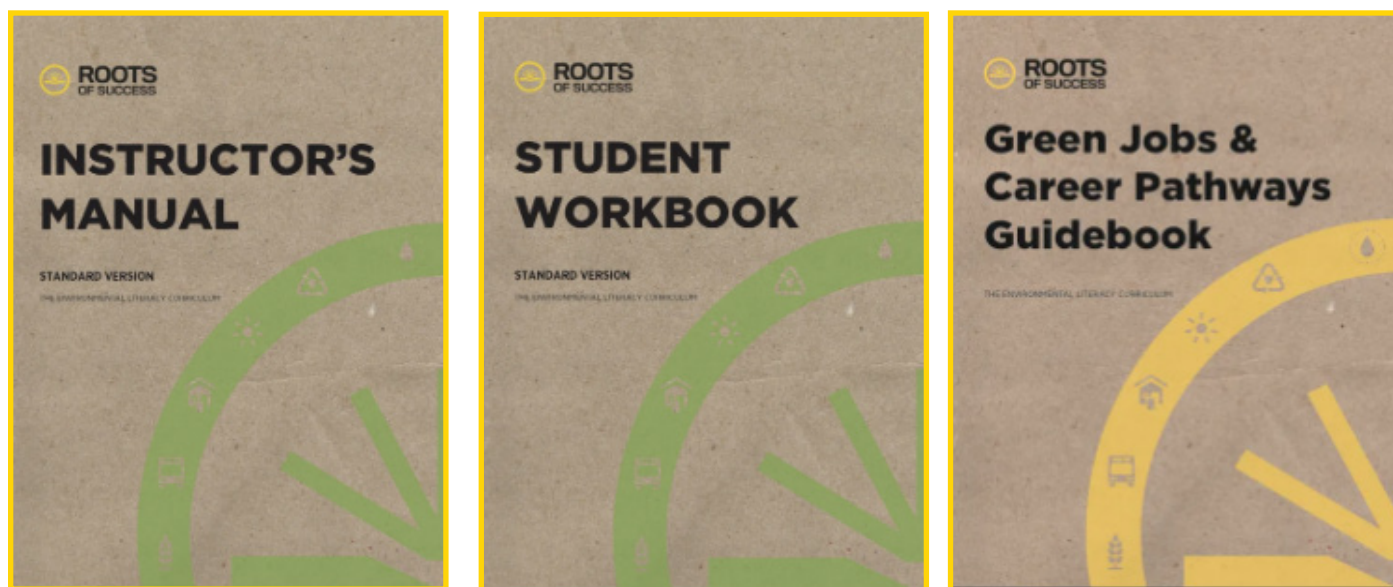


9) The Financial Literacy & Social Entrepreneurship Module focuses on personal financial literacy and on basic business practices, skills sets, and green business principles. In the first part of the module, students' focus on their personal finances and learn how to analyze income and expenses, create a budget, set financial goals, deal with debt and predatory lenders, establish savings, and effectively manage their finances. In the second part of the module, students develop green business ideas and business plans, and focus on how to operate a small green business, effective communication skills, business models, basic accounting, target markets, hiring staff, financial reporting, and recruiting advisors.



10) The Application & Practice Module serves as the conclusion. It provides students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in all the other modules to real world situations by envisioning and designing all of the elements of a sustainable, healthy, and just city block.





Because ROS is taught to diverse populations and in a wide range of settings, we have created 10 customized versions of the curriculum.

10 Customized Versions:

- Job Training and Reentry Programs
- High Schools & Youth Programs
- Common Core Aligned for High Schools
- Incarcerated Adults
- Incarcerated Youth
- Spanish Speakers
- Version for the United Kingdom
- Version for South Africa
- Low Income Social Entrepreneurs
- Online Version

In instructor-led versions, students receive a Student Workbook with all worksheets needed for the course. In the online version, students take the entire course independently on a computer or tablet with no external workbook.

"After taking the Roots of Success course I applied for a position as a Civil Engineering Inspector and was hired by Quality Control Inspection Group. Roots of Success classes helped me prepare for the initial interview and now that I am employed I constantly find myself recalling what I learned about water, waste, energy, and building in ROS classes and applying it on the job. Aside from the practical applications, I loved watching the videos and talking with the other students about what we were learning."

– **Maurice H.**, ROS Graduate and
ROS Advisory Board Member

"I love teaching Roots of Success classes! The Instructor's Guide is clear and easy to use. Each module is filled with information that is directly relevant to my student's lives. Students love the videos and discussion questions. They enjoy going through activities in small groups and the worksheets in the Student Workbook, and, most importantly, they look forward to sharing what they are learning in the course with others. The Green Jobs Guidebook is a great resource for students; I use it towards the end of the course when students are looking for information about jobs they can apply for after they graduate."

– **Tony S.**, ROS Instructor

Instructor-Led Version

The Instructor-Led Version of Roots of Success is taught by instructors who are trained and certified to use the Roots of Success pedagogy and teaching materials in a classroom setting. This version has been used for ten years, in a wide range of education, workforce, incarceration, and other settings. To teach Roots of Success classes, Instructors use the "Roots of Success Instructor's Manual" and multimedia materials that include all of the information, videos, visuals, and activities instructors need to teach each module. Each student works in their "Roots of Success Student Workbook", which includes all of the worksheets and activities students need to go through each module. Students receive a Certificate for each module they complete.

Pedagogical Approach

Instructors use the ROS Instructor's Manual and multimedia content to (1) present students with information and (2) continually pose questions that require students to think critically and self reflectively about the what they are learning in each module. Students (3) work in small groups where they focus on particular issues and scenarios, (4) share life experiences, (5) problem solve, (6) share what they learned with others, (7) make presentations, (8) learn about jobs they can access in the green economy, (9) prepare for job interviews, and (10) prepare to be activists/ community organizers. As students go through the activities and answer questions posed by the instructor, they are continually encouraged and positioned to think critically and self-reflectively and address problems related to environmental and social conditions in their communities and society more broadly.

