



Hacettepe University Graduate School Of Social Sciences

Department of Social Work

**SOCIAL RE-INTEGRATION OF EX-PRISONERS IN UGANDA-THE  
MISSING LINK**

Onur YAŞAR

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2022



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## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Onur YAŞAR has on the date of 16.05.2022 successfully passed the defense examination and approves his Ph.D. Thesis titled “Social Re-integration of Ex-prisoners in Uganda-The Missing Link”.

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## ETİK BEYAN

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**Onur YAŞAR**

**To my father,  
whom I recently lost,  
and there is not a single day that I do not miss him...**

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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to understand the social reintegration experiences of ex-prisoners with the society after prison. For this purpose, it aims to reveal how ex-prisoners who turned to crime after prison lost their link with the society and how ex-prisoners who did not commit crime after prison re-establish their link with the society. Qualitative research methods were used in the research, as the study aims to focus on the experiences of former prisoners and their perceptions of the social reintegration process.

Within the scope of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 prisoners who were in prison for the second or more times at the time of the interview in 4 different prisons in Uganda and 15 ex-prisoners who had not been involved in crime again for at least 3 years after their release from prison. A semi-structured interview form was used in the interviews and the data were coded and analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA program prepared for qualitative data analysis.

As a result of the research, positive family and social relations, better education level, participation in employment, vocational training courses in prisons, participating in voluntary activities in NGOs and religious institutions empower ex-prisoners and facilitate the process of social reintegration with society. On the other hand, the research revealed that the factors which complicate the social reintegration of ex-prisoners in Uganda are somehow related with the deep poverty in the country, the prevalence of bribery and corruption in the public and private sectors, inter-tribal discrimination, development gap between rural and urban areas and existing cultural gender roles for women and girls.

The findings obtained as a result of the research were discussed with the empowerment approach and the concepts of human rights, social justice and social inequality, and suggestions developed at micro, mezzo and macro levels.

**Keywords:** Social reintegration, recidivism, empowerment, forensic social work.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ACRWC** : The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- BJS** : The Bureau of Justice Statistics
- CAT** : United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- CEDAW** : The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CRC** : United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CSWE** : The Social Work Education Council
- ICCPR** : The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ICESCR** : The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- NCC** : National Consultative Commission
- NOFSW** : The National Organization of Forensic Social Work
- NRM** : National Resistance Movement
- UPS** : The Uganda Prisons Service

## INTRODUCTION

Ugandan prisons have the sixth crowded prison population in the entire world (Masaba, 2019; Kisa, 2019). On the other hand, the statistics published in December 2021 reveal that there are 254 prisons in Uganda and the total capacity of these prisons is 19,986 people. But the number of people staying in these prisons is 67,318. According to these numbers, the occupancy rate due to official capacity is 336.8%. These data reveal that people in Ugandan prisons will need a significant social work intervention both during and after prison process. However, the status quo is such that there is no solid program to reintegrate prisoners into society during and after incarceration in Ugandan prison system.

This study is an attempt to reveal the current practices and approaches towards reintegration of ex-prisoners in Uganda, to understand how ex-prisoners who turned to crime after prison lost their link with the society and how ex-prisoners who did not commit crime after prison re-establish their link with the society. The study will examine these processes in detail for both groups of participants in the context of their life before prison, their prison life, and their life after prison. With the effort to understand the difficulties, facilitators and power sources experienced by the participants in these processes, the areas that need to be strengthened will be tried to be revealed. As a result of the study, the findings will be discussed with the empowerment approach and the concepts of human rights, social justice and social inequality, finally recommendations for different stakeholders will be developed to facilitate the social reintegration of ex-prisoners and empower them during the social reintegration progress.

It is expected that this study will contribute to the forensic social work literature and give a new perspective, as well as determining the needs of the ex-prisoners living in very difficult prison conditions in Uganda and allowing their voices to be heard.

## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covers the historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual background to the study, forensic social work and ex-prisoners, statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions that underpin the study, scope of the study, justification and importance of the study.

### **1.2. BACKGROUND**

The study background is divided into the historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual background.

#### **1.2.1. Historical Background**

The prisoners, prisons and prison management of today have undergone several evolutionary processes. There is a long history of prisoners, how they are treated to the present-day efforts of social reintegration, which at one point in history were not thought about. To appreciate the role and means as well as the challenges to ex-prisoners' reintegration, it is important to reflect on how this process and efforts to socially re-integrate prisoners have evolved (Turning, 2012, p.281). This reflection will then lay a foundation to a good analysis and assessment of what has been done so far and what remains to be done.

To begin with, the use of prisons can be traced back to the rise of the state as a form of social organization. The Romans were among the first to use prisons as a form of punishment, rather than using prisons for only detention. A variety of existing structures were used to keep people as prisoners, such as metal cages, basements of public buildings, and quarries. One of the most famous Roman prisons was the Mamertine Prison, established around 640 B.C. by Ancus Marcius. Corresponding with the advent of the state was the development of written language, which enabled the creation of formalized legal codes as official

guidelines for society. The best known of these early legal codes is the Code of Hammurabi, written in Babylon around 1750 BC (Turning, 2012, pp. 281-282).

In Europe, from the middle ages until the 16th and 17th centuries, prisons were seldom used as a punishment in their sense, and were mainly used to hold those who were awaiting trial and those who were convicted (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2019).

From the late 17th century and during the 18th century, a big resistance is built by the people against public execution and torture both in Europe and in the United States. Especially under the Bloody Code, which has only few sentencing alternatives and imposing the death penalty even for petty crimes, such as theft, was disquieting the public; many jurors were refusing to convict defendants of petty crimes when they knew that the defendants would be sentenced to death. So, rulers began looking for new tools that will punish criminals but at the same time control them. But on the other hand, those tools shouldn't cause to associate administrators with spectacle of tyrannical and sadistic violence. Then as a solution they developed systems of mass incarceration, often with hard labor (Kann, 2005).

After a while it was seen that prison system needs reformative implementations and changes. At this point it is understood that the prison reform movement was significantly influenced by two somehow seemingly contradictory philosophies. The first one was based in enlightenment ideas of utilitarianism and rationalism, and it was suggesting that prisons should be used as substitute for public corporal punishments such as whipping, hanging, etc. This theory, referred to as *deterrence*, claims that the primary purpose of prisons is to be so harsh and terrifying that they deter people from committing crimes out of fear of going to prison. The second theory, which sees prisons as a form of rehabilitation or moral reform, is based on religious ideas that accept crime equal with sin, and claims prisons should be a place to instruct prisoners in Christian morality, obedience and suitable behavior. These later reformers were believing that prisons could be constructed as humanitarian institutions of moral instruction, and that prisoners' behavior could be "corrected" and "changed" so that when they were released, they would be good members of society (Lewis, 2009, p. 16).

The concept of the modern prison pretty much remained unknown until the early 19th-century. At that time the punishments mostly consisted of physical penalties such as capital punishment, mutilation, flagellation (whipping), branding however, sometimes non-physical penalties such as public shaming rituals were used (Spierenburg, 1995).

The modern prison phenomenon has also changed a lot over time. In this process of change, the cultural, social and historical structures and legal systems of the countries have been effective. Before and after the phenomenon of the modern prison, protecting the rights of prisoners has never been an easy task. Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, included details such as the prohibition of torture, the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence, it did not directly refer to the rights of prisoners. In 1955, the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders was held. At this congress, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners were adopted. These rules constitute an important milestone in the protection of prisoners' rights. As an extension of these rules, the "The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners", also known as the "Nelson Mandela Rules", were adopted in the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 in order to protect the rights of prisoners in the most comprehensive way in the international arena (Gilmour, 2022).

Historically throughout Africa and in Uganda, where the research was conducted, there is no concrete evidence that prisons exist to punish wrongdoers in society. (Mukemo, 2000; Birungi, 2005). It is seen that those who wrote and taught about how to treat and punish those who act against the interests of the state and society and the order are people from the western world. Of course, this does not mean that no one thought about the behavior against the society until the prisons as we know them today were established in Africa. However, at that time, thoughts and teachings about crime and punishment took place in folk tales, poems, sayings and proverbs. For example, in the narratives of the Bantu tribe in Uganda, there are oral narratives in which there is a practice of paying more than the damage done in cases of injury or damage to property (Mujuzi, 2009). In some tribes in Kenya, it is reported that mutilation, torture, compensation and, to a very limited extent, the death penalty. In Uganda's

Buganda and Bunyoro tribes, the offender could be detained temporarily at the King's palace until the offender's relatives paid compensation to the victim or his family (Birungi, 2005).

The use of the prison as we know it today in Africa was imported by European colonists. European colonialists used prisons to protect the society from people who did not want to be a part of a law-abiding society and caused problems in the society. However, it is also claimed that the colonialists actually used the prisons to obtain cheap and free labor to be used in the construction of structures such as castles, churches and schools etc. (Mukemo, 2000; Birungi, 2005).

It is stated that rehabilitation efforts for prisoners begin with work programs in prisons. Work programs which intended in part to keep prisoners mentally healthy, a simple, kind of practical form of rehabilitation, have existed as long as Canon City's principal prison. "*Convicts during confinement need constant employment to keep from destruction and degradation,*" writes an 1896 warden (Biennial Report, 2019). But early rehabilitation programs for the prisoners extended beyond time-consuming and economically productive labor to education for inmates and ecclesiastics have a role on that. For example, the chaplain of Colorado State Penitentiary began a night school available for the prisoners with good behavior records in 1882. The program's purpose was intelligible: to provide some skills to prisoners which they would need after they returned to ordinary society, where literacy and math were very important to employment. The prison's administration obviously believed in its inmates' ability to change, and was deeply concerned with their well-being even in the early 1880's. After that early rehabilitation programs were developed just like prison funding did. By 1896 Warden Tynan was suggesting a rehabilitation program which providing cash new-beginning funds for those will be reintegrated into society, as the truly repentant should be given assistance, until they have strength enough morally and physically to stand alone.

On the other hand, Bridewell House of Corrections which resulted in the building of other houses of correction has a significant impact on movement of reintegration of prisoners. These houses were mostly used to keep petty criminals, vagrants and irregular local poor. In these facilities, the prisoners were given small jobs and were taught how to sustain living



costs after the prison. By the end of the 17th century, those correction houses were merged into local prison facilities under the control of the local justice of the peace. This marked as the beginning of prisoners' social reintegration (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2019).

Despite, the long history as observed above, to date, there are still visible gaps in the social reintegration of ex-prisoners into the societies where they live after prison. Thus, there is a need for refresh evidence to identify what is missing and the point is being missed to ensure better reintegration of ex-prisoners. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to take a look at the theoretical dimension of the work with both prisoners and prison authorities and with the members of the society where social reintegration is thought to be completed.

### **1.2.2. Theoretical Background**

Crime is defined as a violation of the rules of social behavior determined by law, in its most general form (Laub & Sampson, 2001, p. 10). The society plays a central role in the correction of these illegal behaviors. Therefore, some theories have been developed on people committing crimes and quitting committing crimes (Maruna, Immarigeon, & LeBel, 2004). Let's take a brief look at the main theories for the punishment of criminals by the state and society and the prevention of criminal behavior.

**Retribution:** In its most primal version, retribution can be described as vengeance (“an eye for an eye”). But for many who support retribution, they claim they are not asking raw vengeance, but prefer to call it “just deserts” (Mitchell, 2012, pp. 480-482). Theories of retribution argue that the purpose of imprisonment is to cause a sufficient level of misery to the prisoner, in proportion to the perceived seriousness of their crime. These theories do not necessarily focus on whether or not a particular punishment benefits the community, but instead are based upon a belief that some kind of moral balance will be achieved by "paying back" the prisoner for the wrongs they have committed (Bushway & Paternoster, 2009, p. 120).

**Deterrence:** Deterrence theory can be traced to the early utilitarian philosophers like Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham who claimed that people are motivated to get pleasure and avoid pain. That is to say by increasing the accuracy (severity) and the seriousness (amount) of the legal punishment to be made it may deter the offense ( Stafford, 2015, p. 255)

So, theories of deterrence assert that by sentencing criminals to extremely harsh penalties, other people who might be considering criminal activities will be so terrified of the consequences that they will choose not to commit crimes out of fear.

This study will however be guided by the Desistance Theory and the Reintegration Theory which fall under rehabilitation theories.

**Desistance theory**, as a branch of criminological study seeks to understand why and how those formerly engaged in criminal activity change their behavior and cease offending. As with theories of crime, it is necessary to consider the combination of both individual and social factors that interact with each other. These interactions sometimes result in either the onset of criminal activity or the desistance at different stages throughout the life course. Therefore, much criminological research has been conducted so as to formulate an understanding of why some people commit crime while others do not and why some of those who do, manage to terminate their offending patterns while others continue to recidivate (Glueck & Glueck, 1950, p. 52; Sampson & Laub, 1993, p. 204). Such research has been primarily concerned with identifying the criminogenic factors associated with criminality such as inter alia, socio-economic deprivation, early school leaving, criminal families, anti-social attitudes, anti-social peers, anti-social personality pattern, substance and alcohol abuse and low levels of involvement in anti-criminal leisure pursuits ( Andrews & Dowden, 2007).

Smith (2007) argues that in comparison to theories of the onset of criminal behavior, theories of desistance have been much neglected and underdeveloped in the history of criminology, but knowledge and debate has continued to evolve so as to better understand the phenomenon. However, McNeill (2012) points out from its earliest days , that still there is

not a big agreement on the definition of desistance. He chose to define this as a long-term stay away from criminal behavior for those who made crime a behavioral pattern.

Farrall (2002), describes the “desistance” as the offender's stop to committing a crime and maintain a crime-free life, whether or not with the effect of any external intervention. Acquiring new skills, a good full-time job, and a quality life partnership are some of the factors that influence the desistance process.

**Reintegration theory** is premised on the belief that crime represents a breach or absence of community. Instead of merely blaming offenders for their crime, proponents of reintegration theory claim that society is responsible for creating conditions that breed criminals. In this respect, it is a responsibility that the same society must be part of the solution to help reintegrate the offenders (Chikadzi, 2017, p. 289).

According to Muntingh (2001), the motive for reintegration of offenders is based on two moral bases. Firstly, it is better for community people to be in congruity with one another, and secondly, wherever harmony and community are absent, offenders should be actively pursued. Muntingh (2005) points that a punitive approach stigmatizes and underestimate offenders. This results in a further violation of community and breakdown of harmony in society. For this reason, eventual aim of incarceration should always be the reform and reintegration of offenders.

The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into the community can only be made successful and meaningful by implicate in multiple stakeholders. For this purpose, at a policy level, multi-stakeholder processes are a complementary constituent of reintegration interventions (Chikadzi, 2017, p. 290).

Therefore, institutions such as the courts, police, communities, voluntary organizations and municipalities are seen as essential in promote and adjuvant the successful reintegration of offenders. Although most of these institutions are offering critical services are this regard,

there are still some unsolved areas and difficulties in which they try to render rehabilitation services (Zondi, 2012).

On the other hand, offender rehabilitation is deeply criticized by some scholars because they claim that it has a small effect on changing offender behaviors. For example; Wilkinson (2005, pp. 70-85) and Martinson (2001) claim that as far as rehabilitation and reintegration are the subject, nothing works. Such allegations are used by supporters of the retributive approach to prop its introduction into the criminal justice system. Martinson (2001, pp. 36-37) rejects claims for the rehabilitative approach by arguing that rehabilitative approach is faulty and sees the crime "normal" within society. He says crime is one of the "normal" ways which people use to react to the severe realities they live under.

Although it is right that in many examples rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders have not worked, such an argument should not be enough to reject the rehabilitative approach within the criminal justice system totally. Rather than that scrutinizing the shortages in the delivery of offender reintegration services is needed. Offenders get confronted various difficulties that push them to committing crime as a survival mechanism. It is expected that improvements in the programming of offender rehabilitation and reintegration would lead to better results.

Social work is defined as “*Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people*” by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2014). Therefore, social work is a discipline and profession that believes and advocates that people can change and develop. Efforts to social reintegrate into society after prison are also process of change. Since this study is a research conducted within the discipline of social work, it accepts that prisoners who have been prisoned face many difficulties in the process of social reintegration into the society after they are released from prison, but advocates the idea that these people can reintegrate into society with the support to be offered to prisoners.

While criminal justice system prefers concepts such as, punishment, zero tolerance, criminal personality; social work approaches this field with the concepts of empowerment, strengths perspective, social justice and cultural competence (Gökçearsan Çifci, 2014).

Social work is a discipline that promotes social change and social reintegration itself should be seen as a process of change. Therefore, what is required here is that this process is facilitated by policy makers and practitioners for prisoners leaving the prison. For this, the powers that prisoners already possess can be uncovered and supported. The social work discipline and profession works for the empowerment of people, which is clearly stated in the international definition of the profession.

The findings of this study will be discussed around the empowerment approach and its concepts, which is an important theoretical approach used by the social work discipline to reveal and strengthen the powers of the prisoners.

### **1.2.3. Conceptual Background**

Offender reintegration requires the practice of transition from imprisonment into common society. During this practice, offenders begin to adapt to the outside world after their discharge from prison and expectantly they start a new life free from offence (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012; Zondi, 2012). Similarly, Maruna, Immerigeon ve LeBel (2004, p.5) define offender reintegration as: *“A systematic and evidence-based process by which an action is taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families, significant others and victims in partnership with statutory and voluntary organizations”*.

A broader definition for social reintegration, covers the period which starts with prosecution to the release and also includes post-release support. In this broader sense, social reintegration of offenders contains exertions handled following arrest, to canalize them away from the criminal justice system to an alternative prevention, including a restorative justice process or

convenient treatment. Instead of forcing offenders to the de-socializing and destructive effects of prison unnecessarily, it suggests executing alternative sanctions in appropriate situations and attendant simplifying the social reintegration of offenders within the community. Besides, some of the prosecutions may include for an addiction an obligation to undergo a treatment, while others may cover referral to an educational or personal development center, or force offenders to undertake unpaid beneficial work to the community as well as being penalized this also help the offenders to understand that they are acknowledging and repaying the damage they have caused to the community by committing an offence (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006).

Reintegration is not only an individual matter but also a societal issue. This situation is also emphasized by Maruna (2009) who illustrates reintegration as a “two-way street” which covers not only the changes a person makes after being released from prison but also includes how the community responds to that person. On this individual and societal issue Kirkwood & McNeill (2015) propound the concept of true offender reintegration as similar as integration of asylum seekers. They claim that these two marginalized groups have many similarities. We can summarize those similarities like; both groups need legally recognition, they are in need for social capital (social connections); they need safety, stability and moral inclusion.

Almost all prisoners will return to their communities back at some point of life. Offender reintegration can cover all the services and programs guided to prepare prisoners to return to the community safely and to live as law-abiding citizens (Nathan, 2015). Therefore, social reintegration programs to be offered to prisoners coming out of prison are very important.

Social reintegration program is used to define as “*interventions designed to help offenders who have been placed in an institution, such as a reform school, a detention center or a prison, a mental health institution or a residential drug treatment center*”. These social reintegration program consist of rehabilitation, education and pre-release schedules offered in prison, besides conditional release, post-release and aftercare interventions. The main objective of social reintegration programs is preparing the offenders to crime-free lives with

the assistance and supervision that they need to get, so they can avoid re-offending. Their purpose is helping offenders to desisting from crime, reintegration to the community in a successful way and avoiding a relapse into crime (United Nations Office on Drugs And Crime, 2012, s. 6).

Although the boundaries between are not always so clear there are three basic categories of social reintegration programs: (a) prison-based rehabilitation programs; (b) reintegration and aftercare programs delivered upon release and (c) non-custodial, community-based programs. When offenders are diverted to alternative services and programs, social reintegration interventions can implement at multiple stages of the criminal justice process and sometimes even outside of that process. These programs consist of a wide range of services and initiatives implemented or sponsored by the criminal justice system, often complemented with community agencies and NGOs by collaborative schemes. It can see on Figure 1. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018, p. 5).

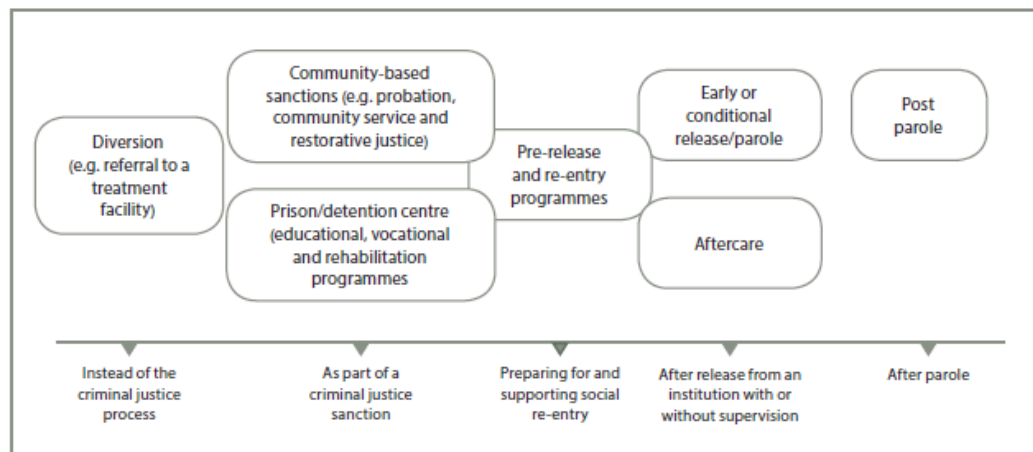


Figure 1: Social Reintegration Programs and the Criminal Justice

All programs and services offered to support offenders in the pre- and post-release phase to ensure that they become law-abiding citizens constitute offender reintegration (Thurber,

1998). During reintegration, support by professionals, families and communities to the ex-offenders is very important to keep them away from life of crime (Zondi, 2012). Reintegration cannot or should never be seen as a simple event; on the contrary it should be understood as a long and complex process which we are yet to understand it holistically (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012, pp.447; Healy & O'Donnell, 2008, pp. 25-26; Muntingh, 2005, p.5; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009, p. 29-30).

That the primary objective of the treatment of prisoners shall be their reformation and social rehabilitation stems from Article 10, 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Furthermore, Rule 58 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners states that *“the purposes and justification of a sentence of imprisonment or a similar measure derivative of liberty is ultimately to protect society against crime. This end can only be achieved if the period of imprisonment is used to ensure, so far as possible, that upon his return to society the offender is not only willing but able to lead a law-abiding and self-supporting life”* (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2015). When the Article and the Rule considered together, clearly states that imprisonment without reintegration serves no purpose at all.

This study examines the current plight of prisoner's efforts to socially re-integrate and the effectiveness and challenges of the current interventions. As mentioned before social reintegration can be understood as the support given to offenders during re-entry into society following imprisonment. A broader definition, however, encompasses the period starting from prosecution to release and post-release support (United Nations, 2006, p.12).

The number of people imprisoned in the United States grew consistently for nearly 30 years. Although that number has been slowly decreasing since 2008, but as of 2012 there were still over 2 million people incarcerated in prisons and jails across the country. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reveals that since 1990 an average of 590,400 prisoners have been discharged annually from state and federal prisons and almost 5 million ex-offenders are under some kind of community-based supervision (Nathan, 2015). The International Centre for Prison Studies reports that at 30 April 2012, 307 out of 100 000 South Africans were in



jail and this situation is putting it the 28th place out of 216 countries according to rates of imprisonment (Khwela, 2014, p. 146). Those data show us how important reintegration is for the community.

