



Issue: JN26-08

Justice Nest August 2026 Monthly Newsletter

Soul of Justice: Seeing the Whole Person

Dear Friends,

At Justice Nest, we have learned that justice is never just about a case file. Behind every charge is a person, and behind that person may be a child, a family, a livelihood, or a future at risk. **This is the soul of justice: seeing the person beyond the case and responding with humanity.**

From the courtroom to the prison cell, and from release to reintegration, our work is about seeing the **whole person** and ensuring that contact with the justice system does not become a life sentence of poverty, separation, or hopelessness. The stories in this edition bring this belief to life, mothers finding their way home, children reunited with their families, incarcerated people supporting others as peer paralegals, and individuals finding the courage to begin again.



:Miriam with Officer in Charge Madam Elizabeth at Thika Women's Prison During the Mum & Baby Day;

Our participation in the **Thika Women's Prison Mom & Baby Day** further reminded us of the importance of family connection and emotional support for those affected by incarceration. Through our collaboration and partnerships, we are also creating pathways towards economic empowerment, including livelihood skills training for Justice Nest beneficiaries.

Our growing impact reflects what is possible when justice is centred on people. The numbers are only part of the story. The soul of justice is found in the lives restored behind them. I invite you to read these stories, share them, and join us in building a justice system that **protects dignity, restores relationships, and creates pathways home.**

Thank you for believing that every person deserves another chance.

With gratitude and purpose,

Miriam Wachira

Founder & Executive Director

Justice Nest

Beyond the Cause List

The following dialogue is a common scenario in any court in Kenya:

Court clerk: Criminal Case no xxx of 2026 Republic versus Valentine Wakwetu. What language do you understand? English or Swahili?

Accused: Swahili.

Magistrate: Umeshtakiwa na wizi kinyume na sheria... Ni kweli au si ukweli? Maelezo ni kwamba... ***(Translation: You are charged with theft contrary to the law... Is it true or not true? The particulars are that...)***

Accused: Ni kweli nilipatikana nayo. Lakini ni yeye alikataa kunilipa... Ako na pesa yangu kama 75,000(USD580) na amekataa kunilipa. ***(Translation: It is true I was found with it. But it is because he refused to pay me... He has my money, about 75,000 (USD 580), and he has refused to pay me.)***

Magistrate: Plea of not guilty entered....

This is a typical exchange in a Kenyan court, a fast, procedural interaction that can feel indifferent to the person at the center of it. To the magistrate, it's another entry on a bloated cause list. To Valentine, it was a bewildering whirlwind where a personal financial dispute became a criminal charge, leading to denied bail and a cell door closing behind her.

Valentine's story, like so many others, is a stark reminder of what happens when socio-economic challenges and legal illiteracy intersect. This is where Justice Nest steps in. Our legal department operates on the

frontlines of such crises, identifying and defending vulnerable individuals who are swept up in a system that can move too quickly for fairness.

Our work is comprehensive. We intervene not just to manage a criminal file but to restore a family. The intervention in Valentine's case, for instance, would shift from simply handling a charge to considering the fact that her sudden loss of liberty leaves her children without care. Our legal team works diligently to secure favorable bail terms while simultaneously opening communication with the complainant. Concurrently, our social department ensures the children are safe.

Through this combination of direct court advocacy, alternative dispute resolution, and dedicated social care, we guide situations that would otherwise end in prolonged detention toward resolution. Justice Nest exists to bridge this gap, using legal aid, mediation, and compassionate care to ensure the legal system protects human dignity and keeps families whole.

📁 **Beyond the Case File** ❤️

As advocates, it is easy to become accustomed to the language of criminal practice, *accused person, complainant, charge, plea, mention, hearing, remand, conviction, sentence*. But we rarely put thought into the story or the person behind every case.

In one of our stories, a mother of two, assaults a neighbor for insulting her and her children after a long day of work. By the time we met her, she has spent weeks in remand prison. Her children are not with her, they are staying with a neighbor who has agreed to look after them temporarily. But "temporarily" slowly began to look like a question no one knew how to answer.