Online Version

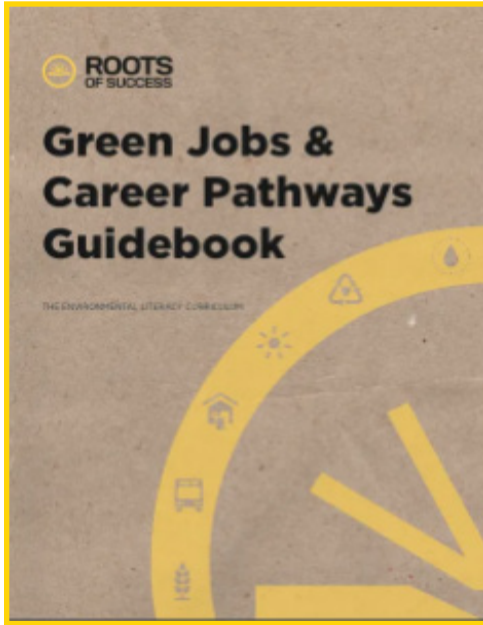
The Online Version of Roots of Success allows students to take the ROS course on a computer, tablet, or phone at their own pace. Students receive a Certificate for each module they complete. This version is distributed to job-training programs, reentry programs, schools, youth programs, and other education and workforce settings through the ROS digital platform. In prison and jail settings, the online version is distributed through licensing agreements with IT vendors.

Pedagogical Approach

Working on a computer, tablet, or phone, students are guided/led through each module with the instructor (Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes), who provides the student with information, videos and visuals, activities, scenarios, and situations, while continually posing open-ended questions that require the student to think critically about what they are learning and to apply what they are learning. Students answer the questions by typing their thoughts into the computer on the keyboard. As the student respond to the questions, the instructor responds to the student's ideas in ways that require the student to think more deeply about what they are learning and, to apply what they are learning to a wide range environmental and social challenges, problems, and injustices. The course is structured so that students must complete the content on each page before moving on to the next page in order to ensure that students cannot rush through or skip over content.

How the Online Version Works:

1. A unique sign up code is sent to each student.
2. Individual students enter the code at our Roots of Success registration site.
3. Once registered, individual students sign in using the email and password.
4. Individual students complete the modules and earn their Certificates.



The “Roots of Success Green Jobs & Career Pathways Guidebook” familiarizes students with 100+ jobs and career pathways in the green economy. It was created to provide Roots of Success students and graduates with detailed information on labor market opportunities they can access after graduating from the Roots of Success course.

The focus is on meaningful, dignified jobs that provide workers with family supporting wages and occupational mobility over time, most of which do not require a college degree.

The Guidebook focuses on employment opportunities in six sectors: Water, Waste, Transportation, Energy, Building, Health, Food, and Agriculture.

Each individual job opportunity includes detailed information on the job description, basic qualifications for the job, salary ranges, benefits, career ladders, and growth figures.

“Roots of Success is changing women’s attitudes about the types of jobs they would like to try in the workforce with reentry into the community. Reentry to the community is an anxiety within these walls, but learning and being excited about the Energy sector this past weekend, the women found themselves curious to search more green job pathways. The women find confidence in empowering their lives into a positive future.”

– **Lanelle Warner**, *Instructor, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility*

“The class showed me new doors to different jobs in different fields. It showed me how to make my living situation better by not having too much waste.”

– **Terrell Hill**, *Student, Larch Correctional Center*

“Roots has given our students confidence that they can come into an interview and know what they’re talking about.”

– **Taleigh Smith**, *Green Jobs Outreach Coordinator, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC)*

“When I first found out about the Roots of Success class, I was ready to sign up immediately. I just couldn’t wait to learn new things about the environment and jobs that help out different communities all over the world. I’ve always been interested in environmental activities and the things I can do to help my community become a better place to live in. During the course, I took notes on the green jobs that interest me the most. I feel solar installer and recycling sorter fit me the best because they include hands on work and help out the environment in many different ways. When I get released from jail, I will make sure I inform my friends and family about this wonderful program and all the green jobs that are out there for them. Thank you so much for creating a program like this, it was extremely helpful. I learned a lot from this course; I feel my mind is opened up so much more now. ”

– **Terrel T.**, *Student (Online Version)*

Where Roots of Success Graduates Have Been Hired

Roots of Success graduates are trained and prepared to enter all sectors of the green economy. Over the past ten years, ROS graduates have been employed by the businesses and organizations below:

Environment

San Francisco Department of Environment
San Francisco Parks and Recreation
Bay Area Climate Collaborative
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula
Greencorps Chicago
ILM & Partners
North Florida Community College

Water and Waste

Bay Area Appliance
Gardens That Grow
Gilmans Kitchens+Baths
EarthBaby Compostable Diaper Service
Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma
Greencorps Chicago
GreenWaste Recovery
Recology San Mateo County
The Green Project of New Orleans Building Materials and Recycling

Energy and Transportation

Alcal-Arcade Solar Contracting
Bay Area Appliance
Bay Area Climate Collaborative
Clean Solar
Danlin Corporation Solar Contractor
Joule Energy
Lawrence Fine Art Services
Luminalt Solar
Modern Aire Mechanical
ProVOLT Solar
Real Good Solar
Recurve/Advanced Home Energy
Segway
Skytech Solar
Solar Alternatives

Building

Alcal-Arcade Specialty Contracting Inc.
Bay Area Appliance Contractors Labor Pool
Gilmans Kitchens+Baths
Green Thumbs Up
JobTrain
Marcan Enterprise Inc.
Modern Aire Mechanical
Nolmar Corp
SDI Insulation
Sequoia Construction
Southern Environmental Solutions
Whole House Building Supply

Food, Health, & Agriculture

Advocates for Urban Agriculture
Altgeld Gardens Urban Farm
Angelic Organics
Bare Escentuals Mineral Makeup
Big Delicious Planet Catering
Bite Cafe
Chicago Botanic Garden Fruit and Vegetable Island
Chicago Botanic Garden Green Youth Farm
Chicago Food Co-Operative
Chicago Specialty Gardens
City Farm Resource Center
Cook County Boot Camp Farm
Ecumenical Hunger Program
Farmedhere, LLC
Gardens That Grow
Garfield Park Conservatory
Green Thumbs Up
Iron Street Urban Farm
Joshua Charles Catering
Little Veggie Patch
Native Foods Café
Passion Café
Pilsen Community Market
Provenance Food and Wine
Takashi Restaurant
The Chicago Lights Urban Farm

Food, Health, & Agriculture (cont.)

