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Issue: JN26-10

Justice Nest October 2026 Monthly Newsletter

⚖️ From Custodians to Champions of Justice: Paralegals as the Bridge to Justice🌉

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you all. I hope this letter finds you well and filled with hope.

As I sit in my office reflecting on the month gone by, I find myself reflecting not only on what we have accomplished at Justice Nest, but also on the deeper question that continues to shape why we do this work.

Over the past few weeks, I have had the privilege of being part of two gatherings that have given me much to think about: the **Micah 6:8 East Africa Gathering** and **the Praxis Africa Regional Gathering**.

Both gatherings created space for honest conversations about faith, leadership, justice, culture and the kind of world we are trying to build. I found myself returning again and again to a question that has been sitting deeply with me:



📸:**The Micah 6:8 cohort 1 gathering in Kampala, Uganda**

How does my work redeem the world?
That question takes me back to the motto of my alma mater, Notre Dame Law School: ***"A different kind of lawyer."***

For me, being a different kind of lawyer has never simply meant practising law differently. It has meant asking what justice looks like for people who are often invisible to the systems designed to serve them. It has meant seeing the person

behind the charge, the mother behind the case file, the child behind the prison wall, and the human being behind the sentence.

This month, I have seen that same conviction reflected in the work of our prison paralegals.

The prison officers who have taken on the additional role of paralegals are redefining what it means to serve. They are moving beyond enforcement to become sources of legal information, support and hope. They are helping people understand their rights, navigate legal processes and find pathways back to their families and communities.

Their work reminds me that transformation does not always begin with changing an entire system. Sometimes it begins when one person chooses to see another person differently.

The **Micah 6:8** and **Praxis** gatherings also left me thinking about the place of faith and culture in the world today.

> ***Are we meeting the needs of the world around us?***
> ***Are we listening deeply enough to the questions people are asking, the pain they are experiencing and the hopes they carry?***

At Justice Nest, this is increasingly how I understand our work. We are not simply providing legal services. We are asking whether justice can be more humane, more accessible, more restorative and more attentive to the families affected by the justice system.

We are asking whether a prison officer can become a bridge to justice. Whether a mother can be given a second chance before incarceration destroys her family. Whether a child can be protected from the consequences of a parent's imprisonment. Whether someone who has made a mistake can be held accountable while still being given a pathway to restoration.

When I think about the theme of this month's newsletter, I am reminded of something profound: these officers are no longer just custodians. They are becoming champions of justice.

They stand at the critical intersection between incarceration and reintegration. They are helping to build bridges between people in custody and the legal knowledge, support and opportunities they need to reclaim their lives.

Perhaps this is what it means to be a different kind of lawyer.

Perhaps it is also what it means to live out our faith: to keep asking what the world needs from us, and then have the courage to respond.

As you read the stories in this month's newsletter, I hope you will see what I see: people transforming lives from within, creating pathways to freedom, and building bridges back to family and community.

Thank you for walking this journey with us.

With gratitude and purpose,

Miriam Wachira
Founder & Executive Director
Justice Nest

🌟Feature Story: From Incarceration to Beacon of Justice



📸: Mr. Ayoyi serving a client and after his release

Hudson Ayoyi, a 40-year-old father from Kakamega County, was a grade one mason and sole breadwinner for his family. In pursuit of greener pastures, he traveled over 500 kilometers to Kwale County, where his life took a sharp turn on April 23rd, 2018, when he was arrested and charged with five counts of breaking and stealing. Unable to raise a KSh 500,000 (USD 3,850) bond, he remained in custody and, unfamiliar with legal matters, canvassed his trial blindly until he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment on February 22nd, 2019.

Transferred to Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prison, Ayoyi found hope through spiritual rehabilitation under the Catholic doctrine, serving as chairman of the Catholic Church Community of the prisoners. In November 2023, he was moved to Shimo La Tewa Medium Prison, where the emergence of Justice Nest became pivotal. He applied, was shortlisted, and selected as a pioneer paralegal, undergoing training organized by the organization. His determination saw him rise to Deputy Captain of the paralegal team.