The families of the prisoners, who are breadwinners, are assumed to be in household poverty trap since there is no budget income being supplied during the period of imprisonment. When a member of the family is sent to prison, particularly if that is the breadwinner, the family is on several occasions faced with economic problems because of the living costs. This situation subjects them to poverty and finally crime incarceration which affects not only the prisoner but also the family (Travis & Waul, 2004; Strydom, 2009; Poehlman & Eddy, 2010).

Unfortunately, some ex-offenders end up back in prison after all. This can be seen as an obvious indicator of failed reintegration process and lack of self-reform. To avoid failed reintegration process and lack of self-reform three phases associated with offender re-entry programs can be use. These phases are;

- Programs that implemented during imprisonment, which aim to prepare offenders for their eventual release;
- Programs that implemented during offenders' release process, which try to attach ex-offenders with the various services they may need;
- Long-term programs which take place after releasing of ex-offenders into their communities, which try to provide offenders with support and supervision (Nathan, 2015).

If ex-prisoners are turning back to environments that do not ensure access to the kind of activities that are significant for re-integrating them into the community, this cause the situation that they will be less likely to be successful in their after-release transition. This increase the possibility of involving to a crime again (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005).

It is claimed that for dealing with crime in community a better option is to put more effort on the rehabilitation of offenders, giving more priority to the activities that helps to the reduction of offender recidivism (Khwela, 2014, p. 147). But unfortunately, because of the factors like

resource shortage, prison overcrowding, and insufficient concern given to the post-release needs of ex-offenders, the social reintegration needs of prisoners are frequently a low priority in practice. Available resources in prisons are used mostly to sustain security, safety and order instead of establish prison workshops, skills training and educational facilities. Similarly, governments and other stakeholders in society do not usually give a priority on supporting ex-prisoners with post-release reintegration activities either. Consequently, in some countries ex-prisoners encounter new difficulties to employment and education because of their criminal record after release and this situation is blocking the process of reintegration notably and resulting with re-offending. Another important problem is there is not sufficient coordination and cooperation between pre-release preparations in prisons with the supports offered in the community. Finally, many countries do not have an overall reintegration strategy for ex-prisoners adopted by relevant authorities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006, p.2).

It is stated that a successful reintegration program for prisoners should consist of three stages, starting with the prisoner's arrest and during prison stage, the release stage and the post-release stages (Nathan, 2015). Clinical social work practice, which has an important role in the prevention of crime and rehabilitation of the offender, also performs its interventions in three important stages. These stages are pre-prison, prison and post-prison stages. The social work discipline, which also assesses the factors affecting the person's committing a crime, helps people regain their social functionality by developing appropriate intervention plans. The social work profession, which values people because they are human, has a special place in the penal system with this aspect. With its emphasis on human rights and equality, it focuses on the empowerment of convicts and, in this respect, stands against the understanding of the justice system that prioritizes punishment (van Wormer & Boes, 1999).

#### **1.2.4. Contextual Background**

The penal system in Uganda was presented by the British colonial masters with giving importance on imprisonment and other forms of physical penalty in order to punish offenders especially those who opposed colonial policies. The main purpose of colonialists was to

prevent community from offenders and keep them away from repeatedly resisting their rule and committing new crimes. Imprisonment in comparison to other punishments was viewed as most appropriate to discourage criminals from refusing to obey the colonial rule and committing crimes. They thought if they keep offenders separated from the community they cannot encourage other people to resist colonial rule and commit crime (Kakungulu, 1997). After independence, Uganda kept using the colonial punishment system with 1962 Constitution. New constitutions made in 1967 and 1995 pursued the penal regulation that had been set by the colonial government and even extended its cover (Kasiko, 1998).

After some time, it has understood that over dependence on imprisonment is causing new problems. For example, when an offender detained for a petty crime, in many cases, he was returning to the community as ready to commit new and bigger crimes. The reason is that an offender in prison interacts with other veteran and seasoned offenders. Through this interaction, they would undergo a process denominated as “prisonization” in which they learn how to survive in prison and how to commit bigger crimes without getting caught by law enforcers. Since there is no sufficient system for social reintegration of ex-prisoners this unfortunate situation continues (Ssebugwawo, 2010).

According to World Prison Brief report, Ugandan prisons as the sixth crowded in the entire world with an occupancy level of 293.2 percent. Quoting the World Prison Brief, an online database for information about prison systems throughout the world Uganda’s prisons have a total population of 54,059 inmates, including those on remand as of October 2017. It means there are 129 prisoners for every 100,000 Ugandans (Masaba, 2019; Kisa, 2019). Figures published in December 2021 reveal that the number of prisoners over the physical capacity in Ugandan prisons has increased even more. According to the data of December 2021, there are 254 prisons in Uganda and the total capacity of these prisons is 19,986 people. Unfortunately, the number of people staying in these prisons is 67,318. According to these figures, the occupancy rate due to official capacity is 336.8%. Another remarkable statistic regarding the prison population is that 51.8% of the prison population consists of detainees awaiting trial and whose sentence has not been finalized yet (World Prison Brief, 2022). Even in the period between the beginning of the research process and the submission of the

research, it is seen that there is a huge increase in the prison population. So, these numbers show us the importance of reintegration programs for ex-prisoners in Uganda for the community and also ex-prisoners themselves.

Ssebuggwawo (2010) claims that the criminals in Kampala often involved another crime even they have punished for their previous crimes. This problem becoming more apparent in Uganda and he explains this situation by the excessive use of imprisonment instead of other alternative sentences. According to him main reason for this situation is prisons don't have appropriate programs and activities, especially after staying long time in jail and after exposed to the prisonization process, to provide the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders into society. Therefore, to avoid this repetition he claims there is a need for new paradigms targeting to prevent recidivism while at the same time supporting offenders such as therapy and vocational training programs. Nevertheless, scholars do not have a joint approach on recidivism and here is no standard measure to prevent repetition of re-offending.

Although there is not much scientific research on the reintegration of prisoners in Uganda, Mudoola (2013) mentions some developments in Uganda prisons in relation to equipping prisoners with life skills. She narrates from a prisoner *“My prison term has been a blessing in disguise. Before I was imprisoned, I did not have any knowledge in farming, but while in jail, I have gained skills that will make me a job-creator after my release”*. In Uganda prisons are producing huge amounts of maize each year. There 21 farms under the control of Prison authorities across the country. It's claimed that those farms are used to improve farming skills of prisoners.

Mudoola (2013) narrates from a prison director: *“Prison farms contribute to transforming prisons from being punitive to correctional institutions. These equip prisoners with agricultural skills that will help them create jobs hence become responsible citizens upon discharge. The programs create a paradigm shift of prison practices – from traditional custodial and punitive roles to correctional and rehabilitation roles that facilitate social reintegration of offenders”*.

As far as international standards and reports say, Uganda is trying to implement some programs for the reintegration of prisoners in the community. Official statistics represent that Netherlands has least number of criminals according to other countries in the world. The government is planning to close its detention facilities in Netherland for this reason. According to reports Switzerland ranks second with recidivism rate of 22% followed by Norway 30% and Uganda 32%. This signifies that in Uganda, out of every 100 inmates discharged, only 32 would be back in prison within a year. According to recidivism rates Uganda is followed by Zambia 33%, Rwanda 36% and Kenya and Tanzania 47% in Africa. As 2013 numbers, US has the worst crime records in the world with recidivism rate of 90%. It was followed by South Africa, Germany and Asia tying at 74% (Mudoola, 2014).

From 2010 when Ssebuggwawo (2010) carried out his study to 2013 when Mudoola (2013) examined the involvement of prisoners in agriculture, there seems to be a positive transition. However, what is reported is mainly based on information from major prisons workers. This brings with it the need to conduct research on how the problem and process is perceived and experienced by prisoners. On the other hand, it is thought that still the efforts trying to socially re-integrate prisoners seem to be concentrated in the urban centers and based on prisoners with limited community and family involvement. Also, those efforts are not comprehensive enough.

The Ugandan penitentiary system has passed through some considerable changes over the last ten years. Changes in prison system mostly sponsored by international donors and human rights NGOs. The Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) has indicated political will to decrease torture acts and ill treatment, compulsory labor and living conditions which threatens prisoners' life. Uganda has the low reoffending rates according to other African countries. However, overcrowding in prisons is still high and important differences are monitored between Luzira Maximum Security Prison (Kampala), which is considered a model prison in Africa and other rural prisons over the country.

The situation that social-reintegration activities are planned usually in Luzira prison gives us a wrong general picture for the country. There seems to be a gap between the ideal situation

and the reality we have currently. There is a need for a study to understand the prisoners' experiences of reintegration into society and to evaluate the currently implemented programs in prisons and community. For this purpose, this study is being undertaken.

### **1.3. FORENSIC SOCIAL WORK AND EX-PRISONERS**

Social work is a discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, empowerment and emancipation of people. While social work does this, social justice and human rights principles are at the center of social work (IFSW, 2014). Therefore, social work is an academic discipline that should have a say and contribute to the studies in this field in the process of reintegration of prisoners in prison with the society after prison.

Since this study is expected to contribute to the field of forensic social work, at this stage, it would be appropriate to discuss the subject of forensic social work under a separate heading. Barker (1995) defines forensic social work as: *“The practice specialty in social work that focuses on the law and educating law professionals about social welfare issues and social workers about the legal aspects of their objectives”* in the Social Work Dictionary. The National Organization of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW) defines forensic social work as follows: *“application of social work principles to questions and issues relating to law and legal systems”* (NOFSW, 2022).

Forensic social work studies are initially based on studies with young people involved in crime and the association of pre-professional social work with criminals was made in the late 1800s by the settlement workers' endeavors on juvenile delinquents. At the organizational level, this issue with social work was first addressed at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. Later, with the efforts of the Chicago women's club, the first juvenile court in the United States was established in 1899 as part of the Circuit Court of Chicago (Roberts & Brownell, 1999; Killian & Maschi, 2009).

Social workers continued to work with juvenile delinquents throughout the Depression Era and into the 1940s. However, the publication of an influential Social Service Review centering on Kenneth Pray's assertion and arguing that social workers should work with criminal justice professionals in the rehabilitation of adult offenders has furthered the debate in this area and given prison social work a foothold as a profession (Brownell & Roberts, 2002).

The Social Work Education Council (CSWE) published a 13-volume series on social work curriculum in 1959. One of them is about teaching correctional social work. This publication helped formalization of the discipline of correctional social work. Educational opportunities have increased significantly since then, which preparing social work students to deliver social work services in correctional settings (Brownell & Roberts, 2002; Matejkowski, Johnson, & Severson, 2014).

In addition to the fact that today's penitentiary institutions are places where the punishment prescribed by law is served in return for the consequences of the crime; they should be institutions where activities to prevent crime are carried out. One of the most important professions related to crime prevention in Penitentiary Institutions targeting rehabilitation is the social work profession. For this reason, social work practices in penitentiary institutions have an important effect on reducing the negative effects of crime on individuals, families and society. Social work practices in prisons achieve this effect by contributing to the functional execution of the prison process, by intervening in accordance with the needs of convicts with special needs, and by working to prevent re-offending (Zengin Taş & Duman, 2019).

Human rights and social justice principles are at the core of social work. Social work aim to facilitate the social welfare services for the groups who are under the risk. So, the basic philosophy of social work is the realization of social justice in society. Social work strives for the liberation of vulnerable and persecuted people to reduce poverty and increase their inclusion, and it does so in solidarity with disadvantaged people (Gökçearsan Çifci, 2008).

So, forensic social work tries to realize social justice for the prisoners and ex-prisoners in the society.

Social workers assess new inmates, prepare a support plan accordingly, refer them to physical and mental health systems, and monitor their progress (Matejkowski, Johnson, & Severson, 2014). Therefore, forensic social work carries out professional intervention for prisoners from the time they enter the prison, during and after the prison process. Thus, it helps inmates both to get through the prison process with the least damage and to reintegrate with the society after prison.

#### **1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

If effective programs and interventions do not occur, re-offending will come to the agenda of the society at large. Many offenders fail to reintegrate into the community as law abiding citizens after imprisonment. This is why effective social reintegration programs are crucially required for the society. This is an essential mean of preventing recidivism and increasing public safety which are two very important social policy objectives in all countries. In Uganda, it is alleged that there are some efforts, albeit insufficient, to ensure that ex-prisoners are finally socially reintegrated into their community after prison life.

Although there are some programs and activities in central prisons for Uganda, social reintegration efforts for prisoners in rural areas are very few. Even when ex-prisoners do not commit crime again, turning back to their former society will be difficult without well prepared reintegration programs. Ssebuggwawo (2010) states that without reintegration programs, it is difficult for ex-prisoners to find work, get good housing, and have a meaningful position in their families and society.

Even many ex-prisoners who had been employed before the prison are unable to return to their old jobs after being released and have a hard time making a new start. Many ex-prisoners are not accepted by their spouses or partners after their release and it is very difficult to



rebuild their families again. There are limited efforts to socially re-integrate such ex-prisoners, although some effort to economically re-integrate them is scantily being implemented by various NGOS.

Based on the information above, **the problem of this study** is to reveal how ex-prisoners experience the reintegration process, to explore the difficulties faced by ex-prisoners during the reintegration process, and find out the power sources of ex-prisoners who were successful in the reintegration process.

It is expected that this study will contribute to the understanding of how ex-prisoners who turn to crime after prison lose their link with the community during the reintegration process and how ex-prisoners who do not commit crimes after prison re-establish their link with the community.

Thus, it is aimed to contribute to the development of policies and practices to improve the reintegration processes of ex-prisoners in Uganda.

### **1.5. GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The status quo is such that there is no solid program to re-integrate prisoners into society during and after incarceration in Uganda. This undesirable state of affairs needs to be checked through an informed process guided by empirical evidence to ensure practical and sustainable solutions. Thus, the current study serves the purpose of providing such needed information with proven evidence to the benefit of both policy makers and implementers.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to understand how ex-prisoners who turn to crime after prison lose their link with the society during the reintegration process and how ex-prisoners who do not commit crimes after prison re-establish their link with the society.

## **1.6. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. How do ex-prisoners who are involved in recidivism and not involved experience the process of social reintegration?
- ii. Which factors influence prisoners and ex-prisoners' motivation for social reintegration?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by ex-prisoners in their social reintegration process?
- iv. Which strategies can use by different stakeholders to improve social reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners in Uganda?

## **1.7. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study scope is divided into the subject scope, time scope and the content scope.

### **1.7.1. Subject Scope**

The scope of the study is limited to the experiences of social reintegration process of ex-prisoners who are involved and not involved, the motivation factors and the difficulties faced by ex-prisoners during the social reintegration process into society, and the strategies that different stakeholders can use to facilitate the social reintegration process of ex-prisoners in to society.

### **1.7.2. Time Scope**

The study looks at the subject matter from the historical perspective to date. Therefore, regardless of date all relevant material will be cited to back up the study. However, effort will be made to cite recent material as well to give a current outlook of the study and a fair mix of the trends by looking at the events and evolvment.

### **1.7.3. Geographical Scope**

The study was based on Uganda major prisoners in Masaka, Mukono, Luzira (Kampala) and Wakiso. Mukono and Masaka represented the fairly rural prisons while Wakiso and Luzira

(Kampala) represented fairly urban prisons. This can help the researcher to compare and contrast the social reintegration efforts in the rural and urban prisons.

### **1.8. JUSTIFICATION**

Most studies and reports in Uganda concentrate on the crime rate, its causes and trends and neglect what happens to ex-prisoners after release. Latest Ssebuggwawo (2010) and Mudoola (2014) showed some effort on this issue. These however were not comprehensive enough and besides they do not give a recent picture of the state of prisoner's social reintegration. There is thus need for recent empirical evidence to explain the social reintegration of ex-prisoners in the contemporary Uganda.

### **1.9. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Most of the models and reforms proposed for the social reintegration process are in some way based on one of the two understandings of the "deficit" model defined by Maruna and LeBel (2002) as "risk-based" and "needs-based" models. Risk-based models focus on increasing the surveillance of ex-prisoners with new technologies such as electronic monitoring and urine testing etc. Needs-based strategies emphasize the "needs" associated with the risk of recidivism. They try to help ex-prisoners overcome addiction or learn basic skills they can use in daily life. However, in some cases, "needs" has become synonymous with or confused with risk factors. As a result of this, "meeting needs" has become an increase in social control (Farrall, 2002). Therefore, apart from these two "deficit" models, a discussion of reintegration has emerged that highlights the themes of reparation, reconciliation and community partnership in connection with the restorative justice understanding (Farrant & Levenson, 2002; Burnett & Maruna, 2006). Maruna and LeBel (2002) describe this "third way" as "strength-based" apart from the two 'deficit' models, which are risk-based and needs-based approaches.

As a research carried out within the social work discipline, this study aims to examine how ex-prisoners in Uganda experience the social reintegration process, within the framework of the empowerment approach, in relation to the concept of empowerment, which is also included in the definition of the social work profession. The study will also reveal the problems faced by ex-prisoners in their social reintegration processes, and will facilitate advocacy for the protection of human rights of ex-prisoners, eliminating the problems encountered in social reintegration processes and facilitating this process. In addition to these, suggestions will be developed to policy makers and practitioners as a result of the study.

Another point that makes the study important is that, in addition to the studies carried out for ex-prisoners, it can offer a new perspective for a different geography by understanding the social reintegration experiences of ex-prisoners in the context of Uganda and considering this process within the scope of the empowerment approach of social work.

## **1.10. UGANDA AS A RESEARCH AREA**

In this section, information will be given in order to better understand the Uganda, which constitutes the study area of the research by readers.

### **1.10.1. Geographic Location**

Uganda is geographically located in the east-central part of Africa, west of Kenya and east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has a total area of 241,038 square kilometers. 197,100 square kilometers of this area consists of land and 43,938 square kilometers of water. It has 877 km land borders with its neighbors Democratic Congo, 814 km with Kenya, 475 km with South Sudan, 391 km with Tanzania and 172 km with Rwanda (The World Factbook, 2021).

Uganda is a landlocked country but it is adjacent to Lake Victoria. In addition to that, there are many large and small lakes in the country. The country generally has a tropical climate and it is rainy between December-February and June-August. The northeastern part of the

country has a semi-arid climate. The country's natural resources are rich in copper, cobalt, hydro energy, limestone, salt and gold. Uganda is generally landlocked; it has a well-watered, fertile land structure with many lakes and rivers. The land suitable for agriculture constitutes 71.2% of the total area (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2020).

### **1.10.2. Political and Administrative Structure**

Uganda is a unitary state governed by a presidential system. The executive power in the country is mostly concentrated in the hands of the President. The President is elected by referendum every 5 years, and his Deputy, Prime Minister and other cabinet members are appointed by the President among elected members of the Assembly. With the law on the Constitutional amendment proposal approved on December 27, 2017, the term of office of the President, Parliament and local administrations was increased from five to seven years, and the age restriction was lifted in the election of the President (T.C. Kampala Büyükelçiliği, 2020). However, in order to understand the political and administrative structure of Uganda, it is necessary to look at its historical past.

In the 1860s, British influence began in Uganda with explorers searching for the source of the Nile. This effect was later advanced by various trade agreements between the two countries and the Uganda Protectorate was established in 1894. Britain enacted colonial borders to control and limit Uganda more easily. This situation has caused many ethnic groups with different political structures and cultures to live together (The World Factbook, 2021). The efforts of many tribes with administrative and cultural differences to live together made the lives of these social groups and the establishment of a common administrative system difficult. It caused internal turmoil and social events in the following process.

Uganda left England on 9 October 1962 and declared its independence. Since then, October 9 has been celebrated as the National Independence Day in the country. After independence Sir Edward Mutesa II was appointed as the first president of the country. In February 1966, Prime Minister Apollo Milton Obote, citing internal turmoil in the country, suspended the

Constitution, announced that he had abolished the positions of president and vice-president and declared himself the leader of the country. Obote declared the republic in Uganda with the new constitution he announced in 1967, abolishing the traditional kingdoms in the country and gave the head of statewide powers. On January 25, 1971, Idi Amin Dada, head of the armed forces, overthrew President Obote with a military coup, dissolved the parliament and made a new constitution by declaring himself president. It is estimated that around 300,000 Ugandans were killed during the 8-year presidency of Idi Amin. Idi Amin advanced his army into Tanzania due to the developments regarding the Ugandans who were exiled to Tanzania in October 1978. At the end of the war Amin had to flee the country in February 1979 with some of his soldiers after the exiled Ugandans supported by the Tanzanian army captured the capital of Kampala. After Amin's flee, the Uganda National Liberation Front established a provisional government headed by Yusuf Lule. Lule was replaced by Godfrey Binaisa in June 1979, due to a conflict between Yusuf Lule and a quasi-parliamentary organ known as National Consultative Commission (NCC). Binaisa was dismissed in May 1980 due to an ongoing dispute over the powers of the provisional presidency. Until the elections in December 1980, the country was ruled by a military commission chaired by Paulo Muwanga. With the elections, Milton Obote took the presidency chair for the second time in Uganda's history. The army led by Obote has killed too many people to make peace in the country and has one of the worst human rights records in the world. As a result of the internal turmoil, the National Resistance Army led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni took the power by making a military coup and Museveni declared itself President in late January 1986 (Uganda Tourism Board, 2021).

Uganda is still struggling to cope with the effects of its turbulent past. Although the National Resistance Movement (NRM), led by President Yoweri Museveni, takes over the country with the hopes of rebuilding the country and the slogan of "breaking with the past", this will not be easy after years of dictatorship and war. However, there are also positive developments when compared to previous regimes and administrations. The establishment of the Uganda Human Rights Commission and the reorganization of the national constitution considering human rights can be given as examples of these developments (Pavic & Kyriazis, 2011).

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who came to power with a military coup in 1986, won all the elections held after that date and continued his presidency. Museveni also won the last elections held in January 2021.