The Jackson Park Urban Farm and Community Allotment Garden
Uncommon Ground Green Roof Restaurant
Windy City Harvest

Community Organizing & Leadership

Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
Advocates for Urban Agriculture
Chicago Botanic Garden
Community Housing Partnership
Concordia Place
Ecumenical Hunger Program
Greencorps Chicago
Growing Power
Redwood City Public Library

Other

Always Best Care Senior Services
Center for Independence of Individuals with Disabilities
Dog-Alicious Pet Care
East Palo Alto Senior Center
Farmers Insurance
Peninsula Interfaith Action
San Mateo County Clerk Assessor
San Mateo County Department of Housing
San Mateo County Works Program
The Way We Grow Infant Center
Urban Solutions
Women's Initiative for Self Employment

And Hundreds More!

Prisons, Jails, and Juvenile Facilities

Roots of Success has developed customized curricula for prisons, jails, and juvenile justice facilities in states across the country specifically to prepare incarcerated individuals to support sustainability initiatives, institutional cost saving, transfor

Roots of Success:

- Structured to be taught by incarcerated instructors who are trained and certified to teach and mentor their peers
- Increases knowledge and skills needed to address problems and implement solutions
- Promotes positive behavior, confidence, leadership development
- Prepares individuals for jobs in environmental fields and full-time employment upon release
- Inspires participants to engage in sustainability projects while in prison
- Reduces conflict and violence
- Increases financial literacy and social entrepreneurship skills
- Empowers participants to reduce waste and increase energy conservation
- Reduces costs and carbon footprints in facilities
 - \$90,000 reduction in annual trash bills in multiple facilities
 - 60% decrease in electrical usage over 3 years in 9 facilities
 - 12,000 pound reduction in food waste per week in facilities
- Taught to men in solitary confinement as part of rehabilitation programs
- Teaching or taking ROS classes in prison was viewed positively by Board members in dozens of resentencing and clemency hearings

*Statistics collected are from Ohio DOC and are "on average"



"Roots of Success was the core component that tied together our cultural change in environmental awareness. We had begun recycling and composting. We addressed energy and water conservation, but I knew we needed education to really reach the inmates. It took our green initiatives to a new level; it led the change that allowed inmates to be part of the environmental awareness at SCC (Southeastern Correctional Complex)."

– **Warden Sheri Duffy**; *Southeastern Correctional Complex*

"Men who take a ten week Roots of Success class while incarcerated in Washington State Penitentiary have the opportunity to apply for jobs in the facility's Sustainable Practices Lab. About 70% of the 127 ROS graduates have been offered jobs in the Lab and no one can recall anyone turning down the opportunity. This is a great model for turning theory into practice."

– **Joslyn Trivett**, *Network Manager; Sustainable Prisons Project*

"Engaging inmates in meaningful activities and giving them opportunities to contribute reduces violence and makes prisons safer for both inmates and staff."

– **Dan Pocholke**, *Director; Washington State Prisons*

ss the U.S. Roots of Success is the only evidence-based environmental literacy and work readiness program created
rm facility culture, reduce violence, access a range of employment opportunities, and reduce recidivism.



Ricky Osbourne / Sustainable Prisons Project

"Roots of Success puts into perspective how our relationship with the environment could not only ignite change for the planet, but it ignites change for the better in all of us behind bars. This program was therapeutic to me and my colleagues because it got us to think and hope for our days to come outside of prisons. It helped us understand how we could be the solution for problems regarding climate change, corruption, as well as the devastation of ecosystems."

– **Daniel Carter**, ROS Student

"Women enter these walls with shattered lives and scattered focus. Roots of Success has proven to be instrumental in providing a compass, guiding students as they discover a healthy and sustainable direction for the future. Women graduate with an eagerness to participate in their own lives. Roots of Success gives beyond, to a place where they can reach out and rejoin their community on a pro-social, eco-forward, career pathway."

– **Lori Moseley**, Instructor; Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility

"As my colleagues and I prepare to teach another Roots of Success class, we are not only bringing a new world to our students but are introducing them to the world; a world they never knew existed, by exposing them to concepts that were previously foreign to the vast majority of them. It is not that they do not have the aptitude or attitude to learn, but have been denied the opportunities. "

– **Cyril Walrond**, Instructor; Stafford Creek Correctional Center

'The students that have experienced the Roots of Success class have done extremely well in absorbing the material from the modules. They have asked critically thoughtful questions and have engaged in rich discussions that are relative to their lived experiences. Many have expressed to me, as their instructor, that they're grateful a class like Roots is offered while incarcerated; expressing how it will benefit them as they re-enter their communities. Also, Roots of Success meets the College & Career Indicator credit on student transcripts in order to complete state requirements for High School Diploma."

