

WOMEN'S PATHWAYS TO PRISON IN KENYA

Life Circumstances, Offending and
Criminal Justice Experiences of Incarcerated Women



This publication is a collaboration between the Thailand Institute of Justice, Griffith Criminology Institute and the Kenya Prisons Service.



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Thailand Institute of Justice

GPF Building Tower B,
15th – 16th Floor, Witthayu Road,
Pathumwan, Bangkok, 10330, Thailand
Tel: +66 (0) 2118 9400
Fax: +66 (0) 2118 9425, 26
Website: www.tijthailand.org

ABOUT THE THAILAND INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE:

Thailand Institute of Justice is a public organisation established by the Government of Thailand in 2011 and officially recognised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the latest member of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network Institutes in 2016. One of its primary objectives is to promote and support the implementation of the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

ABOUT THE ARTIST OF THE COVER PAGE:

This painting is made by a woman from Langata Women's Maximum Security Prison in Kenya. She discovered her painting talent when she came into prison in the year 2009. She uses art as a way to escape and find inner peace.

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FOREWORD

Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) has been working actively to increase compliance with International Human Rights Standards with a particular emphasis on the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules). As the Service strived to increase compliance with international human rights standards for corrections, it became apparent that women and children accompanying their mothers in prisons are faced with untold challenges that are different from men. With this realization, we decided to also adopt and work with The United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (also known as the 'Bangkok Rules') in order to provide gender specific and gender responsive approaches to our work.

Bangkok Rules was borne out of the recognition that prison systems across the globe need to be gender sensitive whilst addressing the needs of female offenders. For us to be able to aptly address these gender specific needs of women, we have to first understand what leads to their incarceration. In light of this, we invited the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) who had conducted such research within the ASEAN region to do a similar study within the Kenyan context.

I wish to sincerely thank TIJ and all the researchers in particular for heeding to our call to come and carry out this research. I also wish to thank the officers and prisoners who took part in the study. As a Service, the move towards evidence-based interventions is very timely.

This report highlights that the societal experiences of women cuts across continents. You shall read stories of Kenyan women who face abuse and discrimination that directly or indirectly leads to their eventual imprisonment. The criminal justice system needs to be responsive to this prior victimization and trauma and more so when they come to prison; addressing these specific needs of female prisoners.

It is just but the beginning of a long journey that lies ahead in addressing the gender-specific needs faced not only within the Prison Service, but also in making the entire criminal justice system more gender sensitive and striving towards less punitive or non-custodial options for female prisoners.

KPS strongly commits to understanding, promoting and enhancing the gender sensitive treatment of female prisoners. This will include but is not limited to: facilitating and supporting access to legal aid services, continuous training of our staff to be sensitive and aware of the needs of female prisoners and developing trauma informed rehabilitation programs among others.

As a Service, we recognize that success is founded on partnership and that we are not yet where we strive to be. I thus call on all stakeholders from fellow criminal justice partners to civil society organizations to synergize with the ultimate goal of transforming our entire criminal justice system to be more inclusive, just and gender-sensitive for all. We owe it to all the women out there.

**WANINI KIRERI, OGW (SENIOR ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
GENERAL OF PRISONS) COMMANDANT – PRISONS STAFF
TRAINING COLLEGE**

*** At the time of the research, Madam Wanini was the Director of Legal affairs, Human Rights, Research and Statistics at Prisons Headquarters. She was recently appointed to head the Kenya Prisons Staff Training College. ***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) would like to acknowledge with appreciation the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) and the individual prison administrations in the preparation and implementation of this research project, including permitting access to and allowing private in-depth interviews with women prisoners. The TIJ also extends thanks to the KPS staff members who contributed their valuable time to this project. The research team is also grateful to our Swahili-English interpreters, who helped us do justice to the women's voices. Finally, the authors and TIJ would like to express their sincere thanks to the 49 women prisoners who agreed to take part and so willingly and openly shared their life stories with us.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

The research team and authors of this report comprise of researchers from the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), Griffith University and the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) as follows:

Dr. Samantha Jeffries,	Griffith Criminology Institute/School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia
Chontit Chuenurah,	Chief of the Implementation of the Bangkok Rules and Treatment of Offenders Programme (IBR), TIJ
Min Jee Yamada Park,	Research officer, TIJ
Prarthana Rao,	Research officer, TIJ
Dennis Mungo,	Human Rights Coordinator, KPS

INTRODUCTION

The *United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)* were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. The Bangkok Rules make a strong statement about the fair and equitable treatment of women throughout their contact with the criminal justice system, including when in prison (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). To meet the goal of gender equity and in turn the needs of women in prison, we must understand who the women in our prison systems are. Research should therefore be conducted on female prisoners' backgrounds and their journeys into prison. As per the *Bangkok Rules* (67 and 70[2]), efforts must be made to "organize, and promote comprehensive, results orientated research on the offences committed, by women, [and] the reasons that trigger women's confrontation with the criminal justice system" and that this research be published and disseminated to allow the development of policies and practices that, "aim to improve the outcomes and fairness to women" (United Nations General Assembly, 2010: 23).

Knowing what brings women into prison is important. With this knowledge we can develop prisons that are more gender-responsive and in turn, better meet the needs of incarcerated women. Gender-responsivity requires understanding the typical background of women prisoners and in light of this, developing prison policy and practice that respond to the needs that arise from these background factors.

In February 2018, the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) in collaboration with Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) conducted a pilot study focusing on women's journeys to prison in Kenya including their childhood, adulthood, history of prior offending, history of victimisation, circumstances surrounding their offending and experience in the criminal justice system. With great support from the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS) the research team completed in-depth interviews with 49 convicted women prisoners in two women's prisons in Kenya.

In this report we relay findings from a study exploring women's pathways to prison in Kenya. Utilizing a pathways' approach, common in criminological research, and in-depth life-history interviews, we explore and map the life circumstances, offending and criminal justice experiences leading to women's incarceration. This study contributes towards an understanding of the gender-specific contexts out of which Kenyan women's incarceration arises. Pathways research in other countries has been pivotal in developing gender-responsive policies and practices in correctional institutions particularly in the areas of needs/risk assessment, classification, treatment, and programming for women (Bloom et al., 2003; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004; Van Van Voorhis, Wright, Salisbury & Bauman, 2010; Voorhis, 2012).

We begin with a discussion of the extant research literature drawing specifically from studies conducted in non-western countries and the African continent where available. Our methodological approach is then explained and findings presented. Finally, in light of the study findings, we conclude with a number of recommendations to improve gender-responsivity in Kenya's correctional institutions for women.



PRIOR RESEARCH

Beginning in the 1990's, with the seminal work of Kathleen Daly (1994), western researchers began examining women's pathways to criminalisation (i.e. into court and prison). The pathways' perspective takes a 'whole of life' approach utilising life history interviews to map the experiences and circumstances that propel women into the criminal justice system. Findings from this research show women's offending and criminalisation is bound to an assemblage of interrelated and interconnected factors that limit and shape their behaviours and life choices (Artz, Hoffman-Wanderer & Moulton, 2011; Owen, Wells & Pollock, 2017). These factors comprise: victimisation and trauma, disordered family lives and other adverse experiences, mental ill health and addiction, male influence/control, economic marginalisation and familial caretaking responsibilities (Daly, 1994; Bradley & Davino, 2002; Simpson, Yahner & Dugan, 2008; DeHart, 2005; Salisbury and Van Voorhis, 2009; Stalans, 2009; Lynch, DeHart, Belknap & Green, 2012; Owen et.al., 2017).

More recently, pathways' researchers in non-western countries have identified similar interdependent life experiences and circumstances in the trajectories of imprisoned women. In addition, women's pathways to prison are more notably impacted by limited access to justice and comparatively unjust and/or corrupted criminal justice processes (Kim, Gerber & Kim, 2007; Cherukuri, Britton & Subramaniam, 2009; Berko, Erez & Globokar, 2010; Artz et.al., 2011; Havanon, Jeradechakul, Wathanotai, Ratanarojsakul, & Pankatiprapa, 2012a; Havanon, Jeradechakul, Wathanotai, Paungsawad & Sintunava, 2012b; Shechory, Perry & Addad, 2011; Khalid & Khan, 2013; Shen, 2015; Maghsoudi, Anaraki & Boostani, 2017; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018b).

However, in the African continent, little has been reported or published about the characteristics of women in prison, the conditions and circumstances which lead them to imprisonment, and/or their gender-specific needs (Artz & Rotmann, 2015: 3). Further, there are no previous explorations of women's pathways to prison in Kenya and only one prior African study of this kind (see Artz et.al., 2011). The research reported below is therefore important. It will contribute to the understanding of women imprisoned in Africa and provide a starting point from which to build new Kenyan knowledge in the area.

2.1 Victimization and Trauma

Prior research shows a strong relationship between victimisation, trauma and criminalisation. Studies of imprisoned women report higher rates of victimisation (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional abuse) and trauma exposure than in the general female population (Saxena, Grella & Messina, 2016). Moreover, in contrast to male prisoners, victimisation and trauma experiences are more common, start earlier, and last longer for women (Owen, et.al. 2017: 27). Many women in our prison systems are victims of gender-based violence perpetrated against them during childhood and/or adulthood by predominately male family members. This has led



researchers to conclude that the line between victim and offender is more often blurred for women than men. Reporting from the South African context, Artz and Rotmann (2015: 6) state, “child and adult experience of abuse is probably the single, most important factor that distinguishes female inmates from male inmates”.

Domestic violence, for example, is linked to women's offending in both direct and indirect ways. Directly, women may kill abusive intimate partners (as an immediate defensive strategy against assault or because they wanted to escape their abuser) or be coerced and/or threatened into offending by their victimisers. Indirectly, domestic violence can have a negative economic impact limiting victimised women's financial means and leading them to a life of crime, arising out of economic necessity. The trauma of intimate partner abuse can also lead to mental health problems, substance abuse and gambling addictions all of which are then linked to offending (Kim, et.al., 2007; Cherukuri et.al., 2009; Shechory et.al., 2011; Artz et.al., 2011; Havanon et.al. 2012a; Havanon et.al. 2012b; Jeffries and Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries and Chuenurah, 2018b).

2.2 Disordered Family Lives and Other Adverse Experiences

As children and adults, people's familial experiences contribute significantly to their lives. In addition to victimisation, western research shows that female offenders experience more adverse childhood events than male offenders and are more likely to come from disordered families with histories of poverty, substance abuse, criminality, mental illness and addiction. (Owen, et.al., 2017: 24-29). Similar results have been produced by studies in non-western prison systems (Kim, et.al., 2007; Cherukuri et.al., 2009; Shechory et.al., 2011; Artz et.al., 2011; Havanon et.al. 2012a; Havanon et.al. 2012b; Jeffries and Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries and Chuenurah, 2018b).

Summarising the limited extant research in Africa, Artz, et.al., (2015) for example, concludes that the lives of many imprisoned women in South Africa are characterised by early childhood experiences of extreme poverty, abandonment and loss, as well as adulthood occurrences of intimate relationship dysfunction and financial stress. Women's disordered familial relationship histories, adverse and traumatic events especially in childhood (e.g. unstable or absent parent/child relationships, death of a central family member, unstable living arrangements), shape women's choices (or lack thereof) and lead to their involvement in crime (Artz, et.al., 2011).

2.3 Mental Ill health, Substance Abuse and Other Addictions

Victimisation, other adversities (in childhood and/or adulthood), mental ill health and substance abuse are often interconnected. Comparisons of male and female offenders in western countries consistently show that women

have more complex histories of trauma and victimisation, associated mental ill health and substance abuse (Drapalski, Youman, Stuewig & Tangney, 2009; Saxena, et.al., 2016). Adverse experiences across the life course including exposure to traumatic events such as victimisation can contribute to the development of mental illness, lead to substance misuse and other addictions (e.g. gambling) (Bloom and Covington, 2008; Saxena, et.al., 2016). Drugs and/or alcohol, for example, may be used by women as a form of self-medication; a means to numb the pain of trauma (Owen, et.al., 2017: 29-30). Addiction can then drive criminal behaviour (Rushforth and Willis, 2003; Artz, et.al., 2011).

In South Africa, Artz, et.al.'s (2011) research on women's trajectories into prison found that criminal behaviour was often fuelled by addictions to gambling, drugs and/or alcohol with crimes being committed to finance these. Addiction constrained women's life choices by limiting employment opportunities and financial means, causing or compounding mental health problems, damaging familial bonds and support systems and isolating women from pro-social family and friends who might have diverted them away from criminal activities.

2.4 Male Influence and Control

Women's pathways to prison are often directly connected with boyfriends, husbands and/or other men in their lives. Many women in prison are there because they have found themselves entangled in crimes committed by men and more often than not, women's roles in offending are secondary to that of men (Berko, et al., 2010; Havanon, et. al., 2012; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a;).

For example, research undertaken in Thailand has shown that female drug offenders frequently find themselves in prison as a result of guilt by male association. They are arrested as a result of police 'sting' operations primarily targeted at men with whom they are having a romantic relationship. In the eyes of the court, supporting or assisting the main offender while the crime is being committed is equal to committing the offence yourself. Thus, some women may unwittingly find themselves arrested and incarcerated due to the actions of a romantic partner; some may not even have known what their husband, boyfriend or lover was up to (Havanon, et. al., 2012a; Havanon, et. al., 2012b).

Recent research in Cambodia on drug trafficking and homicide similarly demonstrates that connection between women's pathways into prison and male influence and control. Jeffries and Chuenurah's (2018b) study of international cross border drug trafficking showed that women were frequently tricked into carrying drugs across international borders by their romantic partners. Further, the majority of Cambodian women imprisoned for homicide offending are there because a male family member, intimate partner, friend or acquaintance had actually committed the crime (Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a). In some cases, the women were present when the homicide took place but they did not actively participate. In other instances, the women were completely unaware that a homicide had been committed until brought before the police for questioning or they confessed

to committing homicide to protect a male family member from the horrors of imprisonment (Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a).

2.5 Education, Economic Marginalisation and Familial Caregiving

The majority of imprisoned women have limited education which results in poor employment prospects and in turn, socio-economic disadvantage and poverty. Economic marginalisation plays a key role in many women's pathways to crime and often intersects with familial caregiving responsibilities. Imprisoned women are commonly mothers and recurrently their family's only source of financial support. This is particularly so in non-western nations where women's familial caretaking role extends beyond western ideals of the nuclear family. Women are often faced with sole responsibility for their children (children's fathers regularly abandon them), parents, grandparents and other extended family members but with low levels of education, and limited employment prospects, can find themselves imprisoned as a result of actions they have taken to support themselves and their families (Cherukuri et.al., 2009; Artz et. al, 2011; Khalid and Khan, 2013; Shen, 2015; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018b).