📸:Gladys Right After Being Released

Mothers do not get a heads-up from police when they are about to be arrested. Most of the time, their children end up neglected. Even when families step in, they eventually grow weary. When an accused mother is sent to remand, the consequences do not stop at the prison gates, they

travel home to children who have committed no offence, yet suddenly find themselves facing the consequences of one. And sometimes, the most painful question is: *When is mum coming home?*

When we encounter such a family, the case initially looks like any other. But when we meet the children, suddenly the case looks different. The charge is still there; the law has not changed. But now we understand what is at stake. We begin to see that the question is not only about what would happen to the accused, but also the children.

Could the matter be resolved lawfully without unnecessarily keeping the mother away from her children? Could the complainant and accused find a lawful resolution? Could the prosecution or court consider a non-custodial outcome for the sake of the children?

These are not questions asked to place the children above the law. These are questions asked because justice must consider the human consequences of its decisions.

Eventually, a day comes when their mother returned home. The children did not ask about the case or outcome, they ran. One child reaches her first, the other follows. Their mother drops her bag and hold them both. And in that embrace was something no judgment could fully capture, that is the **soul of justice**.

🔒 Finding Meaning Despite a 40-year Prison Sentence 🐦



📷:Our Paralegals During a Training

Khadija Mohamed is an inmate paralegal at Shimo La Tewa Women's Prison and a paralegal at Justice Nest. She is currently serving a 40-year sentence, which she is appealing. Despite her own ongoing legal journey, Khadija has chosen to use her knowledge and experience to support other women in prison.

Bubbly, welcoming, and hardworking, Khadija is a trusted and approachable figure among fellow inmates. Through training by Justice Nest, she was equipped with basic paralegal skills and knowledge to identify legal challenges, provide legal information, conduct awareness sessions, and refer inmates requiring further assistance to the Justice Nest legal office.

Since her training, Khadija has supported and handled over 30 cases. She serves as an important link between inmates and the Justice Nest office, often helping fellow inmates take the first step towards seeking legal

assistance. She also conducts legal awareness sessions in the prison blocks, ensuring that legal information reaches women who may not otherwise know their rights or the options available to them.

One case remains particularly close to Khadija's heart. She assisted a pregnant woman who had been accused of stealing. After listening to the circumstances of the case, Khadija identified mediation as a possible way forward and advised the woman accordingly. The complainant later came forward in court, the parties engaged in mediation, and the matter was resolved, leading to the withdrawal of the case. For Khadija, this experience demonstrated that justice is not always about a court process. Sometimes, it is about dialogue, understanding, and helping someone discover an alternative path to resolving a dispute.

While continuing to pursue her own appeal, Khadija remains committed to serving others. Her story reflects the Soul of Justice, the belief that every person, regardless of their circumstances, has the capacity to contribute, support others, and become an agent of change.

Reflections on "The Soul of Justice" ❤️

Our paralegals submitted a reflection on what ***"The Soul of Justice"*** means to them. Here are some of their inspiring thoughts:

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To me, the Soul of Justice means helping people understand their rights and giving them hope. Through my work as a paralegal, I have met many people who need someone to listen to them and guide them. I have learned that even small help can make a big difference in someone's life. Justice also means treating everyone with fairness and dignity.

”

HALIMA -
PARALEGAL PRISON CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

“

To me, the Soul of Justice means helping someone who does not know where to turn. As a paralegal, I have met many inmates with different legal problems, and I try my best to listen and guide them. I feel happy when I see that the knowledge I gained from the training can help another person and give them hope.

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LAVENDER -
PARALEGAL PRISON CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

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To me, the Soul of Justice means fairness and giving everyone a chance to be heard. My paralegal training has helped me understand how important legal information is, especially for people who do not know their rights. I try to help by listening and guiding those who come to me with their problems. It gives me satisfaction when I am able to help someone take a step towards finding justice.