Over nearly two years with Justice Nest, Ayoyi served more than 85 clients, coaching them on trial presentation and legal strategy. His dedication directly contributed to the release of 30 inmates who reunited with their families. As a paralegal inmate, he became a beacon of rehabilitation and transition for countless families, serving clients wholeheartedly both in the office and in their wards.

On Friday, October 23rd, 2026, Ayoyi marked his D-Day, his normal release from custody. A free man equipped with spiritual skills and legal knowledge, he left ready to reunite with his family and rejoin society. The Shimo Medium Prison Paralegal team wishes him well, celebrating a story that proves hope can flourish even behind prison walls, and that justice can be served not just for oneself, but for countless others.

🗣️ Voices from the Inside the Walls:

💡 The Power of Legal Empowerment



Corporal Juma Karoyo of the Kenya Prison Service represents the very best of criminal justice reform through his 23 years of dedicated service. Trained at the Prisons Staff Training College in security management and rehabilitation, he combines technical expertise with an unwavering commitment to human rights.

As Team Captain of the prison's paralegal unit at Shimo la Tewa Medium Prison, Juma provides critical leadership that bridges the gap between inmates and justice, overseeing a team that helps prisoners navigate complex legal processes, from appeals and bail applications to mitigation efforts and legal submissions. Captain Juma Karoyo shared how the role has transformed his relationship with the prison community.

Why He Chose to Become a Paralegal

"I was motivated by professional growth, a personal desire to help rehabilitate, and to fill a justice gap. Over 60% of prisoners in Kenya are in remand and cannot afford a lawyer. As a paralegal, I came in to help reduce conflicts in prison by helping inmates understand their charges, bail, and appeal processes."

How the Role Changed Relationships

"Before, the relationship was top-down:- officers give orders, inmates obey, which led to fear and mistrust. Now, it's more interactive and trust-based. Inmates approach us to ask about their cases, mention dates, and discuss plea bargaining. We hold legal aid clinics and awareness sessions, and improve communication with families."

From Custodian to Source of Legal Information

"Previously, prison work was perceived as only security, counting prisoners, and locking doors. Now, the perception has changed to a place where legal information is provided, explaining the constitution, criminal procedure code, rights of arrested persons, bail and bonds. We are supporters and bridges to justice, helping inmates draft appeals. Officers are now respected, not just feared. Inmates now say 'afande wa sharia' (officer of the law) not just 'afande wa gereza' (prison officer)."

Strengthening the Prison Service

"This knowledge has led to better rehabilitation programmes, professionalism, and reduced abuse of human rights. It has helped decongest prisons by helping remandees get bail/bond and appeals. When justice is explained, inmates are calmer and more obedient. The Kenya Prisons Service is now seen internationally as a model for a correctional service that respects access to justice."

🌸Halima's Perspective on Restorative Justice



Halima Jarso is a dedicated prison officer and peacebuilder with a deep commitment to serving incarcerated women. A graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution. Today, she serves as the Captain of the Shimo la Tewa Women's Prison Justice Nest Paralegals, overseeing daily operations, acting as a bridge between the prison administration, inmates, and Justice Nest, and mentoring fellow paralegals.

Why She Chose to Become a Paralegal

"Many women in prison cannot afford lawyers. I wanted to help them understand their rights and navigate the system. I believe that access to legal information empowers inmates to make informed decisions, understand their rights and responsibilities, and participate more meaningfully in their pursuit of justice."

How the Role Changed Relationships

"One of the most fulfilling aspects of my role is facilitating successful mediation. To me, mediation goes beyond resolving disputes; it is an opportunity to repair harm, restore relationships and promote mutual understanding. I find great satisfaction in helping inmates recognise how their actions may have harmed others while also creating space for them to acknowledge and express their own feelings."