Artz, et. al's (2011) South African research for example, identified low levels of education, associated poverty and familial caretaking as key drivers in women's offending. Here, 75% of women reported having children and of these, 45% had their first child as a teenager. Most women received no support from the fathers of their children and only 50% had a regular income prior to incarceration. Almost three-quarters of the women never finished school (Artz & Rotmann, 2015: 6). Poverty placed a high degree of stress on these women's ability to support themselves and their families. Economic marginalisation combined with motherhood played a crucial role in women's pathways into prison. The needs of children and other family members provided a rationale for crime (Artz, et. al., 2011).

Similarly, Khalid and Khan's (2013) research on women's pathways to prison in Pakistan revealed that many women became involved in criminal activity to make 'ends meet' for themselves and their families. The majority of female offenders in this study were mothers without husbands with the economic "burden of the family [lay] on their shoulders" (Khalid & Khan, 2013:34).

However, economic motivations other than poverty are not uncommon in pathways' research. In China for example, Shen (2015) found that economic gain was the most common pathway to prison. For some, poverty, the need to survive and provide for themselves and their family underpinned offending. However, for others, consumer culture, material consumption and the desire to 'get rich quick' was the motivating factor. Similarly, Havanon, et. al's (2012a), study of women imprisoned in Thailand showed that drug and property offending appeared primarily motivated by consumer culture.

2.6 Limited Access to Justice

Finally, research undertaken in non-western prison systems show that once women are arrested, low levels of education, limited literacy, and associated economic marginalisation constrains their ability to access justice and/or take advantage of corrupt criminal justice systems. Women may be unable to connect with or afford competent legal representation and have limited understanding of the criminal justice process and the cases being made against them. This makes mounting a strong defence in court difficult. Poverty also blocks many women from being able to pay bribes to police and/or court officials (Cherukuri, et.al., 2009; Havanon, et. al., 2012a; Havanon, et. al., 2012b; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018b).

Cherukuri, et. al's (2009: 270) pathways' research in India, for example, showed that women's "lack of education means that others seldom inform them [the women in this research] of their rights, and they have little knowledge of the particulars of the cases against them. They also lack the wherewithal and economic means to exploit the corruption in the system by offering bribes that might affect the outcomes of their cases". Similar results are reported in pathways' studies conducted in Cambodia, Thailand and South Africa (Artz & Rotmann, 2011: 6; Havanon, et al. 2012a; Havanon, et al. 2012b; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018a; Jeffries & Chuenurah, 2018b).

APPROACH AND RESEARCH METHODS

We utilised a narrative analysis of life history interviews. Narrative analysis focuses on the ways in which people construct and use stories to interpret the world (Presser, 2009; Ignatow & Michalcea, 2016). Narratives are social products that are produced by people in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations; they are interpretive devices through which people represent themselves and their social realities to others (Presser, 2009; Lynch et al., 2012; Fleetwood, 2015).

Our interview schedule was open-ended, consisting of women's responses to broad discussion topics. This approach provided women the opportunity to describe significant events in their lives and analyse links between their varied life experiences and criminalisation. The discussion topics were as follows:

1. *Childhood familial relationships, friendships, victimisation and other experiences*
2. *Adulthood familial relationships, friendships, victimisation, other experiences*
3. *Education, employment and economic circumstances*
4. *Histories of prior deviant behaviour and offending*
5. *Histories of physical and mental ill health including substance abuse*
6. *Circumstances surrounding their offending*
7. *Interactions with and experiences of the criminal justice system*

Interviews were undertaken with woman convicted and sentenced in two Kenyan prisons (one urban and one rural). In total, n=49 interviews were conducted.

All the women were informed about the research by the prison staff and asked if they would like to participate. A few turned the invitation down. To ensure that participants received the relevant information and gave informed consent, at the beginning of each interview we explained the aim of the study, the confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary nature of participation before confirming consent (verbal) to participate. Anonymity was further protected by assigning each woman with a pseudonym and changing minor details of their lives that had no bearing on the research purpose.

The interviews lasted between one and two hours, were audio recorded, conducted in Swahili (or in a small number of cases, English), translated and transcribed into English. The women's narratives were then synthesised into distinct pathways to prison, which will be discussed in detail in the following section. Results are presented below following a descriptive overview of the research participants.

RESULTS

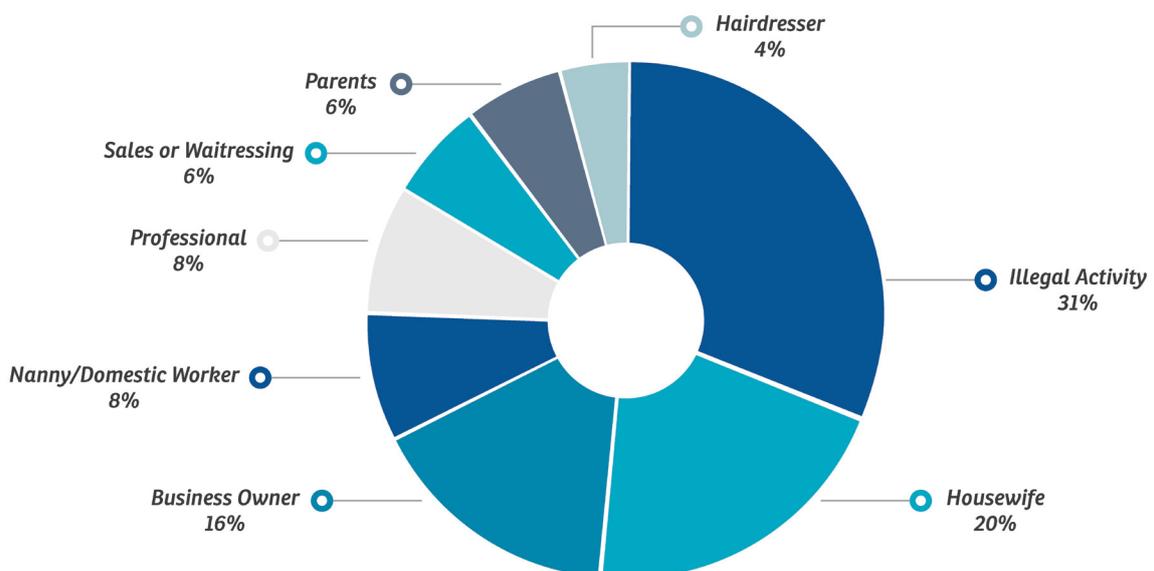
In this section, we report results from the narrative analysis following a descriptive tabulated overview of the women interviewed. The tabulated profiles of the women provide a cross-sectional view of the research participants while the narrative analyses paints a more nuanced picture of the life circumstances, experiences and events constituting their pathways to prison.

4.1 Demographic profiles

The average age of the women was 38.7 years and their ages ranged from 19 to 62 years. One woman identified as Muslim and the remaining n=48 reported they were Christian. All but three women were mothers with the average number of children being n=3. Four women were foreign nationals and the remaining n=45 identified as Kenyan.

As demonstrated in Figure 1 (below), the majority of women reported criminal activity as their primary means of income prior to imprisonment. A significant proportion of women also reported housewifery as their principal occupation (see Figure 1, below). Other occupations/sources of income included: business owner, nanny/domestic worker, professional (in a 'white collar' occupation), sales or waitressing, hairdresser and parental financial support.

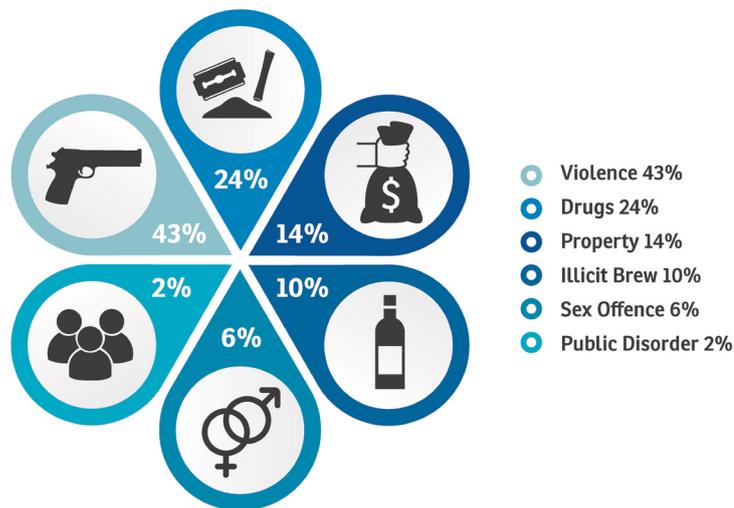
Figure 1: Employment/Primary Source of Financial Support Prior to Imprisonment



4.2 Offence Profiles

The majority of women (43%) were in prison for committing crimes of violence. Drug offending constituted the second largest offence category followed by property, illicit brew, sex and public order offences (see Figure 2, below).

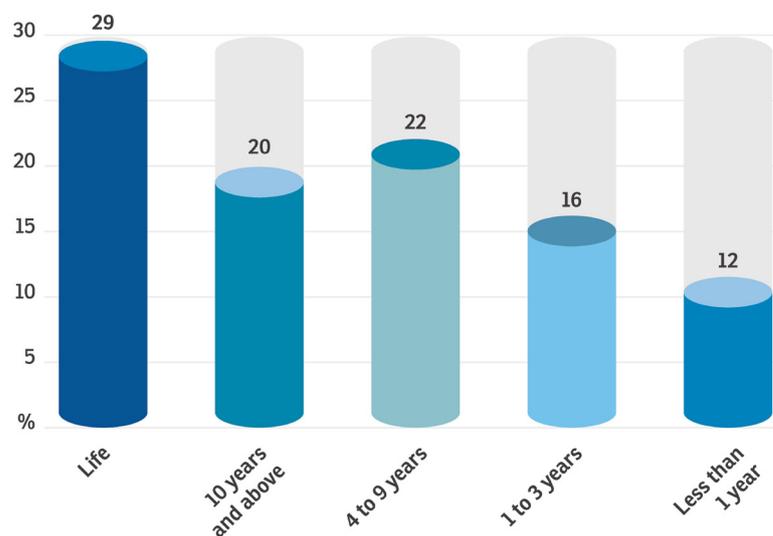
Figure 2: Offence Category



4.3 Sentence Length

The length of sentenced prison term ranged from a few months to life imprisonment (see Figure 3, below). A high proportion of women were sentenced to extensive terms with nearly 50% being incarcerated for 10 years or more.

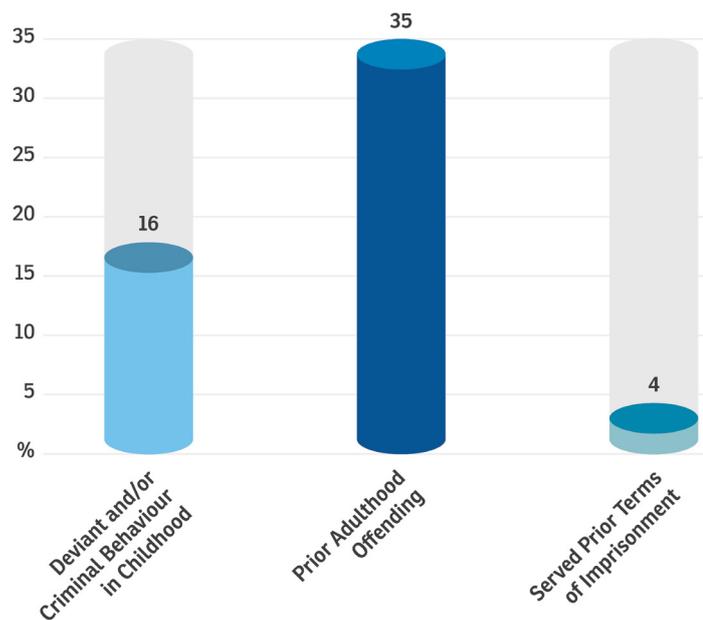
Figure 3: Sentence Length



4.4 Prior Deviant/Criminal Behaviours

Close to 35% of women reported having engaged in criminal activity as adults prior to the offence for which they were currently imprisoned. Just over 15% of women described participation in deviant and/or criminal behaviour during adolescence (see Figure 4, below). Deviant behaviour included activities such as 'partying', drinking alcohol, associating with a deviant peer group/intimate partner and 'skipping' school.

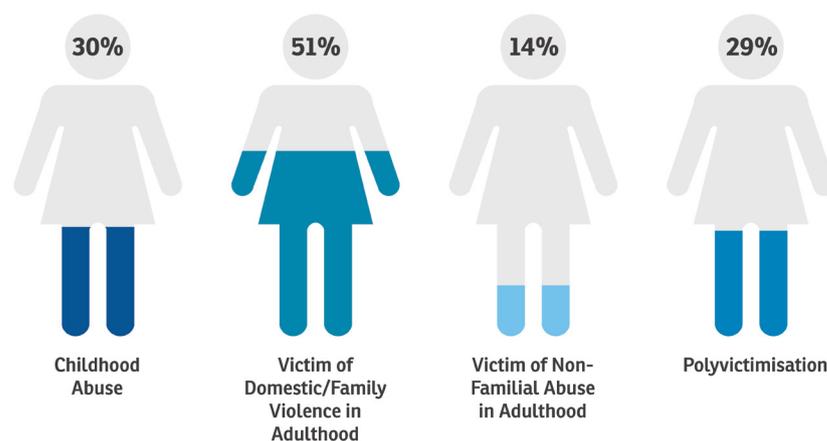
Figure 4: Prior Deviance and Criminality



4.5 Victimization

As illustrated in Figure 5 (below), victimization (including sexual, physical and emotional abuse) in childhood and/or adulthood was a common theme in the women's stories. In childhood, 30% of women described growing up in homes marred by abuse most frequently perpetrated against them, their mothers or other female caregivers by male family members.

Figure 5 : Women's Experiences of Victimization



As adults, violent victimisation was common (see Figure 5). More than half the women reported having lived with intimate partner and/or family violence (i.e. perpetrated by other family members most frequently in-laws) as adults. Being abused by intimate partners was frequently described as ordinary, a normal part of marriage, something women needed to endure. This normative construction of domestic violence permeated the women's accounts of their intimate relationships. Husbands/boyfriends were frequently described as being 'good men' but when prompted as to whether or not they had ever been abusive, the women invariably replied "yes". Sikudhani, for example, told us that her husband was a "good husband". When asked "did he ever physically or verbally abuse you?" She responded, "yes he did...sometimes he'd threaten me too but that's just what marriage is. It's normal...you know men".