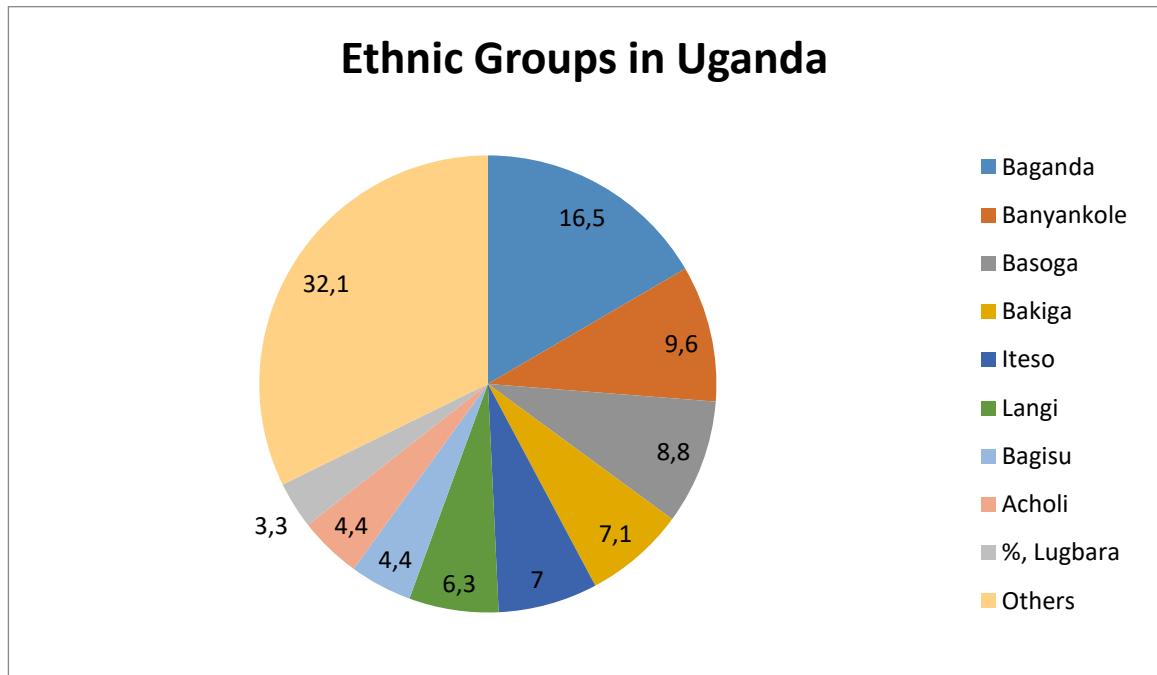
### **1.10.3. Population and Social Structure**

Uganda has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world and the population is estimated to be 44,712,143 in 2021. The fertility rate in the country is among the highest in the world, with 5.8 children per woman. This situation is explained by the unmet need for birth control, the lack of sufficient support from the political administration in family planning and the cultural preferences of large families to have many children. The high number of births, the short time intervals of these births and the early birth of women increase the maternal mortality rates (The World Factbook, 2021). It is thought that gender inequality plays a role in women giving birth at an early age and not being able to decide on the number of children they will give birth. It is an observable fact that women in Uganda society are sent to school less than men and they have less say in the decisions taken.

The 0-14 age group constitutes 48,21% of the country's population. Young people between the ages of 15-24 also make up 20,25% of the population. In other words, 68,46% of the country's population consists of young people and children under the age of 24. In this population, the number of men and women is almost equal. People aged 25-54 make up 26,24% of the population, those aged 55-64 make up 2,91%, and those aged 65 and over 2,39% (The World Factbook, 2021).

We mentioned that many ethnic groups live together in Uganda. When distinguishing between these ethnic groups, it is seen that a distinction is made mainly as "Nilotic North" and "Bantu South". Speakers of the Bantu or Luganda language make up the majority of the Ugandan population (Lyons, 2021). The quantile of ethnic groups within the population is as follows: Baganda 16,5%, Banyankole 9,6%, Basoga 8,8%, Bakiga 7,1%, Iteso 7%, Langi

6,3%, Bagisu 4,4%, Acholi 4,4%, Lugbara 3,3%, Other 32,1% (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021). This quantile can be seen in the graphic below.



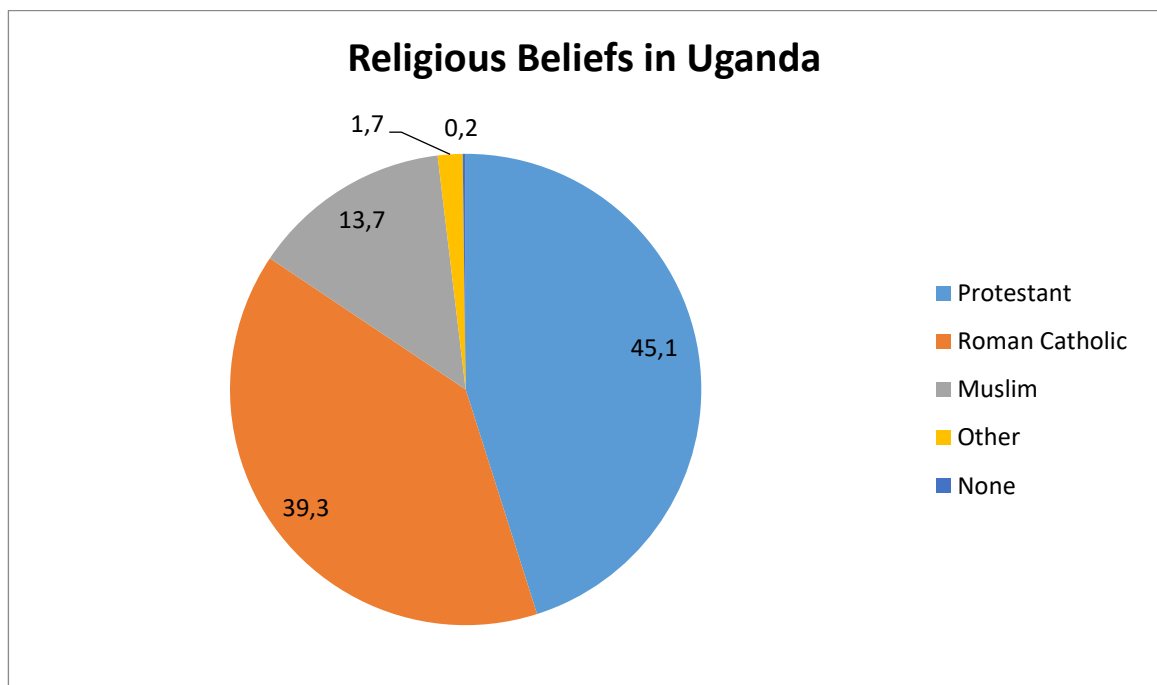
Graphic 1: Ethnic Groups in Uganda

Source: (T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2021)

There are at least 32 languages in daily use in Uganda. Although English and Swahili are accepted as official languages, the local language called Luganda or Ganda has a wide range of uses. The education system and official correspondence are entirely in English. Although Swahili has been adopted as the official language to facilitate integration with neighboring countries in the region, its use is not as common as in Tanzania, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the reasons why the public does not prefer Swahili is that it is widely used by dictators in the past and within the army, which has come to the fore with human rights violations. Since many ethnic groups live together in the country, there are still indigenous languages used in daily life. Accordingly, Uganda Radio broadcasts in more than 20 indigenous languages including Alur, Ganda, Lugbara, Masaba, Rwanda, Nyankole, Nyole, Soga and Teso as well as official languages (Lyons, 2021).



In terms of religion as well as ethnicity, people of many different religions live together in Uganda. As in other parts of Africa, Islam and Christianity have been combined with indigenous beliefs and religion forms in various ways. Percentages of religious groups in Uganda in the population are as follows: Protestant 45,1% (Anglican 32,0%, Pentecostal/Born Again/Evangelical 11,1%, Seventh Day Adventist 1,7%, Baptist 0,3%), Roman Catholic 39,3%, Muslim 13,7%, other 1,7%, none 0,2%. These percentages are shown in the graphic below.



Graphic 2:Religious Beliefs in Uganda

Source: (The World Factbook, 2021).

76.2% of Uganda's population lives in rural areas and 23.8% live in cities. The capital, Kampala, is the country's most populous city with a population of approximately 3.3 million. Jinja, Mbale, Masaka, Entebbe and Gulu are among the major cities. Developed cities are generally located in the south of the country. This is due to the fact that the lands in the

southern part of the country are more fertile and the trade opportunities are more developed (Lyons, 2021; The World Factbook, 2021).

#### **1.10.4. Economy**

Uganda has agriculturally fertile soils that are suitable for climate and receive abundant rainfall. 72% of the workforce works in agriculture. The country also has rich natural resources, especially copper, gold and steel (The World Factbook, 2021). More than 60% of export revenues in the country are derived from agricultural products. The most important agricultural products produced for export are coffee, tobacco, tea, cocoa, cut flowers, sugar cane, corn, cassava, legumes, palm oil, aquaculture and cotton. In Uganda, agriculture and animal husbandry are carried out by the majority of the population as subsistence rather than earning an income. Mechanization is insufficient in the sector and agriculture is done with old methods of hand hoes. For this reason, the total yield is generally low. Although there is no coast to the sea, fishing is among the livelihood activities of Uganda as the country is very rich in fresh water resources. A large part of Lake Victoria, the second largest lake in the world, is located within the borders of Uganda. In addition to this, about 60 small lakes and many rivers are within the borders of the country. Tilapia fish, which is extracted from Lake Victoria, is in increasing demand, especially in the European and American markets. Fish caught from lakes and rivers are also consumed in the country. It is estimated that 1 million people earn their living directly or indirectly from fishing (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2020).

Uganda is an important destination for international tourists with its national parks hosting many different wild animals. Tourism revenues are also an important economic resource for the country (Lyons, 2021).

However, Uganda has many economic difficulties. While the turmoil and civil war in South Sudan brought a huge wave of immigration to Uganda, on the other hand, the problems in South Sudan, which is the most exported country, caused a decrease in export figures. Other key economic challenges in the country are: poor economic governance, widespread

corruption, the government's under-investment in health, education and economic opportunities for a developing young population. Uganda has one of the lowest electrification rates in Africa - only 22% of Ugandans have access to electricity. This rate decreases to 10% in rural areas (The World Factbook, 2021).

Poverty in Uganda rose from 19.7 percent to 21.4 percent between 2012 and 2016, and the Gini index rose from 41 to 42.8. This situation has also increased the economic inequalities in the country. Severe drought observed in the country in 2016 and 2017 reinforced the poverty in the country. The incidence of multidimensional poverty, which includes the monetary dimension as well as human capital deprivation and access to basic services, has reached almost 60%. The most important factors in this increase in this rate are the very limited access to essential services, especially improved sanitation and electricity. Another important problem in the country is geographical inequalities. Rural areas lag behind urban centers in many aspects. The eastern and northern regions of the country constitute 3/4 of the monetary poor (World Bank, 2020).

Although a minimum wage level has been set in Uganda, this wage remains well below the official poverty level. The current minimum wage standard has never been formally implemented and this rate was set in 1984. Although the Ugandan parliament passed a law in 2019 to determine the minimum wage according to the sectors and to implement the determined wage, the President of the State did not sign this law (U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2021). The absence of an official minimum wage application in the country, which is protected by the state guarantee, causes people's labor to be exploited, to be employed as cheap labor and to be driven into poverty.

Uganda is among the poorest countries in the world, with 41% of the country's population living in severe poverty (Opportunity International, 2022). There is serious economic and social inequality in the country. The society cannot benefit from the welfare and economic outputs in the country fairly and cannot get a share. There are structural problems in this regard in Ugandan society. One of the most important problems is the phenomenon of

corruption and bribery in many institutions. This situation is an important obstacle for people in the country to reach services and also prevents foreign investors from investing in the country and therefore the development of the economy. For this reason, President Yoweri Museveni established the Anti-Corruption Unit, which is directly subordinate to the presidency, to combat corruption and bribery in the country in 2018 (Ministry of ICT and National Guidance , 2022). However, the establishment of this unit has unfortunately not yet been able to prevent the corruption and bribery problem in the country.

Another important structural problem in Uganda is intertribal rivalry. There is a competition between the tribe which the current head of state is a member who took over the administration of the country with a military operation and other tribes in terms of participation in employment, sharing of resources and income in the country. This situation negatively affects social justice, social and economic equality in the country.

#### **1.10.5. Education**

Formal education in Uganda was introduced by European missionaries. There is no school as we know it until the missionaries arrive in the country. Although education was tried to be carried out by the state after gaining independence, it brought with it the opening of private schools that the administration was insufficient in this regard (Lyons, 2021).

Pre-school education in Uganda starts at the age of 3 and children up to the age of 5 can continue pre-school education. Children who started primary school at the age of 6 continue this education for 7 years. Two-stage secondary education begins after primary school ends. The first stage consists of 4 years, students who are successful in the exam at the end of this stage are entitled to receive O level (Ordinary Level) certificate. The second stage consists of 2 years of education. Students who complete this stage and pass the exam are entitled to receive A level (Advanced Level) certificate. Students who have received an A level certificate can enroll in higher education programs ranging from 2 to 5 years, considering their grades and exam success in previous education processes. However, this education

system fails to meet the needs of the country and to provide students with the necessary skills in real life (Wabalayi, 2019).

The Uganda government introduced the Universal Primary Education program in 1997. Within the scope of the program, the state has started to cover tuition fees for orphans in the country and up to four children per family. This program has increased school enrollment and attendance rates across the country. School age population information by education level in Uganda is shown in the table below.

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>Pre-primary</b>	4,434,842
<b>Primary</b>	9,163,260
<b>Secondary</b>	6,417,643
<b>Tertiary</b>	3,419,644

Table 1: School-Age Population by Education Level

Source: (Unesco, 2021).

It is seen on the table that children are at the age of primary and secondary education at most. In the third place are children in the pre-primary age group. This situation reveals the importance of determining and implementing policies for the enrollment and attendance of children in these age groups by the government. In the second stage, it is important to increase the education level of this young population by developing higher education policies. The number of students enrolled in primary education from the P1 to the P7 grade between 2013 and 2017 are shown in the table below.

<b>Class</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>P1</b>	1,883,803	1,932,489	1,842,006	1,888,847	1,965,606
<b>P2</b>	1,307,745	1,349,233	1,277,974	1,352,893	1,365,311
<b>P3</b>	1,312,592	1,362,786	1,283,194	1,349,293	1,377,947
<b>P4</b>	1,317,315	1,359,448	1,272,522	1,328,035	1,365,908
<b>P5</b>	1,138,789	1,178,273	1,101,698	1,156,465	1,170,640
<b>P6</b>	920,045	963,083	901,939	958,298	971,231
<b>P7</b>	579,431	627,343	584,984	622,093	623,946
<b>Total</b>	8,459,720	8,772,655	8,264,317	8,655,924	8,840,589

Table 2: Primary Scholl Enrollment by Class (2013-2017)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018).

Looking at the table, there is generally a decrease in the number of enrollments for the next class for each year. In 2017, the number of people enrolled in the P1 class was close to 2 million, while the number of people enrolled in the p7 was approximately 624 thousand. The rates of those who completed primary education between 2013 and 2017 are shown in the table below.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Boys</b>	68,0	72,0	59,8	59,7	59,3
<b>Girls</b>	67,0	72,0	63,3	63,4	60,0
<b>Total</b>	67,4	72,0	61,6	61,5	60,0

Table 3: Primary School Completion Rates (2013-2017)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018).

According to the table, there is no big difference between the primary school completion rates of male and female students. However, in the table, it is noteworthy that since 2014,

there has been a great decrease in primary school completion rates for both sexes. The rate of transition to the secondary school of those who have completed primary school is given in the table below.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Boys</b>	72,3	70,5	62,8	64,4	60,8
<b>Girls</b>	72,0	70,5	63,6	65,2	60,5
<b>Total</b>	72,2	70,5	63,2	64,8	60,6

Table 4: Transition Rates to the Secondary School (2013-2017)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018)

As it is understood from the table, from 2013 to 2017, the rates of transition from primary education to secondary education decrease each year compared to the previous year. This situation increases the importance of the measures to be taken by the government in order for school-age children to continue their education.

Although there is no big difference in the ratio of female and male students in the table regarding the education system in Uganda, Wells (2009) states that girls enroll less in school than boys at the secondary level according to the authors own research. Another important issue is the incompatibility between the enrolled class and the age group, and their age is older than they should be due to their late enrollment to the school.

The proportion of students who have completed the first stage of four-year secondary education and are entitled to receive O level certificate is given in the table below.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Boys</b>	36,7	36,4	36,4	39,6	36,2
<b>Girls</b>	33,8	33,9	35,9	36,0	33,5
<b>Total</b>	35,3	35,8	36,2	37,8	34,8

Table 5: O Level Completion Rates (2013-2017)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018)

According to the table, it is seen that there is not a big difference in the rate of those who are entitled to receive O level certificate between 2013 and 2017, and there are small increases and decreases. The most striking ratio here is that between 2013 and 2017 the proportion of girls who qualified for O level certificate is always less than boys are. This situation also supports Wells' (2009) research, which mentioned above. The rates of those who continue their second stage secondary education, which is two years, are also shown in the table below.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Boys</b>	37,0	33,6	28,1	31,0	28,4
<b>Girls</b>	27,0	25,9	21,4	29,4	21,0
<b>Total</b>	32,0	30,0	25,0	30,2	24,8

Table 6: Transition Rates to the A Level (2013-2017)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018)

According to the table, there is a general decrease over the years in the transition from O level to A level. Another important point is that the rate of female students is less than male students for each year.

There are some important universities in Uganda in terms of higher education. For example, Makerere University, which opened as a technical school in the capital city Kampala in 1922, became the first major higher education institution in East and Central Africa. At the present time, Makerere University is the most prestigious higher education institution in the country



with its faculties of medicine, agriculture and forestry, arts, education, technology, law, science, social sciences and veterinary medicine. Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Christian University, Uganda Martyrs University and Islamic University in Uganda are also among the important universities of the country. The number of students enrolled in the university in 2013-2016 can be seen in the table below.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Boys</b>	79,709	100,525	103,280	104,432
<b>Girls</b>	60,398	79,835	82,035	81,980
<b>Total</b>	140,403	180,360	185,315	186,412

Table 7: University Enrollment Numbers (2013-2016)

Source: (Uganda Bureau of Statics, 2018)

According to the table, there is an increase in the number of students enrolled in the university each year between 2013 and 2016. Although this is a positive development, the rate of students enrolled in university among university-age youth is very low. Another detail that draws attention in the table is that the number of female students is lower than the number of male students. The rate of female students among students enrolled in the university in 2016 was 44%.

#### **1.10.6. Crime and Criminal Justice System in Uganda**

In Uganda, the number of crime cases listed in police records in 2018 was 238,746, while in 2019, this number was 215,224. The range of these crimes according to the categories is shown in the table below.

No	Crime Categories	Number Of Cases Reported	
		2018	2019
1	Thefts	61.533	55.704
2	Assaults	36.323	31.895
3	Sex Related Crimes	17.521	15.638
4	Domestic Violence	13.916	13.639
5	Economic Crimes	15.099	13.264
6	Breakings	14.018	12.919
7	Threatening Violence	13.357	11.592
8	Child Related Crimes	11.589	10.596
9	Criminal Trespass	9.500	7.920
10	Malicious Damage to Property	8.339	7.541
11	Robberies	7.354	6.761
12	Homicide	4.497	4.718
13	Narcotics /Drugs	2.890	2.750
14	Arson (General)	2.196	1.614
15	Escapes from Lawful Custody	1.557	1.329
16	Abduction/Kidnap	507	424
17	Political/Media Crimes	442	169
18	Trafficking in Persons	286	120
19	Corruption	32	64
20	Terrorism	16	10

Table 8: Crime Cases Listed in Police Records by Category in 2018 and 2019

Source: (Uganda Police, 2019).

There is almost 10% decrease in the number of crimes reflected in police records in 2019 compared to the previous year. According to police officials, in this decrease in crime cases; investing in the infrastructure of the state's fight against crime, working on the sensitivity of the public to crime, conducting effective fight against organized crime organizations

throughout the country, operations directed at hiding places of criminals, shortening the intervention period of the police in crime incidents, improving inter-agency coordination in intervention and investigations and the increase in the number of motor vehicles which allocated to the police have been effective. 54.7 (117,903) of the crime cases recorded in 2019 took place in rural areas, 41.3% in urban centers and 4% along the highways. Defilements, thefts, burglaries, rape and murders are mostly seen in rural areas whereas robbery, common assaults and aggravated assaults are more prevalent in urban areas. Although there is a decrease in the overall crime numbers in 2019 compared to 2018, there is an increase in cattle stealing, cattle rustling, aggravated assault, aggravated robbery of cash, aggravated robbery of motorcycles, murder by mob action, cybercrimes and corruption in the sub-crime categories. (Uganda Police, 2019). It is understood from these data that crime categories differ between urban and rural areas. In addition, some sub-categories of crimes decreased while others increased.

Traditionally, prisons have been considered as places where people who do not obey the rules of the society are detained in order to protect the rights and dignity of other individuals in the community. Thus, it is aimed to protect harmony and order in the society. The attitude towards those who do not obey the laws of the society was "lock them up and throw away the keys" for many years. Prisons were places where criminals were subjected to hard labor, corporal punishment, and even torture. We have already mentioned these in the historical background of the study. Charles (2005) states that the understanding of prison in Uganda is to subjecting offenders to hard labor and to give corporal punishment. Kalid (2007) also stated that the role of the penal system and prisons in Uganda is the punishment and deterrence of the perpetrator and the prevention of crime by long prison terms.

However, modern thought advocates the idea that prisons should have a multi-faceted role in the reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners. At the international level, the idea that prisons should not be punitive and deterrent institutions, but should have a reformatory and rehabilitative structure so that prisoners do not turn to crime again becomes important. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners points out that prison

education, vocational training, religion, and treatment are among the methods that can be used to reform and rehabilitate prisoners (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2015).

There are three main categories of penalties under the penal law in Uganda. These categories are fines, imprisonment and death sentences. Since few people can afford the fine due to poverty in the country, the vast majority of those arrested receive a prison sentence even if a minor offense has been committed. Therefore, it seems that the most used method to deal with the criminals in the country is imprisonment (Charles, 2005; Kalid, 2007).

In line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the government of Uganda introduced the Uganda Prisons Act in order to increase the rehabilitative aspects of Uganda Prisons in 2006 (Justice Law and Order Sector Progress Report, 2007). The need for rehabilitation of prisoners in prisons has also been included in the policy documents of the Ugandan Ministry of the Internal Affairs. This change of understanding can actually be seen as a reflection of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Uganda Prisons Act (Ugandan Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2009). The government established the Prison Authority to more effectively control practices in prisons and to coordinate all administrative activities from a single center. It is also aimed to reduce the existing bureaucracy. In this process, some programs such as prison farms were also initiated, with this program, it was aimed to help prisoners gain farming skills and prepare them for the period after prison (Kalid, 2007).

These regulations and practices reveal that prisons in Uganda want to be transformed from punitive to rehabilitative structure. However, the extent to which this regulation and restructuring is reflected in real life practices and how effective they have on the lives of prisoners is what matters. In the analysis of the interviews with ex-prisoners within the scope of the research, we will have the chance to evaluate whether these practices were successful from their point of views.

In the literature, it is recommended for first-time offenders to be in separate wards with those who have committed crimes more than ones in order for the rehabilitation process to be

successful. If this is not done, it is believed that those who have committed crimes for the first time will learn new criminal trends from those who have committed more than one crime. If this is not done, it is believed that those who have committed crimes for the first time will learn new criminal trends from those who have committed more than one crime. When separating prisoners' wards, variables such as gender, health conditions, age, criminal history, type of crimes committed and duration of sentence should be considered. (Inciardi, 2010). However, there is a provision in the Ugandan Prison Act that only separates the wards for male and female prisoners. Within the scope of this provision in Uganda prisons, male and female prisoners are held in different prisons or in separate sections of the same prison in order to prevent contact between them. Nevertheless, male and female prisoners are not kept separately according to crime types, duration of sentence, age and other variables. After leaving as men and women, they use the same wards, dining halls and garden etc.