From Custodian to Source of Legal Information

"These experiences have strengthened my belief that justice is not only about accountability but also about healing, understanding and the possibility of positive change. As a prison officer and paralegal, I have come to appreciate how legal knowledge, combined with empathy and effective communication, can build trust within the prison community and contribute to rehabilitation. For me, the true value of being a paralegal lies in the opportunity to help inmates understand the law, take responsibility for their actions and recognise that, even within the prison system, there is room for reconciliation, personal growth and restored relationships. My role as a paralegal officer has helped make me more approachable to the inmates."

Strengthening the Prison Service

Halima believes in a justice system that uplifts rather than punishes. *"Every woman deserves a fair chance. Through our paralegal work, we're not just helping with cases, we're restoring hope."*

🧵Stitching Second Chances



For nine years, Senior Sergeant Samuel Irungu Wachira has been stitching second chances into the fabric of Kenya's justice system. As a trained security and corrections specialist, he has mastered an extraordinary kind of tailoring, not just of fabrics, but of lives. At Shimo la Tewa Main Prison, Samuel transforms the traditional prison narrative through his specialization in vocational training.

Why He Chose to Become a Paralegal

"I chose to become a paralegal because I recognised that many inmates had limited knowledge of their legal rights and the court processes affecting their cases. Some had spent considerable periods in remand without fully understanding their legal options or the implications of their sentences. I realised that providing accurate legal information could make a meaningful difference in their lives."

A Life-Changing Case

One experience that has remained with Samuel involves an inmate who had initially been charged with robbery with violence. Through plea bargaining, the charge was reduced to stealing. However, when the court passed sentence, the period he had already spent in remand had not been taken into account. The inmate had spent almost five years in remand custody. Using the knowledge and skills acquired through his paralegal training, Samuel assisted him in preparing an application before the High Court, seeking consideration of the time he had already spent in remand. The Court considered the application and factored in the period he had spent in custody. Following this consideration, the remaining period was ordered to be served on probation, enabling him to leave prison.

"Seeing the impact of that application reinforced my belief that legal knowledge can change lives. Here was a person who had spent almost five years in remand, and whose time in custody had not initially been accounted for in his sentence. By identifying the issue and helping him seek the appropriate legal remedy, I was able to contribute to an outcome that allowed him to continue serving the remainder of his sentence in the community under probation supervision."

How the Role Changed Relationships

"This experience also changed how I view my relationship with inmates. While my primary responsibility remains the security and orderly management of the prison, I now appreciate more deeply that inmates also need guidance, information and an opportunity to understand the legal processes affecting them. Being a paralegal has helped me become more approachable and more attentive to their concerns."

Challenges and Collaboration

"The role is not without challenges. Balancing my duties as a prison officer, my responsibilities as Captain, my work in the tailoring department and my paralegal obligations requires commitment and effective time management. Some legal issues require further attention and professional legal assistance. In such instances, I refer inmates to our advocate, Ms Aisha Saidi, for further legal guidance and assistance. This collaboration ensures that inmates can receive appropriate support in addressing their legal concerns."

Strengthening the Prison Service

"Through Justice Nest, I have come to appreciate that legal empowerment can begin within the prison system itself. A prison officer can be both a custodian of security and a bridge to justice. When inmates understand their rights and the lawful avenues available to them, trust can grow, relationships can improve and the administration of justice can become more responsive to their needs. My experience has taught me that sometimes, making a difference does not require a grand intervention. It begins with listening, identifying a problem and helping someone take the right legal step. For me, that is the value of being a prison officer and a

paralegal: contributing not only to safe custody, but also to fairness, rehabilitation and access to justice."

📖Case Studies Briefs:

1. Juliet's Second Chance
After pleading guilty to theft, first-time offender Juliet faced a sentence that would separate her from her four-year-old daughter for two years. Justice Nest filed a criminal revision in the High Court, arguing her sentence was excessive. The court agreed, and Jennifer was released a year early, returning home to her daughter and a chance to rebuild her life.