Just over 14% of women reported being a victim of non-familial abuse either in childhood or adulthood. This included sexual, physical or verbal assault by employers, sexual assault by other known/unknown persons and physical and verbal assault by teachers. The most common story was that of employer assault in contexts where as young teenagers the women worked as live-in-nannies/domestic workers. For example, at 13 years of age, Nyawira leaves her family home to work as a live-in-nanny and is sexually assaulted by the "man of the house". She narrates:

“ Eventually I matured and the man of the house noticed me.....he once...pretended he was drunk, he removed all his clothes and lay on the carpet. He asked me to get him his clothes but I refused. I went out of the house and stood there until the lady of the house came back. The lady of the house was pregnant...When she went to deliver the baby and I was left at home with her husband, he raped me. This is how I got my first child. ”

In another example, when Kioni is 14 years of age she leaves home to work as a live-in-nanny where she is repeatedly abused by her employer. She describes this time in her life as follows:

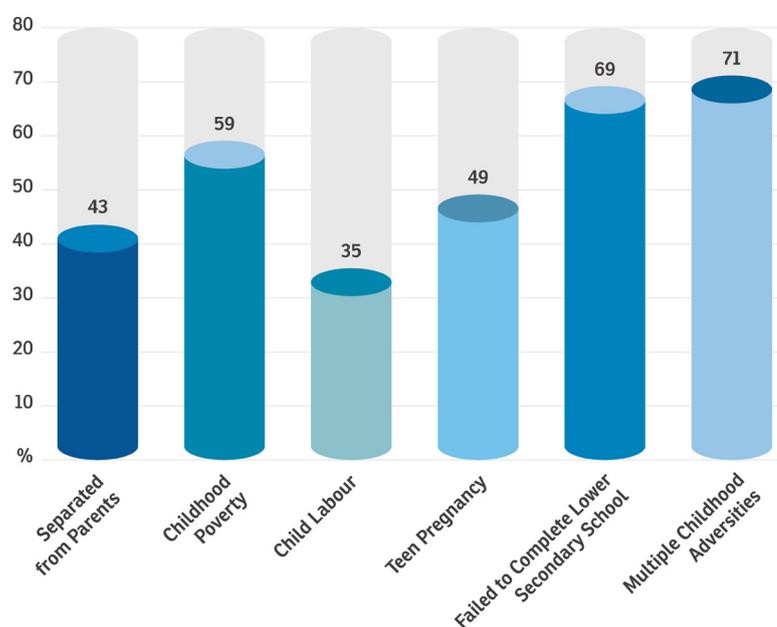
“ [My employer] wouldn't allow me to eat what I prepared for her family. Sometimes she would take the food and lock it up in her room. Other times she would make me eat baby food. There was a time she got angry and beat me up with a wire. ”

A significant number of the women interviewed had experienced more than one type of victimisation across the course of their lives. Exposure to multiple ('poly') types of victimization was the reality for nearly 30% of the women interviewed (see Figure 5, above).

4.6 Other Adversity

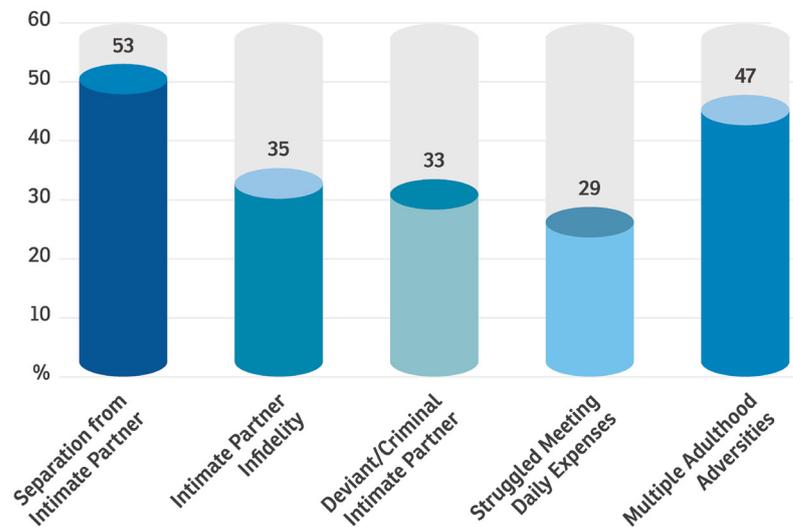
In addition to victimization, many of the women had lived with multiple other forms of adversity. In childhood many described growing up in disordered family environments and experiencing additional hardships including: separation from parents (i.e. through parental death or abandonment), familial poverty, associated child labour and failure to complete lower secondary school. Teen pregnancy (sometimes as the result of rape) and motherhood was another common theme. In addition to victimisation (see Table 5 above) and as illustrated in Figure 6 (below), just over 70% of the women interviewed lived with multiple childhood adversities.

Figure 6: Other Childhood Adversities



As adults, hardship and dysfunction in intimate relationships were a common feature in many of the women's lives (see Figure 7, below). In addition to domestic violence victimisation (discussed previously) other problems in intimate relationships were common. Husbands/boyfriends were frequently unfaithful (oftentimes infecting women with HIV), abused alcohol and/or drugs and/or were engaged in other criminal activities. For over half the women, this invariably led to the dissolution of an intimate relationship. For some, the poverty of childhood extended into adulthood economic marginalization. As adults, nearly 30% of women reported difficulties in meeting their everyday expenses. Multiple hardships (i.e. more than one adulthood adversity) characterized the life histories of close to 50% of the women interviewed.

Figure 7: Other Adulthood Adversities

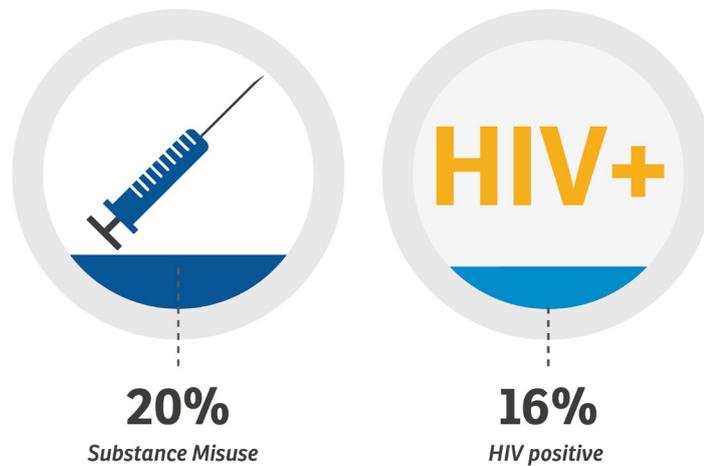


4.7 Substance Misuse and HIV

Substance misuse was a problem for around 20% of the women interviewed (see Figure 8 below). Women's substance misuse arose from a number of different often inter-related contexts including exposure to deviant peer group influences during adolescence or young adulthood and/or substance abusing intimate partners; using drugs and/or alcohol to numb the pain of abuse or as a way to cope with other hardships in their lives. Alcohol was the most common substance of choice. Jumapili's story encapsulates these contextually related factors.

As a child, Jumapili's parents separate and she never sees her father again. Her older brother is extremely violent and "beat" her "up a lot". At the age of 11, Jumapili is sexually assaulted by a man she hardly knows. She tells us, "when I was eleven a man paid me for sex and another raped me; the one who raped me really hurt me. When I understood the business aspect of sex, I decided to turn it back on the men so that none would ever hurt me again." Jumapili begins working as a prostitute, is regularly raped and beaten by her clients and develops an addiction to alcohol and heroin. She uses alcohol to cope with her job, the abuse she has endured and continues to withstand and later, develops an addiction to heroin after being introduced to the drug by one of her boyfriends. She narrates, "I've been drinking for ten years now and I got really addicted. I also started using drugs like heroin. I didn't use it [heroin] often but I had a boyfriend who introduced me to it. I got into drinking because of the job I was doing".

Figure 8: Health



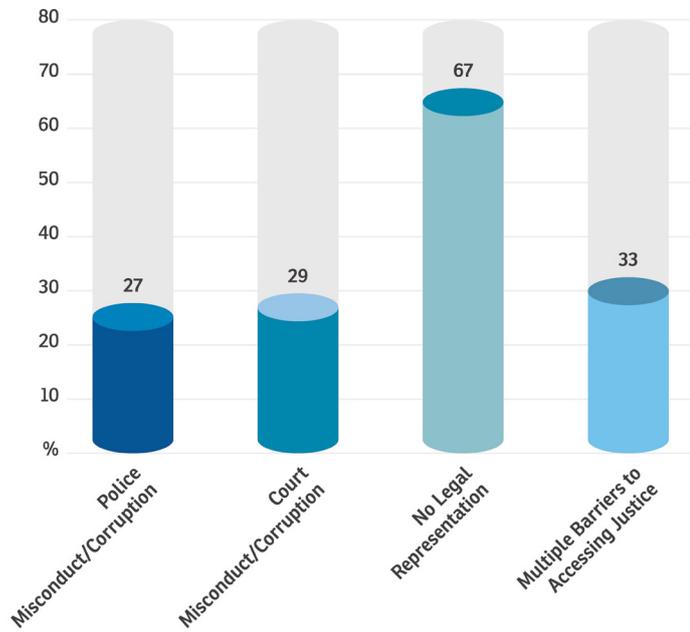
Sixteen percent of women reported being HIV positive (see Figure 8, above) and in every case, they were infected by an unfaithful intimate partner. Walta, for example, conveys “after my husband died I found out he had infected me with HIV. I suffered from a lot of HIV related complications in the beginning and I couldn’t earn enough to educate my child”.

4.8 Barriers to Justice

As demonstrated above, many of the women interviewed were under-educated and as a result, occupied a subjugated economic position. Once arrested, lack of education and economic marginalisation limited their access to justice. Few understood what was going on in the courtroom or the cases being made against them. Further, only those charged with murder were guaranteed a publically funded lawyer. The result, as illustrated in Figure 9, was that close to 70% of women went to court without legal representation. A few women reported paying for a private lawyer but given limited economic means were unable to afford competent legal representation.

Further, these women were arguably barred from the conceivable benefits bestowed on those with money in corrupt criminal justice systems. As shown in Figure 9 police/court misconduct and corruption was unexceptional. Some women reported being asked for bribes by police or court clerks. Most were unable to pay. Some sold everything they owned to diminish penalties but sentences were never actually reduced. Other women reported that the police or courts had been paid off by victims’ families to ensure that the women were convicted and received the harshest possible sentence. Grossly problematic police investigative practices were also reported with some recounting experiences of intimidation and abuse occurring during police questioning. Just over 30% of women reported multiple barriers to justice.

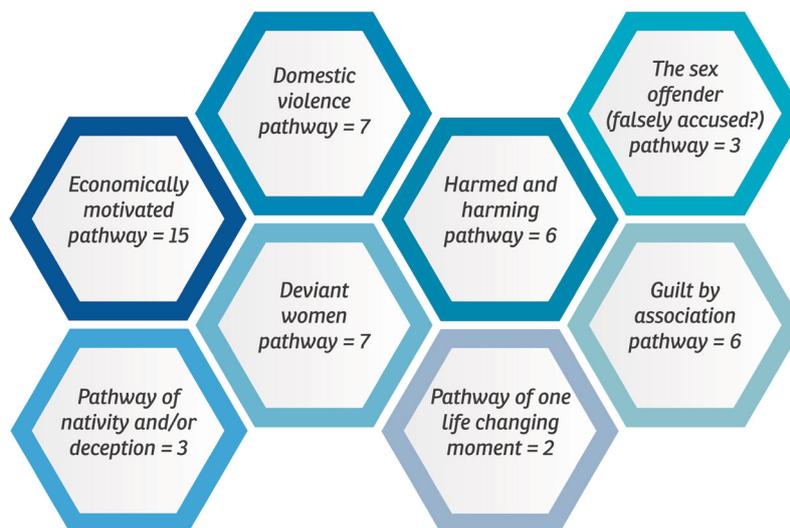
Figure 9: Barriers to Justice



In the following section we discuss the common themes or pathways that emerged from our narrative analysis of the women's stories.

PATHWAYS TO PRISON

Eight common themes or pathways emerged from our narrative analysis of the 49 women's life stories. They are the 1) Economically motivated pathway, 2) Domestic violence pathway, 3) Harmed and harming pathway, 4) Deviant women pathway, 5) Guilt by association pathway, 6) Pathway of nativity and/or deception, 7) Sex offender (falsely accused?) pathway and 8) Pathway of one life changing moment. Each will be discussed in detail in this chapter.



5.1 Economically Motivated Pathway

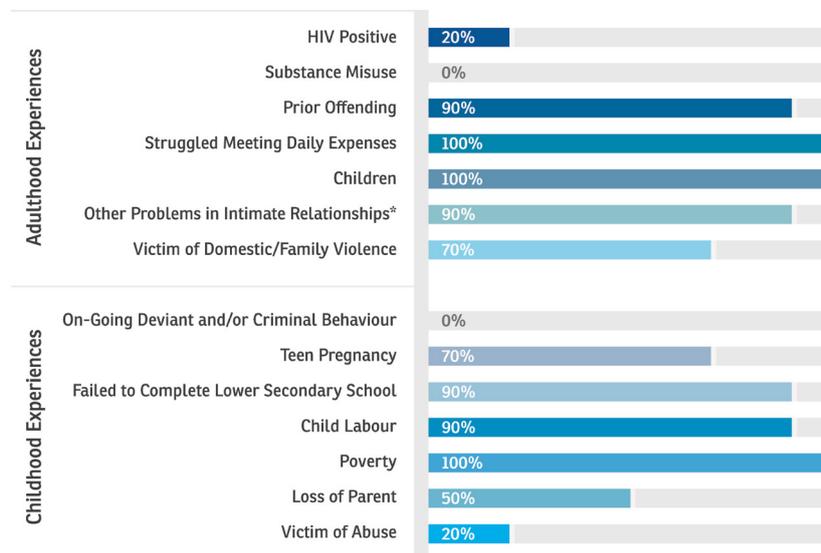
This was the most common pathway into prison with just over 30% of women (n=15) narrating economic reasons for their crimes. There was nevertheless variance in the women's economic motivations. The majority offended out of economic necessity and others out of self-identified greed. Thus two subcategories constitute the economically motivated journey to prison: 1) familial economic provisioning pathway, 2) pathway of economic excess. The primary motivation for the majority of these women (n=10) was familial economic provisioning. For the remaining women (n=5) the motivation to offend was self-indulgence. Each will be explained in detail below.

5.1.1 Familial Economic Provisioning Pathway

The life stories of the n=10 women on the pathway of familial economic provisioning took a similar sequential path. All these women grew up in households marred by poverty, sometimes due to the loss of one parent, exited education early with resultant limited employment prospects, had children (often as teenagers) with men who eventually absented themselves from familial financial responsibility and were oftentimes abusive. With constrained employment opportunities, each woman then made the decision to offend as a means to financially support their children and sometimes other family

members. Offending emerged during adulthood against a back drop of sole motherhood and familial economic need. For many, crime was a source of empowerment; a space to break free of patriarchal family structures, take control over their lives and provide children with unprecedented opportunities for a better future. Figure 10 below highlights key aspects of these women's life journeys.

