



Justice Defenders

Training paralegals and lawyers within defenceless communities
to provide legal services for themselves and others

Because everyone deserves a fair hearing.

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Challenges facing prisons in Kenya and Uganda

*Keeping the wheels of education and justice turning
at a time of global crisis.*



I. Overcrowding

Prisons in Kenya and Uganda have an occupancy rate of 2-3 times capacity, a breeding ground for the spread of COVID-19. With courts shut down, thousands cannot have a fair hearing and languish in detention at a heightened risk of infection.

II. Lack of basic services

The health crisis has put prison facilities under unprecedented strain and worryingly curtailed the provision of water, sanitation material, food and drug supply, as well as basic healthcare and education services.

III. Psychosocial health

With all external partners, visitors and families barred from accessing prisons, inmates have lost fundamental connections and supplementary welfare support. Also, the halt of most educational and vocational activities has left communities idle and aimless.

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Legal education in East Africa prisons during the COVID-19 pandemic





I. Closed prison academies

Prison academics in Kenya and Uganda are closed until all educational activities are officially resumed across both countries.

II. Internet access

Secure internet access for prisoners as a fundamental tool to ensure the right to education.

II. Distance learning and exams

Zoom classes, remote tutoring, online curricula and internet-based exams.

IV. Peer teaching

Our community of prison-based graduate teachers, both inmates and officers, taking the initiative to deliver law classes to their junior colleagues during the COVID-19 emergency.

A background image of a classroom. A teacher in a white shirt stands at the front, pointing at a chalkboard. Several students in white uniforms are seated on wooden benches, facing the teacher. The room has light-colored walls and a wooden floor.

Justice Defenders' three-pronged response to COVID-19



I. Direct intervention

We are decongesting prisons by providing legal services and raising money to pay fines and reunite the most vulnerable petty offenders with their families.

II. Advocacy

We are promoting simple technology solutions to deliver speedy summary justice and ensure continuity of educational activities.

III. Partnerships

We are committing to a health and humanitarian response by providing PPE and sanitary items to keep prisoners and officers safe.

Only improved access to education for all and the equal application of the law can prevent defenceless communities to spread and suffer across the globe



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