2. Zainabu's Resilience
A survivor of domestic violence, Zainabu was arrested after defending herself. Though granted free bond, she had no surety. Justice Nest mediated with her family, and her sister traveled from Kisumu to secure her release. In October, she was sentenced to one year of probation, beginning a new chapter outside prison walls.

3. Rita's New Beginning
Unable to afford a KSh 1,000,000 (USD7,700) bond, single mother Rita remained in custody, separated from her child. Through Justice Nest's guidance on plea bargaining, the court considered favourable social reports and sentenced her to two years of probation, allowing her to return home.

4. June's Reconciliation
Charged with assault following a workplace argument, June was deeply remorseful. Advocate Ms. Diana Gakinya facilitated mediation with the complainant. The matter was withdrawn under Section 204, and June was released the same day, grateful for the second chance.

5.Paralegal Programme Triumphs
At Shimo La Tewa, our paralegals secured multiple victories this month:

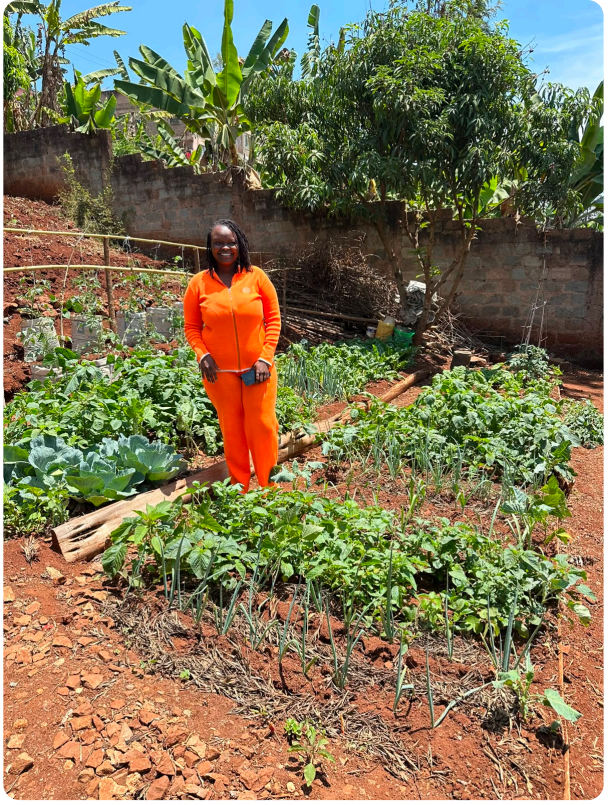
- **Acquittals:** Ian, Jimram, James, Stanley, and Hussein were acquitted after paralegals identified flawed prosecution evidence, lack of ID parades, and contradictions.
- **Mediation:** Omar and Awadh had their theft charges resolved out of court through successful mediation.
- **Bail Reductions:** Malin secured his release after paralegals successfully applied for a reduced cash bail.
- **Probation:** Maurice was released on probation after his paralegal expertly guided his mitigation.

To read the full stories and more go to :
https://www.justicenest.org/blogs-stories

🪺 Rebuilding a Nest: Wanjiku's Journey to Reunification

For over six months, Wanjiku's daughter lived in a children's home while her mother navigated the justice system. But a prison sentence does not have to be a life sentence for a family.

While Wanjiku was in custody, Justice Nest's Social Support Office walked alongside her, monitoring her welfare and ensuring she had access to her prescribed mental health medication. Upon her release, our team continued to engage with her, assessing her readiness to reunite with her daughter.

📸: **On the left Wanjiku visiting her daughter at the children's home & Right in her kitchen garden after her release**

Recently, our Social Worker visited Wanjiku at her new home in Thika, where she stays with a friend and grows vegetables to sell to her neighbours.

Seeing her stable and determined, we accompanied her to the Children's Office and the children's home for a deeply emotional bonding session. After six long months, mother and daughter were reunited in a joyful embrace.

Impressed by Wanjiku's progress and her suitable living environment, the Children's Officer and the home management officially approved the reunification plan. Next week, her daughter will finally come home.