There are a number of international, regional and national laws in force regarding pre-trial detention in Uganda. International regulations include universal human rights treaties that Uganda has also legally ratified. These international regulations include: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The regional regulations that Uganda is subject to in terms of the African continent are as follows: African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Protocol to the African Charter establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). At the national level, the fourth part of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda sets out the rights, duties, declarations and guarantees regarding the aspirations and other human rights and freedoms. In addition to this part of the constitution, the following legal regulations also contain regulations regarding the rights of prisoners and detainees: The Penal Code Act, Trial on Indictments Act, Criminal Procedure

Code, Police Act, Prisons Act, Uganda Peoples Defense Forces Act, Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act and the Children's Act (Segawa R. K., 2016).

Although there are legal regulations at the international, regional and national level, the very long detention period of Ugandans awaiting criminal prosecution is an important problem with the Ugandan penal system. This exposes the violations of fundamental human rights guaranteed by law in Uganda and of the implementation of law itself. Studies show that the vast majority of detainees in the country continue to be held unlawfully beyond the detention period defined in the Ugandan Constitution. The large number of people who remain in detention for a long time, awaiting trial and thus acquittal or conviction, demonstrates the neglect of national and international obligations to protect individuals' fundamental right to liberty in Uganda. Although it is stated that resource constraints are at the root of this problem, long periods of detention can be improved with measures to be taken (Pavic & Kyriazis, 2011).

The time prisoners spend in prison can be used to learn how to read and write or to learn vocational skills that they can use in the community after their sentence is over (Garland, 2018). The Uganda Human Rights Commission has advised the Ugandan Parliament that prisoners should not lose their right to education while in prison (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 12th Annual Human Rights Report, 2009). Providing education programs to prisoners in prison makes it easier for them to continue their education life in the community after their sentences are over. Also, vocational training in prison will make it easier for them to find a job and earn some income. One of the main purposes of imprisonment was to transform prisoners. Although education is a tool for this from the very beginning, new penological studies also reveal that the education given in the prison will contribute to the desired change and transformation in prisoners (Pisciotta, 1983; Jones, 1992). Current international regulations reveal that prisoners have the right to receive education within the resources available if they so wish. Prisoners should have access to vocational training, books and other training so that prisoners do not go back mentally and keep their development and learning skills alive (Omoni & Scholastica, 2010). Education is seen as a very important aid

for prisoners' reintegration into society. An important point regarding the education programs provided in prisons is that in order for prisoners to continue their education after prison, education in prison must be integrated with the education system in the community (Office of U.N High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2005). In the current legal regulations in Uganda, it is seen that the Uganda Prisons Act does not include the types of training for prisoners, final exams before release, the source of payments for prison teachers, whether education is compulsory for young prisoners and how prisoners can access books and educational materials. This is particularly at odds with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa.

Prison work is considered beneficial for prisoners as it keeps them busy and mentally and physically active (Marion, 2009). However, prisoners must be paid a fair remuneration for their work. That is, prisoners' work should not only be used for profit by prison administrators or private contractors. Prisoners should be allowed to spend the money they receive in return for prison work in prison, to send them to their families, and to save for post-prison period if they wish (Kalid, 2007). The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners state that working in prison must be subject to the health, safety, industrial injury and occupational disease laws equivalent to working in the community and must not be inherently bothersome (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2015).

The Uganda Prisons Act does not contain a detailed provision governing the work of prisoners. However, it authorizes the Minister of Internal Affairs to regulate the work of prisoners and the fees to be paid for such work. In this regard, the regulation of Prisoners (Earning Rates and Gratuity) Rules, which was made by the Minister of Internal Affairs Brigadier Moses Ali in 2000, was preserved with article 125/a of the Uganda Prisons Act, which entered into force in 2006. According to this regulation, a prison earns five hundred Uganda shillings per day if qualified, two hundred and fifty Uganda's shillings if semi-skilled and one hundred Uganda shillings if unskilled. However, these rules do not contain regulations on working hours, working conditions, occupational injury compensation, for

whom they have to work, and prisoners' demand for this money. Another negative aspect is that a lot of time has passed since the arrangement and the fees are very low (Kalid, 2007).



## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a literature review in accordance with the study objectives; respectively: Factors influencing prisoners and ex-prisoners' motivation for social reintegration, the challenges of social reintegration process into society and strategies to improve social reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners.

### **2.2. FACTORS FACILITATING THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF PRISONERS AND EX-PRISONERS**

International standards and norms clearly state that the rehabilitation of prisoners and their accomplished reintegration into the community are important purposes of the criminal justice process. While doing this the importance of implementations to support the reintegration of offenders to prevent committing further crimes and protecting society is emphasized (United Nations Office on Drugs And Crime, 2012). The main purpose of those reintegration programs and services is support the prisoners overcome the stigma of criminal record, the harmful effects of prison and barriers they face while trying to reintegrate into the community.

In developing and least developed countries governments sometimes reluctant to invest in prisoner social reintegration programs, especially when such services and support are not available even for ordinary citizens (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Actually, developing programs and taking precautions to provide effective reintegration of prisoners into the community will be one of the best and most low-cost ways of prisoner reoffending. Policymakers should keep in mind that those reintegration programs are needed not only for the favor of the offenders but also for community safety and socioeconomic development of the country.

On the other hand, reintegration is not a very easy process for many offenders. Because they get face to face many struggles and challenges at the same time. Seiter and Kadela (2003)

states many ex-prisoners have difficulties in finding job because most of them tend to be less educated and less skilled in employment areas. Petersilia (2003) states the fact that many of ex-prisoners have low family and community support and some of them have social, mental health and medical problems which makes the reintegration difficult for them. Pager (2003) emphasises the negative effect of stigmatization about criminal record on reintegration progress. Beside those challenges many of attitudes and skills which they learnt in prison are not making easy a successful reintegration.

International standards and norms emphasize the rehabilitation of prisoners and successful reintegration into the community is one important purpose of the criminal justice system. Successful reintegration of prisoners to the community is also important for social structure of the society and socioeconomic development of the countries. According to the literature ex-prisoners have many difficulties and struggles for reintegration. For these reasons the motivation factors of ex-prisoners during reintegration process are very important to cope with the challenges and struggles against reintegration.

Davis, Bahr and Ward (2012) conducted a research to understand the process of reintegration from offenders' perspective. According to research the offenders stated 6 main factors which they think they influenced to re-integrate and desist from offending crime. Those factors are: (1) substance abuse; (2) employment; (3) family support; (4) types of friends; (5) personal motivation to change; and (6) age.

Many social science researches show that the family is a very rich source of psychological, social and financial support in the event of crisis such as divorce, death and health problems (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Criminal researches show that after releasing from prison offenders mostly rely on their family members like parents, grandparents, siblings etc. (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008).

Wikoff, Linhorst and Morani (2012) states that financial assistance is an important reintegration factor for recipients. Stable employment has an important effect on successful reintegration (Visher & Travis, 2003), nevertheless inadequate education and job skills causing obstacles to assure stable employment (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

Social support both during and after prison can help as a critical motivation factor to make distinction between who desist from re-offending and who persist on it (Bales & Mears, 2008, p. 292). Maintaining a job, having relation with a partner and association with a child can help as a motivation factor for ex-prisoners to avoid re-offending (Bahr, Harris, Fisher, & Armstrong, 2010).

Education is another factor that motivates prisoners to reintegrate into society after prison. Because education is an opportunity for ex-prisoners to enter employment, lower recidivism rates and improve their quality of life. Research also shows that education plays an important role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have been released from prison (Brazzell, Crayton, Mukamal, Solomon, & Lindahl, 2009).

Housing issue is one of the important barrier in front of the successful reintegration. Lutze, Rosky and Hamilton (2013) explain that housing unreliability raises the rates of re-offending because of social stigma which cause former prisoners to attempt unlawful activities. According to their research these housing issues contribute recidivism, homelessness or former prisoners living in impoverished and crime-ridden communities. This is why the support of prisoners released from prison in housing is a motivating factor that will help them in their social reintegration process.

In this study, I will consider some of these factors in detail to better understand the issue.

### **2.2.1. Family**

According to existing theoretical and empirical researches social ties with family have three dimensions which their involvement in criminal behavior. First, family ties have a controlling effect on releasing offenders' behavior; second, they procure emotional support and finally they make easier identity transformation (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

Social ties effect on recidivism is mostly discussed through the control theory perspective. Social control models consider people's relation to society and family restrain their offend motivation (Hirschi, 2002). Offenders' ties to family shape their daily routines, places that

they go to socialize, with whom they connect and the sort of behaviors they engage in while socializing (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

According to Chikadzi's (2017) research one of the biggest difficulty offender face after prison is broken relations with their family and community. After releasing from prison mostly their family members and people from their former community refuse and astracise offenders and this make very difficult for them to readjust their life again. This situation prevents a successful reintegration and rehabilitation. When ex-offenders are refused by their family and community members they most likely contact with fellow criminals. Their deprivation of healthy reliation, peer pressure and influence of fellow criminals lead them to recidivism. This makes the family support one of the crucial motivation factor for successfull reintegration for offenders.

Positive family ties provide emotional support to the ex-offenders. This support decrease re-offending urge in several ways. For example: family ties and relations supply emotional resource to the ex-offenders to cope with stressfull challenges of reentry (Agnew, 2005). Some other studies indicate that ex-offenders who have strong family ties show better level of optimism, future confidence and reluctance to commit crime again (Burnett, 2004). Laub and Sampson (2003) state that ex-offenders' families' support supply them an emotional shield which protects them from the challenges to reentry. They emphasise that emotional support given by the family members, including spouses, parents, children and in-laws is essential for their ultimate success for desistence.

According to literature some researches indicate that having a good family relationship and family ties is one of the essential constituent for cognitive change of ex-offenders. Those theoreticians especially indicate that cognitive transformation is pair with the relational ties and this pair help ex-offenders to build an alternative identity (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Being part of the roles inhered in family ties promote ex-offenders' sense about themselves as contributing member of society and make stronger their commitment to not offending againg (Maruna & Toch, 2005).

Several studies also shows that people tend to have reduced tendencies to commit crime when they start to have a meaningful partnerships. Especially for men, “good” marriages are helpful to grow stronger ties and this also affect reducing crime levels. On the other hand becoming a parent is also helps to desist from offending because this new family role brings new responsibilities and support them to behavioral change (Farrall, 2004).

### **2.2.2. Employment**

Laub and Sampson (2003)’s research which is conducted with high-risk samples shows that there a negative correlation between employment and criminal behavior. They analyzed longitudinal data of 500 men and found that during their employment periods they were less intended to commit crime and use alcohol. The analysis of the National Supported Works Demonstration Project data shows that having a good job reduced the probability of recidivism among offenders after their release. Theoreticians states that stable job situation provides a sense of identity and meaning to their life. This situation also brings limitation on their daily routines in this way reduces their exposure to incidents related to criminal behavior (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

Even they have required skills and capability, unemployment is a serious challenge which experienced most of ex-offenders. Because their criminal history record and serving a prison service have a negative effect on the employers’ attitude towards them. Once the employers learn their criminal record they intend to fire them (Chikadzi, 2017).

It’s understood that many prospective employers see giving a job to an ex-offender is a risk which is not worth to take. In other words, society is not acting willingly to giving second chance and provide employment opportunities to ex-offenders. An extensive body of research shows that most business owners checking background of possible employees and if they have a criminal record or sentence in prison they do not offer a job to them and this affects the reintegration process of ex-offenders (Brown, 2011).

Harding (2003) states some possible explanations for the difficulties ex-offender face after prison for employment: a) loss of human capital during prison process, b) socialization to

prison culture in the prison c) Detachment from social connections that facilitate job research process and d) stigmatization of being ex-offender.

Unemployment has many destructive results for every one as well as ex-offenders. It can cause stress, low self-esteem, depression and self-doubt. Therefore if employment opportunities doesn't given to ex-offenders this situation will bring devastating results for both ex-offenders and society (Small, 2005).

Therefore giving employment opportunities to ex-offenders will support their successful reintegration into society and reduce recidivism risk. On the other hand in social work profession we believe in people's capacity to change. Thus its important that social workers use their advocacy role to push policy making processes to influence them in a positive way to improve ex-offenders' employment opportunities. Employment opportunities provided to ex-prisoners will increase their rehabilitation chance. As a result advocating employment opportunities for ex-offenders should be seen as a complementative element of a comprehensive crime-fighting strategy.

### **2.2.3. Housing**

The needs of people leaving prison are becoming more and more complicated everyday and homelessness is one of the most important obstacle ex-prisoners facing. On the other hand while imprisonment period can causing homelessness, homelessness itself can cause committing crime and imprisonment too. Although the relationship between homelessness and crime is very complex and needs a deepen research on it Hickey (2002) states that homeless men and women perceive a relationship between homelessness and committing crime and recognise that among other things substance abuse, relationship breakdown, social and community network breakdown, less education and training and general lack of capability to cope with obstacles in life after periods of institutionalisation can also contribute the complex cycle of committing crime and homelessness.

The relationship between homelessness and delinquency is described as a proven and complex relationship in the literature. While staying in prison increases the risk of being

homeless after being released from prison, homelessness also increases the risk of committing a crime. This can lead to a negative cycle that continues on its own (Dore & Daly, 2015).

Travis, Solomon and Waul (2001) states some reasons for ex-prisoners housing problem: a) prisoners mostly don't have financial resources when they released, b) they don't have personal references to compete with other people to secure housing in the private market and c) many ex-prisoners don't welcome in their family house. However all prisoners after release need to find a place to live. Basic challenges to find low-cost and steady housing facility are similar with the challenges for finding a job. When prisoners released from prison most of them don't have money for deposit on a place to live. Landlords ask potential tenants about their employment, housing references and criminal history record.

Especially the first month after release is very important and vulnerable because the risk of becoming homeless and re-offend in this period is so high. As a matter of fact after the shock of release, lack of housing raise the possibility of recidivism. So procuring low-cost housing opportunities tolerant social policies can help a successful reintegration progress and transition back into community for ex-offenders (Li, 2018).

Literature shows that there is a link between homelessness, crime and imprisonment. Corr and Mayock (2012) deliniate the relation between homelessness, crime and imprisonment as cyclical and self-perpetuating. They point homelessness as the entry point to this cycle.

According to Department of Corrections at any given time 10 percent of the state's parolees are homeless and need housing support in California. Unfortunately this rate is considerably bigger in urban areas like San Fransisco and Los Angles where almost 50 percent of parolees are estimated as homeless. Although there are some homeless shelters as a last opson for ex-prisoners who need housing, they are not always available. The period just after release may be most vulnerable time to fall back into old habits and criminal behaviors. Therefore for the relapse prevention and successful transition back to their community, affordable and reliable housing opportunities are very important for ex-offenders (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

#### **2.2.4. Education and Vocational Training Opportunities in Prison**

Research shows that the rate of recidivism of ex-prisoners who participate in education and training programs while in prison is significantly reduced (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders, & Miles, 2013; Inderbitzin, 2015; Dignam, 2016; Simpson, 2019). Education provides an opportunity for those who have entered the criminal justice system to later join employment, reduce recidivism rates and improve their quality of life. Besides, it is clear that education plays an important role in the rehabilitation and social reintegration of those in prison and those who have been released before (Brazzell, Crayton, Mukamal, Solomon, & Lindahl, 2009).

Although the importance of education and vocational courses offered to prisoners in prison today is understood (Hoselton, 2016; Hoselton, 2018), this was not the case in the past. In the early 20th century, prisoners in prisons in the United States and the United Kingdom were forced to work on agricultural farms for long periods, and the food produced there was used in penal institutions. In the 1950s, prisoners began to be used in mines, quarries and other commercial works and this situation began to be seen as vocational training. Later on, with the thought that the training would reduce the crime rate, prisoners were started to be employed also in Canada (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013).

In African countries, prisoners' rights and options are very limited due to economic conditions. With the Ouagadougou Declaration, known as the action plan for Africa, South Africa has started to prioritize educational activities to rehabilitate prisoners and ensure their social reintegration into society. In the Ouagadougou Declaration, literacy skills training, improving existing skills, providing civic and social education, and providing psychological support to prisoners are emphasized as priority areas. Compulsory literacy training, including accelerated education methods, is provided for inmates in Namibia for the first 12 months. With this, it is aimed that all prisoners gain literacy skills and can participate more easily in employment after prison. In addition, horticulture, building and construction, farming and carpentry courses are given to prisoners in prison so that they can find a job more easily after completing their sentences (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017).



In Ghana and Sierra Leone, emphasis has been placed on educational activities in prison in order to reduce the high rates of recidivism (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013). However, educational activities, especially in Ghana prisons, were disrupted due to the lack of sufficient financial resources. In eastern Africa, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda are trying to offer educational activities to prisoners in prisons (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017). Although countries in Africa want to offer formal and vocational training opportunities to prisoners in prisons, this is usually not possible due to financial problems.

Researches shows that education for prisoners can change thinking, encourage pro-social behavior, increase employment, and reduce recidivism. Education has the power to transform lives in both tangible and intangible terms. Therefore, it is an important tool that can be used to re-establish the lives of people who are released from prison, to reduce crime rates and recidivism rates, and to reduce criminal justice costs (Brazzell, Crayton, Mukamal, Solomon, & Lindahl, 2009).

Utilization of educational activities for the rehabilitation of prisoners has also been the subject of the United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. Uganda enacted the Prisons Act 2006 regarding the application of United Nations standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners and to provide prisons have a rehabilitative role. This law, which has been enacted, recommends the provision of academic and vocational training in order to facilitate the rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners after prison (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017).

Although formal and vocational education contributes to the social reintegration of prisoners in prison, and although formal arrangements are made for prisoners to receive formal and vocational education in prison, the practices are far from what is desired. In this context, questions were asked to the participants within the scope of the research in order to reveal the current situation. The narratives related to this will be given in the following sections of the thesis.

### **2.3. THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL REINTEGRATION PROCESS INTO SOCIETY**

Prisoners face many challenges and difficulties in their social reintegration processes after they are released from prison. Davis, Bahr and Ward (2012) point out the difference between the prison environment and main stream of society. After release ex-offenders find themselves in a new environment which is totally different from prison environment. Moreover, considering the dynamic structure of society, ex-offenders who spent long time in prison will find very different environment from their former environment before imprisonment. This makes reintegration harder for them.

After release from prison ex-prisoners undergo a great deal of challenges and difficulties. For a successful reintegration they need support from their family, environment, society and government (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012; Seiter & Kadela, 2003; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009). Because those challenges and difficulties become barriers in front of the reintegration and rehabilitation and if ex-offenders don't get enough support against these barriers they increase reoffending chance.

A better understanding of the challenges ex-prisoners face in the social reintegration process helps professionals, families and communities better support the social reintegration that prevents recidivism.

In this study, these difficulties faced by ex-convicts in their social reintegration process will be discussed under three headings.

#### **2.3.1. Individual Challenges**

There are many factors that make it difficult for inmates to reintegrate into society at the individual level after they are released from prison. The main individual factors include, for example, ex-prisoners' age, gender, marital status, family relationships, education and housing status.

On the other hand, skill deficiencies such as poor interpersonal communication skills, poor cognitive or emotional functioning, illiteracy or innumeracy or lack of planning and financial management skills, which make it difficult for them to compete and succeed in society after prison, are among the individual factors that make reintegration into society difficult. In addition to these, social isolation and marginalization experienced by ex-prisoners, physical or emotional abuse, poor employment or unemployment and an early life of crime, substance abuse and drug addiction, physical and mental disabilities are also factors that make social reintegration process difficult for the ex-prisoners after their release (Griffiths, Dandurand, & Murdoch, 2007).

Some of the individual challenges are dynamic, meaning they are open to change. Whereas some other individual factors are static. Therefore, static ones do not change over time. For example, the sex of the ex-convict, criminal history, age at the time of arrest. Dynamic challenges can be changed with the help of some programs and activities within or outside the criminal justice system. For example, the education, employment, housing status of ex-prisoners can be changed. And through some training and empowerment programs, ex-prisoners can be provided with new skills so that they can compete and be successful in social life (Harper & Chitty, 2005).

### **2.3.2. Institutional Challenges**

Organizing a rehabilitative prison system for prisoners is not always easy to prison authorities. Overcrowded prison population is one of the biggest challenge for prison authorities. The resources invested in overcrowded prisons mostly used for basic needs of prisoners like food, accomodation facilities etc. instead of fulfilling the primary rehabilitative function of them. So for overcrowded prison managers it is not easy to focus on reintegration programs due to lack of resources and staff (Casey, Jarman, & Scurfield, 2011). According to Bureau of Justice Statistics the United States has almost 2.2 million prisoner population. According to data of the World Prison Brief this numbers equating occupancy level at 103.9 percent and this makes the United States prison system 113th most overcrowded worldwide. According to this data Haiti has the most overcrowded prison population with the percentage

of % 454.4, Philippines has the second overcrowded prison population with the percentage of % 434, El Salvador follows them as third one with the percentage of % 348,2 and Uganda has the 6th overcrowded prison population in the world with the percentage of % 293,2 (McCarthy, 2018).

Prison overcrowding and inadequate resources causing given low priority in practice to needs of prisoners and their reintegration endeavour. Prison managements mostly use the resources for improve security, safety and order, instead of workshops, skill trainings and educational facilities which helps prisoners reintegration process. There is a wrong belief that security in prisons can be achieved by only using disciplinary measures but improving the prison environment, providing good education facilities and supporting positive communication and relation between prison staff and prisoners can also help the security and peace in the prisons. Another important problem is lack of coordination between programs and preparations before release with the services provided by community after prison. Most countries do not have any reintegration strategy which should be conducted by relevant authorities like: Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Employment Institutions and other Social Services etc. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006).

Management of prisoners transition back into their community after prison is very important. This should cover linking them to the services and facilities in the community like housing, employing etc. which will help their stability after leaving regimented structure life of prison and reintegration. Preparations for a successful reintegration should begin just after entering the prison. This will help the prisoners, their families and community for transition, especially after longer prison periods (Casey, Jarman, & Scurfield, 2011).

For Ugandan prisons it is not easy to say the conditions are good. As of February 2019 there are 59,280 inmates in Ugandan prisons and 28,637 are suspects on remand. It means almost 50% of inmates are suspects on remand and they are exposed to prisonization while during this process and government and prison authorities need to spend time and money on them. The government is trying to solve the congestion problem by expanding the holding capacity and building new prisons (Walubiri & Nsaba, 2019). Beside this overcrowding problem the

staff number in Ugandan prisons are not enough. Segawa (2019) states that the current staff ratio is 1/7 but the recommended ratio is 1/3. The lack of staff number does not only cause security issues also staff are not able to take leave or work according to 3 shift system. It means they are over working without taking leave and this can cause burnout syndrome for staff. Since they do not have enough staff they can not focus on reintegration programs in the prison.

For the challenges faced by prison authorities some precautions should be taken policy makers and governments. Resources should be revised and encouraged to invest in the education facilities, work shops, skill training programs which help reintegration of ex-offenders.

### **2.3.3. Societal Challenges**

It is not enough for ex-prisoners to return to the society physically after they are released from prison, neither for the society to accept them immediately, nor for the prisoners to adapt to the society and return to social life.