Figure 10: Familial Economic Provisioning Pathway (n=10)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

All of these women had offended on numerous occasions prior to serving their current term of imprisonment but this was the first time any of them had been incarcerated. Some explained how they had managed to evade prison in the past by 'paying off' the police or if arrested, by paying court fines. Walta, for example, is arrested twice for selling illicit brew, receives fines, pays them and continues to offend because *"I didn't think I was going to be sent to prison...I thought they would always give me the opportunity to pay a fine and stay free"*. Nyambura brewed and sold illicit alcohol for seven years before she was finally arrested and imprisoned. She *"struggled with the police during this time [but] was never charged...you know it is not a very good job to do because police are always knocking at your door. It is just that you do not have much of an option...you need to survive"*.

The struggle for survival had been a feature of these women's lives since childhood. All but one woman failed to complete lower secondary education and none went on to upper secondary school.

In n=9 cases, childhood familial impoverishment meant there was simply no money to pay for schooling and as children, the women needed to find work to support themselves and their families.

Eucabeth, for example explains that her parents worked as farmers and earned *"enough for food by nothing else."* She was able to complete lower primary school but then "after a while my parents got too old to support us". Eucabeth and her siblings were then forced to leave school and "supported ourselves". Wambui's father deserted the family when she was young and she was raised by her mother who "did odd jobs like cleaning clothes." *She told us, "life was difficult and we didn't get the option to go to school. When we got old enough my mother took us along with her to help with the odd jobs in order to earn more. We used the money to buy food and clothes."* Eidi who did complete lower secondary school was *"birthed by somebody then thrown away"*. A "good Samaritan" found her lying under a tree and raised Eidi as her own. Eidi explains how her education eventually came to an end:

“*She [the good Samaritan] send me to school....until standard 8. After that she struggled [to earn money] because she was old she handed me over to another friend of hers and she told her to take care of me because according to the way I'm feeling in my body anytime I can go. I can leave this world. She [new caregiver] took me through to form four [lower secondary] but she was unable to pay the last fees. That caused my life to be struggle and hectic.*”

Walta's family was also poor. She tells us, *"we had some money but it wasn't too much. My older siblings got to go to school but the younger ones didn't"*. Walta's education also ends prematurely but in this case as the result of sexual assault victimization. When she is 13 years of age, Walta is raped by a family member, subsequently falls pregnant and as a result, can no longer go to school. Unsurprisingly, 13 year old Walta finds it difficult to be a mother under these traumatic circumstances. She runs away from home leaving her baby behind. She explains, *"I left my child with my mother and came to Nairobi to look for work. I realized I had to provide for my child and couldn't do it in the village"*. As a teenage girl with no education, Walta has few options. She sells fruit and lives on the streets of Nairobi but barely makes enough money to feed herself let alone her child. In a reoccurring theme, Walta eventually meets her future husband and is hopeful that with him, her future will be brighter.

However, Walta's dreams of a better life are short lived. She has four children with her husband but he is an alcoholic, a criminal, unfaithful, domestically violent and infects Walta with HIV. After her husband is *"shot [dead] by police"* she finds herself back on the streets of Nairobi selling fruit. Walta cannot earn enough money to support herself and her children; a situation made worse by increasing bouts of ill health due to HIV. She explains her subsequent decision to offend as follows: *"After a friend told me about a business opportunity [in another town] I saw that people make more money selling illicit brew and I decided to do it because I needed to support my children."*

Walta's story replayed itself in the narratives of the other women on this pathway. Wambui for example describes the relationship with her husband, the aftermath of their separation and her decision to sell illicit drugs as follows:

“ He used to beat me up...When he got drunk he'd beat me up. Sometimes it was everyday other times it was once in a week or even twice in a month. [My husband would drink] any and every time he got some money; he'd give us some for food then go drink the rest. I just persevered because I didn't want to be a single mother like my mother. He infected me [with HIV]. She [the woman he is having an affair with] infected him and he infected me. When I found I was unwell he just left me. I went back to where my mother was born. Life was difficult there. This is when I decided to sell drugs.”

Eidi similarly meets a man who tells her “he can help me in one way or another”, they get married and she gives birth to a daughter. Her husband takes her back to his tribe, leaves her with his mother and moves back to the city. He stops providing for Eidi and the baby and on his rare visits home, when she asks for support he “started being so tough to me...he used to beat me”. The “beatings” get increasingly worse and Eidi makes the decision to leave her husband. She starts working as a maid for low pay and is abused further by her employers. Eidi explains, “they knew I would do the job to support my daughter...I was there to suffer. I was there to obey. Even if I complain who am I? I was there to bare that situation”. Eventually, Eidi “got tired” of the abuse and her low paying domestic work. A friend offers Eidi the opportunity to be involved in her illicit brew business. Eidi agrees. She tells us, “my salary was 150 shillings per day. My work was to brew and package the drink in bottles, with that I got about 30 shillings commission per bottle. The money I was getting was good”. Offending provided Eidi with a means to provide for herself and her daughter without having to endure violence.

Nyambura is married for 15 years and has five children. In the beginning her husband is a “good man” but begins to change after the birth of their third child. He starts to drink alcohol, is physically violent and stops financially providing for the family. Nyambura narrates: *He refused to bring food home, then he goes and drinks then comes back wanting to fight and he was also not paying [school] fees for the children. I had to keep working harder at the farm to buy [school] books for the children....[he was beating me] all the time until I just thought I will die in this house. Even his parents told me to leave for my own safety*. Nyambura leaves her husband and supports her children by selling illegal brew.

Fanaka, Eucabeth and Wanja did not experience domestic violence in their relationships but still parented alone with no financial support from the fathers of their children. Fanaka had her first baby when she was 19 years old but the father of her child “didn't help me...he just ran away”. She meets another man a few years later but again, as soon as Fanaka is pregnant, he “ran away”. The fathers of her third, fourth and fifth child do the same. She explains, “you know men are just enjoying me [sexually], they told me that they love me [but they] ran away after I told them I was pregnant”.

Fanaka's mother helps support her and the children but when she passes away, Fanaka starts selling illicit brew because "there is no job" and no one to help care for the children.

Eucabeth similarly falls pregnant as a teenager to a "boy" who "left me alone to fend for the child". This "boy" returns periodically, Eucabeth falls pregnant again and then he leaves. She narrates, "the same man who got me pregnant when I was 18 is the one who fathered all my children. He doesn't support any of them...he would leave and come back". Eucabeth makes the decision to sell drugs because "I had a child and no one to leave him with, I saw this would earn me enough money to support my child and my parents". For Wanja single motherhood is a choice – "I just wanted to have children and I didn't want to get married" – and she was able to make enough money farming to support her children until "the water stopped". She explains:

““ When I was farming I made enough money but we ran out of water. I did not want to leave my children to go seek employment. My last born had not gone to high school. I started selling [drugs] to get money to take him to high school. If the water didn't run out I would not have started selling [drugs]. ””

In contrast to the other women on this pathway Sikudhani does not separate from the father of her children but he provides no financial support and while married she essentially lives as a sole parent. Sikudhani's husband is an alcoholic, a drug addict and domestically violent. Reflecting on the domestic violence early in their relationship she tells us, "that's just what marriage is, its normal". Sikudhani observed that her husband was especially violent when she asked him for money to support the family:

““ You know men; when you don't have money and he has it, all you keep doing is beg him and eventually he takes that as a sign that he has all the power over you. He beat me up every time he had money because in his eyes I was a beggar...a wife without a job will be controlled by her husband”. ””

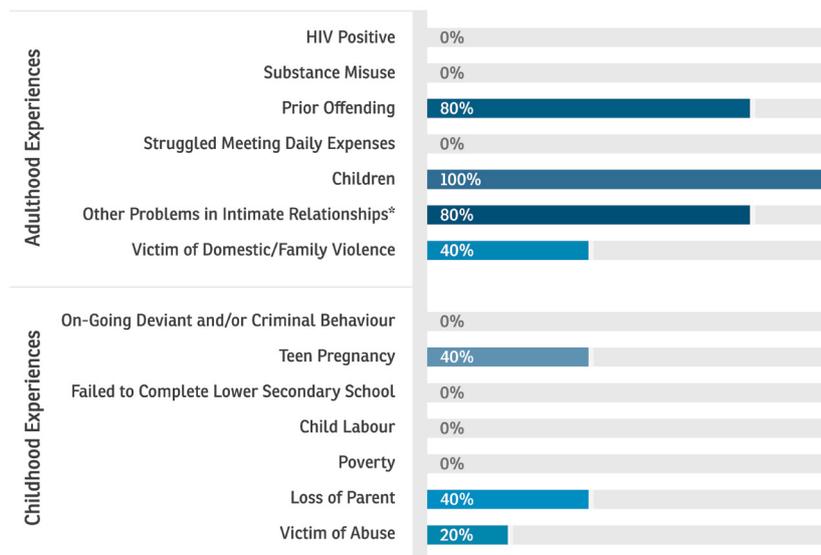
Choosing to take back control of her life, Sikudhani decides "to get my own money because I was tired of always begging. I didn't want to ask for money to buy onions and the like anymore". However, with limited education Sikudhani's ability to find well-paying legitimate work is constrained so she decides to start an illicit brew business. This business operates successfully for over nine years before Sikudhani is eventually arrested and imprisoned. She never asks her husband for money again – "I haven't asked him for money to buy an onion in nine years" – the domestic violence stops and "we become like two ships in the night...all we do is pass each other". Everything Sikudhani earned was "for me and the children". Unlike their mother, a good student forced to leave school early due to familial poverty; Sikudhani's children receive an education, "I earned so much money I educated all my children without his [husband] help". Sikudhani explains that with an education her life would

have been “completely” different. For Sikudhani educating her children is crucial and crime provides her with the means, “I don’t want them to lack like I did, all my children are doing well at school”. The importance of educating children so that they “don’t lack like I did” and associated pride in being able to provide this opportunity was a theme echoed in these women’s stories. Walta tells us that offending allowed her to pay “my children’s school fees in two instalments...I don’t want my children to go through all I have gone through”. Wambui similarly states “I didn’t want my children to struggle like I did so I went into crime to support them....I wanted them to get an education so that they would have a better future”.

5.1.2 Pathway of Economic Excess

Every woman on this pathway was motivated to offend for economic reasons but the impetus was greed rather than survival. Compared to the women on the previous pathway, these women occupied a position of relative societal privilege. Waccara was the only woman to narrate childhood financial problems but even then, an extended family member ensured she received a tertiary level education. For the remaining women, childhood families were described as being “middle class”, “well-to-do”, or “financially ok.” All these women completed lower secondary school and three continued into tertiary education. Higher levels of education lead to increased employment opportunities. None experienced economic marginalization as adults. Figure 11 below highlights key aspects of these women’s life journeys.

Figure 11: Pathway of Economic Excess (n=5)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Similar to those on the familial economic provisioning pathway, all these women were mothers but only two narrated experiences of domestic violence and none struggled to support their children in or outside of their inmate relationships. Waccara's husband tried to physically "beat" her once but she "defended myself well so we [only] fought verbally". Eventually Waccara leaves her husband. She runs a very profitable business supporting both her children and younger sister. The violence in Nduta's relationship was mutual. Her husband is unfaithful. She tells us, "one day I saw him with another woman I beat him very badly and said I would kill him, I even took a knife. He beat and stabbed me when I did that....African women does not beat the man". Nduta stays with her husband. She is an economically self-sufficient highly successful business owner. Kaweria and Duni are both single mothers but earn "good money" in white collar professions while Abuya supports her boyfriend with the money she earns from her lucrative business.

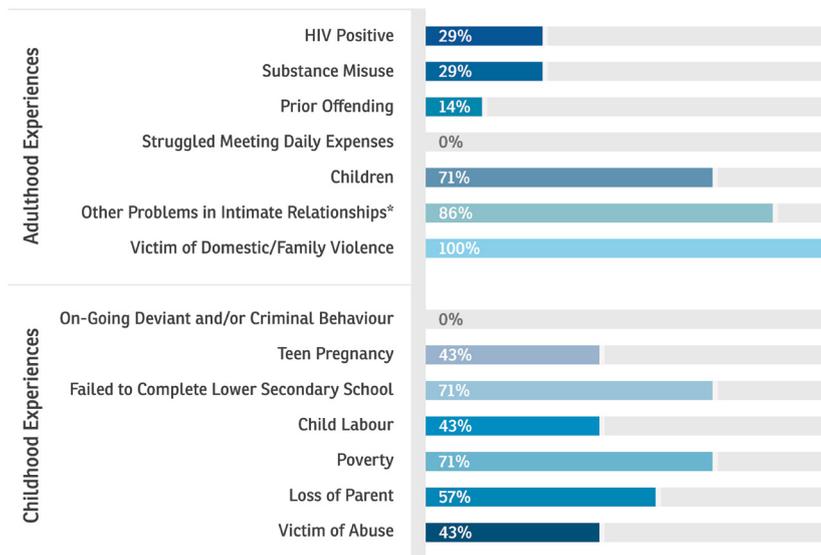
The desire to have more is what motivated these women to offend. Abuya tells us that her turning point into prison was "greed because...I still wanted more". Kaweria states, "I think I started being too ambitious". Waceera narrates, "I was doing very well financially [in her business] and I desired big things...I saw one of my friends had a lot of money and she was selling drugs...I decided to try it... [it was] greed, I was financially good." Nduta articulates, "there was good money for it [selling drugs], the money tempted me...I saw it as an opportunity [to get rich]". Duni is less forthcoming blaming her offending on "single parent[hood]", "poverty" and the "Kenyan government." Despite her relatively privileged life Duni uses her tertiary level education to commit a string of fraud offences, opens a business using the proceeds of her crimes and earns "a lot of money along the way". She explains:

“ I started doing forgery....I did this for about 4 years and opened a big business with the money I made through robbing people. It was a big business with five employees and a manager. But because I did not make the money genuinely it died in 6 months. I went back into hustling again then went into forging documents again. I worked with big government people while doing this illegal business and they prepared everything for me including identification documents. I did this until I was caught. ”

5.2 Domestic Violence Pathway

Just over 14% (n=7) of the women interviewed narrated this pathway making it the second most common trajectory into prison. These women are incarcerated as the direct result of fighting, fending off, retaliating against or escaping domestically violent men. All but one was incarcerated for violent crimes and none had prior histories of adulthood offending or deviant behaviour as young people. Two women abused alcohol as a coping mechanism. Childhood abuse/other adversity and poverty were not uncommon but it was adult relationships with violent men that drove these women into prison (see Figure 12 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 12: Domestic Violence Pathway (n=7)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

The stories of five women (i.e. Durah, Muthoni, Mwassaa, Felista and Njeri) were virtually identical. All were incarcerated for killing a domestically violent (ex) partner and in every case their crime occurred in the midst of a violent attack.