While financial challenges remain, Wanjiku's resilience is inspiring. Justice Nest remains committed to providing continued psychosocial support and exploring livelihood opportunities to ensure this family not only reunites but thrives.

📅PARTNERSHIPS🤝

💻 Empowering Justice Through Technology 🙏



📸:**Justice Nest Legal Office at Shimo La Tewa Maximum Prison**

Access to justice relies heavily on access to information. Recently, Justice Nest partnered with **ComputerAid Kenya** to deliver a transformative five-day ICDL training and a crucial technology donation at Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prison.

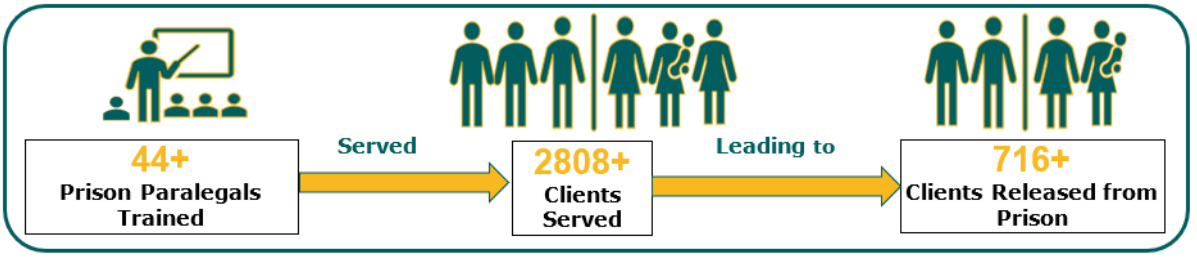
The training equipped **15 dedicated participants, 5 inmates and 10 correctional officers** involved in paralegal work, with essential digital skills. They covered four key ICDL modules: Computer and Online Essentials, Documents, Spreadsheets, and Artificial Intelligence. These new skills will drastically strengthen their ability to conduct legal research, manage case data, and prepare documentation.

The technology donation was particularly significant. Previously, approximately 30 paralegals were forced to share only 8 computers, while serving a prison population of around 2,000 inmates. By increasing access to technology, we are empowering them to work more efficiently and provide timely support to those seeking legal aid.

📊 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Prison Paralegal Program- Bridging the Justice Gap

The **Prison Paralegal Training Program (Bridging the Justice Gap)**,equips inmates and prison officers with legal education to improve access to justice. We have **44+ trained prison paralegals** who have served **2,808+ clients**, contributing to **716+ client releases** and helping ease prison congestion while restoring dignity.



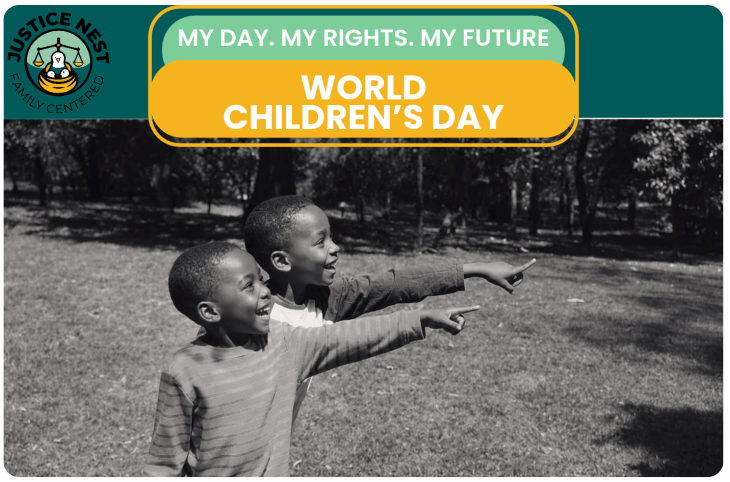
Children & Mothers Diversion and Restorative Justice Program- Mending The Nest.

Through the **Children and Mothers Diversion and Restorative Justice Program (Mending the Nest)**, we work to prevent the imprisonment of mothers and children by addressing poverty, trauma, and social inequalities. We have supported **299+ mothers**, helped secure **186+ releases**, and reunited **375+ children with their families**.