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SAMUEL -
PARALEGAL PRISON CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

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The Soul of Justice, to me, is being there for someone who needs help. As a paralegal, I have learned the importance of listening to people's problems and helping them find the right information. Not everyone understands the law or knows what to do when they have a legal problem. I believe justice starts when people are given a chance to understand and speak about their situation.

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KAROYO -
PARALEGAL PRISON CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

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The Soul of Justice means helping others even in difficult circumstances. Through my work as a paralegal, I have learned that many people need someone to explain things to them and show them where they can get help. I believe that justice is not only about going to court but also about making sure people are treated fairly. Helping another person understand their rights is important to me.

MOHAMED –
PARALEGAL INMATE

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To me, the Soul of Justice is about hope and helping others. Through my training as a paralegal, I have gained knowledge that I can use to guide people with different legal problems. I have learned that listening to someone and helping them understand their situation can mean a lot. I feel that justice becomes meaningful when everyone is given a chance to seek help.

MGELE –
PARALEGAL INMATE

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Author: Quotes from our Paralegals

⚖️ **Justice Beyond the Courtroom Towards Restoration** 🌱



📷: Erin at her home showcasing her crocheted work

For many people in contact with the justice system, freedom is only the beginning of the journey. Beyond court proceedings lies a deeper need for safety, emotional healing, and the opportunity to rebuild a livelihood.

Erin's journey is one example of this holistic approach. A single mother of four, Erin was detained at Lang'ata Women's Remand Prison after being unable to raise a KES 150,000 (USD 1160) cash bail. Her detention placed immense strain on her already vulnerable family. Following advocacy by her legal representative, the bail was reduced, enabling her to return home.

But restoration did not end with her release. Through Justice Nest's social support and counselling, Erin was encouraged to develop healthier ways of coping with the emotional distress. She channelled her energy into crocheting, transforming what began as a coping activity into an emerging source of income. Today, she creates and sells floral crochet hats while continuing her small trading business.

Erin's story is a reminder that while justice can depend on a court outcome, it is also about restoring dignity, rebuilding confidence,

strengthening families, and creating pathways for people to reclaim their futures.

A Mother Who Had No One to Turn To, But Still Found a Way Home



 **Mildred with Janett Justice Nest Social Worker after delivery of her baby.**

For Mildred, getting out of prison was supposed to be the beginning of a new chapter. But when she walked out of Lang'ata Women's Prison on 11th August 2026, she had no family support waiting for her, no money, and she was heavily pregnant.

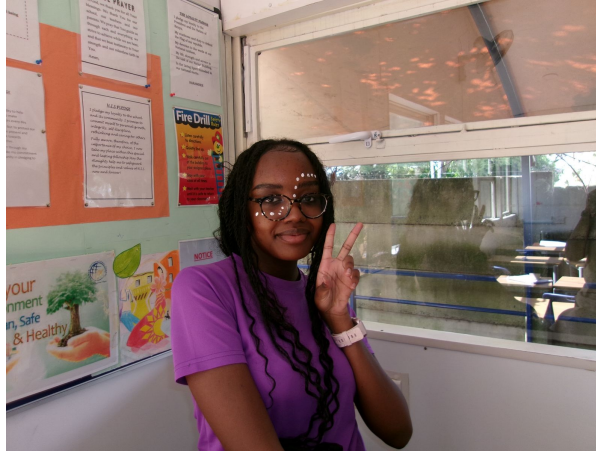
Three days after her release, she went into labour. With no one to rely on, Mildred took herself to a government hospital and delivered her baby safely. However, she was informed she had an outstanding hospital bill of Ksh 10,600(USD82) and could not be discharged.

When Social Department visited her on 19th August, it was clear she was worried about what would happen next. Mildred opened up to the team about her life and the lack of support she has experienced from her family. She has largely had to fend for herself.

While at the hospital, the team approached the hospital's Social Work Office and the management and explained Mildred's situation. After several discussions, the hospital agreed to discharge Mildred through its waiver system by waiving a large portion of her hospital bill. Justice Nest was required to take care of her medication, approximately Ksh 850(USD7), which was paid, and Mildred was finally discharged.