When Muthoni met her future abuser she was already vulnerable having lost her husband to a stroke. With two children and nowhere to live, Muthoni moved into a “shanty”. Here she meets a man who would eventually become her boyfriend and abuser. For the first few years of their relationship Muthoni’s boyfriend treated her well but that changed once they starting living together. She explains:

“ We were together for four year and he was good only in the first year of our relationship. I was very comfortable with him and even introduced him to my family who told me to be cautious and give it time. They asked me to first get to know him. I tried to follow my family's advice but love is funny and I couldn't stay away. After two and a half years of dating we moved in together and that's when he changed. He'd bring women to the house while I was on shift [work] and it was evident since the neighbours would warn me about all he did when I was at work....I had tried bringing up his infidelity before but he beat me up, thoroughly. It got so bad my sons disliked him. ”

Muthoni finally makes the decision to leave her boyfriend after she discovers him having an affair with one of their neighbours. When a woman chooses to leave a domestically violent intimate partner she is at increased risk of harm. Research consistently shows that domestic violence likely continues post-separation and often increases in severity. Domestic violence is about power and control. Thus, separation is a particularly hazardous time for women because it sends a clear message to perpetrators that they are losing power over their victims and it is at the point of separation that women are at heightened risk of being killed. On the day of the offence,

Muthoni's abusive ex-boyfriend arrives at her house. He is angry and violent. Muthoni is scared and fearing for her life refuses to open the front gate to let him in. Her ex-boyfriend then jumps over the gate and starts to physically assault her. Muthoni reacts in self-defence. Grabbing a knife from a nearby table she kills her ex-boyfriend. She explains:

“ *He came and knocked on my gate and I asked my son not to open it for him. I went to talk with him without opening the gate but he was angry and violent. He jumped over the gate and started beating me up. I grabbed a knife from the table and stabbed him three times. All I can say is it would have been me or him. If he didn't die, I would be dead. It's just that I saw the knife first otherwise I'd be dead.* **”**

When asked what the turning point was that led her to prison, Muthoni said *“men...I'll not get involved with men [again]. If it were not for a man, I wouldn't be here. I will stay away from men. I won't be thinking about another relationship”*.

Durah's boyfriend is a violent alcoholic. Like Muthoni, Durah eventually makes the brave decision to leave him but again, this does not herald an end to the abuse. She says, *“when I left him he still used to come and abuse me.....After I left him, I was lonely but then I called him and told him not to come in my house. But within one or two months he used to come to my door when drunk and being violent and shouting”*. It was during one of these terrifying post relationship visits that Durah kills her ex-boyfriend in self-defence. She narrates what happened to us as follows:

“ *One day he broke my door and came inside.....He started shouting and being violent asking why I left and if I had another boyfriend. I decided to take a knife because I thought it will scare him away but I cannot explain what happened, I did not mean to hurt him. I just wanted to scare him away so he can stop beating me but then I stabbed him and he died. Our neighbours heard a lot of noise then they called the police who came and found me still in shock inside the house. I still ask myself many questions like what happened because I thought it was a dream.* **”**

Felistas was only 17 years of age when she is arrested for committing a homicide. In high school Felistas met a boy, they became girlfriend and boyfriend but then he started pressuring Felistas to marry him. Exercising her basic human right to choose who she is intimate with and marries, Felistas turns down the proposal and they separate. Her now ex-boyfriend is enraged by Felistas' rejection. He comes to Felistas' house, is hostile, violent and threatening suicide. Felistas tells us what happened on that day:

“ *He came to our home. He threatened my mother. He told her if he could not marry me then he would kill me and/or himself. He had tried to call me but I did not receive his calls. My mother called me and told me what was happening; I still refused to marry him. When I arrived home, my boyfriend and mother were in the house. We quarrelled and he hit me. I fell to the ground. My mother helped me get up. The boy had a knife, when he saw me get up; he started shouting and continued to beat me. He had already taken poison and alcohol before he came to our home. He became weak then he fell down and died. We screamed for help; the neighbours came and called the police. When the police came, they took me and said that I was the first suspect... they did not believe me [that I did not poison my ex-boyfriend].* **”**

When asked what the turning point was in her life that led her down a pathway to prison Felistas says *"the main reason is that I said that I did not want my boyfriend's love"*.

Njeri and Mwassaa are also in prison for killing their abusers but in these cases the relationships had not ended. Both women had at certain points wanted to leave these relationships but when they reached out for help and advice were told by family members to *"persevere"*.

Mwassaa's life story was especially traumatic. She never knew her parents, was raised by an older sister and continuously abused by her uncle and auntie. At the age of 15, Mwassaa attempts suicide due to the years of family violence she had endured, the fact that she was pregnant and was forced to marry the 18 year old father of her baby. Mwassaa's husband was a criminal, domestically violent and their relationship ends when he is incarcerated for murdering someone during a robbery. Mwassaa meets her second husband when she is 18 years of age and in the beginning he treats her well. However, he teaches Mwassaa *"how to drink"* and a few years into their relationship, begins to *"beat"* her. She tells us, *"he used to beat me but I would just persevere... he would get violent when he'd drink...his mother told me to persevere and my friend back home told me the same thing so I did"*. She soon uses alcohol as a form of self-medication because it *"would stop me thinking about my childhood and all that I had gone through"*. One evening they have both been out drinking and when they return home, Mwassaa's husband becomes abusive perpetrating an especially brutal assault against her. Mwassaa kills him in self-defence. She describes the horror of that night as follows:

“ *We had gone out drinking and got back to the house fighting. I left him and went to the bedroom. My husband came in after me with a knife. I didn't see the knife and just walked by him to go get clothes from the hanging lines. He followed me outside and slashed my face. I was confused. I didn't know why I was bleeding so much but he continued beating me up. He kicked me and hit me and eventually we struggled for the knife. I got hold of it and I stabbed him in the stomach. The neighbours heard the commotion, they came over saw what had happened and rushed us to hospital. My cheek was hanging and my teeth were visible so they treated me first because they thought I would die. By the time they got to him he had died. They sent his body to the mortuary and sent me to the police station.* **”**

Njeri's father drank alcohol almost every day and perpetrated domestic violence against her mother. In adulthood Njeri marries twice. Her first marriage was a happy one. Njeri tells us, *"he was a good husband... never drink and never was violent"* but he died in a traffic accident leaving Njeri devastated. She starts drinking and meets her second husband a few years later. He would come home *"drunk"* and *"beat"* Njeri. She tried to leave him by running away to her home town but Njeri's mother tells her to *"preserve"* with the marriage. On the day of the crime, Njeri's husband had removed her infant daughter from her care. He refused to tell Njeri where her daughter was. He told Njeri, *"I have started to become stubborn and he was teaching me a lesson"*. Njeri had refused to give her husband anymore of the money she had inherited from her first husband. She explains what happened next:

“ He started to shout at me for nothing.... he got so angry...he said that he normally tells me my day will come and today it is the day. He went and locked all the gates....he hit me on the head. He continued knocking me saying everything I own in this house. I should remove. So I started to remove my pictures, curtains as he was crushing the pictures we took together. While in the process of removing he pulled me down then we started fighting but I was out of energy I put my head down and started crying. Then I suddenly turned and found him with a knife trying to stab me, which even slightly cut me as I pushed him away then he fell down and the knife stabbed him on the stomach and I also fell down. ”

Nyawira was the victim of childhood familial abuse. She left home at the age of 13 to work as a live in nanny and was subsequently raped by two different male employers. She fell pregnant as a result of the second rape. As an adult she meets and marries a man who was already married (initially Nyawira was unaware of this). He is a particularly brutal domestic violence offender and infects Nyawira with HIV. She says, “he would beat me....the violence I've seen...the marks you see on my legs are from him...he used to cut me with knives”. Nyawira formulates and escape plan, “he went back to his first wife and that is when I decided to plan my exit. I started a small business and I saved most of what I got. I knew it would be enough to get a house for me and my children”. Despite fearing the ramifications of leaving her husband, Nyawira follows through with her plan. It is against this backdrop of exercising her basic human right to live free of violence that Nyawira is propelled into prison. Her husband is enraged at Nyawira's decision to leave him and makes sure she pays for doing so. She narrates the events leading to her imprisonment as follows:

“ I moved out and moved in with the lady....he [violent husband] came for me and threatened this lady. I decided to go back with him to protect her and when we got to the house we got into an intense fight. He beat me up and this time I hit back and I hit him hard. The next morning none of us could leave the house. My clothes were drenched in blood...We stayed indoors for two days then he decided to take me to hospital on the third day. When we got back to the house he beat me up [again]. That night the children didn't even eat. The next day, he left for work and I moved out permanently. He went looking for me at my friend's house but didn't find me. I enrolled my children in a different school, started my business again and lived peacefully away from him. A short while after moving out I was told by neighbours that some men had come looking for me and that they had said they'll return later. My heart was troubled by this news. I knew it was my husband's doing. Six months later, two men came and told me that my child had been caught by the chief's office. I ran out and followed them because my child was in trouble. On our way there is when I realized that it was ruse. My husband had told the officers that I stole his money and the moment I got to the police station, I was arrested and put in a cell. ”

The police told Nyawira that the only reason she left “the matrimonial home” was because she had violently robbed her husband, they said “I had beaten him up with a hammer and robbed him...no one at the police station would listen to me”. In Nyawira's words the only way she could have avoided prison would have been “[if] I'd not fall in love with any man”.

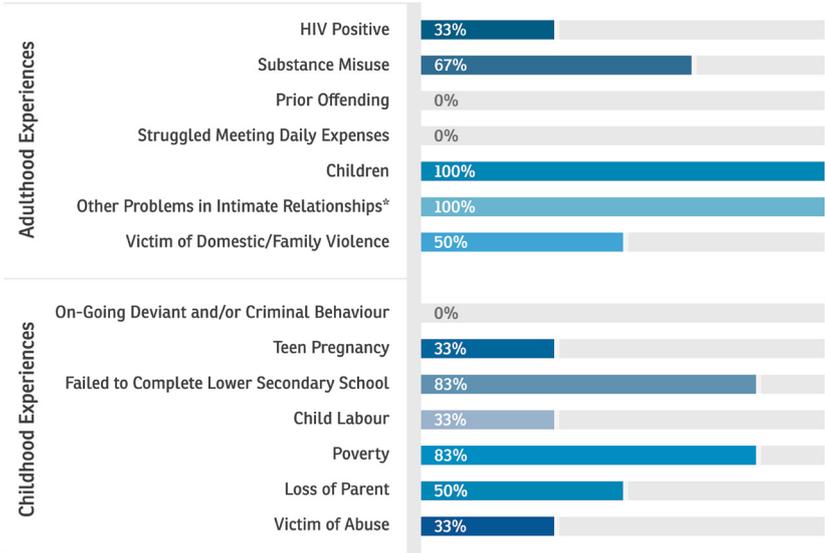
Gasira is imprisoned for Arson. She committed this crime in the midst of being beaten by her domestically violent ex-boyfriend. When they were together, Gasira had financed her boyfriend's business, bought him a car

and registered this vehicle under his name. She had called the police on numerous occasions after he had “hit” her. After discovering that she has been infected with HIV, Gasira decides to separate from her boyfriend but he refuses to sign the car back into her name. She confronts him about this and “he was beating me. He was saying I made him sick. He would kill me. I asked him why he had not written the letter to withdraw his ownership from the car. He got angry and started to fight me. I got paraffin, poured it....and lit it on fire”.

5.3 Harmed and Harming Pathway

All these women (n=6) suffered through childhood adversity, although some more than others. As adults they married men who did not treat them well. Some were in domestically violent relationships while others endured intimate partner infidelity, abandonment and/or were partnered with men who abused alcohol and generally mistreated them. Most abused alcohol as a means to cope with the stress of their lives. Unlike the women on the domestic violence pathway, none of the harmed and harming women offended as a direct result of abuse in their intimate relationships. Their victims were not current or former intimate partners. Neither was their offending economically motivated. None of these women had prior offending histories. Rather childhood adversity compounded by problems in intimate relationships manifested in a *loss of control and ensuing anger* being directed outwards at harming others and/or inwards at injuring themselves (see Figure 13 below for key aspects of these women’s life journeys).

Figure 13: Harmed and Harming Pathway (n=6)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Njoki lived with domestic violence as a child describing her father as “an angry man” who frequently “beat” her mother when he was drunk. Her father never provided for the family and considered his children “irrelevant”. She was raised in poverty and undereducated as a result. As an adult she married and had seven children with a man who engaged in extra-marital affairs. Njoki develops a problem with alcohol misuse. She drinks to

cope with her husband's infidelity. One night when she is out drinking with friends, Njoki learns that one of the women she is socialising with has been having an affair with her husband. Njoki explains that she was drunk and "couldn't control myself...I wanted to bring her shame by making her have diarrhoea in public". She puts poison in the woman's drink but rather than making her sick, Njoki's victim dies. Njoki tells us: "my husband having the affair was the turning point (into prison)". She explains that the violence she was exposed to as a child contributed to her crime because "every time my father fought my mother, we'd run...we lived in constant fear and knew no peace...in that moment when I knew my husband was cheating I felt as insecure as I did then".

Mumbi's husband was domestically violent, had numerous extramarital affairs and infected her with HIV. He eventually leaves Mumbi for one of his young lovers. Mumbi is enraged by her husband's abandonment of her and like Njoki, is imprisoned for perpetrating a crime of violence against her husband's lover. She explains that she beat and poured hot water over the victim because "it was just anger".