The attitudes of the society towards people who are released from prison, their ostracism, their disapproval of their behavior and sometimes even disgust come to the fore. This attitude and manner of the society towards ex-prisoners complicates the process of reintegration with the society (Brand, 2016). Maruna and LeBel (2022) state that social reintegration should include "relational reintegration" rather than physical proximity. That is, the reintegrated person should be re-accepted as a full fledged member in and of the wider community.

One of the most important factors that make it difficult for ex-prisoners to reintegrate into society is the stigmatization against ex-prisoners. Public stigma refers to the labeling and discriminatory attitude imposed by a powerful group such as a community or government towards a minority and weaker group. Stigmatization, can be defined as the co-occurrence of components of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination. For stigma to occur, there must be a use of force. Stigma processes affect multiple areas of

people's lives. Stigma has profound effects in areas such as earnings, housing, involvement in crime, health and life itself (Link & Phelan, 2001). Another important result about stigmatization is that the group stigmatized by the society internalizes these beliefs against himself/herself after a certain period of time (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Mak & Cheung, 2010).

When the label is internalized, the person labeled by the society may begin to behave in accordance with this label. For ex-prisoners who are labeled by the society, this situation is reflected in life as recidivism (Winnick & Bodkin, 2008). That is, in this case, those who are stigmatized actually stigmatize themselves by internalizing and adopting the stigma. Self-stigmatization consists of three components. These are:

- Stereotype (such as negative beliefs about one's competence)
- Prejudice (such as low self-esteem)
- Discrimination (such as avoidance of pursuing employment and interaction) (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Chui & Cheng, 2013).

In the literature, it is stated that one of the most striking consequences of stigma against ex-convicts is that it makes it difficult to participate in the workforce (Weiman, 2007).

It is clear that there is a need for social work intervention regarding the negative and destructive effects of social stigma on ex-prisoners on their self-perceptions and self-confidence. However, it is necessary to carry out not only individual practices towards ex-convicts, but also mezzo and macro-level studies against the stigmatizing attitude of the society towards ex-prisoners.

One of the societal challenges unique to Uganda that ex-prisoners face in their social reintegration process is the rivalry between the tribes. Especially ex-prisoners who are not members of the tribe that is dominant and powerful in the country's administration, while struggling with the stigma of being an ex-convict after prison, they also face the difficulties

of not being a Munyankole. In this social structure, advocacy is required for ex-convicts to obtain their right to live under equal conditions on the basis of human rights.

#### **2.4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION OF PRISONERS AND EX-PRISONERS**

The coordination between agencies in criminal justice system and the social services has a huge importance to improve social reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners. If there is not a good coordination between those agencies and resources are not used efficient this effect reintegration progress in a negative way and can cause recidivism.

Shaw (2006) emphasise the community participation of social reintegration. She states community involvement has an essential role for crime prevention and social reintegration of ex-offenders. The participation of municipalities, the police, schools, health and social services and even private sector to the social reintegration process will increase the effectiveness of the programs. Griffiths (2004) also states that community has a key role for successful reintegration of ex-offenders nevertheless spesific strategies needs to mobilize and sustain community interest and participation in reintegration programs. He also indicates that unfortunately the community mostly too much rely on the criminal justice system and goverment policies instead of taking responsibility.

Flor and Flor (2019) mention about some characteristics which should be included by reintegration programs and strategies for successful transition of ex-offenders into the society. These characteristics are:

- Concentrating and considering of specific groups of offenders and their unique challenges,
- Depending on scientific and reliable methods for the assessing needs and risk factors of offenders,
- Be aware of offenders are accountable and hold them responsible for their choices and actions,

- Starting with the prisoners first entry to the prison, continuing through releasing process and transition to the community,
- A good coordination between all parties supported by reciprocal protocols, transparent definition of mutual roles and responsibilities with appropriate working schemes which also includes time tables,
- Using well based case management practices and sufficient information management systems,
- Not pushing public safety priorities to the background,
- Encouraging community participation during planning and intervention process (this helps strong community ownership for the programs),
- Having a good self-evaluation mechanism for the program and strategy to improve strategy itself and stay trustable for the community to prevent crime offends.

It is shown in many study that prisoners have some essential social and personal problems like financial issues, substance abuse, mental problems, poor social relationships etc. Unfortunately they leave prison with some new problems like loosing job, house and/or a relationship etc. So after prison they are not only facing the problems which they have before imprisonment they also encounter some new problems and challenges (Maguire, 2007). A successful reintegration program should be considering all these aspects of prisoner challenges.

Every crime has some costs to the community and these costs can not be underestimated. For a crime at the beginning there is law enforcement, investigating and prosecuting costs, later imprisonment, victims and community costs follow. So failed reintegration process costs concern policy makers and community members. After release if ex-prisoner re-offend community safety is under danger because of increased crime. Re-offending also keeps ex-prisoners rely on the social services which also a cost to the community instead of contributing the community income and safety (Borzycki & Makkai, 2007).



It is not easy to come up with a simple recipe for an effective and comprehensive strategy for successful reintegration of ex-offenders and stopping recidivism. Starting with evaluating present legislation system and adopting new legislation could be a wise step. For example China set up the Office of Resettlement Assistance and Education of Released People for the purpose of development of aftercare and transition facilities for ex-offenders and testing different forms of community sentencing and conditional release alternatives. The Singapore Prison Service started implementing “reintegration officer” strategy which works with community-based organizations. All approaches and strategies taken by each country needs to consider existing laws, resources and community characteristics. However during planning and implementing social reintegration strategies some basic steps can be used for all countries since some offenders are similar (United Nations Office on Drugs And Crime, 2012).

The elements of a strategy for offender reintegration is showned in the figure 2.

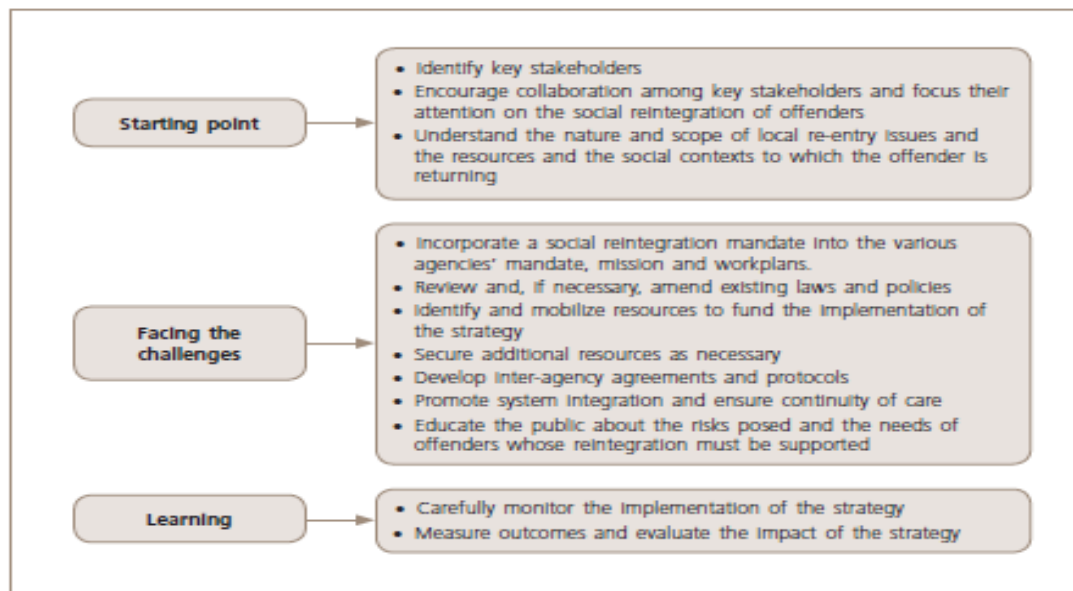


Figure 2: Elements of a Strategy

Source: (United Nations Office on Drugs And Crime, 2012, p. 22).

Singh (2016) states that purpose for reintegration strategy should not be punishment it must be protection of public, promotion of social responsibility, supporting human development

to decrease recidivism rates. So offender reintegration programmes should adopt rehabilitative, educational and developmental options instead of punitive and retributive criminal justice. Correctional services mostly criticized that they don't do much in order to prepare ex-offenders for re-entry to the community. The acquisition of appropriate skills would be a key during this process for a successful reintegration. The author also offers a multidimensional strategy which includes many actors like media, probation services, NGOs, judiciary, community, offender etc. For a successful reintegration of ex-offenders all those parties should take responsibility and act for it.

The key role players for that can be seen in figure 3.

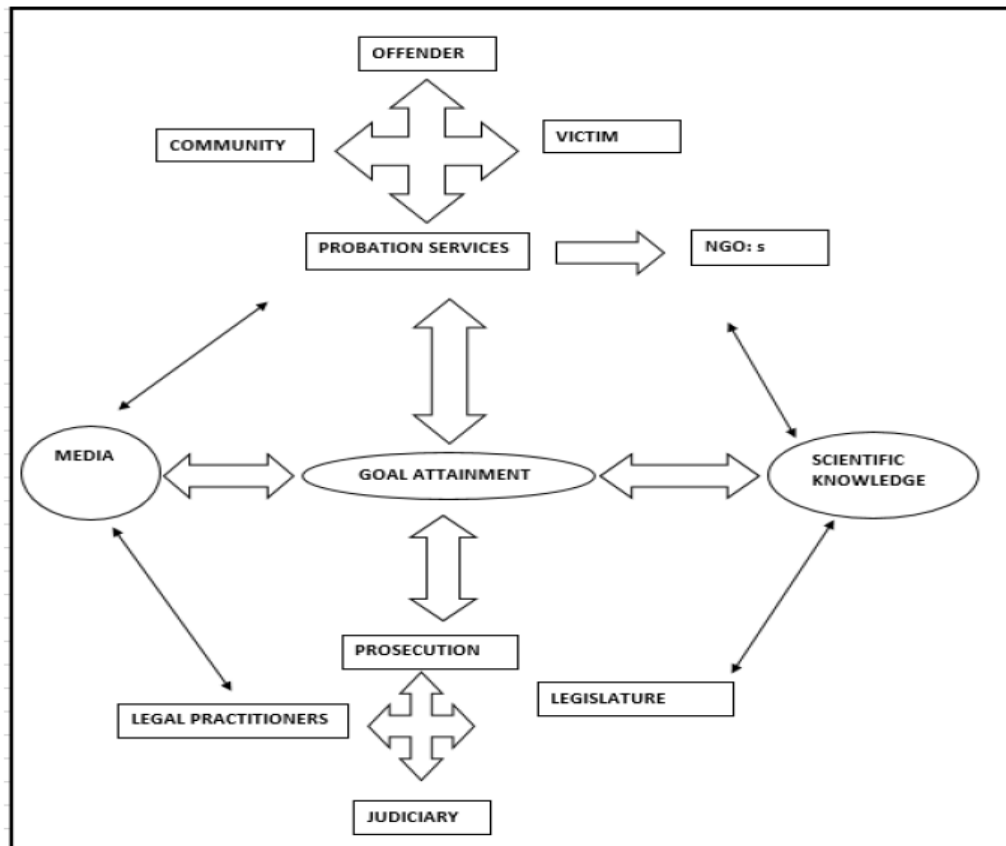


Figure 3: Key Role Players within the Criminal Justice System for Offender Reintegration

Source: (Singh, 2016, p. 6).

## 2.5. CONCLUSION

It is clear that reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-offenders into community is one of the most important goals of criminal justice system and this goal is also mandated by United Nations international instruments and guidelines. Reintegration of ex-offenders is an important subject for both individuals and society. Although especially in developing and under developed countries government takes reintegration issue reluctantly cost of recidivism will be more than reintegration programs. For a crime government needs to cover expenses of law enforcement, investigation, prosecution, imprisonment and community costs.

According to the literature, prisoners generally have a low level of education (Harlow, 2003), have learning difficulties (Fazel, Xenitidis, & Powell, The prevalence of intellectual disabilities among 12,000 prisoners - a systematic review , 2008), are not actively involved in the workforce (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003), have high poverty rates (Petersilia, 2003), have alcohol and drug addiction (Fazel, Bains, & Doll, 2006), and have psychological problems (Diamond, Wang, Holzer, Thomas, & Cruser , 2001).

Societies cannot afford and sustain reintegration programs without government support and legal arrangements. So, it is important to be prepared a multidimensional strategic plan which includes all parties like prisoners, prison managements, policy makers, private sector and community for successful reintegration of ex-offenders and prevent recidivism. While doing all this, it is necessary to carefully consider the programs in the prison, the preparatory work for the post-prison process and the support mechanisms after the prison, starting from the process of entering the prison, the motivation factors that affect the reintegration of ex-prisoners into the society and the obstacles they encounter in this process.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the research model, sampling and selection of participants, data collection process, data collection tools, data analysis process, ethical issues and limitations will be explained.

### **3.2. RESEARCH MODEL**

The aim of this study is to understand the social reintegration experiences of ex-prisoners in Uganda in terms of both ex-prisoners who have completed the social reintegration process and ex-prisoners who reoffend after prison. Since the study is aimed to focus on experiences of ex-prisoners and their perception about the social re-integration process so understand how a particular phenomenon was experienced and perceived by individuals, the qualitative research method could serve this purpose. Phenomenological approach, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Because the purpose of the research involves a journey of discovery and by listening to the experiences of the ex-prisoners first-hand, it investigates the meanings and perceptions that arise from their experiences.

Creswell (2007) states qualitative research is carried out with the aim of understanding and defining a particular subject in detail. This detail can only be achieved by talking directly to people and allowing them to tell their own stories by their view and perception. The phenomenological approach would be appropriate for such a study if the research question is to uncover the shared experiences of individuals of a particular phenomenon. Understanding these common experiences is important for developing policies and practices. Beside that Smith and Osborne (2008) state that one of the key strengths of phenomenology is that it enables voices which are difficult to hear to be heard and carry deep problems that are difficult to see to the surface. For this research ex-prisoners are a group which is not easy to hear their voices from many people and policy makers. So this study and approach can help them to make their voices heard.

To gather information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, housing, education, employment, health status etc. the questionnaire form is used which is prepared by the researcher.

### **3.3. SAMPLING AND DETERMINATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

There are two groups of participants in the research. These groups are prisoners who sentenced to prison at least second time and ex-prisoners in the community.

For the first group the participants were determined by the criterion sampling method (Patton, 2002, p. 243) which is among the purposeful sampling methods used for qualitative research. In criterion sampling, the researcher selects the participants from the cases that meet certain criteria. In this research for the first group of participants which are prisoners need to have these criteria to be selected:

- Being in prison at least second time during the research, (it means these prisoners committed a crime and sentenced to prison for this crime and after their release they involved another crime and sentenced to prison again),
- Being older than 18 years old (Prisoners under 18 years of age should be considered as the subject of another study in itself because of their more sensitive and particular situation).

Criterion sampling in this research helped the researcher to choose not only prisoners but prisoners who were part of recidivism and reoffend. Therefore, it gives an opportunity to understand from their point of the view why they failed to reintegration process and come back to prison. This technique also allowed the researcher to exclusion of the prisoners who under the age of 18 which were considered to be the subject of another study itself.

The first group of participants chosen from the Uganda's major prisons in Masaka, Mukono, Kampala and Wakiso. Mukono (Kauga Prison) and Masaka (Masaka Prison) represented the fairly rural prisons while Wakiso (Kigo Prison) and Kampala (Luzira Prison) represented fairly urban prisons. Two rural and two urban prisons chosen because this can also give an opportunity to the researcher make a comparison between them.

For the determination of second group of participants, snowball sampling or chain sampling and the criterion sampling method (Patton, 2002, p. 243) used together which are among the purposeful sampling methods used for qualitative research.

The snowball or chain sampling technique is used when it is difficult to access the units that make up the universe, or where information about the universe (size and depth of information, etc.) is missing (Patton, 2002). The sampling process in the snowball sampling method begins by reaching one of the individuals to who with the research will be conducted. At the end of the interview with this participant, other individuals suggested by that participant and after the interview with those individuals are reached to other individuals suggested by them (Şahin, 2014).

In qualitative research, Neuman and Robson (2014) defines the snowball sampling method as a method used to reach marginal groups of the society, illegal individuals and groups that deviate from the general behavior of the society. Şimşek and Yıldırım (2011) states that that this method helps to identify rich sources of information.

The second group of the participants consist of ex-prisoners in the community however it was not easy to contact ex-prisoners in Ugandan community for me. That's the reason for choosing snowball sampling method. Since the participants were choosen from the prisoners who demonstrated recidivism behaviour in the first group, the participants of second group were chosen with a criteria of not demonstrating recidivism behaviour after their release. The American National Institute of Justice defines the concept of recidivism as not being involved in any criminal activity within 3 years after being released from prison (National Institute of Justice, 2020). So in this research for the second group of participants which are ex-prisoners in the community need to have these criteria to be selected:

- Not being involved in any criminal activity at least within 3 years after being released from prison,
- Being older than 18 years old (Ex-prisoners under 18 years of age should be considered as the subject of another study in itself because of their more sensitive and particular situation).

The purpose of selecting a non-random sample in qualitative research is the desire of the researcher to work with small sample-in-depth interviews where more studies will be conducted, rather than the numerical size of the sample, without the concern of representation. It is important to select a sample that focuses on the experiences of participants in the subject of the research and includes quotations showing the diversity and richness of the experiences (Kümbetoğlu, 2015, pp. 97-99).

The strength and logic of the purposeful sampling comes from its emphasis on in-depth understanding. This allow to researcher to select information rich cases for the research in depth (Patton, 2002, p. 46).

### **3.4. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

In the research, semi-structured in-depth interviews were used as a basic information gathering tool for all participants. Beside that a questionnaire form is used to gather demographic information such as education, health, housing etc. situation for the first and second group of participants.

In Uganda, it is necessary to obtain a written permission from the Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters in order to enter the prisons and making interview with prisoners. When I decided to study this topic at first place I talked with some lawyers and policemen about my topic to get some ideas and learn about the formal processes to get access to prisons and make interviews with prisoners. Most of them warned me about the Ugandan bureaucracy and difficulty of overcoming it.

Unfortunately, I experienced this very tough Ugandan bureaucracy very well. I delivered my official application letter to Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters to get a permission to access the prisons and make interviews with prisoners on 21'st December of 2018 and I could success getting the permission letter 14'th October of 2019. It took almost one year for me only getting permission to conduct this research. But I used this time to make observations on Ugandan culture, social relations in society and reading on theoretical part. I also read

some articles about interview techniques according to my supervisor and thesis monitoring committee members' advices.

After getting the permission I visited Kampala Luzira Prison first to implement some pilot interviews with the prisoners. After a comprehensive body and belongings search I was allowed to enter the complex with prison blocks. With the guidance of the security guards, I went to the block named "Murchison Bay". Security guards made a second body and belongings search before taking me to the office of the commander who is responsible for the "Murchison Bay". I declared my permission letter to the commander and made a brief explanation about my research. Although my cell phone and other devices taken at the gate by the guards the commander strictly warned me about not to take any picture and voice record. After that security guards showed me a room for interview and I made a pilot interview with a prisoner who is randomly selected among the prisoners who are in prison at least second time and older than the age of 18. After pilot interview I shared the transcription of the interview with the thesis monitoring committee members. After getting their consent and positive feedback I made other interviews.

I conducted prison visits for my research each time with my personal vehicle. Reaching Mukono (Kauga Prison) and Masaka (Masaka Prison) was very difficult since they are far from Kampala. Masaka (Masaka Prison) is 3 hours away and Mukono (Kauga Prison) is almost one and half-hour away from Kampala by driving. Reaching Wakiso (Kigo Prison) takes almost 1 hour while Kampala (Luzira Prison) takes 40 minutes by driving.

A comprehensive body and belongings search were made during all visits before entrance of the prison walls. After this search permission letter from Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters is shown to prison commander and other prison personnel. After this process interviews conducted with the prisoners who complied with the research conditions. Before each interview, the participants were given detailed information about the research and volunteer participation form (Appendix 1) was read and signed by the participants. All interviews were conducted in the prison in the interview room designated by the prison commander. During the interviews, there was no prison staff in the room but a staff member



waited outside the door for security reasons. Since no recording devices were allowed during the interviews, the spoken words throughout the entire interview were written down by the researcher. For this reason, the duration of the interviews took longer than expected. All interviews lasted between 1 hour 15 minutes and 1 hour 45 minutes. Lawyer Wahap Abdulkasim, who assisted me in obtaining the official permits and appointments required for an interview in prison, also attended the interviews held in prison. He took notes during the interview process and shared his notes with me at the end of the interviews. Since any voice recording is not allowed during the interviews held in prison, a second person taking notes and sharing his notes with the researcher facilitated the transcription of the interviews. At the end of the interview, the notes taken by the researcher and the lawyer were read to the participants and their approval was obtained. All the interviews were conducted in English, which is the official language of the country and the researcher can use effectively.

It was not easy to find and contact ex-prisoners in the community for the second group of participants. During my meetings at Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters and the prisons I asked the staff several times to help me contact ex-prisoners in the community. Unfortunately, every time I asked they said there are some organizations which supports ex-prisoners in the community and they can link me them but somehow they avoid to tell the name of the organization or anyone from the organization. Therefore, I tried to find someone to contact ex-prisoners in the community. Then luckily with the lawyer's help I contacted Mr. Jonathan Mugerwa who is the Manager of Buena Charity Services. Mr. Mugerwa has an impressive life story. He sentenced 15 years in prison on charges of burglary in 2005. He got remission due to his good manners in prison and released in 2016. When he was in the prison some Canadian volunteers visits the prison and he decides to do volunteer works for prisoners after meeting Canadian team. He hears the word "Buena" from a Spanish origin volunteer which means "good" that's how he chose the name for Buena Charity Services.

After he released from prison in 2016 he establishes the Buena Charity Services to support ex-prisoners in the Ugandan community. He states that this is the only Ugandan NGO which aims to support prisoners and ex-prisoners. He finishes high school and gets some certificate when he was in prison and he got an acceptance to bachelor program on entrepreneurship in

Makerere University after his release. Makerere University which is biggest and most famous university in Uganda also supports Mr. Mugerwa's volunteer work by allocating a room to Buena Charity Services in Makerere Business School Campus. He organizes meetings in that room and uses the room as an office for volunteer works with ex-prisoners.

After I met with Mr. Mugerwa I explained him about my research and he accepted to help me to contact ex-prisoners in the community. So, we organized a meeting with the ex-prisoners who are attending and using Buena Charity Services at the meeting room which is allocated by Makerere University. Almost twenty ex-prisoners came to the meeting. At the beginning of meeting Mr. Mugerwa introduced me to the participants and I gave brief information about my research to them. I kindly asked them if they want to join my research. The volunteer participation form was read to each of the volunteers and asked to sign the form. This form can be seen in the attachment. One copy of the volunteer participation form is given to the each of the participants also. Interviews were held with 15 volunteer participants from this group. All the interviews with this group were conducted in the office room of Buena Charity Services which is in Makerere University Business School building where the participants feel themselves comfortable to talk about the research subject. Participants in this group allowed voice recording during the interview. Notes were also taken by the researcher during the interview. All interviews lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour 15 minutes.

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

For the research the in-depth interview technique was used to search for answers from the participants determined in accordance with the purpose and the subject of the research.