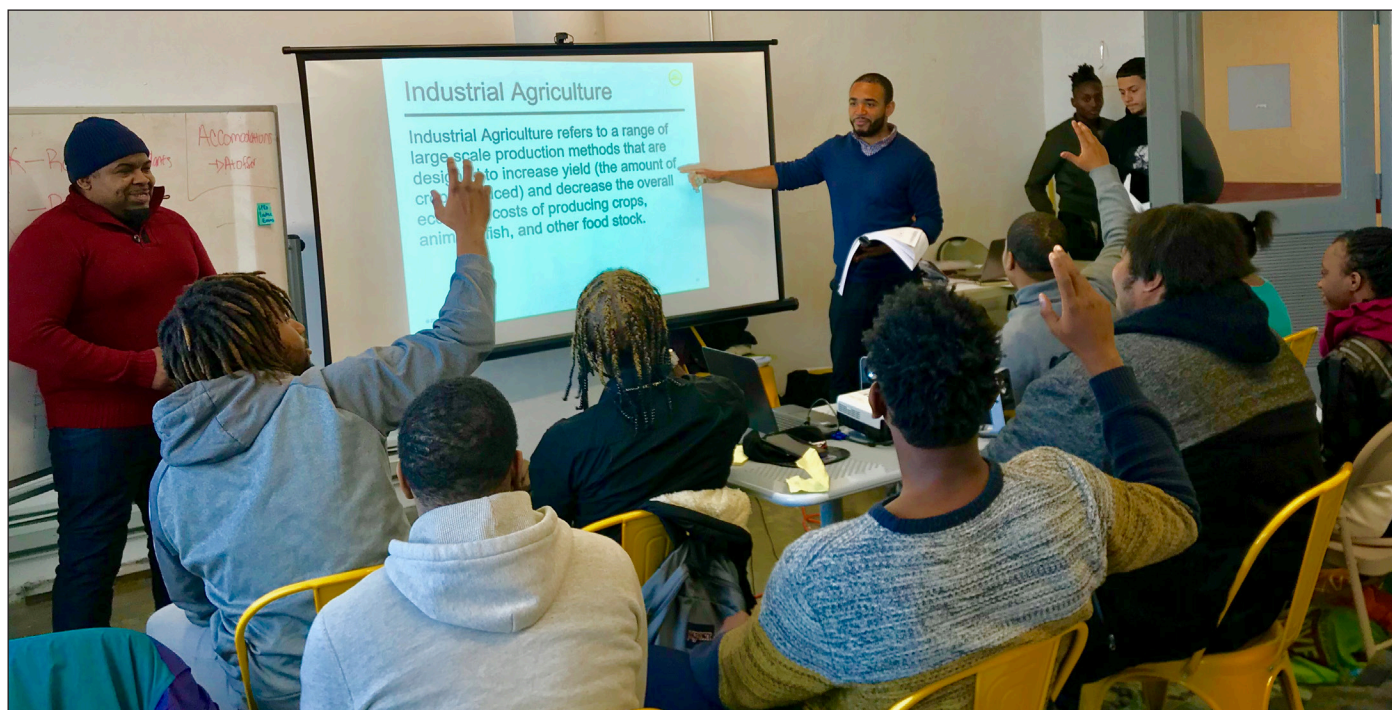
– **Lawrence Burdick**, Instructor; Five Keys Schools and Programs, Santa Rita Jail

Job Training and Reentry Programs

Roots of Success has proven to be a foundational component to workforce development organizations, both committed to engage youth and adults who have struggled in school and face significant barriers to employment.

Roots of Success:

- Foundational component for workforce development and reentry programs
- Engages, motivates, and inspires students
- Develops collaboration, communication skills, scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving skills
- Frames environmental issues in relation to employment opportunities
- Promotes professional behavior and professional development skills
- Familiarizes students with green jobs and career pathways
- Students work in small groups to address and solve problems together
- Ongoing technical assistance for instructors
- Prepares students for 100+ jobs/careers in multiple sectors of the economy



"I believe this class has made me a better person and helped me be more aware of the environment and the community around me."

– **Amanda Veneziale**, Student; Windy City Harvest
Job Training, Workforce Development, and Reentry Programs

"The course gave our students the ability to understand what is happening around them, the vocabulary necessary to articulate what they see in the environment, and a deeper appreciation for eco-warriors. It showed them ways to be environmental entrepreneurs and also stewards of the planet."

– **Hakim Cunningham**, Instructor; Successful Women in Clean Energy

"Roots of Success gave my students insight into the concept of environmental injustice. My students knew about environmental issues but never connected them to social justice. This was incredibly valuable for them because it helped open their eyes to see what is happening in their communities and what needs to be fixed."

– **Frank Cardello**, *Instructor; A. Philip Randolph Institute*

"I come from a working class background that did not focus on working collaboratively. I appreciate being able to develop a stronger sense of connectedness with those in my class. Because of this course I was able to be vulnerable and open up to those I did not already know. The team building and open ended discussion allowed us to share our different perspectives and find commonality."

– **Dani Jackson**, *ROS Graduate; Windy City Harvest*

"Having the ROS program at our school has a positive impact on our students and our program. Some students were surprised and inspired by the examples of people like themselves effectively helping to heal the environment and their communities through green jobs, social entrepreneurship, and environmental justice action."

– **John Cothran**, *Instructor; Asian Neighborhood Design*



High Schools and Youth Programs

Roots of Success has customized curricula for high schools and programs working with high school-aged youth. The green academies, and juvenile facilities across the country.

Roots of Success:

- Meets Common Core Language Arts and College and Career Readiness Standards
- Engages students who are falling behind and inspires them to become life long learners
- Increases core competencies for students
- Inspires exploration of STEM-based and environmental careers
- Familiarizes students with 100+ jobs/careers in multiple sectors of the economy
- Includes comprehensive lesson plans, rubrics, and assessments
- Students receive college credit for taking the ROS course
- Inspires students to address problems in their communities
- Meets College & Career Indicator credit for High School Diploma
- Includes "demonstration of learning" project
- CTE pathway and alignment



"Roots of Success classes have helped me learn more about the environment around us and how to create a green business. Thanks to this program, I have gained the confidence in trying to start my own business in making all natural and organic homemade hair products, start my own garden, and grow crops to be able to provide people with but also to have for myself."

– **Lorena Soto**, Student;
Park East High School

"ROS helps me engage and prepare low-income youth of color for the 21st century labor market and green economy. The certificate is something they can be proud of and has a significant impact on their ability to find work."

– **Oscar Medina**, Teacher; Western Institute for Leadership Development

"Roots of Success utilizes so many different types of teaching techniques--we're using video, we're breaking into groups and doing group activities, we're using vocabulary, and we're asking insightful questions about their communities--that's the key."