Chuki is also imprisoned for a crime of violence perpetrated against her husband's lover. Chuki's grew up with childhood adversity living in poverty with a mother and no father. She was bullied at school because she did not have a father. As an adult she marries and falls pregnant to a man who is already in a relationship with another woman. Chuki accepts that she must share her husband with this other woman because she has nowhere else to go. Returning to her mother's home was not an option because she was "poor". Eventually however, Chuki's husband starts engaging in extra-marital affairs with more women. He even brings one of his young lovers home with him. On the day of the crime, Chuki is insulted by her husband's lover. The women start fighting and Chuki "beat her with a stick and she fell down dead". She narrates the reason for her loss of control as follows:

“ The bitterness in my life and in my background led to me committing this crime. If this woman came to my home and I was already filled with love and with peace, I would never have returned her abusive words or confronted her. I could just go call my neighbour to help resolve. But I lost my conscious in that moment and my bitterness took over and I reacted. ”

Kwanboka's husband was an alcoholic, failed to provide for the family and expected his wife to take sole economic responsibility for familial economic provisioning. Her in-laws blamed Kwanboka for their son's inability to 'act like a man' telling her that the "house still needs a man to control it". She experiences verbal abuse from her in-laws and her husband on a regular basis. Kwanboka's husband and in-laws remove the children from her when she tries to leave her marriage but she eventually escapes. Kwanboka is in prison for assaulting a business colleague who owes her money. Like the other women on this pathway, Kwanboka's act of violence is situated within a narrative of anger and associated loss of control, she explains:

“ I took out all the anger I had toward her [the victim]...[the turning point was] my marriage because in that marriage I learnt to hate and acquired anger...they [husband and his family] rejected me for no good reason...if they had accepted me I would have stayed in my marriage and never met this lady [the victim]. ”

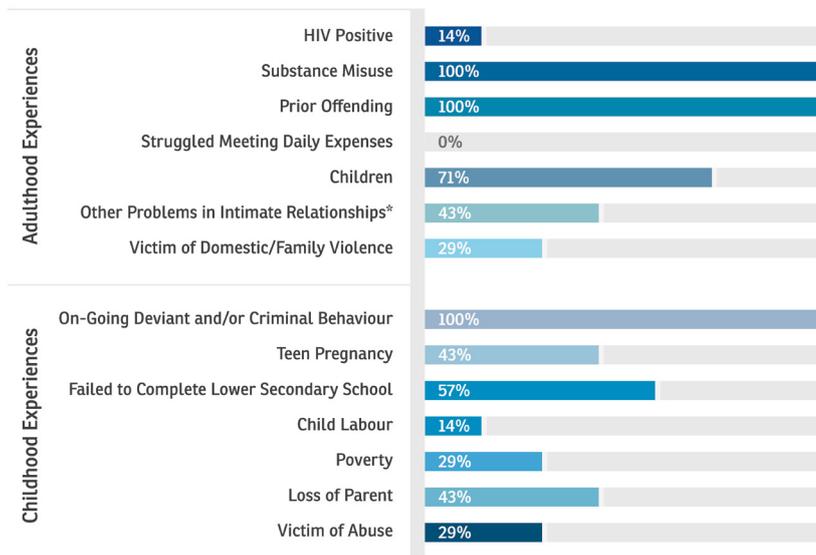
Adongo is in prison for her role in a robbery and kidnapping that resulted in a man's death. Adongo's childhood was marred by family violence. Her father was an alcoholic who frequently “beat” her mother when he was drunk. During adulthood and in a now reoccurring theme, Adongo marries a man who is unfaithful, an alcoholic and eventually infects her with HIV. She leaves her husband and travels down a path of self-destruction abusing alcohol, getting in with “bad company” and eventually offending. Adongo explains that the turning point for her was “after I found out I was HIV positive...I was very angry and hated my husband with a passion because he is the one who put me in this mess.”

Vatusia was raised by a single mother who she described as “verbally and physically abusive....always arguing and making noise....the house never had peace”. As an adult she marries a man who “has other women” and is domestically violent. Eventually, Vatusia sees no point in staying with her husband so she leaves without her children. Her husband will not let Vatusia take the children with her. After the separation, Vatusia who had never previously behaved in a deviant or criminal manner starts drinking, using and selling drugs. She explains: “when I separated with my husband is when my life begun to have difficulties. If I was still living with him and in my marriage, I could not find myself out here engaging in such illegal businesses.” The harm Vatusia experienced in her lifetime, most recently in her intimate relationship, is internalised and directed at injuring herself.

5.4 Deviant Women Pathway

Seven women (14%) constituted this pathway to prison. As with the women on the other pathways, these women were not strangers to childhood or adulthood adversity. However, and in contrast to others, this group of women were drawn to the excitement of the deviant/criminal lifestyle. Some were propelled into the deviant life by adversity (including abuse). For others there was no evidence of hardship in their life histories. In contrast to the other pathways, the women on this trajectory had all behaved in deviant and criminal ways across the life course. Most were repeat offenders and they all reported enjoying ‘partying’, abusing substances and ‘hanging out’ with ‘bad company’. It was these deviant/criminal lifestyles that eventually impelled them into prison for a variety of different offences (see Figure 14 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 14: Deviant Women Pathway (n=7)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

All these women began acting in deviant/criminal ways during their adolescence or early adulthood. After finishing school Zakia started 'going out' and drinking alcohol with a group of friends from her village, "my friends influenced me, they always bought alcohol and took me places where alcohol was in plenty, they never asked me to pay for anything". As a young woman, Hiari forms friendships with people she describes as "bad company" because they "had the same vices and they were all boys...we went to clubs and drunk the same alcohol". In early adulthood, Hamisi's mother asks her to leave the family home because "I used to drink alcohol. She got angry and told me to leave her house...I went to stay with a friend. I got into bad company and started an affair with a married man". Megan also "joined bad company and going into drugs". Ngina went out "clubbing" and "got into prostitution" with her "bad company." Malin started "clubbing, drinking and smoking dope" in her mid-twenties. Jumapili leaves home when she is a teenager to find work as a prostitute. She tells us, "I already knew what kind of job I was going to do since I had been introduced to prostitution earlier [by a friend], the money was easy to earn and it was a lot. There was also no stress so when I got the money all I could do was spoil myself with drugs and alcohol...: [my mother is a good mother]...I'm the worst criminal in the house; whatever she asks me to do, I don't. For example she told me not to take alcohol and I started taking alcohol".

At some point in their lives all of these women had struggled with addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. The majority had offended on numerous occasions prior to being imprisoned for their current offence. Jumapili had been arrested "too many times to count" for loitering [i.e. prostitution] but also reported stealing from clients when they were "drunk or high". She had served prior terms of imprisonment and reported an addiction to alcohol and Heroin. Jumapili is currently imprisoned for stealing. Zakia is incarcerated for loitering, an offence she had committed on numerous prior occasions. Zakia also reported drinking alcohol "everyday"

and using “marijuana a lot”. Hamisi had a problem with alcohol and a history of committing theft offences. Megan drinks alcohol, develops an addiction to cocaine and almost dies as the result of an overdose at the age of 26. She starts laundering drug money for a number of years and successfully traffics drugs more than once before being arrested and imprisoned on this occasion. Malin had a long term addiction to cocaine and methamphetamine which she curtails only when she starts trafficking drugs. She explains her offending behaviour leading to her current term of imprisonment:

“ I met a Nigerian supplier who said he could sell me the drugs if I came clean. I stopped using regularly. I started coning people online; it was my first job with that employer. It is like money laundering. After a year, I started travelling selling drugs to different countries. I travelled once a month for about five days. I travelled to Venezuela, Indonesia, I got caught in Kenya. ”

In contrast to the other women, Hiari’s criminal/deviant lifestyle was prematurely cut short. She meets her “bad company” at the age of 17; goes out ‘partying’ and drinking. They make plans to steal a car but are caught by the police. Hiari and her friends are convicted of robbery and she is sentenced to life imprisonment. She nevertheless describes the events leading up to the offending with a tone of elation:

“ I remember the day they told us this they had just come from a big job which earned them 500,000 KES each. After seeing how much money my friends made I decided to join them....I wanted to be a part of it. I asked them to get me role to play in their next heist and they did. We went out of town to steal a car but didn’t manage to do it; we got caught by the owner who called the police. The police got to us very fast since the police station was close to the place we stole the car. We had everything planned out; an inside man to help us, a mechanic to take the car apart and sell it for part and even the cut each of us would get. None of us counted on the owner being around. ”

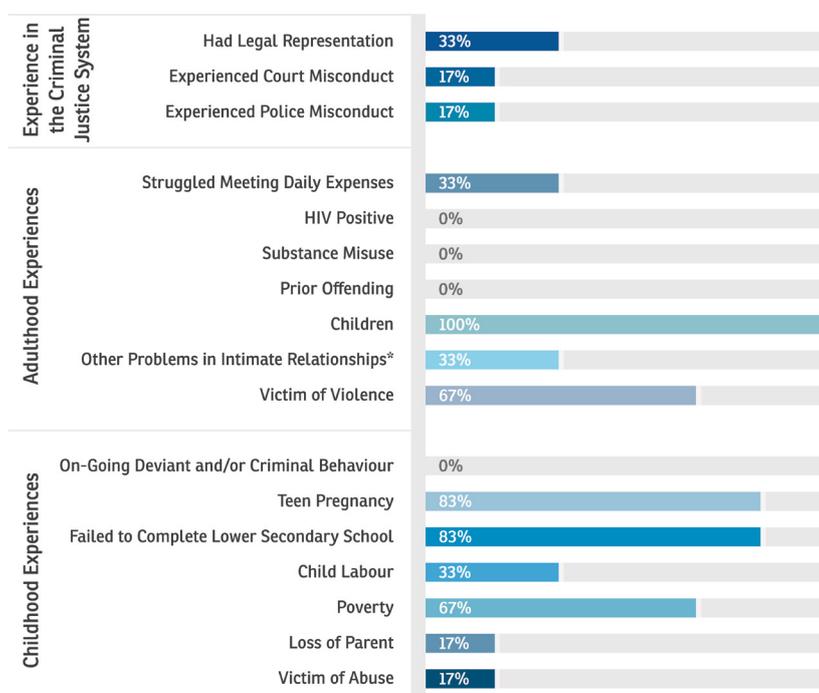
Ngina was actively engaged in a deviant lifestyle from the age of 18 when she started working as a prostitute. She enjoyed the money and luxurious lifestyle that sex work afforded her.

5.5 Guilt by Association Pathway

Six women (12%) were categorised on the pathway of guilt by association. Most reported being under-educated and all had experienced economic marginalisation at some point in their lives. However, some narrated more vulnerability than others including childhood and adulthood victimisation. There was no indication in these women’s stories that offending was motivated by economic gain and it certainly did not occur in response to domestic violence. There was no suggestion that problems in their intimate relationships had manifested in loss of control nor was involvement in a criminal lifestyle evident. None of these women had prior offending histories and while some had engaged in deviant behaviour as young people, they were all living normative lives prior to imprisonment. The commonality in these women’s stories was a refusal to accept culpability for the offence they were imprisoned for. Rather they narrated being embroiled in the offending of other known persons. They were in prison as a result of guilt by association but their ability to substantiate this was constrained. Justice inaccessibility was especially problematic for the women on this pathway. Some were beaten by police officers during questioning, others paid bribe money to court officials (to no avail), legal representation was either non-existent or lacking and the women, who were all undereducated (i.e. only one woman had completed

lower secondary school), expressed confusion with regard to the entire criminal justice process (see Figure 15 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 15: Guilt By Association Pathway (n=6)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Elinah and Kioni are in prison for violent offences that occurred within the context of their employment. Elinah and Kioni were both victims of gendered violence. Elinah grew up with domestic violence and would see "my father beat my mother a lot especially after he drank alcohol...we [Elinah and her siblings] used to run and hide". Both women grew up in poor families, did not finish lower secondary school and needed to find work as young teenagers to help support their families. Kioni finds work as a live-in-nanny, is raped and falls pregnant to a man known to her employers who also "beat" her repeatedly. Elinah is a domestic worker. The victims in each case were the children of the families that these women worked for.

Kioni eventually finds employment with a family that "treats me well" but is ultimately imprisoned for conspiring to kidnap her employers' infant son. The child was forcibly removed from Kioni when she was out shopping. She is assaulted by the assailant and left unconscious. The child is eventually found but Kioni's employer "insist that I arranged the kidnapping". She is brutally beaten by police and the victim's family during questioning:

“ When we got to the police station they beat me up. Male officers beat me up and a female officer put her gun on my chest and told me that if it was her child she would have killed me. They did all this to make me confess to something I hadn't done but still I didn't confess because I hadn't done it...my employer go her family to come to see me and when they got to the police station her mother-in-law slapped me so hard the police had to support me to keep me from falling. ”

At the court house, Kioni is asked for and subsequently pays *"bribe [money] to the clerk of the court....he asked me to give the land as a bribe and he'd fix my case so that I would never go to prison"*. She did not have a lawyer nor did she understand the court process. She explained that she was *"constantly being asked for bribes but I don't know why"*. When asked what the turning point was that led her down a pathway to prison, Kioni told us, *"I think I was too trusting [of her employers] and that led me here"*.

Elinah is accused of attempting to kill the child of her employer but insists that while she was in the house that day it was a male employee who carried out the attack. The first Elinah knew about the offence was when she went outside and found the child lying naked and unconscious. The primary perpetrator is eventually charged with attempted murder but the police also accuse Elinah of participating in the assault which she denies. Elinah pays for a lawyer but he does not show up to court. She also appeals her conviction in light of the fact that the male employee (i.e. primary offender) provides a letter stating that she was not involved in the offence. Her appeal is rejected. Elinah feels guilty in so far as maybe she could have done something to stop the attack on the victim. She states *"maybe I could have taken the child upstairs to stay with me....I am innocent but sometimes I feel it was my ignorance thinking the children are just safe downstairs with the people who were there"*.

Chineye described her childhood as happy but as an adult she was the victim of domestic violence. She is in prison for the murder of her brother-in-law who was *"found dead in a forest...chopped up with machetes"*. Prior to his death, Chineye's sister had been *"fighting with her husband because of his mistress and I'd been helping her deal with it"*. Originally, 20 family members had been arrested for the murder but Chineye explains *"my sister's husband's older brother bribed the police and everyone else was released except for the two of us [Chineye and her sister]"*. At court Chineye had a lawyer but *"he didn't do a good job, there wasn't any evidence but I was still convicted and sentenced to death....I spent 10 years on remand because they kept changing judges"*.

Alouch was raised in a poor family and exited education when she was only 12 years of age. As a teenager she goes out *"clubbing and drinking"*. Her friends *"were pulling me to their company and were making me try drugs and alcohol at an early age"*. However, Alouch's deviant behaviour comes to an abrupt end after she is sexually assaulted while *"unconscious [due to intoxication]"* and falls pregnant. She turns her life around at this point, moves to the city, finds a well-paying job and enters into a loving and supportive intimate relationship. Alouch is imprisoned for the homicide of a female friend but as with the other women on this pathway, her role and subsequent culpability in this offending is dubious. She explains the events leading to the victim's death as follows:

“ [My friend] got pregnant but she did not want the baby, she wanted to abort because she did not like the guy who gave her the pregnancy. She came to my house to seek advice and said she does not think the guy is going to be a responsible person to live with and so she was considering abortion. I told her we go see this doctor I used to see even when pregnant to seek advice. We went to his clinic she went inside but I waited at the reception and when she came out she said the doctor has sorted her and after a while she will started receiving her periods. I do not know how he did it because I was just outside. We went home and because it was late she slept in my house....We went home, prepared something to eat then went to sleep. My friend started bleeding a lot at night but I was asleep. In the morning I found a lot of blood everywhere and I called her she did not respond. This was around 5am. I started screaming and called my neighbours to come and help me. They came and tried to wake my friend up but she did not wake as she was already gone....A big crowd of people were all over my house then the police came to take the body for post-mortem and found cause of death to be abortion. They asked if I was the one who committed the crime I told them no and explained what happened from when we went to see the doctor until when we came to home, ate and slept then I found my friend dead but they did not understand....They told me, even the judge at the court said the biggest mistake I did was to carry somebody who has done an abortion to my house and the mistake was that she died inside my house. ”

At the police station, Alouch “did not even know what to do, I was just confused and following what everyone was saying [i.e. that she had committed an offence] because they looked learned. But now I regret”. At court, she had a lawyer and plead guilty because “the judge told me I was guilty because I knew [the doctor] had committed murder but I did not go to report so it....they even said I was the one who did abortion to my friend but I tried to explain and even took them to the doctor’s office but the doctor said he does not know us. We did not have a receipt or anything because it is illegal to commit abortion and the doctor could not write a receipt”. Alouch is sentenced to life in prison and when asked if she would do anything differently in hindsight replies:

“ We should be careful with type of advices we give our friends because I think if my friend could wake up right now and find me here she would be surprised. I only helped in words not in actions but I am here. I did not plan to do anything that could cause her death, if I knew going to the doctor could make her die I would have told her against it and told her to just persevere and give birth. ”

Visola and Winda also explained that they had not committed the crimes for which they were imprisoned. They were however, well acquainted with the actual culprits. Visola was in prison for possession of drugs for distribution and Winda for stealing. Both women entered a plea of guilty in court but narrated an inability to access justice.