Mildred's story reminds us that reintegration does not end at the prison gate. Sometimes, a mother leaves prison only to face another difficult reality. But when the right support comes at the right time, even one difficult day can change everything. Mildred is now home with her newborn baby, given an opportunity to begin again.

My Experience as a High School Intern at Justice Nest



📷:Hope - Legal Intern

As a 17-year-old high school student taking Law at A level, my experience at Justice Nest has given me a clearer understanding of what working in the legal field actually involves. One of the best experiences was observing court proceedings. Watching advocates present their arguments gave me a more realistic understanding of what it means to work in law.

I was also lucky enough to get the opportunity to visit a prison, which allowed me to understand how the justice system works beyond a courtroom. Looking back, one of the biggest things I will take with me is a better understanding of the legal structures in Kenya. This experience has taught me that the justice system is not as simple and direct as I am studying in school. It made me more aware of the inequalities that exist, especially when it comes to individuals not having the financial means to get legal representation.

This has helped me appreciate legal service organizations like Justice Nest. My time here has given me experiences that I will carry with me long after my internship ends.

📅 July 17 OUR PAST EVENTS 📌

👥 Solidarity Behind Bars: Prisoners' Justice Day



📷:During the World Prisoner's Justice Day at Pic(1) At Shimo La Tewa Max Prison and Pic (2) At Lang'ata Women's Prison

In commemoration of Prisoners' Justice Day (10th August), Justice Nest partnered with lawyers from **Mombasa branch LSK** to provide legal awareness sessions at **Shimo La Tewa Prisons**.

We also held a Legal awareness session at **Lang'ata Women's Prisons-Remand Section**. The sessions focused on **bail and bond, plea bargaining, the trial process, and prisoners' rights**, giving incarcerated people an opportunity to ask questions and better understand their legal options.

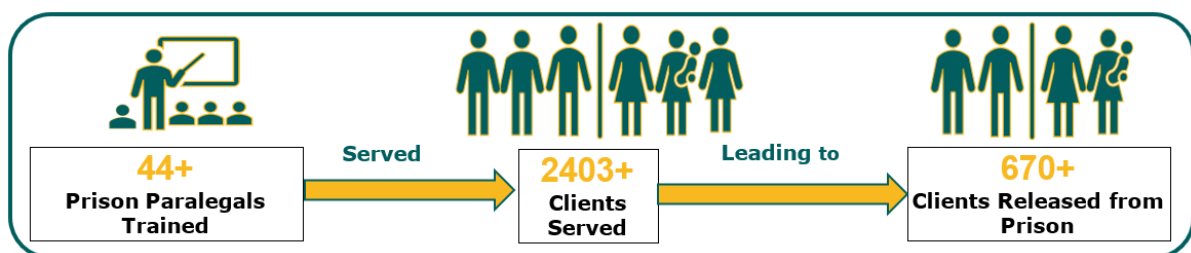
The partnership reaffirmed the power of collaboration in **bridging the justice gap and bringing legal knowledge closer to those who need it most**.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Prison Paralegal Program- Bridging the Justice Gap

Through the **Prison Paralegal Training Programme (Bridging the Justice Gap)**, Justice Nest is turning legal knowledge into a pathway to freedom. We have **44+ trained prison paralegals** have served **2,403+ clients**, contributing to **670+ client releases** and helping ease prison congestion while restoring dignity.



Children & Mothers Diversion and Restorative Justice Program- Mending The Nest.

Through the **Children and Mothers Diversion and Restorative Justice Program (Mending the Nest)**, we put families at the heart of justice. We have supported **274+ mothers**, helped secure **150+ releases**, and reunited **314+ children with their families**.



JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Help Us Turn Knowledge Into Justice

Your support helps us:



Deliver legal education



Train paralegals



Support vulnerable mothers and individuals



Reunite children with their mothers strengthening families



Expand access to justice

Together, we can build a family-centric justice system that is fair, accessible, and empowering for all.

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