

## **Reintegration A Transitional Care of Juvenile Ex-Offenders after Rehabilitation in Kenya**

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**Abstract: Purpose:** *Reintegration of Juvenile ex-offenders is a long term process that starts at the time of child's intake into a rehabilitation center and continues even after their physical release through interventions, programs and services. The process help disengage children from institutions and re unite them with their families and communities. The objective of the study was to determine factors which contribute to successful reintegration of ex-offenders in Kenya.*

**Methodology:** *The study employed a qualitative research methodology whereby a descriptive survey design was implemented. The study employed a qualitative research approach whereby a descriptive survey design was implemented. The study constituted a purposive sample of ten (10) juvenile ex-offenders, seven (7) rehabilitation Centre managers, ten (10) immediate relatives of juvenile ex-offenders and ten (10) community leaders. Qualitative data was availed by deploying interview guides, face to face interviews, observation and note taking. Data was analyzed qualitatively, where answers and responses from the interviews were transcribed and recorded on note books. Notes were analyzed using content analysis to clarify the ideas into themes that were identified through generation of meanings from text according to various target themes. The study also implemented open questionnaires and is qualitative data.*

**Findings:** *According to the information availed by the study, rehabilitation centre managers indicated that juvenile rehabilitation centers in Kenya are underfunded and have no holistic system of juvenile reintegration and are overcrowded. No follow-up procedures are instituted to aid in juvenile reintegration. Similar results were attained from other participants and that little or no follow-up procedures are instituted to aid in juvenile reintegration. Consequently, the study pointedly determined that the reintegration process adopted by rehabilitation centers in Kenya induce little effect on behavior change among juvenile ex-offenders. The ex-offenders cited discrimination by some community members, family members, friends, institutions like schools and colleges failed to admit them and some employers denied them employment. Lack of funds coping with trauma; leaving their gang were also among other challenges faced.*

**Keywords:** *Offenders, delinquency, rehabilitation, probation, deinstitutionalization.*

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### **I. Introduction**

According to Wang'eri, (2014), the department of children in Kenya has established institutions for children under the children Act (2001). These institutions are: the remand homes to offer children safe custody and care pending finalization of their case at the children's court, the rehabilitation centres which rehabilitate children and reintegrate them to the society for fully functional living and the children's home which are for the care and protection of abandoned, neglected and other vulnerable children. In most cases, the most preferred conduit of effecting behavioral change among juvenile delinquents is rehabilitation. According to Wang'ombe, (2019) a juvenile is a person with the legal capacity to commit a crime, by virtue of being of or above the minimum age of criminal responsibility, but not over the age of criminal majority or legally being an adult. Conventionally, the process of behavioral rehabilitation involves the various intervention measures to induce the

desired change in behavior. These measures include; repetitive training in social skills, aversion therapy, procedural desensitization and behavioral reversal Wang'ombe, (2019).

More often than not the process of rehabilitating juvenile delinquents take time and necessitates the provision of skilled practitioners in order to be effective. Juvenile justice laws in Africa formed part of colonially inherited laws with the resultant effect that the philosophy of how to manage child offenders reflected the social construction of childhood as conceptualized by the colonizing countries (Ndirangu, 2000). As illustrated by Harvey (2000), it is only in recent times (post- 1990) that a number of African countries have embarked on the process of juvenile justice law reforms.

In Kenya rehabilitation centres are government-mandated institutions tasked with the responsibility of correcting juvenile delinquency. According to Mugo et al., (2006), juvenile delinquency is rising steadily in Kenya .Consequently, the Kenya Juvenile justice system is often plagued with numerous .juvenile cases which take considerable time to receive effective disposition .One of the reasons why juvenile cases take more time in Kenyan court is mostly convoluted process employed by the police. According to Wakanyua, (1995) when a juvenile offender is arrested the police may hold them in a cell without following due process. Additionally, the Kenyan justice system is ill-equipped to handle juvenile cases, as exemplified by the repetitive court appearance and subsequent detention in remand centres before their cases can be determined.

## **II. Statement Of The Problem**

The quality of rehabilitation services especially their education is of paramount concern and children with deviant behavior are taken up by the juvenile court (Children's Act of Kenya, 2001) Kenya law provides for a whole range of penalties for children convicted of offences .Not all Juveniles get fully rehabilitated after 3 years (Mugo et al., 2006).