– **Robert Teritto**, Instructor; CO-OP Tech High School

"Roots of Success has encouraged me to apply to universities where I plan on getting a degree in environmental science. It has also influenced me to start a composting program at my school to reduce waste."

– **Chloe**, Student; Santa Cruz High School

the curriculum is used in high schools, alternative schools, CTE high schools, youth programs,



"Throughout the course I have been imbued with more knowledge on the topic of environmental and social injustices within the world, ranging from environmental racism and food deserts to the uncontrollable mass of garbage that has been accumulating on our earth."

– **Charles Bailey**, Student; Soquel High School

"Roots of Success offered an outward facing environmental curriculum to students eager to create change. It is really beneficial that we can offer college credits to these students and this program has inspired and motivated students to engage in sustainability projects in their schools and communities."

– **Laura Robledo**, Instructor; Global Student Embassy

"Through the Roots to Success class I have learned how to use my fellow peers as a resource and strength when discussing our position in the world and how we can create a change in the right direction."

– **Pilar Cenicero**, Student; Analay High School



Programs We Have Worked With

A. Philip Randolph Institute	Green City Force	Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
Adult Reading Center	Green Door Initiative	Pima Prevention Partnership
Airway Heights Corrections Center	Green For All	Project Main Street
Ashoka	Green Impact Zone	PUSH Buffalo
Asian Neighborhood Design	Good Work Food Collaborative	Quiet Creek Herb Farm
Bayview YMCA	GRID Alternatives	Ramah Navajo School District
BIG: Blacks in Green	Grow Pittsburgh	ReSOURCE
Berkeley City College	Growing Home	Richmond BUILD
Berkeley Public Library	Groundwork New Orleans	Rikers Island High School
Black Belt Community Based Tourism Network	Harris County Department of Education	Rising Sun Energy Center
Boston Youth Environmental Network	Hiaki High School	SF Dept. of the Environment
Bridges Out of Poverty Initiative	Holyoke Works	Second Chance
Brotherhood Sisterhood Sol	Horticultural Society of New York	Solano County Health & Social Services
Bronx Community College	Howard Area Community Center	Solar Richmond
Bully No More	Hunters Point Family	San Francisco Conservation Corps
Cañada College	I Am My Brothers Keeper CDC	San Mateo County Green Jobs Academy
Chicago Botanic Garden	Jewish Vocational Service	Sankofa Vision
Chicago Lights	Keep Jackson Beautiful	SoBRO
Clean City	Lone Star College	Stafford Creek Correctional Center
Cleveland Police Department	ILM Partners	Sustainable South Bronx
Cleveland Rise	Larch Corrections Center	Sustainability in Prisons Project
Coffee Creek Correctional Facility	Lake Erie Correctional Institution	Toltecalli High School
Conservation Corps North Bay	Limitless Vistas, Inc.	The Garden Project
Consortium for Worker Education	Louisiana Green Corps	The Lei Company
Community Housing Partnership	Malama Kaua'i	The Osborne Association
Cook County Green Corps	Marin Employment Connection	Thompson Island Outward Bound
Coyote Ridge Correctional Center	Marin County Probation	Tierra y Libertad Organization
Connections for the Homeless, Inc.	Massachusetts Clean Energy Center	Tricycle Gardens
Co-op Technical High School	Laney Community College	Uplifting Sisters
CPLC Community Schools	Mission High School	University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
Dayton Correctional Institution	Monroe Correctional Center	Urban League of Greater Cleveland
DoE – District 79	New Mexico Corrections Dept.	Vermont Youth Services
East Bay Green Job Corps	New York City District of Carpenters	VtGREEN
East River Academy	NJ Institute for Social Justice	Washington Correction Center for Women
Ecology Center Youth Leadership Academy	Nontraditional Employment for Women	Washington County Youth Service Bureau
EcoTrust	NW Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition	Washington State Penitentiary
Education Allies	OAI, Inc.	Windy City Harvest
Environmental Health Watch	Ohio Department of Recreation and Correction	YouthBuild
Franklin Medical Center	One World Green	
Fight for Light in HBCUs	Otesha Project UK	
Five Keys Charter Schools	Paradigm Shifters	
Goodwill Industries	PathStone	
	Pathways to Graduation	

And Many More!

Funding Model

Since its inception, Roots of Success has funded its operations using a fee-for-service funding model that generates revenue from two sources: (1) programs pay to train and certify instructors to teach Roots of Success and (2) programs purchase customized versions of the teaching materials for their students on an ongoing basis.

Because this fee-for-service model did not generate sufficient funds to fully staff the organization, over the past 10 years we relied very heavily on pro-bono support. Specifically, (1) our Executive Director worked pro-bono since our inception; (2) we recruited nonprofit and for-profit professionals to work with ROS staff on major projects pro-bono; (3) we benefited from interns who received college credit for their work with our organization. Between 2010 and 2020 ROS received pro-bono support valued at over \$2.4 million dollars.

This fee-for-service model worked best in the organization's first four years (2010-2014) when job training and reentry programs received funding from the federal government to support green job training programs throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico with funding from the American Resource and Recovery Act (ARRA). When the ARRA funding ended, hundreds of job training/reentry programs were closed or limited in size and the number of job training/reentry programs using Roots of Success was greatly reduced. At this point, we continued to work with job training/reentry programs and greatly expanded our work with schools, youth programs, prisons, jails, environmental/environmental justice organizations, community-based organizations, and government agencies. Between 2014 and 2020, our work with prisons and jails increased so significantly that more than half of all students taking Roots of Success classes during this time period did so while incarcerated. In 2020 we lost significant revenue due to the Covid 19 pandemic which caused almost all of our partners to stop working with students.

The conditions that provided Roots of Success with some level of financial stability in its first ten years have changed. Moving forward, in addition to continuing the fee-for-service model, the organization will seek funding from foundations and donors to meet the needs of the populations we serve.