The in-depth interview technique used in qualitative research is a data-forming tool that makes it possible to go down to the essence rather than the appearance of many visible phenomena, processes and relationships in the social world, to understand their details and to understand them in a holistic way. It is a technique, which focuses on the researched topic and aims to create data by gathering opinions, thoughts and evaluations of individuals around

this topic. This technique gives the opportunity to reveal how individuals form their worlds and evaluate the social environment that surrounds them with their perceptions of the external world can be observed by looking at the meanings, intentions and expectations that cannot be directly observed. Through this technique researcher can make an in-depth understanding of what is reflected in their narratives and expressions, and the conditions they are in (Kümbetoğlu, 2008, p. 72).

Although the researcher knows the dimensions of the event partially, semi-structured interview form was used instead of a strictly drawn interview technique based on the assumption that he would not know everything about the subject. The semi-structured interview form for ex-prisoners is consisted on three basic sections: (1) Life before prison; (2) Imprisonment; (3) Life after Prison. Under each section family, financial situation, housing, health situation, education and social relations issues handled and discussed. (Appendix 2). With the first section it is aimed to obtain information and insight about the participant's family life, social relations, economic status, housing status, education and health status which accompanied the process of route to offending before prison process. In the second section, it is aimed to obtain information and understanding about the participant's prison experiences, efforts to maintain family and social relations in the society during imprisonment, relations with other prisoners and employees in prison, programs in prison and their plans for life after the prison process. In the third part, it is aimed to obtain information and understanding about the experience of the participant's release, family and social relations after prison, changes in these relations, economic status, health status, housing status, changes in these situations, whether they turn back to crime again or not, efforts for social reintegration back to the society and support mechanisms. In this part, it is also important that I tried to understand what kind of support mechanisms they used for social reintegration such as family, social relations, ex-prisoners' organizations etc. and what kind of barriers and struggles they faced such as transportation, finding job, finding accommodation and social relations etc.

In addition to the semi-structured interview form, a questionnaire form was also used to gather the information about socio-demographic characteristics of ex-prisoners in accordance

with the purpose and the subject of the research. The form also includes questions about employment, education, housing, health and justice criminal system (Appendix 3). Although questionnaires are mostly used for collection of data for quantitative analysis, in this study questionnaire is used to obtain general and tidy information about the participants. Beside this, it is also selected as an organizational tool to provide a quick cross-reference to the interview transcripts of the participants.

### **3.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

All interviews conducted within the scope of the research were written by the researcher in Microsoft word program with the help of the notes taken during the interviews. Although transcribing the interviews was a very difficult process, the researcher tried to transcribe them as soon as possible after each interview. Interview transcripts varied between 12 and 19 pages.

The obtained interview transcripts were read more than once in a topic-oriented manner based on the purposes of the research, and during the reading, they were coded and analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA program, which was prepared for qualitative data analysis.

Patton (2002) states that, there are two main sources that the researcher can use while analyzing the data in qualitative researches. The first is the questions produced during the design phase of the research before the fieldwork while the conceptual framework was created and secondly, the insights and comments that emerged during the data collection process (p. 437). The researcher benefited from both sources while analyzing the data.

The descriptive analysis method was used to analyze the data in the study. In descriptive analysis, the data are summarized and interpreted under the themes determined in line with the research questions or the preliminary information obtained through observations and interviews during the data collection phase (Altunışık, Coşkun, Bayraktaroğlu, & Yıldırım, 2010, p. 322). Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) also say that in descriptive analysis, the outcomes of the interview should be read over and over and summarized in line with the predetermined themes, in order to convey the statements of the participants in a striking way, direct

quotations should be included frequently. In this study, interview outputs were read over and over again. With the coding made after repeated reading, the data were summarized and interpreted under the themes which are created in line with semi-structured interview form and the information obtained from the interviews and the observation at the data collection stage.

### **3.7. ETHICAL ISSUES**

The ethical issues in the research process start with deciding on the research topic and continue in the process of interpreting the data and sharing the findings.

After I decided on the subject of the research and made the necessary readings, I drafted a semi-structured interview form that I planned to use in the interviews. Later, I shared this draft form with my advisor and the members of the thesis supervising committee, and I gave its final form in line with the feedback I received from them.

With my research proposal and the semi-structured interview form that I plan to use in the research, I obtained the necessary permission before starting the field application of the research within the scope of the Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines (Appendix 4). On the other hand, in order to carry out my research in Ugandan prisons, I applied to the Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters and got my written permit (Appendix 5).

I interviewed all the interviewees in the research on a voluntary basis. I introduced myself to all of the participants, gave information about my research and clearly stated that if they had anything to ask, they could ask at any stage. I stated that they should let me know when there is a question or situation that bothers them at any stage of the interview, and that we can pause the meeting at any time. I also obtained written consent from each participant before participating in the study.

I sincerely answered the questions asked by the participants. I think that this facilitates the establishment of a relationship of trust. Particularly, the participants in the first group often

asked questions about the confidentiality of the interviews. I observed that they were worried about their identities being revealed and getting the reaction of the prison administration. For this reason, I stated to all the participants that the interviews would only be used within the scope of my research, and that I would never tell the prison administration about what the participants in the research told me. I clearly stated to the participants that I will not write their names in the report during the presentation and reporting of the research.

I observed that when a trusting relationship was established and the interviews progressed, the participants expected that I could improve their negative situation since I am a Mzungu (White man). For this reason, I paid special attention not to make any promises to them and stated that I would include the negative conditions they experienced in my thesis, and that I could make suggestions to improve the conditions they were in at the end of my thesis, but I had no power over the prison administration.

Although some guards asked implicit questions about what the participants told after the interviews, it was reminded that the content of the interviews was confidential and the information was not shared.

Participants in the second group were relatively more comfortable in the interviews than those in the first group. Considering that the participants in the first group are still in prison, this situation is understandable.

I paid a small fee to six of the participants in the second group for their transportation expenses for the day they came to the interview. Other participants stated that they came from nearby places and did not ask any fees.

In both groups, there were participants who experienced emotional moments during the interviews. In this case, short breaks were given to the interview, and the interview was continued when the participants felt themselves ready.

### **3.8. LIMITATIONS**

There are some limitations in this study. In the interviews conducted in the prisons within the scope of the research, only the prison blocks with male prisoners could be accessed within the scope of the permissions obtained from the Ugandan authorities. Therefore, only male prisoners were interviewed in the prison part of the study. On the other hand, while determining the participants in the study, interviews were conducted with participants over the age of 18, since it was thought that the participants under the age of 18 should be the subject of another research on their own due to their unique conditions.

It is thought that conducting interviews in prison is not a limitation. Because there was no prison staff in the room where the interviews were held and the presence of a local lawyer who facilitated access to the research area during the interview played a facilitating role in gaining the trust of the participants and in conveying their thoughts and experiences.

The research is limited to what the participants in the interviews told and shared about the subject and the observations and impressions made by the researcher throughout the process. The fact that the researcher is from abroad made the process of obtaining the necessary permissions to carry out the research long and difficult.

## **CHAPTER 4: PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

It is stated in the third chapter that there are two groups of participants and for the first group criterion sampling method is used which is among the purposeful sampling methods while snowball or chain sampling technique is used for the second group which is also among the purposeful sampling methods.

This chapter presents basic profiles of the two groups of the participants and general information about them.

### **4.2. PROFILE OF THE FIRST GROUP**

The participants of the first group consist of 16 prisoners from Kauga, Masaka, Kigo and Luzira Prisons. All the participants in the first group are older than 18 years old and serving their at least second prison sentence during the research. The profile of the first group and the general information about them can be seen in the table below.



	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Number of Prison Sentence</b>	<b>Prison</b>
<b>1</b>	Prisoner 1	23	Single	-	2	Luzira
<b>2</b>	Prisoner 2	29	Married	4	3	Luzira
<b>3</b>	Prisoner 3	33	Divorced	3	3	Luzira
<b>4</b>	Prisoner 4	56	Married	4	2	Luzira
<b>5</b>	Prisoner 5	20	Single	-	2	Kauga
<b>6</b>	Prisoner 6	35	Separated	3	2	Kauga
<b>7</b>	Prisoner 7	37	Separated	4	3	Kauga
<b>8</b>	Prisoner 8	44	Married	3	2	Kauga
<b>9</b>	Prisoner 9	39	Separated	3	2	Masaka
<b>10</b>	Prisoner 10	26	Separated	-	2	Masaka
<b>11</b>	Prisoner 11	37	Divorced	3	3	Masaka
<b>12</b>	Prisoner 12	24	Single	-	2	Masaka
<b>13</b>	Prisoner 13	43	Separated	3	3	Kigo
<b>14</b>	Prisoner 14	50	Divorced	4	2	Kigo
<b>15</b>	Prisoner 15	36	Divorced	3	3	Kigo
<b>16</b>	Prisoner 16	27	Separated	2	2	Kigo

Table 9: The Profile and the General Information of the First Group of Participants.

The youngest of the participants is 20 and the oldest one is 56 years old. Unfortunately, interviews with female prisoners could not be held among the first group of participants, as the permission letter issued by the Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters allowed access to buildings where only male prisoners were stay. Therefore, in the first group, all of the participants are male and the table does not include a gender column.

Considering their marital status, six participants are separated, four participants are divorced, three participants are single and three participants are married. Seven of the participants have three children, four of them have four children, and one of them has two children while four of the participants do not have any child. During the interviews, 10 of the participants were serving their second prison sentence and six of them serving their third prison sentence.

### **4.3. PROFILE OF THE SECOND GROUP**

The participants of the second group consist of 15 ex-prisoners who are attending activities of Buena Charity Services. All the participants in the second group are older than 18 years old and did not involved in any criminal activity at least within 3 years after being released from prison. The profile of the second group and the general information about them can be seen in the table below.

	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Employment After Prison</b>
<b>1</b>	Ex-Prisoner 1	Male	44	Separated	1	Rent	Part time
<b>2</b>	Ex-Prisoner 2	Male	27	Single	-	Living with Parents	Part time
<b>3</b>	Ex-Prisoner 3	Male	31	Cohabiting	3	Rent	Employed
<b>4</b>	Ex-Prisoner 4	Female	42	Separated	3	Living with Parents	Part time
<b>5</b>	Ex-Prisoner 5	Female	28	Married	3	Rent	Part time
<b>6</b>	Ex-Prisoner 6	Female	57	Divorced	4	Rent	Employed
<b>7</b>	Ex-Prisoner 7	Male	25	Single	-	Rent	Part Time
<b>8</b>	Ex-Prisoner 8	Male	44	Divorced	3	Rent	Unemployed
<b>9</b>	Ex-Prisoner 9	Male	36	Married	3	Rent	Employed
<b>10</b>	Ex-Prisoner 10	Female	35	Married	3	Rent	Part time

<b>11</b>	Ex-Prisoner	Female	37	Cohabiting	3	Rent	Part time
11							
<b>12</b>	Ex-Prisoner	Female	48	Separated	2	Rent	Unemployed
12							
<b>13</b>	Ex-Prisoner	Female	31	Single	-	Living with Parents	Unemployed
13							
<b>14</b>	Ex-Prisoner	Female	36	Married	2	Rent	Unemployed
14							
<b>15</b>	Ex-Prisoner	Male	33	Cohabiting	2	Rent	Part time
15							

Table 10: The Profile and the General Information of the Second Group of Participants.

There are eight females and seven male participants in the second group. The youngest of the participants is 25 and the oldest one is 57 years old. Considering their marital status, four participants are married, three participants are separated, three participants are cohabiting, three participants are single and two participants are divorced. One of the participants have one child, three of them have two children and seven of them have three children while three of them have no child.

None of the participants own their own house. Twelve of the participants live in the rented house. The last three of the participants were living with their parents. Four of the participants were unemployed and eight participants were working in part time jobs. Only three participants were employed in a full-time job.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the information obtained from the interviews with the participants will be conveyed, supported by direct quotations from the participants. The findings of the study will be presented under the headings of life before prison, imprisonment and life after prison for the participants in the first and second groups. This presentation will then provide an opportunity to compare the prison experiences of both groups, their life after prison and their reintegration efforts.

The findings obtained within the scope of the research will be discussed around the empowerment approach and concepts mentioned in the theoretical background. Empowerment; includes the process of helping individuals, groups, families and communities discover and use resources within and around them. The term empowerment in social work also refers to helping people gain the personal, interpersonal, and political power they need to take control of their lives, and to make changes in policies, institutions, and social attitudes that negatively affect their lives. The findings of the research will provide the participants to reveal the weaknesses felt in the face of the difficulties encountered in the process of social reintegration with the society and the potential strengths they can use to overcome these difficulties.

### **5.2. LIFE BEFORE PRISON**

During the interviews with the first and second group of participants, information was tried to be obtained about their family life, social relations, education, health, housing and financial status regarding their lives before being imprisoned. At this stage, it is thought that the information obtained on life before prison will help to understand the social context of reintegration. The information obtained about the lives of both groups before their imprisonment will enable the researcher to get to know the participants in the first and second group better.

There are potential powers that will make it easier for people to have control over their own lives within their family ties, social relations, education, health, housing and financial situation and to get rid of the crime cycle. The information obtained in these areas will make it easier for us to become aware of these forces and to develop recommendations based on these powers as a result of research.

In addition, as a result of the study, it is expected to provide a perspective on the comparison of the experiences of the participants who were re-involved in crime after they were released from prison and who entered the prison for the second or third time and the participants who were not involved in crime after leaving the prison. Thus, we can say something about the strengths of those who have not re-entered the crime cycle and who have been successful in reintegration into society and the weaknesses of the participants who have had problems in the process of reintegration and commit crimes again.

In this section, the information obtained on these issues will be conveyed.

### **5.2.1. Family Issues**

In the interviews with the first group of participants, the majority of them stated that they had some problems with their spouses/partners before they were sent to prison. They expressed that the love and feelings between them had been lost. For some participants, it was found that their family relationships, which they already consider as bad, resulted in divorce or separation because of the prison sentence. Another striking point in this regard is that most of them take a blaming attitude towards their spouses/partners about family relationships that they think are going not well. For example, one of the participants in the first group stated that he had been married for 9 years before entering prison, but that his marriage did not go well and that his wife divorced him after the prison sentence he received.

*“Well...It's hard to keep the family going after a while. I was married for 9 years...Before I go to jail, I can't say my marriage was going very well. We*

*were not sharing much. How to say...our relation... It was something like just on the paper after some years. We had lost that spirit. The spirit in the beginning. My wife's name was O..... (Silence)... But she was a very selfish person; I tried to manage her for 9 years. But when I was in jail for the first time, she acted selfish again and asked for a divorce and I didn't insist against this, cause we were not feeling much for each other, no more... and we got divorced.” (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).*

The participant accuses his ex-wife of being selfish because of his marriage that went bad before the prison and the divorce decision of his ex-wife.

Another participant blames his ex-wife for the family relationship, which he thinks is not going well, and states that the problem was due to economic reasons.

*“My family life...To be honest, things were not going well with my wife... (Silence) ...but that was her fault. Ok?. She is a very dissatisfied person. Complains, complains and complains. She always finds something to complain. It is difficult to endure to her. Her requests never end. I never saw that she was satisfied with the money I earned. She always wanted more. She always finds something to argue. We were arguing too much, for everything. The love and respect between us. E Ehh...It was over. My prison sentence was the last straw for her... and we broke up. She went with the children and is living with another man now.” (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).*

The participants who stated that their marriage ended with the prison sentence actually stated that their emotional relationship with their spouses ended before they were sentenced to prison. Prisoners whose family relationships end are deprived of the social support provided by the family as stated by Laub & Sampson (2003) and (Agnew, 2005). Moreover, if family relations do not improve, they are deprived of this resource in solving the problems encountered during and after the prison process.

For some participants, their family relations not only deteriorated emotionally. One participant said that not only was his relationship with his partner bad, but he received his first prison sentence for inflicting violence on his partner.

*- I was not married officially but I was living with V..... for 4 years. We have two kids. I can't say I got a good relation with her and the kids. My first sentence was for beating up V..... I sentenced three years for that. She went to police for that and I sentenced... She likes making a drama out of something all the time, all the time.*

*-Would you like to tell me the event, how did it come up?*

*-I came from work in the afternoon and was tired. She told me to take care of the kids. She said she has somethings to do. I said I was tired too. Kids are too little anyway, how can I take care of them? We started to argue. She started yelling at me and I couldn't keep myself and I hit her. When she tried to prevent me, I got angrier and I hit her a few more times and she fell down and hit her head against the wall. She started yelling more and ran out of the house and went to the police” (Prisoner 16, 27 years old, Kigo Prison).*

Family relationships have an important place in people's lives and are significant resource in difficult times. The relations of the participants, especially in the first group, who have problems in family relations, deteriorate over time, become estranged from each other, and even worsened relations can lead to domestic violence. The participants did not receive any professional support regarding bad family relations. Family relationships that go bad or end cause the participants to be deprived of this power, and the inability to fix their bad relationships causes them to feel powerless.

Another remarkable point in the statements of the participants is that the economic problems experienced by the family also play a role in the deteriorated family relations. This situation is actually related to the problem of poverty, which affects the majority of the population in



the country. One of the issues that needs to be empowered and advocated for the participants and their families is the equitable sharing of welfare in the country.

More than half of the second group described their family relationships as good before they were imprisoned. It is noteworthy that the participants, who defined their family relationships as good, find themselves successful in managing their family relations, make an effort for their families and share responsibilities in the family. One of the participants who described family relations as good before going to prison described himself as a positive man, problem-free person and stated that he loves his family.

*“I have always had a good relationship with my family. It still is. Emmm...And why not? I am a person who always positive. I am a positive man. So, I'm not a person of problem. No, no sebo, I am not a problem maker. Thanks god my wife is too. Our first one was born before going to jail. I loved spending time with the kid. When I went to prison, I was mostly upset that I could not spend time with my family. I was supporting my family for everything and love them.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

In terms of empowerment approach, past and present skills, abilities, success and interests of the person are important sources of power. They reveal the authentic side of people. Focusing on people's past and present success is the starting point for the helping and change process (Sullivan, 1992; as cited in Şahin F. , 2011). For example, the fact that this participant describes himself as a positive, problem-free person while talking about his family relationships and emphasizes that he loves his family gives clues about his strengths and resources.

A participant who described family relations positively stated that knowing and fulfilling the responsibilities of the parties in the family affect positively to family relations and that problems could be solved by talking.

*“My family relationships ...We had a good relationship with my husband and children. Knowing their responsibilities and doing their part makes the family*

*easier and better place. B... was a supportive person at home. He would help the kids. He wouldn't make things difficult. Of course, from time to time, there were things we couldn't agree on. But we could talk. right?... He is a person open to talking and listening. This makes the relationship easier.”* (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).

The participant mentions that individuals in the family share responsibilities and that they can solve their problems by talking. Sharing responsibilities within the family positively affects family relations and becomes a strength that can be used for the family in the face of difficulties encountered. In addition, the participant's statement that his family problems can be solved by talking shows her skill in this matter. Such skills are also an important source of strength.

One of the participants who described family relations as good before prison said that her husband likes the food she cooked; she was cleaning and preparing his clothes. She describes herself as a woman who loves her husband and child. Her respect for her husband is based on her religious belief.

*“I had a good relationship with my family before I went prison. I respect my husband. This is Allah's order anyway. Right? So, he was nice to me too. He likes the food I cook. and... I was preparing and cleaning his clothes. I used to take care of the children. I wouldn't yammer him. It would be a lie if I say we were bad. I am a woman who loves her husband and child.”* (Ex-Prisoner 5, Female, 28 years old).

Apak (2018) states that one of the most basic sources that motivates the individual is spirituality, and in this context, spirituality plays an important role in empowerment. It also states that spirituality should be included in the scope of social work practices while focusing on the resources and strengths of clients. However, some aspects of spirituality can also have a debilitating effect. This issue should be taken into consideration during interventions.

When I shared the transcript of my pilot interview with my thesis supervisor, my thesis supervisor suggested me to also collect data on the root families of the participants. She said that this would present a perspective from a different point of view for the study. Positive relationships of people with their parents will also be a power that supports them in life and facilitates their social reintegration processes. Understanding the root family relationships of the participants will give us an idea of their strengths and weaknesses in this regard. Therefore, questions about the relations of the participants with their root families were also included in the interviews.

During the interviews with both the first and the second groups, some of the participants stated that they did not have very good relationships with their root families. One of the parents leaving the family or the parents' divorce are cited as factors that negatively affect relationships with the root family.

One of the participants stated that his father left his family when he was 8 years old, his mother raised him and his siblings, therefore he had not seen or called his father for many years and even don't know his number. While explaining these, his anger towards his father was still continuing.

*“Frankly, I haven't seen my father for many years. (Silence) My father left us when we were little. I can't say that my father was caring of us. (Tearful eyes, looks angry) ...Yes, I remember, I was about 8 years old when he left home. He was not a very good father until then anyway. He used to stop by at home some time to time. When he came, he wouldn't be very interested in us; he would not give money to my ma. Mom raised me and my siblings. I did not call my father. Shit... I don't even know his number. Why should I? You wouldn't look for someone who doesn't love and leaves you, do you? (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).*

Children who think that they are abandoned by their parents and feel that they are not loved, may show their reaction about their parents with aggressive behaviors (Yörükoğlu, 2004). The participant still felt anger while talking about his father who abandoned them. It is also

stated that those who are deprived of their fathers during adolescence have difficulties in their social relations and experience adaptation problems (Akduman, Akduman, & Cantürk, 2007).

Another participant stated that he did not have good relations with both his mother and father before and after the prison, and that his grandmother raised him after the divorce of his parents and therefore he doesn't owe anything to his parents.

*“I can't say that I am on good terms with my mom and dad, whether before or after I went to jail. My mother and father divorced when I was little, more precisely I was around 10 years old. My grandma raised me and took care of me. When I was a kid, I used to see my father several times in a year and mom few times more than that. Father chose to leave the family and mom chose the leave me and my sis and began to live with another man. So, I don't think that I owe them much.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

The disintegration of the family as a result of death, separation, and divorce negatively affects the self, personality and identity development of children in the family. Due to the breakdown of the family, children may begin to see themselves as unattended, worthless, and purposeless. The experience of the fragmented family negatively affects the socialization process and social relations of the child. Research shows that marital conflicts and divorce can cause problems such as anxiety, aggression and behavioral disorders in children (Çamur Duyan, 2011, Uluğtekin, 1991).

Alcohol problems of the parents and domestic violence are also stated as another reason for the negative relationships of the participants with their root families. One participant stated that her father had an alcohol problem, was inflicting violence on herself and her sibling when he was drunk, and her mother was insensitive, so she left home when she was 16 years old.

*“I do not have a relationship with my parents. Dad peg out couple years ago. His health wasn't good. He was a fucking drunk man but when you say this to*

*him, nah... (Shakes her head) he wouldn't accept it. When we were little, he would drink alcohol and get drunk and then beat us. When he started drinking in the nights, we would run away with my broh. My mother wouldn't be too interested in us either. I left home at the age of 16 and didn't want to contact them later.” (Ex-Prisoner 12, Female, 48 years old).*

People who grew up with abuse and antisocial behaviors in their childhood may later enter a cycle of violence and treat their own children badly. In addition, People who were neglected or abused in their childhood are more likely to commit crimes later in life. Similarly, people who were victims of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to become sexually aggressors as adults. Abuse, crime and sociopathy continue in a cycle for generations (Yorgancıoğlu, 2018).