In spite of numerous reforms that have been effected in rehabilitation schools in Kenya such as enactment of the children's act and change of name from approved to Rehabilitation schools (Wang'ombe, 2006), educational outcomes of children who have received rehabilitation services have not been satisfactory while some children on release from the institution come back to the society reformed. Many others on releases drop out of school and continue with deviance and criminality and eventually end up in adult penal institutions (Wakanyua, 1995). Though extensive research has been carried out in the area of child rehabilitation in Kenya, most of the studies (Wang'eri, 2014; Mureithi, 1954; Wakanyua, 1995) focused their attention on institutional phase of rehabilitation, shedding little light on the post institutional life experiences. Some children run away from the Centres and go back to the streets; other develop new types of deviant behavior while others exhibit persistent deviant behavior .This study sought to fill the gap by conducting biographical research based on causes , types of services to be used and strategies of changing behavior

## **III. Purpose Of The Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the juvenile rehabilitation centres for children with behavior disorder in Kenya.

## **IV. Findings**

### **4.1 GENDER**

Both male and female ex-offenders were interviewed. Male (6) and females (4) were interviewed. The table below represent the percentage interviewed.

**Table 1: Gender of the interviewed ex-offenders**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	6	60.0
Female	4	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table above shows that a total of 10 ex-offenders were interviewed 6(60%) were males and 4(40%) being females. There are few females because there are only two rehabilitation centres for girls compared to seven for boys in Kenya.

**Table 2 : Highest level of education attained**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Primary	5	50.0
Secondary	3	30.0
University	2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The highest level of education attained by the ex-offenders is university 2(20%). Majority of the ex-offenders 5(50%) had attained primary education followed by secondary 3 (30%).

**Table 3: Length of stay in the rehabilitation centre**

<b>Duration (in years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	1	10.0
1.5	1	10.0
2	3	30.0
2.5	1	10.0
3	4	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The table above shows that majority of the ex-offenders 4(40%) stayed in the rehabilitation centre for 3 years followed by 3 (30%) who stayed for 2 years, 2.5 years 1(10%), 1 year and a half 1(10%) and one year 1(10%). Maximum number of years required to complete the rehabilitation process is 3 years, hence majority of the offenders were able to complete. Munyao (2006), noted that courses and grade tests offered to children cannot compete favorably in the labour market and this could be associated with the short time most juveniles spent in the rehabilitation centres. This leaves them jobless and frustrated.

**Table 4 : Usefulness of the skills acquired from the rehabilitation centres**

<b>Are the skills useful?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	8	80.0
No	2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Majority of the ex-offenders 8(80%) agreed that the skills they acquired were useful and they rely on the skills acquired to earn income while the rest 2(20%) felt the skills did not benefit them in any way.

**Table 5 : Challenges**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Finding employment and biasness by community	2	20.0
Low education level	1	10.0
Poverty lack of finance	1	10.0
Loss of personal documents	2	20.0
Leaving gang crime and drugs	1	10.0
Finding a place to live	1	10.0
Having criminal record	1	10.0
Harassment by law enforces	1	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows the various challenges faced by the ex-offenders. Finding employment and biasness by community and loss of documents being the biggest with 2(20%) followed by the rest as indicated on the table above.

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that most common reason why the rehabilitees were in the centres, was because of stealing. The study concluded that majority of the rehabilitees develop Deviant Behavior due to teenage parents. At this age, the parents have no experience of the most appropriate and healthy ways of bringing up their child. Therefore, early child offending may develop through primary risk factors such as lack of parental supervision and neglect due to low income. In addition, majority of the rehabilitees had stayed for more than one year in the Rehabilitation centres. This implies that they had stayed for a period long enough to be rehabilitated. There were some rehabilitees who took longer period of time to be rehabilitated.

The study also identified several challenges impeding the overall performance of juvenile rehabilitation centres in Kenya. These problems include a sustained allocation of minimal monetary resources, and excessive overcrowding. The findings of the study closely mirrored the results of Wangombe (2019), as well as the inferences of Munene and Naomi (2017). Because these findings involved the government mandated juvenile rehabilitation facilities in Kenya, they are representative of the situation in Juvenile rehabilitation centers countrywide. As a result the gathered findings can be applied to instigate the necessary interventions in all juvenile rehabilitation center in Kenya.

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