Pro Bono Support

Year	Amount
2009	\$182,426
2010	\$247,845
2011	\$245,845
2012	\$203,058
2013	\$204,908
2014	\$300,108
2015	\$74,858
2016	\$179,008
2017	\$185,010
2018	\$191,762
2019	\$185,014
2020	\$209,893
Total	\$2,409,735

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of Programs	33	53	57	58	98

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Instructors Trained	147	254	194	207

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Students	1,179	2,952	2,285	4,319

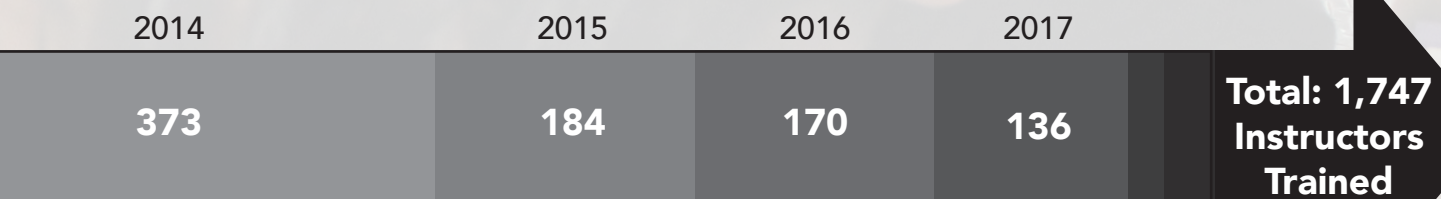
"The women that teach Roots of Success at Coffee Creek Women's Correctional Facility are so dedicated and passionate about the curriculum. They believe in what they are instructing. The students get through the first class and they are hooked. They get so excited and crave the next lesson. The students and the instructors learn to work together, listen, express themselves. They make realistic plans for their futures in sustainable jobs in the green sector. The women become more confident and expressive. They learn to write resumes and learn that there are jobs out there that are really suited for them that they never would have thought about before. They want to save the world!"

– **Kathleen Fitts**, Green Team Coordinator, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility

Over Time



*Significant reduction in programs using ROS due to Covid 19 pandemic shelter in place requirements



"Being a teacher and master trainer in the Roots of Success program, I have found that not only can we contribute to and help the health and sustainability of our planet, but we can help ourselves and one another improve and become better people. You cannot measure this impact by getting perfect scores on tests, this is all about change and personal development that also serves to benefit the environment we all live in."

– **Eugene Youngblood,**
Master Trainer/Instructor

"Originally, this curriculum was designed to increase environmental literacy, academic literacy, and job readiness skills. However, at Airway Heights Correction Center (AHCC) this curriculum has taught inmates a fourth and much needed skill, caring. In an inmate's day-to-day journey through the Washington correctional system, and especially at AHCC, an inmate can often become disconnected from society. This has historically made the process of returning to their communities difficult. Dr. Pinderhughes's program seeks to lessen that burden by closing inmates's educational gap, and inspiring them to 'consider the environment in their work and daily lives, develop leadership, and move people toward a place of action in order to support green pathways out of poverty, equitable green development, environmental and social justice, and community participation in decision making'.

After taking the course, many inmates have exhibited a profound change in their attitudes and social interactions with other inmates. In fact, AHCC administration has included the program in their "good time" restoration pathway as a means for inmates to earn back lost good time resulting from various rule violations. At the date of this article, several of the AHCC Roots of Success facilitators are successful graduates of the good time restoration pathway program. This is one of the many examples of this program's positive impact on inmates residing at AHCC. To find how Roots of Success has led to graduates caring more for their communities, one need to look no further than the City of Spokane, Washington, where they will find blankets made out of reclaimed used clothing (made by ROS graduate volunteers), and fresh vegetables (grown by graduates)... donated to Spokane charities to help combat the cold and hunger felt by local children, individuals, and families in the Spokane area.

Already AHCC has more than a hundred graduates of the Roots of Success program, and from those graduates, AHCC has been able to reach out into the Spokane community to begin a long needed healing process, which every graduate now knows begins with them. What will the state of Washington and its citizens gain from this program? Mothers/daughters and father/sons are returning back to the state's communities with an obtainable goal of helping build sustainable lifestyles. Why is this important? We only have one state, and only a limited amount of resources - what better place to begin demonstrating how much we care?"

– **Dawnel Southwick**, *Roots of Success Staff Sponsor; Airway Heights Correction Center*

"I took this class because I wanted to be a part of the change for the future and learn how to be involved in my community and give back. ROS taught me about green jobs, career pathways, social enterprise, and industrialization. I wouldn't even have known what half of those meant or why they are so important. I've learned so much and actually want to teach this class, that's how much I've been inspired. This class has taught me that I have a voice and the skills to use my voice to make change."

– **Jessica Ray Tweed**, *Student; Coffee Creek Correctional Facility*

"What I never expected was how through being a Roots of Success instructor the students rallied to my support. It was phenomenal. On the breezeway, in the chow hall, and even at visits men would introduce me to their families as their instructor and friend. The relationships we're building and bonds being established through these classes are priceless."

– **Grady Mitchell**, *Instructor; Washington DOC*

"Being a Roots of Success instructor gave me a sense of worth and purpose. I am sure you can imagine how liberating it is to get out of the stale fish bowl environment of a prison living unit and be able to go to a place for 8 hours a day where the prison mentality and environment simply fade away."

– **Mike Hoover**, *Instructor; Walla Walla Prison*

"Creating a sustainable lifestyle culture is paramount and Roots of Success is teaching people a new way to think. Being aware of environmental injustice is the first step to finding a solution. The second step is continuing to hold people accountable for their actions."

– **Julian Reyes**, *Instructor; Coyote Ridge Corrections Center*

Testimonies

"I like how the modules reflect on urban areas in the city that are affected by not having enough healthy stores for the community. Being from an urban community, going green is good for my neighborhood, especially for the youth and elders."

– **Harrison Graham**, *Student; Chillicothe Correctional Institution*

"Teaching the Roots of Success environmental literacy curriculum here at Stafford Creek has been not only a blessing in my life but has also been an enriching privilege and honor. To teach the 10-module course in a classroom without any correctional staff, administration, or outside volunteers to sponsor it is unprecedented in the Department of Corrections...These men enter into our classroom one way and by the time they leave their minds have been expanded beyond recognition...They told us it could not be done, but we are doing it. They doubted there would be any interest, but we have become one of the most sought after programs among the men in the facility."