Visola was arrested by police while looking after a friend’s shop for the day. Her friend’s wife was unwell and as a favour, Visola offered to look after the shop so he could stay home and take care of his wife. Unbeknownst to Visola, there was a large amount of marijuana hidden at her friend’s shop. The police arrived, conducted a search and found the drugs. Visola told the police that the drugs did not belong to her but they responded by stating this was irrelevant in the eyes of the law. Visola trusted the police. They eventually convinced her to plead guilty to a crime she was not culpable of. At court her relative lack of culpability is not taken into consideration and Visola is imprisoned for her poor choice in friends. She explains what happened on the day of her arrest and why she decided to plead guilty:

“ The Officer Commanding the Police Division (OCPD) told me that the drugs would cause me to stay in prison till I grow old if I did not plead guilty. When I went to court I pleaded guilty, but I said the bhang did not belong to me. The magistrate told me that the person who is caught with something is thought to be the owner. He just gave me a sentence. I did not want to waste my time in remand because I was the one who got arrested, my friend told me that he could not help me, I decided to just plead guilty and have the matter done with. ”

Winda is also in prison because of a crime committed by someone known to her. Prior to her arrest, Winda was taking care of a sick friend who was eventually hospitalised. When her friend returned home from the hospital she discovered that her laptop and some clothes were missing. Winda's friend “said because I was the one who was always visiting her; I was the one who stole them... she reported to the police and said I was the one who stole things”. Winda suspects her roommate was responsible for the crime because the police found her wearing some of the stolen clothes. Winda's roommate told the police she had received the clothes from Winda and then promptly disappeared. Winda tells us “when I was arrested, she [the roommate] went into hiding”. Winda also pleads guilty to the offence hoping to receive a shorter sentence, she explains:

“ My mother wanted the matter to come to an end she insisted I plead guilty. She said that the way she knows me as a child, she knows I did not take those things. She said it does not matter what other people think. I asked [the court] for bail or bond but I was denied....I think if the matter could have continued, if I did not plead guilty, I would have gotten a longer sentence. ”

After a few months in prison, Winda's friend (the crime victim) comes to visit her in prison “saying that she knew I was not the one who has taken her things. When I asked who had taken her things, she did not respond”.

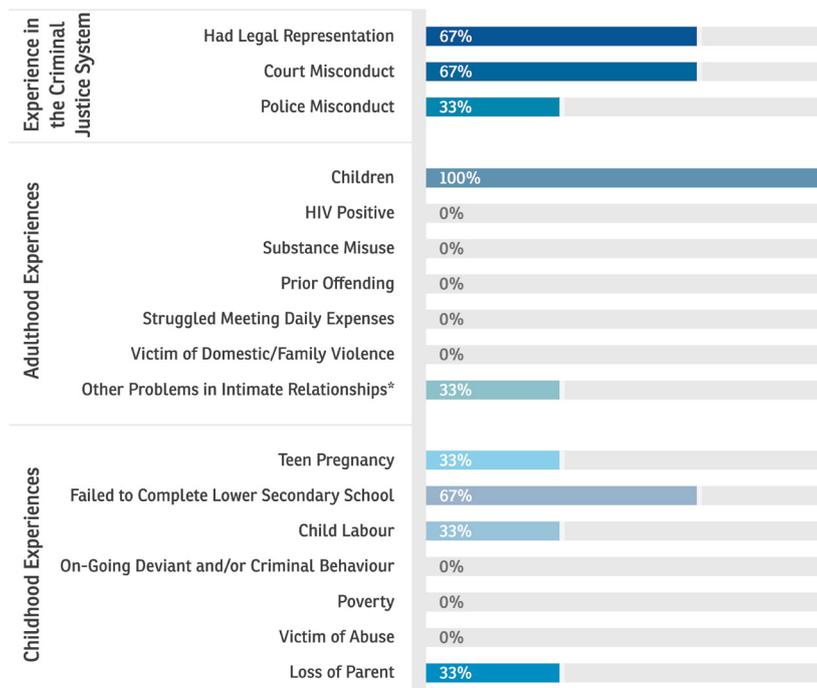
Neither Visola nor Winda completed lower secondary school; they received no legal advice and went to court unrepresented. Both women expressed confusion with regard to the justice process. Winda found the process especially confusing. She stated, “I did not understand the legal process....I did not understand the court processes...one of the court staff told me to plead guilty... I should not [in hindsight] agree for the matter to proceed”.

5.6 Pathway of Naivety and Deception

Three women constituted this pathway to prison. Up until the point of arrest the world of deviance and crime was foreign to them; they had abided by the law their entire lives and there was no indication of deviant behaviour of any kind in their life histories. Further, there was no suggestion of having lived with adversity in either childhood or adulthood. These women narrated life histories apparently void of reasons for offending. Instead, their stories suggest that naivety was their only crime. Their relative inexperience (with regard to the world of crime) and gullibility made the women on this pathway vulnerable to deception and exploitation by others and this is what propelled them into prison. Unlike the guilt by association pathway, these women admitted to their crimes but similarly constructed their offending within a milieu of negligible culpability. They all narrated being either

duped into or naively unaware of offending and like the women on the guilt by association pathway, barriers to justice made pleading their cases difficult (see Figure 16 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 16: Pathway of Naivety and Deception (n=3)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Hawla is imprisoned for fraud. She grew up in a middle class family, never associated with a deviant peer group or engaged in deviant/criminal behaviour as a teenager/young adult. She was comparatively well educated having completed high school where she met her future husband. As an adult, Hawla had a good relationship with her husband and described him as a "good man". They had two children together. Prior to the offence, Hawla owned her own business and her husband "provides for the children". She was financially secure. There was no indication in Hawla's life history that she would ever have reason to offend. Rather Hawla is in prison for naively helping out a friend.

A lawyer friend asked Hawla "for a favour...he wanted to sell his sister's land but since she had passed away the Land Commission was giving him a hard time...he wanted me to impersonate his sister and he'd give me a commission form the amount he got from the sale". Hawla thought about the proposition and asked her husband for his opinion. He told her "the risk was minimal", so she agreed. Everything went well "until the buyer got suspicious and got the police involved in the matter...turns out the land had an owner and the sister wasn't the true owner...he [the lawyer] was trying to con the buyer into buying land that had owners already". Hawla explained that all the documents provided to her by the lawyer had the sister's name on them. She is arrested but her lawyer friend "got away and still hasn't been caught". In court, Hawla was asked to pay bribe money. She gave the court clerk 100,000 KES expecting that "he would talk to the judge and I would be freed"

but this never happened. When asked what she could have done differently Hawla told us *"I wouldn't have the good heart to help this man [the lawyer]"*.

Afreen is in prison for international cross border drug trafficking. She too was middle class, comparatively well-educated and owned a lucrative business prior to being arrested. As a child, she grew up in a loving family and as an adult married a man she described as *"very good...my life was going well"*. Afreen spent most of her adult life caring for her seven children and making clothes; she was a very talented seamstress.

One of Afreen husband's friends was impressed with her sewing talent. This male acquaintance asked if Afreen might be interested in accompanying him to Nairobi to see if there was a market there for her beautiful clothes. Afreen is excited and agrees to go. Once there, her husband's friend takes Afreen's clothes from her and sells them. They are in Nairobi for a few days before returning home.

A year later, the male acquaintance contacts Afreen again to ask if she would like to return to Nairobi, where he is currently living, and open a clothing boutique with him. Afreen discusses this with her husband. He is supportive and tells her that *"if you start doing well, I'll come but if you don't, we can lose everything so I'll stay back just in case and you can come home if the business doesn't take off"*. At the airport Afreen's new business partner's brother *"hands me a bag of clothes"* and tells her to *"give this to his brother and wife in Nairobi"*. Afreen looks inside the bag and *"saw only clothes"*. On arrival in Nairobi airport, Afreen's bag is taken and searched. A large amount of Heroin is found inside. Afreen is shocked.

Afreen does not speak *"English or Swahili"* but no interpreter is present during police questioning or criminal proceedings. She also finds it difficult to access adequate legal representation. When Afreen arrives in court, *"a lawyer suddenly appeared and asked for 200USD"*. Afreen pays the money but never sees the 'lawyer' again. Her husband sells their house and pays another lawyer but he *"ate that money too"*. Combined, these factors made it difficult for Afreen to mount an adequate defence. Language barriers and no legal representation in court made it impossible for Afreen to understand what was going on during her trial.

The man who 'set up' Afreen was never found. She is sentenced to 16 years in prison thousands of miles away from her husband and children. She tells us, *"I would have committed suicide but I didn't...I know my family, my children are waiting for me"*. When asked what the turning point was that lead her to prison Afreen state *"I blame myself...why did I trust them? Why did I leave my country and go to another?"* Thus, similar to Hawla, Afreen's naivety alongside barriers to accessing justice propelled her into prison.

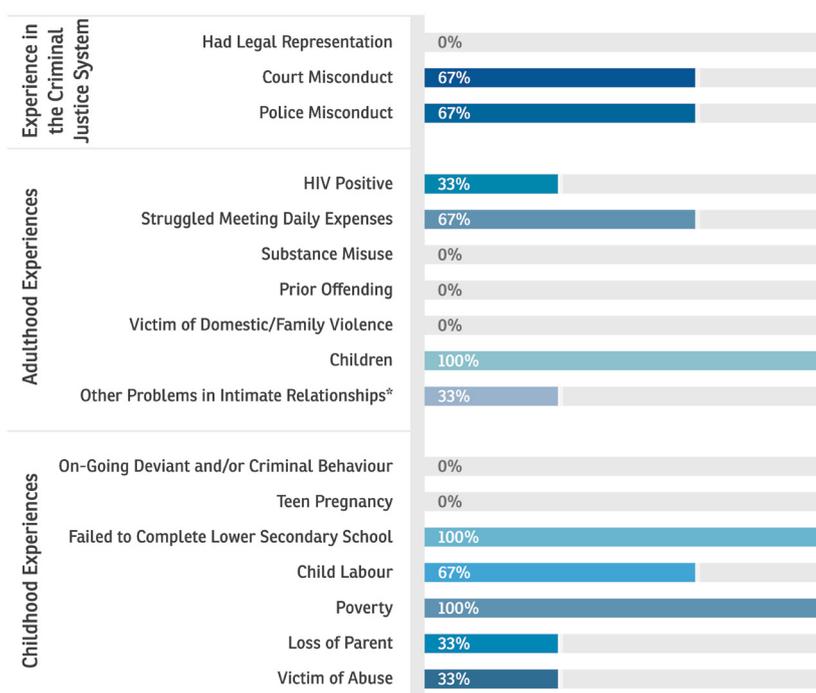
Ngendo's life history is similar to the other women on this pathway. Her childhood is a happy one and as an adult Ngendo marries *"a good man"*, has children and lives a contented middle class life. Ngendo is in prison for robbery. Her husband purchased two second hand mobile phones from a colleague and gifts these to his

wife. Ngendo keeps one and gives the second phone to her nephew. Unbeknownst to Ngendo, both phones were acquired during a robbery. The man who sold Ngendo's husband the phones disappears. While unaware of it at the time, Ngendo has now come to understand that, "in the law of Kenya when you buy something and the person who sold you it is not found, then you stole it". Ngendo, her husband and nephew are arrested. The police "beat us very hard to confess...but we did not because we do not know". Ngendo's husband and nephew are seemingly released indiscriminately. She tells us "if I had a better lawyer things would be different... I did not understand what was going on [in court]...some judges do not listen to some cases very well." When asked to reflect on what she could have done differently, Ngendo states "I could have asked my husband where he got that phone and when he said someone sold for him, I should have refused and told him to go back to the shop and get me a new phone".

5.7 The Sex Offender (Falsely Accused?) Pathway

Three women categorised this pathway to prison and as the name indicates, all were incarcerated for sex offending. Like the women on the previous two pathways, these women constructed their pathways to prison against a backdrop of injustice. In the guilt by association pathway there was recognition by the women that a crime was committed but they were not the culprits. Women on the pathway of naivety and deception were duped into or naively unaware of offending. In contrast, the narratives comprising the sex offender pathway are predicated around the notion of false accusations. To put this differently, all the women on this pathway deny offending and questioned whether or not a crime had ever actually taken place. Everyone reported being 'framed' by others but significant barriers to justice compromised their capacity to establish this (see Figure 17 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 17: The Sex Offender (Falsely Accused?) Pathway (n=3)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Wamuhu, Nafula and Winta all lived with childhood poverty and they are undereducated. None completed lower secondary school. Wamuhu poignantly describes her experience with childhood poverty as follows: *"we used to sleep hungry, even when in school and I did not have lunch they will bring me some little porridge, sometimes I just ate salt"*. Wamuhu and Winta stopped attending school when they were in the upper primary years. Winta left in Class 6 and Wamuhu tells us, *"I went to school until class 8 (last year of primary school) but my parents did not have the financial capacity of paying for my education further so I stopped school"*. Nafula exited education in lower secondary school because her *"teachers beat me up for being a slow learner"* and she runs away from home because of *"the situation at school"*.

After finishing school, Nafula and Winta found employment as domestic workers cleaning the houses of the more economically privileged. It is within the context of this employment that both women are accused, arrested and convicted for sexually abusing the young sons of their employers. Both women suspect they were 'framed' by their employers as a ploy to avoid payment of wages owed.