📅 UPCOMING EVENTS

🦒 World Children's Day: My Day. My Rights. My Future



When a mother is incarcerated, the emotional and economic shockwaves are felt most deeply by her children. Separation disrupts a child's sense of security and exposes them to vulnerabilities like dropping out of school or exploitation. To heal these wounds, Justice Nest is hosting a special, therapeutic World Children's Day event on **20th November 2026** at the **Nairobi National Park**.

We invite you to partner with us through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to give these children a day of pure joy. The event will bring together formerly incarcerated mothers and their children for a safari walk, professional counseling, shared meals, and vital psychosocial support.

The key areas of support include:

- **Transport for children and guardians to and fro the Nairobi National Park.**
- **Recreational experiences, including access to the Nairobi Safari Walk, park and entertainment.**
- **Catering and refreshments, including lunch, bites, snacks, juice and drinking water for participating children and their families.**
- **Take-home food packages comprising dry food essentials to support participating households.**
- **Educational resources, including school stationery, writing materials, school bags and scholarship vouchers.**
- **Professional counselling services for mothers and children post release.**
- **Ongoing psychosocial care to promote emotional well-being and family stability.**
- **Skills development and livelihood opportunities to strengthen mothers' economic independence.**

If you wish to donate physical items (such as school stationery, bags, or food packages), you can drop them off at our office before the 13th of November, 2026:

- **Venue:** 2nd Floor Ridgeview Place, Ridgeways Rd Off Kiambu Rd.

For financial contributions, CSR partnerships, or inquiries, please reach out to us:

- **Email:** community@justicenest.org
- **Phone:** +254 768 295206 (Miriam Wachira)
- **Website:** www.justicenest.org/donate
- **Lipa-Na-Mpesa: 4699532 Acc/No: Your Phone Number**

Through financial contributions or in-kind donations, your organization can help us celebrate childhood, strengthen family bonds, and build a future where these families thrive.

SUPPORT THIS DAY

🎂 Take Flight This Giving Tuesday: Join Our Fundraising Dinner



As we approach **Giving Tuesday,** a global day of generosity, Justice Nest invites you to help our clients find their wings. On **Thursday, 3rd December 2026**, we are hosting an evening of dinner, connection, and purpose, where we will also be celebrating **our 3rd Year Anniversary** and officially launching our new **Strategic Plan** alongside our **Rebranding and Communication Strategy**.

Our fundraising campaign is built on the theory of the birds. For the women and paralegals we serve, navigating the justice system is often a flight through a storm. They need the right environment, guidance, and resources to find their way home. That is why our tickets are named after birds, each representing a vital pillar of our work:

- **Hummingbird (KSH 6,000- USD47):** Provides a post-release starter package (food and hygiene essentials). *No effort is too small.*
- **Tailor Bird (KSH 20,000- USD154):** Funds legal representation for mothers facing poverty-related offences, focusing on diversion and plea bargaining. *Stitching a safe nest.*
- **Swallow (KSH 50,000-USD385):** Supports paralegal training in prisons for inmates and correctional officers. *Equipping them to find their way home.*
- **Phoenix (KSH 100,000-USD770):** Empowers a mother to rebuild her life, break the cycle of incarceration, and build a resilient future. *A second chance changes a family's story.*
- **Eagle (KSH 200,000-USD1540):** Sustains our long-term mission to drive systemic change and policy reform for a family-centered justice system. *Seeing beyond the immediate.*

Whether you feel called to be the hummingbird making a small, mighty impact, or the eagle casting a long-term vision, your support changes lives.

Secure your ticket today: M-Pesa Paybill 4699532, Account No: **Your Name** or visit our **website: www.justicenest.org/donate. Call or whatsapp +254 745 099 104 for more information.**

Let's build a nest where justice and families thrive.

❤️ **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.

Share. Support: www.justicenest.org/donate



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