

RESTORING HOPE

How Wachira is helping jailed mums, families

Justice Nest has a mission to make justice not just a privilege but a right

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IN the quiet corridors of Kenya's justice system, where the cries of the vulnerable often go unheard, one organisation is working tirelessly to restore hope.

Justice Nest, a small but mighty non-profit, is standing in the gap for women, children and prisoners, families broken by legal battles, poverty and silence.

With a mission to make justice not just a privilege but a right, they're helping the forgotten find their way back to dignity.

At Shimo La Tewa Prison on Kenya's coast, a rare kind of silence now fills a remand block teeming with detainees. That silence speaks volumes, it echoes hope, freedom and second chances.

The shift is one of the clearest

WACHIRA IS ESPECIALLY FOCUSED ON WOMEN ENTANGLED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM BY POVERTY



Miriam Wangari, the founder of Justice Nest /JOYCE KIMANI

success stories of a groundbreaking Children and Mothers Restorative Justice Diversion Programme and Prison Paralegal Programme by Justice Nest, founded by Nairobi-based advocate Miriam Wachira.

The quiet revolution is one of the organisation's projects that was started in 2024. In February this year, in the coastal town of Mombasa, Justice Nest trained 33 inmates and officers to become paralegals, equipping them with legal education to improve access to justice.

Wachira, a seasoned children's rights defender and a national advocate for justice reform, especially for poor women and mothers imprisoned for petty offences, views using the power of law to alleviate human suffering as her grand calling.

The Children and Mothers Restorative Justice Diversion Programme aims to break the cycle of imprisonment by diverting mothers and children from the justice system and focusing on their rehabilitation.

"Justice Nest seeks to close the justice gap while reducing the number of imprisoned people. With more than 60,000 people imprisoned in Kenya, nearly half in pre-trial detention, most cannot afford lawyers. They face court without understanding their rights or how to defend themselves, which often leads them to take the wrong plea," Wachira says.

To bridge this gap, Justice Nest trains inmates and officers in legal basics, from understanding the charges to making bail applications, plea bargaining, and navigating the court system. Supervised by qualified advocates, these newly trained prison paralegals have already helped more than 300 people secure their release or resolve cases.

"Some inmates didn't even know what questions they were allowed to ask in court. Others had never seen a witness statement. Others simply didn't know how to tell their side of the story and when you can't speak for yourself, only one version is heard. We're giving them the power to be heard. That's the beginning of justice."

Wachira is especially focused on women entangled in the criminal justice system by poverty. Many are serving sentences for offences like selling illicit brews, stealing small amounts of money, or assault, often rooted in desperation.

"One of the first questions we ask is whether these women are habitual offenders. And most are not. They're pushed into the system by economic hardship. Locking them up causes a ripple effect: children scattered across relatives or put in children's homes, homes abandoned, jobs lost. The cycle only deepens," she says.

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MIRIAM WACHIRA

Justice Nest seeks to close the justice gap while reducing the number of imprisoned people

STAR SURVEY

TODAY'S QUESTION

Should Gachagua challenge President William Ruto in 2027 election?

YESTERDAY'S QUESTION

Do you think Kenya should stop sending domestic workers to Saudi Arabia?

YES 70%



NO 30%