Nafula claims that the only evidence in her case was that *"the boy said aunty touched me [but] he could have been referring to me or his aunty who lived with them. The lady of the house didn't ask the boy [this question]. She just assumed it was me...they had a doctor's report they entered as evidence. This report only states that the boy was unwell and he was given a painkiller. It doesn't say he was defiled. That's all they used"*. Nafula expresses confusion about why her employer would accuse her of this crime but wonders if these accusations were made to avoid paying her wages. She states:

“ *I cleaned clothes for this lady and she hadn't paid me for three months [when I asked for the money] she called the police and they came for me. She had told them that I had slept with her [10 year old] son and they arrested me. The Officer in Charge of the Station refused to take my case and even refused to put me in the cell. After some convincing [by my employer] he put me in the police cell and that is how it all started.* ”

Winta is similarly confused as to why her employer made these allegations against her. Once again she was owed money and Winta needed to resign from her position and return home because her child was sick. She wonders if maybe the wages owed and her impending resignation were behind her employer's false allegations. Winta says:

“ *I was called and informed that my child was sick, I requested the lady to give me money for the days I had worked for her and just like that she took me to the police and they arrested me...I just don't understand, I was just falsely accused...I wish I never went to do the house girl work...I could have stayed at home... I think the lady just wanted me to continue with the work but I did not want to continue and that is why she bought me to prison.* ”

Winta explains that there was no physical evidence to support her employer's accusation and the court imprisoned her despite two doctors reports showing there was no sexual abuse. However, the victim (Winta's

employer's 13 year old son) did testify against her: "the son just said what the mother told him to say". Winta suspects that the police and judge in her case had been bribed by the alleged victim's mother. She states, "there was just a lot of bribery.... just from the way they were talking and acting [in the court] I could tell they [police and judge] had been bribed".

After experiencing childhood poverty, Wamuhu marries a "very supportive" husband and manages to secure financial stability in adulthood. She described her adult life as being happy and carefree until the day that an 18 year old girl comes to her house "wanting to get her hair done" (Winta is a hairdresser). Winta styles the girl's hair and goes out to the market. On her return home, she is met by the police who say that this girl's mother is accusing Winta of procuring her daughter for prostitution. Winta explains:

“ When I came back from market I heard a knock at the door to find police officers. They asked what was I doing with the young girl and I just said I was braiding her hair. The police asked the girl and she said her mother said that she should tell the police I was selling sex for me. Her mother was also there so I asked her why she was telling lies but the police told me to be quite I will talk at the police station.... The girl [victim] write a statement saying I came with two men in the house. I slept with one and she slept with another... I just explained that I have salon business and the girl came to my house to braid her hair, when we were done we both left as I went to the market and she left for her home. The girl changed the story in the court saying I went to pick her from her home to my house. In the house she found two men of which I slept with one and she slept with the other. ”

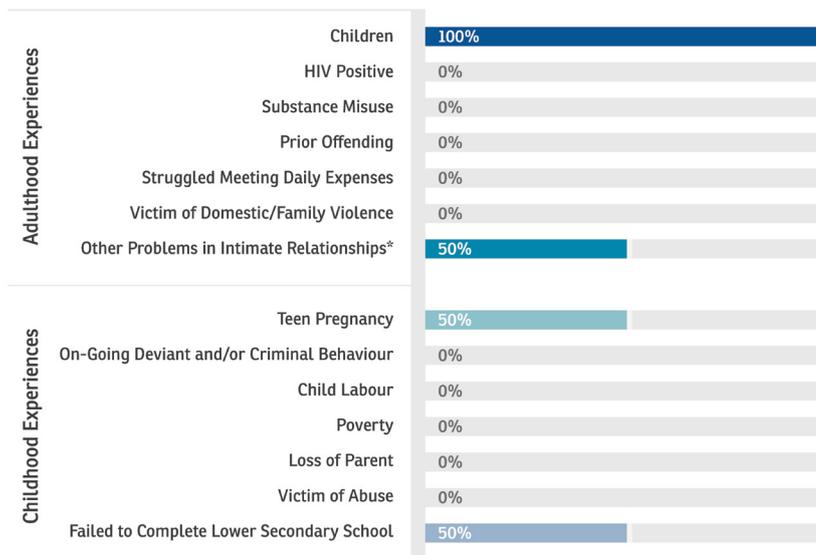
Winta reports that in part her road to prison was paved by jealousy and police corruption. She tells us, "the policeman that arrested me [said] that he will ensure I am taken to prison, his case cannot fail. I was with my husband in the court and he said I [needed to] give him Ksh, 7000 then he [will] close my case, but I told him I did not have any money to [pay the] bribe and I am being accused falsely. Then he said he will make sure I am convicted." When asked why she thought these false allegations were made against her Winta states, "I think it is people's jealousy, I live well with my husband, I have my feeds like cows and goats and I am doing farming. I am just progressive and I think people in the community are jealous".

5.8 Pathway of One Life Changing Moment

The final pathway to prison included two women, Afaafa and Nuru. Both were imprisoned because of violent actions perpetrated by them in the heat of the moment while under the influence of alcohol. Up until that one life changing moment, Afaafa and Nuru had led very ordinary lives. While undereducated, they were raised in loving, secure, middle class families. Neither experienced domestic violence as adults and while Nuru's first husband was unfaithful and they eventually separated, at the time of the offence she was in a perfectly functional and happy relationship with her boyfriend of three years. Nuru was a mother and worked as a waitress. Afaafa was also a mother and a happily married housewife who only ever had "small arguments" with her husband. There was no indication of economic marginalisation. Nor was there a history of prior deviant/criminal behaviour or problematic substance misuse. They only ever drank alcohol occasionally while in social

situations. For all intents and purposes these women had led exemplary and relatively trauma free existences. That is until that moment in time when the course of their lives would be changed forever (see Figure 18 below for key aspects of these women's life journeys).

Figure 18: Pathway of One Life Changing Moment (n=2)



*Includes separation from intimate partner, intimate partner infidelity, deviant intimate partner

Afaafa and Nuru were both convicted and imprisoned for manslaughter and their stories are fantastically similar. Both were out for the evening drinking at a bar, they were intoxicated and proceeded to get into an angry altercation with another patron. Afaafa explains that her husband started arguing with a male friend so she "stood up and pushed the man, I was totally drunk and the man was also very drunk, so he fell down and hit his head on a pool table...nobody took it seriously because the man was still conscious, talking and throwing words". This man, the victim, died the next day. Nuru is similarly out drinking with friends and they get into a "fight" with a girl who is later found dead at the side of a road. Unlike Afaafa who admits to her crime, Nuru claims that she is innocent and tells us that "the prosecutor said we go look for some money he will help close the case but I think he had already been given money by the other [victim's] family because by the time we were able to raise some money he said he does not want to see us in his office". When asked, both women communicate that the turning point leading them into prison was intoxication. Nuru states, "if I was not drunk, we would not have fought" and Afaafa says "alcohol is the main reason I'm here today...I was new to alcohol".

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pathways researchers have found that women's trajectories into the criminal justice system are impacted by a grouping of interrelated and interconnected variables/events that limit and shape their behaviour and choices. Utilising a pathways approach, we explored women's narratives of their journeys to prison in two Kenyan correctional institutions.

The life stories conveyed by the women in this research are reflected in the narratives of imprisoned women across the globe. In particular, victimisation, disordered familial and intimate relationships, low levels of education, poverty and motherhood (often in teen years) characterised many of our interviewee's lives. Some women also struggled with addiction (usually to alcohol but sometimes illicit drugs) and poor physical health due to HIV infection. In addition to these broad categorical findings, eight distinct pathways to prison were identified: 1) the economically motivated pathway incorporating the familial economic provisioning and economic excess pathways; 2) domestic violence pathway, 3) harmed and harming pathway, 4) deviant women pathway, 5) guilt by association pathway, 6) pathway of nativity and/or deception, 7) the sex offender (falsely accused?) pathway, 8) pathway of one life changing moment.

Prior studies show that women's offending recurrently occurs against a backdrop of poverty, familial care-taking, victimisation, adversity and trauma. In this research, the centrality of these experiences to women's criminalisation culminated under the familial economic provisioning (n=10), domestic violence (n=7), and the harmed and harming (n=6) pathways. Combined close to 50% of the women took one of these three pathways into prison.

Barriers to justice were a generic problem for the women interviewed. However, this concern was especially pertinent for those narrating the guilt by association, naivety and/or deception and sex offender (falsely accused?) pathways. Close to 25% of women comprised one of these three pathways to prison and in every case their narratives were constructed, to varying degrees, around denial or a reduced sense of culpability and feelings of injustice. Justice inaccessibility was especially pertinent for these women. They relayed multiple barriers to justice, an inability to communicate with police and defend themselves in court. Police misconduct, bribery and inadequate legal representation were of particular concern and the women, who were all undereducated and often vulnerable in other ways, articulated bewilderment with regard to the entire criminal justice process.

The remaining 25% of women were in prison due to greed, material consumption, the desire to 'get rich quick' (the pathway of economic excess) or because they were drawn into the excitement of the deviant/criminal lifestyle (deviant women pathway). Deviant peer group association and substance abuse were key features of the latter pathway. On both trajectories, victimisation and other adversities were evident in some stories.

What this research shows is that victimisation, adversity and trauma experiences are frequently central to women's journeys into Kenya's prisons. Better meeting the needs of women therefore requires recognition of and appropriate responses to their trauma histories. Results from this research necessitate a trauma informed care/practice approach. While prisons are trauma inducing environments, measures can be introduced to lessen the impact of trauma on women prisoners. We need correctional officers who are trauma informed i.e. have an understanding of trauma, its impacts, how it manifests and how best to respond to women in trauma sensitive ways (Kubiak, Covington & Hiller, 2017). As argued by Owen, et.al, (2017: 180) "interactions with [prison] staff are pivotal to women's sense of well-being and perceptions of safety".

Prison systems are structured in a way that is counterintuitive to recovery for traumatised women. Confined spaces, lack of privacy, harsh punishment, verbal and physical aggression, shaming and intrusive monitoring are not appropriate when dealing with women who have experienced trauma. These practices/approaches are inherently disempowering and mirror, for example, the tactics used by domestically violent men to maintain power and control over their victims. Such practices/approaches in prison settings can cause further trauma and mental health degradation (Owen, et.al., 2017; Kubiak, et.al., 2017). Long term, if our goal is to rehabilitate offenders, we need to empower, not re-victimise women prisoners.

GENERAL PRISON POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

***Recommendation 1:** Gender sensitivity should become an essential element of the policy formulation and management of women's prisons in Kenya. Efforts should be made to enhance an understanding that women prisoners have requirements that are different to those of men. Common characteristics, specific needs and pathways to imprisonment of women prisoners should be recognised and reflected in national prison policy and regulation, guidelines and handbooks, and institutional training of all correctional staff working with women prisoners.*

***Recommendation 2:** At the prison level, the gender-sensitive prison management approach should be implemented in women's prisons. This approach requires, for instance, the recognition of the different needs of women; a less authoritarian manner in the way prison staff communicate with women prisoners; awareness of emotional dynamics and appropriate responses; and listening and understanding complex intersectional needs of some women prisoners.*

Trauma informed care/practice is a strengths based correctional service delivery approach, grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, avoiding institutional processes and individual practices that are likely to re-traumatise (Kubiak, et.al., 2017: 5). Five core values of trauma informed care/practice have been articulated: safety (physical and emotional), trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment. In practice, these values manifest in: 1) treating women with respect and dignity, 2) understanding how women prisoners may be affected by and cope with victimisation and trauma, 3) recognising and minimising power dynamics in prison settings, 4) restoring a sense of power to victimised women, 5) creating an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe (i.e. female prisoners are safe from abuse by other women, visitors and staff), 6) working in a manner designed to prevent re-victimisation and re-triggering of trauma (Owen, et.al., 2017: 179-180; Kubiak, et.al., 2017: 5). As argued by Owen, et.al. (2017: 180) implementing trauma informed care/practice is "cost-free, obtainable and worthwhile." Being trauma informed is positive for correctional staff and prisoners. It creates a safer environment for everyone (Owen, et.al., 2017).

In addition to trauma informed care/practice, there is also a need to develop and introduce trauma specific treatment programs for women imprisoned in Kenya. Trauma informed care/practice is distinct from trauma-specific treatment programs. The former aims to prevent or decrease re-victimisation and triggering previous traumatic events in prison environments. The latter provides relief from trauma related symptoms and/or behaviours. In other words, trauma specific treatment programs are about facilitating recovery from trauma and its associated impacts (Kubiak, et.al., 2017: 12).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE/TREATMENT

Recommendation 3: Given the centrality of domestic violence victimisation to women's trajectories into prison, there is a need for proper classification and screening procedures to obtain essential information about any history of sexual abuse, domestic violence, and parental responsibility of newly admitted women prisoners. Such information is important in developing and designing a suitable programme that matches individual needs and can improve women's mental wellbeing and social reintegration prospects.

Recommendation 4: Correctional staff should be provided with trauma informed care/practice training so that they can understand what trauma is and how it affects women in correctional environments. Particular attention should be paid in this training to the dynamics of domestic violence, its impacts and ways to empower rather than re-victimise women. This training should emphasise respect for and dignity of women prisoners, address the characteristics/manifestations of trauma, and its impacts and considerations of how trauma can be exacerbated and alleviated in correctional settings.

Recommendation 5: Kenya Prisons Service should work toward developing a suite of trauma-informed treatment programs. Given the over-preponderance of domestic violence victims in Kenya's prison system, a positive first step would be the development of a domestic violence program. This program should be developed in close consultation with Kenyan domestic violence experts (i.e. there are a number of well-established domestic violence NGOs operating in Kenya) and with women prisoners (i.e. what do the women want/need in a program).

Recommendation 6: Kenya Prisons Service should consider developing and distributing domestic violence information materials to women in prison. These materials should be developed in conjunction with domestic violence experts and provide women with base-line information about the dynamics of domestic violence (adapting the power and control wheel to the Kenyan context would be ideal here), its impacts and where victims can go to seek further advice/support in prison and post release.

Recommendation 7: Kenya Prisons Service should also consider developing trauma informed programs for victims of sexual assault and women with histories of problematic alcohol and drug use. Once again, these programs should be developed in close consultation with relevant Kenyan experts and women prisoners.

In this research, low levels of education and associated poverty presented as crucial variables in women's prison trajectories. Providing educational and vocational opportunities in prison represent one of the key tools for supporting women's rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. The importance and value of education was expressed by many of the women in this research. Providing women with learning opportunities in prison will improve their ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life and increase their employability. Vocational training is also important for increasing post-release employment prospects (Hawley, Murphy & Souto-Otero, 2013).

EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Recommendation 8: Kenya Prisons Service should ensure that female inmates in Kenya have access to educational and vocational training programs in prison that best meet the individual needs of each woman, taking into consideration their personal interest, existing skills and the meaningful nature of such activities. The vocational training and work offered should correspond to market demands and aim to increase women's opportunity of earning an honest living after release.

Recommendation 9: Educational and training programs should be developed in consultation with women prisoners. With limited resources inside prison, prison authorities may consider developing partnerships with external agencies such as the private sector and NGOs to improve the quality and variety of vocational training provided to women in prison, while enabling them to establish links with organizations that can assist them on release.

The majority of women in this study faced multiple barriers to justice. While many of these problems manifest prior to incarceration, thus 'sitting outside' the Kenya Prisons Service purview, there is still the possibility of facilitating access to legal advice and/or representation for those women held on remand.

LEGAL AID

Recommendation 10: Kenya Prisons Service should facilitate women's access to legal advice/representation. This could be achieved by partnering with established NGOs who already provide pro bono legal services (e.g. The Federation of Women's Lawyers Kenya).



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