In Uganda, it has been reported that 68% of boys and 59% of girls have been subjected to physical violence. This rate is quite high and the violence they are exposed to threatens the holistic and positive development of children. On the other hand, it has been reported that gender-based and sexual violence is also common in the country, and that 35% of girls and 17% of boys are exposed to sexual violence (UNICEF, Child Protection, 2022).

It is common for an individual who has suffered domestic violence to adopt the role of "victim" over time, to believe that it is impossible to prevent violence, to normalize the violence she/he has suffered, and even to deny the violence she/he has experienced from time to time (Arıkan, 2011). The participant, whose narrative is given above, was subjected to violence by his father and his mother remained insensitive to the situation. However, the participant does not accept this violence, does not adopt the role of "victim", and tries to establish a new life by running away from home. I am not saying here, of course, that it should be encouraged and normalized for a minor to run away from home. However, I would like to express that it can be an important power for the participant to not give in to violence and stay strong in the face of this oppress and start a new search.

Offenders' family relations and ties structure their daily routines, places that they go to socialize, with whom they connect and the kind of behaviors they engage in while socializing in the community (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Griffiths, Dandurand and Murdoch (2007) states that many people involved in crimes lack family support. Visher and Travis (2003) indicates good family relationships have positive effects in reducing the risk of re-offending and facilitates social reintegration.

Therefore, researcher thinks it is important to have good relationships before going to prison and to maintain them after being released from prison. Because the positive family relations can be a good resource of power to support during the prison process and after release from prison provides an important resource for the social reintegration of ex-prisoners into the society and is an important support factor in overcoming the difficulties encountered.

### **5.2.2. Poverty and Working Poor**

In this section, the economic conditions of the participants before their first prison sentence are presented. The expressions of the participants in both groups reveal that they tried to survive in difficult economic conditions before going to prison. One of the participants in first group stated that he worked part-time before entering prison, that the money he earned was never enough, bought second-hand clothes for his children and sorrowed not being able to buy new clothes to his children.

*“I was working part time for a boda boda mechanic before going to jail. But the money I earned was always very little. I was always looking for another job when I wasn't working at the mechanic. There were some small jobs rarely, like carrying something in the local market... (Silence). But money was always small. I could never buy new clothes for my children. Do you understand? I could only afford second hand clothes. This makes me feel bad all the time.”*  
(Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga prison).

One of the participants in Masaka prison complained that he could not find a permanent job. The participant stated that he was constantly looking for an additional job, but the money he earned was never enough.

*“I never had a permanent job. I have a very small cornfield. I was planting some cassava. But the corn and cassava I was growing never met my family's needs. Money, money is very important...most important thing to survive. I always wanted jobs for other people to give me extra work in their fields. But the money I earned was not enough to buy neither clothes nor food. We had to eat cassava and posho almost all damn days of the week...”* (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participants could not find a permanent job and they had difficulty in meeting their needs with the money they earned in the temporary jobs they found. This situation can be evaluated as the reflection of poverty and structural inequality in the country's economic life. However, the situation of the participants here is different from the one advocated by the notion of "blaming the victim", which is one of the popular views used to explain the culture of poverty (Duyan, 2014). Because, according to this view, they are responsible for their own poverty, and the reason for their poverty is because they are lazy, waste their money and time, and have no control over their own lives (Özbudun, 2022). Nevertheless, looking at the statements of the participants, they do not adopt poverty as a destiny, they are not lazy, and they work extra jobs to earn money. It is evaluated that this attitude may be a force for them to get out of the poverty cycle.

Similar to the first group, the participants in the second group stated that their economic conditions were bad and they had very difficult financial times before they were imprisoned. Likewise, to the first group, there are participants in the second group who complain about not being able to find permanent jobs.

One of the participants stated that he tried different jobs such as selling small things in traffic, working temporarily in a restaurant, but could not find a permanent job and his earnings were not enough.

*“Finding a permanent job and earning money is not easy at all. I tried my luck at some jobs but I always made small small money, you know. I sold small things in traffic, sugarcane, chewing gum something like these. Then I tried a part time job in a restaurant, I mean cleaning works, but they were also paying little money and I wasn't working every day. They were calling when things were busy.”* (Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).

One of the participants stated that she did not have a job; her husband was working in the sugar cane field, was helping care for goats at the farm when the sugarcane season was over, but the money her husband earned was not enough. She told with teary eyes that one day her husband was staying on the farm and that she could not feed her children at home and she had to go to the imam for asking alms.

*“I didn't have a job; my husband was working in sugar cane fields. When the sugarcane business was over, he was helping to care for the goats on the farm. But we were having trouble to manage our life with that money. Most of the time we had no money. Definitely no money...I mean even not one shilling... They were saying to my husband that if he is not happy with the money he can quit and leave, there are many people waiting to work. Sometimes my husband would stay at the farm to care for the goats and would not come home. Once he didn't come for a few days and we had no money at home. The children wanted to eat and I had nothing to give them. You can't imagine sir how I felt. (She swallows; her eyes get tearful). And I went to the imam in the neighborhood and asked him for alms. I felt so desperate and weak. The imam gave me some alms money and I bought stuff for the children with that money.”* (Ex-Prisoner 14, Female, 36 years old).

As mentioned in the chapter one of the study, the people of Uganda are faced with a serious problem of poverty. 41% of the country's population lives in poverty (Opportunity International, 2022). 72% of the workforce in the country works in agriculture. (The World Fact book, 2021). The statements of the participants about the economic situation give an



idea about the poverty in the country and confirm the shared statistics. In order to combat poverty in the country, the strengths of the poor need to be discovered and made functional.

In Uganda, there is poverty due to the lack of employment opportunities and insufficient social protection, and the working poor consisting of working people living in poverty (Gammarano, 2019).

In this sense, poverty continues to exist as a multidimensional problem that affects the life and quality of life of a significant number of people, creates rights violations and has a significant number of cause and effect relationships in the context of inequalities. For this reason, poverty is actually a social problem that should be evaluated as a violation of the right to live humanely and addressed in the context of human rights (Atatanır & Karataş, 2019).

Participants stated that one of the most important employment related problems in Uganda is competition between tribes. They stated that especially in the public sphere and in many other areas, members of the Banyankole tribe, the tribe of the President of the country, were recruited and there was a discriminatory attitude towards those from other tribes. One of the participants told that it is difficult to find a permanent and good job, there is a discriminatory attitude on this issue, and if one of the two people applying for the same job is from Banyankole tribe, he will get the job.

*“I was working here and there for part time jobs. My income was not good. It is difficult to find good and permanent work. Let me tell you something. They don't give us good work. No sebo, no. They don't give good jobs to everyone. I once applied for a cleaning job in the airport. Even in cleaning jobs, priority is given to Banyankole people. If someone applies for a job at the same time with a Munyankole the job is given to Munyankole. This is so.”* (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

As mentioned in the population and social structure of Uganda in the first chapter of the study, the Baganda tribe is the most populous tribe in terms of population in the country. However, the head of state that has ruled the country since 1986 is from the Banyankole tribe, which is the second most populous tribe in the country. Due to the fact that they have been in power for such a long time and the inter-tribal rivalry since the civil wars in the historical past of the country, people from the Banyankole tribe and other tribes that support this tribe find a place for themselves especially in government institutions and other employment areas. Although few participants expressed their reactions on this issue, the observations made by the researcher in the society during the two years he lived in the country support these claims. The reason why the majority of the participants did not mention this issue was interpreted as they were afraid to talk about it. Unless the subject is brought up by itself, no implication or direction was given to the participants to talk about it.

Poverty arises as a result of income inequality. A large part of the added value produced as a result of the unequal distribution of income at the national and international level goes to the privileged few and causes poverty for others (Maxwell, 1999).

Atatanır and Karataş (2019), state that discrimination is one of the reasons of poverty, that it makes it difficult to access services under equal conditions on the basis of gender, age, race and regional differences and causes social exclusion.

There is discrimination stemming from the tribe and that a certain population is exposed to economic and social exclusion. This situation is a factor that deepens the poverty in the country and constitutes a weakness for the excluded. Reducing employment opportunities for a certain group pushes them into poverty and causes them to commit to crime.

In the study conducted by Laub and Sampson (2003), they revealed that there is a negative correlation between employment and criminal behavior. Likewise, some scholars state that stable job situation provides a sense of identity and meaning to people's life. This position

helps them to control their daily routines and reduce criminal related behavior (Berg & Huebner, 2011).

In Uganda, there is poverty in the family that continues for generations. Some authors use the concept of "culture of poverty" to explain this poverty, which is passed on from generation to generation within the family (Zastrow, 2017). It is stated that high unemployment rates for unskilled workers and low wages for the employed create such poverty. It is rendered that people raised in this culture have a strong sense of fatalism, a sense of helplessness, dependency and inferiority, and are not inclined to plan for the future (Lewis O., 1966).

The main reason the poor are stuck in a culture of poverty is that they are socially isolated and have little contact with groups outside their own culture (Zastrow, 2017). The cycle of poverty in which the poor are stuck is shown in the figure below.

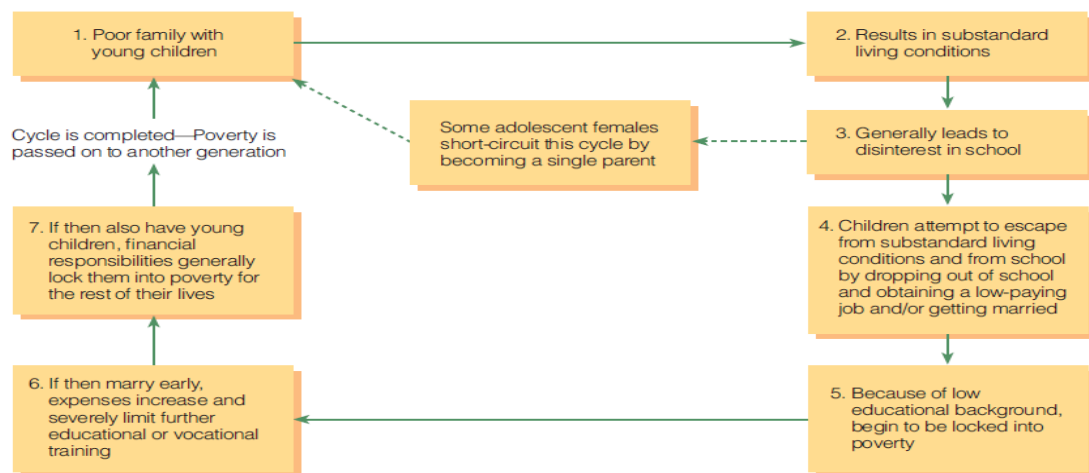


Figure 4: The Cycle of Poverty

Source: (Zastrow, 2017, p:116).

In this study, the incomes of the participants are insufficient and the majority of them do not have a regular job. Poverty and social injustice in the country cause people to have very low earnings and continue their lives as working poor, even if they can find jobs to work. It is thought that this situation may have been effective in their tendency to crime.

### 5.2.3. Interrupted Education Lives

Pre-tertiary education in Uganda consists of three levels, as detailed in the first chapter. These three levels consist of seven years of primary school, four years of lower secondary, and two years of upper secondary education. That seven years of primary education is compulsory and free. However, although it is legally compulsory and free, many people in the country do not have access to education or cannot finish school. Unfortunately, the interviews conducted within the scope of this research also confirm this situation. The education level of the participants is quite low, and those who do not go to school and cannot complete their education life are in the majority.

The education and certification status of the participants are presented in the tables below.

Education Status	Number of the Participants	Certificate
None	7	None
P3	3	
P4	2	
Primary	3	P.L.E.
Secondary (First Stage)	1	O Level

Table 11: The Education and Certificate Status of the Participants in the First Group

As seen in Table 12; 7 of the participants in the first group did not go to school. 3 people dropped out of primary school after 3rd grade and 2 people dropped out after 4th grade. While 3 people in the first group could finish primary school, only 1 person could finish first stage of secondary school. Accordingly, 12 of the participants in the first group do not have any certificates, 3 of them are P.L.E. certificate and 1 of them has O level certificate.

<b>Education Status</b>	<b>Number of the Participants</b>	<b>Certificate</b>
<b>None</b>	4	<b>None</b>
<b>Primary</b>	9	P.L.E.
<b>Secondary (First Stage)</b>	1	O Level
<b>Secondary (Second Stage)</b>	1	A Level

Table 12: The Education and Certificate Status of the Participants in the Second Group

According to table 13 it is seen that 4 of the participants in the second group have never attended to school. In addition, according to the table, it is seen that 9 of the participants finished primary school and 2 of them finished secondary school. According to the same table, while 4 of the participants do not have any training certificate, 9 of them have P.L.E., 1 O level and 1 A Level certificate.

When both tables are compared, it is seen that the number of those who do not go to school in the second group is lower than in the first group. Accordingly, the number of those who have any education certificate in the second group is higher than those in the first group.

Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.”* (United Nations, 2022) By declaring this, it stipulates that education is a universal right for everyone.

Unfortunately, this right is far from being used by many children in the world. The number of participants in the study, especially in the first group, who never attended to school is remarkable. The difference between the two groups supports the claim that education contributes positively to employment after prison, reducing recidivism rates, improving

quality of life and social reintegration (Brazzell, Crayton, Mukamal, Solomon, & Lindahl, 2009).

The majority of the participants in both the first and second groups stated that they could not attend to school or complete their education lives mostly due to the economic deprivation of their root families. One of the participants in the first group explained that 45-50 years ago, there were not many schools in the country, no one cared about education, and the children worked in the fields instead of going to school.

*“-45-50 years ago it was very difficult to go to school. There wasn't much school anyway. People didn't care about school. And you can't blame them. In Uganda, education has become important newly and even now it is difficult to continue and finish school. In my childhood time, going to school wasn't important, because the return of school wasn't something immediately seen. If a child worked in the field instead of going to school, the result was obvious and nobody was in a position to think long term. In the evening, feeding was more important than going to school.”* (Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).

The participant's narrative reveals that the educational infrastructure in the country is insufficient, that children are preferred to work instead of being sent to school for economic reasons, and that the understanding of the importance of education has just begun to settle.

Child labor is widespread in Uganda and children are often forced to work in informal areas and in harsh conditions. 93% of children, especially in rural areas, are employed in agriculture and fishing (UNICEF, Child Protection, 2022). Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to education, that primary education should be free and that children should be encouraged to attend the highest possible level of schooling. In addition, it is stated in the same contract that governments must provide economic and other support to poor families so that children of poor families can attend school.

One of the participants stated that his family could not send him to school after primary school due to economic insufficiency and he could not blame his family for this situation. Participant characterizes education as a luxury for poor people.

*“-I didn’t continue my education after primary school. How can I say...Secondary education is a bit of luxury, for us, for poor people of Uganda...? No, it was not definitely for us. (Wry smile on his face). You know, even just a pencil and a notebook are an expense for the family budget. My family could not afford the continuation of the education. I don’t blame them for this anyway. I understand what this challenge means when I want to send my own children to school”.* (Prisoner 8, 44 years old, Kauga Prison).

Some of the participants from Kauga and Masaka prisons which are represent rural prisons stated that there is not even a primary school in their villages. This situation has reflected on their educational life. Most of the participants from these prisons did not go to primary school, and some of those who could go to primary school did not even finish primary school. The education level and school completion statuses of the rural participants are worse than those living in the urban.

One of the participants explained that there was no school in his village during his childhood, so he did not even attend primary school, and that the school period was spent working to contribute to the family economy.

*“-When I was a kid, there was no school in the village. You can't say it exist now also. There is just a very bad hut that they call a school. I didn't go to school. My friends didn't go either. As far as I remember, there was no school near our village. We worked in corn and cassava fields in school age. We needed corn and cassava to feed and survive, not school.”* (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

Similarly, another participant stated that there was no primary school in his village, the nearest school was 5 miles away and he had to walk this road to get to the school. The participant stated that he did not go to school because of these unfavorable conditions.

*“There was not even a primary school in my village. The nearest primary school was 5 miles away and I had to walk there every day. After primary school, if I want to continue school I had to go to boarding school and who was going to pay for that? Huh? Nah, not my family. It was not possible for my family to afford the boarding school fees. So I had to stay in the village and look after the cattle instead of attending school.”* (Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant states that he could not go to school because there was no school nearby, he had to go to a boarding school in order to continue school, but he could not go to school because his family's financial situation was not enough to afford it.

Children in poor countries are disadvantaged in terms of education. Children growing up in poverty are deprived of basic rights and cannot benefit from health and education services. It is known that children in poor families are generally employed as child labor (Haveman & Mullikin, 2022). The statements of the participants confirm the statements of the authors. The participants who could not go to school talked about the economic poverty in their families and that they had to work at a young age to provide economic income to their families. This situation reflects the impact of the inadequacy of the educational infrastructure in the country and the poverty on the education life of children.

It was learned that most of the participants living in the city were able to attend primary school at least and some of them could get some certificates after primary school. One participant stated that he received "O" level certificate after primary school and wanted to get "A" level certificate by continuing his education but he could not continue his education because he had to work.



*“-I was not a very bright student at school, but I loved school. I continued school after primary school and got O level certificate. I have to thank my family for this. Many of my friends could not continue for O level after primary. I went to public school but families have to sacrifice even for children who go to public school. I wanted to continue for A level after that, but I also had to work and earn money.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

The statements of the participants reveal that it is difficult to reach education in rural areas. However, the statements of the urban participants also show that although their schooling rate is higher, they also have to drop out of school after primary or secondary school, usually due to economic reasons. The fact that the participants could not go to school or had to drop out of school unfortunately creates a disadvantage and weakness for them in terms of employment and social reintegration after prison.

Some life events experienced by their root families in the past negatively affected the participants' education life. A participant whose parents were divorced stated that he could hardly finish 3rd grade of primary school, his parents were not interested in his education and that he could only continue his education life with the support of his grandmother.

*“-I barely finished P3. Mostly I had to finish the term with just one notebook. My father and mother would not give us money. We were grateful to my grandmother for feeding us... and I can't blame her for failing to send me to school. At least she took care of us when dad and mom left us.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

Studies show that children from broken families progress worse in education than children living with their families. Children from broken families also exhibit more behavioral problems at school and have more problems with peers (Hughes, 2005). Çamur Duyan (2011) states that the development and behavior of the children of broken families are adversely affected in this process, and the academic success of the children decreases. In order to ensure that children come out of this process with the least damage, it is recommended to implement social work interventions with an empowering approach.

Although broken families constitute a disadvantage and weakness for the participants, having other family members (such as grand parents, uncle, aunt etc) who take care of the children and support their development can be considered a resource and power. So social work interventions to be developed can be built on strengthening these resources.

Another participant, who explained that her father had an alcohol problem, stated that her father beat her after he got drunk, so she had marks on her body and that she did not like to go to school in this way. Despite all this, she said that she would actually prefer to attend school, but her father preferred to buying alcohol instead of spending money on her education.

*“-I can’t say that I was a good student. I wasn’t a kid likes going to school. When my father got drunk and beat us, my body would have scars and bruises. I would be ashamed to go to school this way. They wouldn’t make fun of me at school, but still I wouldn’t want to go to school that way. Except that still I wish I could continue secondary after primary. That could at least help me find a good job in my life. But I couldn’t continue because my father had no money to spare for this. Because he preferred to buy waragi with all the money he had.”*  
(Ex-Prisoner 12, Female, 48 years old).

Being exposed to violence and not being able to prevent it cause low self-esteem and self-confidence. Accordingly, situations such as feeling inadequate and worthless, not being able to take independent steps, not being able to make healthy decisions and choices are also frequently encountered in people who are exposed to violence (Arikan, 2011). Therefore, domestic violence is a very bad experience for family members and a factor that weakens them in the face of the problems they face. When evaluated from the point of view of this participant, the fact that she was able to graduate from primary school as a girl who was exposed to domestic violence, together with the negative economic conditions of the country she lives in, can be considered as an important source of strength.

Some of the female participants in the second group stated that they could not go to school or continue their education life due to their families' negative attitudes towards education

and educated women. One of the participants stated that she actually wanted to go to school, but her family worried that she would become a prostitute in the future if she goes to school, so they insistently did not send her to school.

*“-I didn’t go to school... No, unfortunately I couldn’t make it. Cause my family didn’t allow me to. Actually, there was no school in our village but there was a school in another village which some children were going from our village. God knows I wanted to go school... but my family didn’t allow me. They were thinking I will be a prostitute if I go to school. They were thinking girls who go to school become a prostitute.”* (Ex-prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).

Another participant stated that her family did not send her to school with the concern that if she goes to school, she will leave her culture, lose her cultural and moral values and she will get HIV / AIDS.

*“-I didn’t go to school when I was a kid. Frankly sir, my family didn’t let me go to school. My parents have some doubts...Doubts about school and education. According to them, girls who went to school wouldn’t give due attention to their culture and values. They may even return with some bad consequences. Some diseases. You know. Things like HIV / AIDS. They were also saying that if I went to school, I would get such diseases...And they didn't let me go to school.”* (Ex-prisoner 6, Female, 57 years old).

It is possible to mention that there is still a negative attitude towards modern school understanding and girls' going to school in Uganda, especially in rural areas. This is related to the cultural value attributed to female virginity in the country. They developed such an attitude because it was thought that girls who went to school could easily lose their virginity and then become sex workers.

In Uganda, it is quite possible to see government bulletin boards that read "Saving yourself for marriage is the right thing to do" or school posters that read "Beware of Sugar Daddies". President Yoweri Museveni's wife, first lady Janet Museveni, organized a sexual abstinence

march on the main campus of the country's largest university and suggested a nationwide "virgin census". Some politicians in the country have suggested that virginity tests be carried out at certain intervals, especially for their own constituencies, in order for girls to attend school, and scholarships should be given to those who are virgins as long as they maintain their virginity (BBC News, 2004; Wax, 2005).

The school is one of the most important institutions that have a role in raising children in the modern state structure. School does not contribute to the upbringing of children, and children who are alienated from school and themselves tend to commit crimes. Therefore, the state should take necessary measures to enable children to attend school during childhood and adolescence (Cankurtaran Öntaş, 2004).

In the research, the participants' narratives reveal about their pre-prison education life that economic poverty and insufficient educational infrastructure are important reasons for the participants' inability to go to school or drop out of school. The participants who cannot go to school or complete their schooling are generally employed as child labor. In terms of education infrastructure, it can be said that those living in the city are relatively more advantageous than those living in rural areas. Another issue that negatively affects the educational life of the participants is the factors such as divorce, separation and alcohol use experienced by the root families. Another important country-specific finding is that girls are not wanted to be sent to school because of the fear that they will lose their virginity and become sex workers if they go to school in connection with the value attributed to virginity in the traditional structure.

#### **5.2.4. Poor Housing Conditions**

According to the literature, there is a relationship between homelessness, crime and prison. Moreover, this relationship has a cyclical, self-perpetuating structure. Homelessness is also shown as the entry point of this cycle (Corr & Mayock, 2012). Everyone in both groups of participants stated that they do not have their own house, except for one participant in the

first group. This participant in the first group also stated that he had his own house, but he did not buy the house himself, the house is inherited. These statements seem to be consistent with what the participants told about their work and economic situation before they were sent to prison.