– **Cyril Walrond**, *Instructor; Stafford Creek Correctional Center*

"So many of us here in prison are frustrated and fed-up with the failures, abuses and incompetence of the current system of incarceration - and we should be. Most of these prisons are nothing but storage facilities that offer little or no support for our rehabilitation. Outside of Roots of Success (which many say is the best program on the "hill") the programs that are offered are ineffective and way out of touch with the latest research in criminal rehabilitation and psychology.

We have spent years in an environment that teaches us how to be angry, lazy, violent, an environment that is cold, indifferent and extremely dysfunctional, then if we are lucky enough we are released into the world and expected to live as healthy, productive citizens. Without Roots of Success, how am I going to make it and how is the world going to become a safer and better place? I am anxious to see what the Ohio prison system will look like in ten years from now when Roots of Success will have made an impact both in and out of this system. My ultimate desire is to see it from the outside looking back in. There are a lot of issues to address here in prison but Roots of Success is a good foundation to build upon. The focus will always be about sustainable solutions."

– *Instructor; Ohio Department of Corrections*

"These types of programs provide prisoners with the necessary skills and experience to successfully integrate into society and find employment in the green economy.... In addition, the Roots course empowers prisoners with its environmental literacy curriculum. While it builds environmental understanding, it also focuses on building the individual student. This means students are challenged to assess their attitude and behavior toward the environment and by extension their attitude and behavior toward society."

– **Jonathan Bolden**, *Instructor; Coyote Ridge Corrections Center*

"As an instructor I've gained so much knowledge throughout the modules and am extremely grateful and honored to be a part of the Roots of Success Community which allows me to inspire students to become strong stewards of their lives, their communities and be more purposeful!"

– **Regina Caudillo**, *Instructor; Five Keys Schools & Programs*

"I found the modules to be fun and interactive. Your lectures made a believer out of me and I plan to educate and pass the word along, letting my family and friends know that our planet and our pollution situation is getting worse by the day. When it comes to the career part of the modules, all of them are very helpful, but the one that caught my attention is the solar panel installation. I would like to be able to learn more about that particular trade because we are making money and helping the environment at the same time. I am currently incarcerated for a traffic offense, but I plan to make a change for myself and help our environment by joining a local group in my area."

– **Mauricio A.**, *Student (Self-Paced Version); Montgomery County Correctional Facility*

Job Training and Reentry Programs

"The Chicago Botanic Garden has taught Roots of Success in our Corps and Apprenticeship programs since 2010. Roots of Success gives us a framework for addressing environmental literacy and issues of environmental justice in our programs, which are otherwise focused on hands-on, technical training in urban agriculture. Roots of Success gives us the tools to base our training in broader foundational concepts of environmental justice and the green collar industry.

We use Roots of Success as a tool to introduce concepts of environmental literacy and to invite participants to share their experience with environmental justice. In each cohort, students learn from the experiences of their peers and are able to address difficult topics, like the impacts of environmental racism, with their peers. Each class we teach is different, because each student brings their own unique perspectives and experiences to the class. Roots of Success takes environmental literacy and opens the door for important conversations in environmental justice."

– **Kate Gannon**, *Instructor; Windy City Harvest/Chicago Botanical Garden*

"Roots of Success is a great and inspiring way to help people understand how important it is to help make our world safer, cleaner and greener."

– **Michael Kleinau**, *Student; CO-OP Tech High School*

"After taking the ROS course student's vocabulary for job readiness increased, they were able to develop their resumes and cover letters, and some even stated that their personal behavior changed (not leaving lights on, not running AC when not home, etc)."

– **Kate Gannon**, *Instructor; Windy City Harvest/Chicago Botanical Garden*

"The class was intergenerational, multi-cultural, multi-racial, and economically diverse yet we all came together as one because we all supported the same cause. The videos, exercises, and vocabulary provided us with enough background knowledge that allowed for stimulating discussion."

– **Migdalia Galarza**, *Student; Windy City Harvest*

High Schools and Youth Programs

"What I liked most about the Roots of Success class was social justice. The vision for a society where all individuals and groups receive equitable treatment and have equal access to the opportunities and benefits offered by the society."

– **Jorge M.**, *Student*

"From this course, one of the biggest things that my students gained was hope and tools to turn that hope into a viable sustainable solution to the environmental injustices and inequalities."

– **David M.**, *Instructor; I Am My Brother's Keeper*

"This class was very empowering as a young person, especially to see all the potential my generation has going into our adult lives. "

– **Charles Bailey**, *Student; Soquel High School*

Case Study of Roots of Success

Case Study of Roots of Success Environmental Literacy and Work Readiness Program Conducted by Dream Corps/Green For All and the Institute of the Environment & Sustainability, UCLA.

Published in "Facilitating Reentry of Justice-involved Individuals Into The Green Workforce" Report, June 2020

Roots of Success: Environmental Literacy as an Empowering Form of Workforce Development Raquel Pinderhughes | Founder and Executive Director

Environmental risks and degradation are unevenly distributed amongst communities. Research shows that low-income communities of color are disproportionately located near pollution sources and bear greater environmental and health risks. Raquel Pinderhughes, a professor of urban planning and policy at San Francisco State University, has dedicated her career to advancing social and environmental justice. She co-authored a report on "The Greening of Corrections: Creating a Sustainable System" for the Federal Department of Corrections. Her work informed the Obama administration's Pathways out of Poverty program, which developed thousands of green job training programs and green jobs in the United States. In 2008, she founded the nonprofit Roots of Success to help break the cycle of poverty and create career pathways for underserved populations in environmental fields.

Her experience teaching, researching, and assisting underserved populations and her understanding of the growth of the green economy led to Roots of Success' inception. Through environmental education, Roots of Success empowers participants to gain knowledge and skills to enter the workforce and improve conditions in their communities and society more broadly

Pinderhughes employs a pedagogical approach to develop and strengthen academic and environmental literacy and professional skills for students. No prior experience or education is required to teach; within prisons, incarcerated individuals teach their peers. She designed a multi-media, activity-based curriculum to increase academic literacy, environmental knowledge, financial literacy, work-readiness, and leadership. Modules include: Fundamentals of Environmental Literacy, Water, Waste, Transportation Energy, Building, Food, Social Entrepreneurism, among others. Roots of Success develops students' critical thinking, problem solving, communications, reading, writing, math, and leadership skills. Students receive a certificate upon completion of the program and, in some settings, receive college credit for taking the course.

Additionally, Roots of Success provides students with access to a Green Jobs and Career Pathways Guidebook, a comprehensive career-planning guide for 100+ detailed green job positions. Presented in a user-friendly format that corresponds with the curriculum, it includes important job quality factors like salary ranges, education requirements, on-the-job training availability, and career outlook, so that students can plan and map out their career trajectories.

Roots of Success engages youth and adults who face significant barriers to employment by teaching in prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, and reentry programs. From 2013 to 2014, Noble Correctional Institution incorporated Roots of Success into their programming and observed a 50% decrease in inmate/inmate violence, a 35% decrease in inmate/staff violence, and a 33% decrease in staff's use of force. According to The RAND Corporation, "inmates 110 who participate in education programs have a 43% lower odds of recidivating than inmates who do not."

In April 2020, we spoke with Pinderhughes to discuss barriers employers impose upon the reentry population and how students can prepare for the job market.

In previous research you divided the green economy into 22 sectors and asked employers what it would take to hire people with high barriers to employment to be hired at their firms. What challenges do people who are returning face when entering the job market and how can organizations increase the likelihood of success?

A large percentage of the reentry population have lower levels of education and skills, so their opportunities to access good jobs are constrained. Aside from the fact that people have criminal records, and that check-the-box states make it difficult for them to be hired by employers, the biggest barriers for people who are coming out of prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities are that their academic literacy and skills and their professional networks are limited. This means that they rely very heavily upon the networks and relationships that individual programs have with employers and that training programs must rigorously prepare students so they can access good jobs. The better prepared programs are to provide participants with knowledge and skills related to the fields they are focusing on, and the better their relationships are with employers in the local areas in which the reentry populations are returning, the better the outcomes will be for their participants

Roots of Success offers multi-pronged modules covering environmental literacy and social leadership skills in correctional facilities across the country. It is endorsed by prisons, justice facilities, and reentry programs. How does having a pedagogical approach inform your curriculum development, particularly in your program for prisons?

We provide the only academic certificate-bearing system where incarcerated individuals are paid to teach others while in the prison system. Having incarcerated people teach their peers is essential to our model as they share and understand the circumstances of their students. Using an approach that gives people the agency to build on their previous knowledge and experience is also essential as it engages students, makes learning relevant, and increases confidence, empowerment, and efficacy.

Roots of Success is not your traditional Environment 101 class. We offer opportunities for those from diverse backgrounds to come into a space to have deep, informing conversations about themselves, their communities, and their place in the world. Everyone is engaged and has a stake. Our curriculum uses environmental literacy as a tool and means to elevate people's understanding of the world alongside their job and academic skills. The better they understand the world and can articulate it, the more confident they become and the more prepared they are for careers. Our pedagogy empowers people to gain the knowledge and skills they need to access good green jobs and post-secondary education upon reentry.

How does Roots of Success prepare its students for the job market?

My research shows that employers are looking for individuals who understand and can articulate the mission of their firms. This is true in the nonprofit, private, and public sectors. Employers are looking for individuals who have strong academic skills, who understand the work, who understand why the work is important, and who can talk to other people about the work. They are less interested in hard skills, which are easier for people to acquire on the job. Roots of Success gives youth and adults who have been failed or poorly served by the education system the knowledge and skills they need for the 21st century labor market, which are primarily a deep understanding of the fields they are planning to work in and strong academic skills.

The pedagogy prepares people to better understand and articulate their knowledge and experiences and to do so in a professional context so they can access employment opportunities that require education and strong academic and professional skills. Understanding environmental issues is important because Roots of Success graduates are applying for jobs in environmental sectors.

Which industries do you see “greening” the most? Do you project any changes or trends for the future?

It seems to me that the biggest changes are occurring in the water, energy, building, and transportation sectors. We’re moving much more slowly in the food sector where there are a huge amount of possibilities, but less of a transition on a large scale in terms of moving from industrial to sustainable agriculture and food production.

There is a lot of talk about how the federal government will address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. Would you share with us the importance of stimulus funding in green job creation like the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s Pathways Out of Poverty grant?

It’s important for people with less education and skills to be supported to gain the knowledge and skills they need to access good jobs. The Pathways Out of Poverty program jump-started thousands of green job training programs around the country. New funding allowed existing job training and reentry programs to expand their capacity and new programs to emerge. ARRA funding made a significant impact on the ability of these programs to support community members; giving individuals the opportunity to access good green jobs and occupational mobility. My research shows that “green jobs” provide workers with higher wages, better benefits, and more stable employment opportunities. The ability to prepare people to access these opportunities was a huge gain.

ARRA’s Pathways Out of Poverty program included an environmental literacy curriculum requirement based on a green jobs training program I developed for the Oakland Green Job Alliance. It is crucial that programs have academic components that provide people with a deeper understanding of the world and the skills they need to access good jobs and be activists who can address social and environmental problems and injustices.

The Green New Deal includes some very good legislation, policies, programs, and strategies for addressing the needs of people with lower levels of education and skills. Whenever possible, we would want it to tie in some requirements for the labor movements in water, waste, transportation, and building sectors because unionized jobs offer better paying jobs and working conditions and, where that is not possible, we need to have local labor laws that ensure family supporting wages and high quality working conditions.



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Ten Year Report 2010 - 2020

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*An Empowering Educational Program that Prepares Youth and Adults for
Environmental Careers and to Improve Conditions in their Communities.*