One of the participants stated that he was living with his family in a rented house before prison that the physical condition of the house was very bad and his wife was complaining about this situation. Nevertheless, he said that they had difficulty paying even the rent of this house, which has poor physical conditions.

*“-Before I entered the prison first time, I was living with my wife and children. The place we were living was rent. Buying a house... it is some kind of dream for us, sir. The physical conditions of the place where we were living in the rent were very bad. Especially you should have seen the kitchen. My wife, I mean my ex-wife, mostly complaining about the state of the kitchen. Despite that, we always had a hard time paying the rent. The situation of the households was also bad. We all had been sleeping on the floor.”* (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).

Another participant stated that he and his family were living in a house that they rented from the village council, in fact, this structure cannot even be called a house, there is water entering the house during the rainy season and the house does not have a kitchen.

*“-I don't have a house. How can I have?... In order to buy a house, you must have a very well-paid job. I am someone who can barely feed his family. Before first prison sentence, we lived in the house which we rented from the village council. They call the place we live in a house, but it would be better to call it a shed. It was just a place to sleep and sit, covered with boards. My wife used to cook the food outside the house with charcoal. Water would enter the house during the rainy season. It was that kind of a house we had been living.”* (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).

Some of the participants stated that they were living with their parents before their prison sentence. Participants who stated that they live with their parents are generally younger than the others are and single.

One of the participants from Luzira prison stated that he was living with his parents before his prison sentence because he did not have enough economic resource to rent a place of his own. Although the participant's family did not complain about his living with them, he said that it was difficult to live in one small house with six people he would want to live in another house on his own if possible.

*“I was living with my parents’ house before prison. I wasn’t able to rent a place cause I didn’t have a decent job and income. I can say that my family is understanding about me on this issue. With a little money I earned in temporary jobs, I was buying some food stuff like matooke or cassava for home from time to time. But like any adult, I would like to live in a place of my own. Who wants to live with parents at twenties? On the other hand, my parents' house was quite small and living six people in the house was very difficult.”* (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).

A participant from Buena Charity Services stated that he was living his parents' house before his prison sentence. The participant had tried to rent a house with a friend once, but returned to his family's house because he had difficulty paying his share of the rent.

*“I was living in my parents' house before prison sentence. Before that, I started living in a rented house with a friend. However, I had difficulty paying my share of rent cause I didn’t have a regular job. Therefore, after a while, I started to live in my family's house again. My family helped me in this time of broke, but I would prefer to live in a house on my own.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

The unfavorable situation in the housing conditions is related to their economic and work conditions. Those who stay with their parents’ houses express that they want to live in a

house on their own, even though their families do not have a negative attitude towards them. On the other hand, the fact that their families allow them to live in their homes when they cannot afford to live in a house on their own can actually be considered as a support mechanism and a source of strength.

One of the motivations of the participants, who are generally involved in crimes originating from economic poverty, when they commit crimes is to pay their rent or improve their physical living conditions. This confirms the evaluations on the relationship between homelessness and crime, which are frequently mentioned in the literature.

### 5.2.5. Social Relations

Interviews revealed that most of the participants in the first group evaluated their life before prison social relations and social life as inadequate and sketchy. One of the participants from Kigo prison stated that most of his time was spent trying to earn money, and that he preferred to rest at home rather than doing something outside during his time other than working. The participant said that the only thing he could describe as social life was hanging out with his friends after church on Sundays and watching a football game.

*“-Social life... (He laughs) I guess I didn't have a social life much or we can just say it was always sketchy. I used to spend my day trying to earn money before I went to prison. Money is needed for the house and the children. I would prefer to rest except when I work to earn money.”*

*“- Oh, I see. Well what about your friends or hobbies? Would you like to tell me about these?”*

*“- I didn't have many friends. There were only a few people I met from the church. Sometimes I would hang out with them on Sundays after church. They love to watch soccer, they really love. Sometimes I used to hang out with them to watch soccer. I guess that was all my social life. Maybe I don't like too many friends. I don't know, it feels better to rest at home when I'm out of work.”*

(Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).

One of the reasons for not being able to devote much time to his social life is that he has to work all the time, and that he wants to rest when he is not working to earn money most of the time. In fact, if he had the opportunity to earn enough money for his family by working fewer hours, he would not be so tired and would be able to spare time for both rest and social life when he was not working.

Another participant from Luzira prison stated that he does not identify himself as a social person who has many friends. The participant also stated that he does not like to go to places such as bars and clubs and explained this as he does not feel comfortable in places where loud music is played, people drink and dance. However, it was later seen that he associated this situation with economic reasons.

*“-I don't see myself as a person with a lot of friends. I think I can describe my social life as inadequate. I'm not a person who hangs out with friends in bars, clubs, and places like that. I think that I can't feel comfortable in such places where loud music is played, drinking and dancing. For such a social life, you must first have money. Got me? You need money first. When I go to a nightclub and can't buy myself a second drink with all money I have, what do you think the people there think of me? A useless broke person...Yeah, this is what they think. So, I also don't like hanging around. People judge you in their minds. I'd rather chat with a few of my cousins at their home instead.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

This participant describes himself as a not such a social person at first, and then talks about the economic background of the problem in the course of the conversation. In addition, the language and expressions he uses about himself (such as “*A useless broke person*”) reveal that he has adopted the “victim” role. It is thought that a social work intervention within the framework of the empowerment approach would be appropriate in order for the participant to be able to control their own life in the economic and social field and to gain their self-confidence and self-esteem.



Some participants stated that their social relations were not good. They explain this situation with their personal characteristics. One of the participants from Masaka prison states that his social relations are not very good and he explains this by his being quick-tempered person who cannot be patient to people.

*“-My social relationships were not very good. I don't have many friends. Although I try to make friends, I can't be patient for a long time to people. I am a quick-tempered person. I don't like to people makes joke about me. I don't like when they ask for something from me often. Or I get angry when they make fun of my soccer team. I guess it's about my character. I don't have many friends because I don't want to have anyone around that makes me angry.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participants in the second group generally evaluate their social relations and social lives positively before their prison sentence. One of the participants from the second group describes his social relations as good; he likes to meet with his friends and watch a football game, and to meet his cousins on Thanksgiving and other special occasions.

*“-My relations with the people around me were good, yeah mostly good. I like meeting with my friends. When we meet, we drink and watch soccer game. I had no problem with my neighbors either. We meet with my cousins on special occasions. For example, I really love thanksgiving days and that kind of opportunities. We get together with many of my cousins on Thanksgiving days, eat together and enjoy”.* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

Another participant from the second group stated that she has good relations with her friends, neighbors and relatives, and likes to meet with her cousins and visit her relatives.

*“-I think I am a good person in social way. Before prison also I was like that. I had no problem with my friends and neighbors. I would help them when they needed me, and they would support me when I needed something. Sometimes I visit my mother and father. From time to time I meet with my cousins. I have*

*many of them. I mean cousins, I have many cousins. Some of them love to gossip, but I like talking to them more about children. I think my social life consists of meeting cousins and some family visits. (She laughs)*” (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).

Among the second group of participants, the number of those who described their social relations positively before prison is relatively higher than those in the second group. This makes the researcher think that the second group of participants could adapt to life after prison more easily with the support of their positive social relations. Those who describe social relations before prison as negative explain this because of reasons such as reflection of economic problems on social relations and character traits.

#### **5.2.6. Underrated Health Problems**

The participants from both the first and second groups also suffered from diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and scabies, which are common in Uganda and some of them are contagious. Another striking point is that the participants are seeing these health issues as ordinary, normal and insignificant. A participant from Kigo Prison stated that he had malaria before his prison sentence, but he did not take it as important and even suffered from malaria several times when he was teenager.

*“-I didn’t have any serious health problems before prison. I had malaria shortly before I was jailed, but that was not a big deal. No, no not a big deal. And you know I had malaria a few times when I was a teenager. That time it was harder a little bit. Many people get malaria in Uganda. And let me give you a trick. If you continue to eat fresh fruit when you have malaria, you will recover quickly.”* (Prisoner 14, 50 years old, Kigo Prison).

Another participant from Kauga prison stated that he suffered from severe diarrhea and scabies before the prison. The participant defines himself as a healthy and strong person.

*“-I see myself healthy and strong man. I was like that before prison also. I once had a very bad diarrhea sickness. The doctor said that it might be caused by*

*water I drank or something I ate. But I got better so there was nothing to worry about. And I had scabies once. More precisely, with everyone in my family. Oh, you should have seen, we were itching all the time. (He laughs) but we got over it too. As you can see, I am a strong man and I overcame all these diseases.”*  
(Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

Some of the participants stated that they have had some infectious diseases and even lost their relatives because of these diseases. However, while explaining these that they talked about these diseases as part of their daily life. A participant from the second group stated that he lost his uncle and cousin from tuberculosis, that he was also infected with the disease, but that he recovered.

*“-My health was mostly ok. But sometimes diseases find you. My uncle had a lung disease. After a while, we learned that many people in our family were infected. The doctors said it was tuberculosis... (Silence). And they said that the disease was also infected me but I survived. My uncle and a cousin died. We had nothing to do. Here diseases come and kill people. This is so. I was lucky to survive.”* (Ex-Prisoner 13, Female, 31 years old).

Another participant from the second group said that he learned that he was HIV-positive a year before going to prison and he does not know how the disease was transmitted to him. He also states that HIV is common in Uganda and they have to learn to live with it.

*“-I learned that I was HIV-positive about a year before my prison sentence. Before that I did not have a health problem. But I still have no idea how it got into me. (Silence) This bad virus. There is nothing to do about it. HIV is common in Uganda, especially widespread in western Uganda. Mbrara, Kabale, in those areas. We need to learn to keep living with this. This is a part of our life now”.*  
(Ex-Prisoner 8, Male, 44 years old).

The participants consider the health problems they have experienced as normal in the routine flow of life due to the common health problems in the country, and they adopt a somewhat

fatalistic approach. On the other hand, knowing the local methods of struggle with the diseases they encounter and being able to apply them can be considered as a strength for those who cannot reach health services.

Some of the participants stated that they were using drugs before entering prison. It has been learned that marijuana, called “bhang” in the local language, which is mostly grown in rural areas illegally is widely used as a drug. One of the participants stated that he had a health problem with his lungs before he went to prison and that he had a problem of forgetfulness from time to time, which he thought was related to smoking marijuana.

*“I didn't have a major health problem. Sometimes there was pain in my lungs. Coughing was following...And sometimes I had a hard time remembering things, past events and so on. Some people said it might have something to do with smoking bhang. I guess they are right. I was smoking bhang. (Silence) It was giving me the opportunity to get some pleasure from life. (Silence) But it may have worsened my health.”* (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants stated that he did not care much about his health and used alcohol and marijuana in the past. He emphasized the need to socialize around friends as his motivation for using alcohol and substance.

*“- I can't say that I have paid much attention to my health in the past. I mean, I wouldn't take special care of my health. I wasn't doing sports, diet or other things like some people. I didn't have any major health problems. I remember I had malaria once or twice only. That was all.”*

*“-You said you didn't pay much attention to your health. Can you explain this a little bit please?”*

*“-As I said, I didn't exercise or I didn't have a diet program like eat this, do not eat this. I used to use alcohol. (Silence) and I used to smoke bhang time to time. The people around me were also. My friends and others. (Silence) I would be excluded if I didn't use while they were using. Got me? Those things...You may*

*need to do some of such things to socialize at those ages.” (Ex-Prisoner 15, Male, 33 years old).*

The average annual per capita consumption of pure alcohol in the world is 6.18 liters. Uganda, on the other hand, has quite striking statistics in this regard. Uganda is the second country in the world with the highest alcohol consumption per capita, surpassing America and European countries, with an annual consumption of 15.09 liters of pure alcohol per capita (Roser & Ritchie , 2022). On the other hand, 2.6 million people in Uganda are reported to be marijuana smokers (Mugerwa, 2020). In fact, this figure is thought to be much higher, since hemp production and use for recreational purposes is prohibited in the country, except for the production of cannabis for medical purposes.

There is only one hospital in the country that provides treatment for alcohol and drug addicts. This shows how inadequate the treatment and support opportunities for substance and alcohol use in the country are (Naamara & Muhwezi, 2014). In this regard, there is a need to create policies by forming public opinion on the provision of the necessary infrastructure and health services so that addicts can receive the treatment they need.

One of the participants stated that he had a traffic accident in the past, his leg was broken in two places and that he was still walking with a little limp. The same participant said that he had malaria several times, but that was not important, and that he also used marijuana. While there are some people who say to him that using marijuana has negative health effects, he said that this does not matter to him, but the main thing is to help him forget the problems in his life.

*“-I had a traffic accident about 10 years ago. A taxi crashed into the boda boda which I was a passenger. My leg was broken in two places and I had trouble walking for a long time. Even now, my leg hurts when I walk for a long time. I still walk a little limping. I've had malaria a few times, but it's not that important. And...(Silence). Well, I was smoking bhang. But I don't know if this is a health problem or not.”*

*“- Oh really? If you want to talk more about this, I would like to listen.”*

*“-They say bhang is bad for health. There are those who say it is good. I'm not looking at that way. I feel good when I am high. That's what matters to me. Understand? I don't give a shit it is good or bad for my health. It allows me to get away from the problems in my life. That's my point.”* (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).

In Uganda, especially urban transportation is based on motorcycles, locally called boda boda. These vehicles, which are quite inadequate and old in terms of safety equipment, cause many accidents and injuries. While the rate of injury traffic accidents involving boda bodas was 24.5% in 2009, this rate has increased over the years and reached 33.9% in 2017. The rate of fatal accidents also increased from 14.7% to 22.2%. Although safety and traffic control policies regarding traffic accidents have been developed, these are quite insufficient in practice. In addition, some political interventions make difficult to implementation of these regulations (Kakembo, 2010; Vaca, & et. al, 2020).

The participants generally encounter health problems that are common in the country due to insufficient hygiene conditions, lack of awareness about protection from diseases and malnutrition etc. However, the participants seem to have adopted a fatalistic approach to the health problems, accepted them and did not care much about these problems. It is thought that the reasons for this situation are that the health system in the country is insufficient, the number of health personnel is very low, the access to health services is expensive, and the lack of adequate information on prevention methods.

### **5.3. PRISON LIFE**

Imprisonment of criminals means deprivation of their liberty. It is also an important interference with the lives of the prisoners themselves and their families, with profound effects. Therefore, the principle that imprisonment should be used as a last resort sanction

has been accepted (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). Since lack of education, lack of employment, mental and physical health problems, lack of housing, drug and alcohol abuse and financial distress are associated with crime and imprisonment has a negative impact on these factors, prison sentence can have a negative impact on criminal behavior (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). For this reason, it is very important to understand how the prison process is experienced by prisoners and the effects of this process on themselves, their families and their economic situation. In this section, information gathered from the interviews held within the scope of the research will be conveyed about the criminal history of the prisoners, their prison experiences, their family and social relations during the prison process, their health status, support mechanisms and the preparation stages after the prison process.

### **5.3.1. The Beginning of the Prison Process-Committing a Crime**

Within the scope of the research, the ex-prisoners both in prison and in the community were asked to tell their crime stories during interviews. Although prisoners have a criminal history ranging from theft, robbery, drug abuse to armed attack, poverty is the basis of many crime stories. One participant stated that he received his first and second prison sentences for theft, and his last sentence for threat and theft. He also states that if everyone had money, crimes in society would decrease.

*“-Eh, yeah, ok. Crime, crimes... Since this is my third prison sentence there is not only one crime. Actually, it is all about money, you know? I think if people have money, enough money, crimes will decrease. But we need money. Everyone needs it. If you want to live a life, you need money. I didn't have a permanent job, but money is always needed. We stole money from a souvenir shop with a friend in my situation. I got my first sentence for this.”* (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

Another participant stated that he stole some goats from someone who lives in the same village, wanted to sell those goats but he was caught before selling the goats in the town. He

justified the act of stealing the goats because he wanted to pay the rent of his house and buy something for himself and his family.

*“-It was the first time I stole a few goats from someone from the village. I just wanted to sell them and pay my rent. I also wanted to buy something for my family and myself. You know, I told you there was nothing right at home. I wanted to buy food for the house, some new clothes for the kids and myself. I didn't want to harm the person the goats' I stole. He had other goats as well. I thought a few goats wouldn't be problem. But I got caught before I could sell the goats in town. They took the goats and gave it to the man. I was told that I had to pay some money as a fine, but I was sentenced to prison for failing to pay the money.”* (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).

One of the participants stated that he stole a motorcycle to earn money by driving a boda boda, so he was put in prison for the first time due to stealing a motorcycle. The participant mentioned that it is not possible to buy a boda boda with his own means under normal conditions. After completing his first prison sentence and being released, he said that he had difficulty finding a job, this time he started using and selling marijuana, and that he received his second prison sentence for selling drugs.

*“-I stole a motorcycle. This was the first time I received my prison sentence. I thought if I had a motorcycle, I could make money with it. I could be a boda boda driver. I just couldn't find a permanent job but if I had a motorcycle I could earn regular money. Since I didn't have money to buy a motorcycle, I decided to steal it. However, I was caught. I couldn't earn the money I dreamed of. After end of my prison sentence, I tried a few more jobs, but it didn't work. This time I started using bhang, and then I thought I could make money if I sell bhang. I started buying bhang from hidden growers in my village and selling them in town. This time I sentenced to prison for using and selling drugs.”* (Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).



The peer relationships and drug usage are also effective in prisoners' involvement in crime. One of the participants mentioned drug use in his crime story and said that he was influenced by drug and his friends.

*“-We stole money from a small shop with my friends. We stole not only money, of course, but also a few small things. However, we were not sane while doing that. Ok? We had smoked bhang. (Silence). I would normally never do such a thing but my friends insisted. I couldn't resist them either. I shared a lot with them, after my father left us, I usually hung out with them. We thought for a while that we would relax with the money we stole. We thought we could pay the rent, buy some new, nice outfits. You know... But it didn't work, we got caught and they sent us to prison.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

When the narratives of the crime stories of the participants are examined, they are generally involved in crimes arising from economic poverty. The participants generally mentioned that they could not find a permanent job while describing their economic situation before the prison. Therefore, their involvement in crimes stemming from economic poverty coincides with this.

The right to work is among the social and economic rights. The right to work is a continuation of the right to live, as it allows the individual to provide the means and means of livelihood for himself and his family. Therefore, combating unemployment is among the top priorities of societies and states (Talas, 1997).

The most important economic result of unemployment is the impoverishment of the individual and therefore the society by losing income. This is one of the biggest problems of developing countries. One of the most important social consequences of unemployment is the increase in crime and violence (Bağlar, 2008). Unemployment and poverty cause negative consequences such as lack of relationships with colleagues, deprivation of the stimuli of social life at work, loss of sense of being successful and useful to society, and feeling worthless at the individual level (Özkan & Yenimahalleli Yaşar, 2011).

Within the scope of the empowerment approach regarding unemployment and poverty, it is clear that efforts should be made to develop the individual strength of the participants and to increase their self-esteem at the micro level; to activate social support mechanisms and to control resources at the mezzo level, access opportunities and ensure social justice at macro level.

One of the participants stated that he received his first prison sentence due to domestic violence because he battered his partner. He explained that in the period after prison, his relations with his partner and his old social environment were not as before, he started using alcohol and drugs in his new social environment, and that he received his second prison sentence because he caused the death of someone while he was under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

*“-Well, yeah I told you that my first sentence was for beating my partner, V..... I said it before. I was very angry. I could not control myself. We started arguing, when she shouted at me, I hit her. I guess I might have overreacted a little. Later, when I was in the prison, she left me, and the children remained with her. After finishing my first prison sentence, I offered to make peace and start our relation again to be with her again, but she refused. When she was not in my life, my social environment changed. I started hanging out in new people, my old friends were distant to me, after all, I was an ex prisoner for them. I started using alcohol and some other stuff. Then I used bhang a few times. I was high again one night, you know. I drank alcohol, smoked bhang. Then I don't even remember how it happened, a fight broke out in the bar, several people were injured. (Silence) Then the police said that I hit someone on the head with a bottle and seriously injured him. There were cuts on his face and head, then died in the hospital. That's why I got my second prison sentence.” (Prisoner 16, 27 years old, Kigo Prison).*

Some of the participants stated that they did not commit crimes directly, but were sentenced for assisting criminals or because they thought they were related to criminals. One participant

said that her brother was involved in an armed robbery, that he and a few of his friends stopped a vehicle and stole the money of the people inside it, but she was not related to this crime. She stated that she was sent to prison because her brother stayed in her house after the robbery for a few nights and could not be caught by the police.

*“-Actually, I haven't committed any crime, sir. I did not commit a crime on my own. However, my brother... Ohh, S... (His brother) He was involved in an armed robbery. More precisely, they stopped a vehicle with a few friends and stole the money of the people inside it. But how could I know. He didn't tell me anything. I thought he just came to visit me. He stayed two nights. Then he left in the morning without saying anything. The cops never caught him. But because they found out that he was staying at my house, they arrested me as one of their accomplices and I remained in prison. Whereas I had done nothing and was not part of the crime. I was imprisoned for 3 years without any meaning on the grounds. They blamed me that I was protecting and hiding my brother.”*  
(Ex-Prisoner 6, Female, 57 years old).

Arbitrary arrests and long periods of detention are among the biggest problems in the criminal justice system in Uganda. People are kept in prison for a long time without any concrete evidence and without a finalized sentence of imprisonment. This situation has negative consequences both physically and psychologically. Innocent people can be criminalized by staying together with other criminals for a long time.

### **5.3.2. Entering the New Environment -The Prison**

While individuals continue their normal life flow, due to the crime phenomenon they involved they enter a new environment: The prison environment. How prisoners experience the prison process and how they adapt to the prison sentence are factors that affect their life after prison (Dhami, Ayton, & Loewenstein, 2007). Individual differences are important in terms of adaptation to prison and experiencing the prison process (Bonta & Gendreau, 1990).

Failure to adapt to the prison process, resisting the prison rules may be a sign of problems in social adaptation after prison or recidivism (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996).

It was tried to get information about how the participants experienced and evaluated the prison process within the scope of the research. One of the participants stated that when he first entered the prison he felt like he was hit by a wall, he had hope that he would not go to prison until the last moment, but it was difficult to face the reality.

*“-When I first came to the prison, when we entered the main gate of the campus, I felt as if I had hit a wall. I didn't feel this when I was in police custody. But when the vehicle entered from the prison campus, I held my breath. I noticed that I was holding my breath when I was out of breath. I said to myself, here's the end. (Silence). Until then I always had some hope. But there I was. At the threshold of the prison. It was hard to admit, but that was the truth.” (Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).*

One participant described the prison as a “cold place”. He described it as a place where everything is bound by a routine and rule, where things are constantly commanded to them, and therefore he doesn't like.

*“-Prison... Prison is a cold place. It's a cold place, not physically, but in sense of humane. A place where positive emotions are not shown much in terms of human relations. Everything happens in a template. We are constantly being told what to do. After a while, you adopt this system too. (He shakes his head unhappily) We act like puppets. Someone else always decides when we wake up, when to eat, and when to work.” (Prisoner 14, 50 years old, Kigo Prison).*

One of the participants described the prison as a place where they were constantly checked and monitored and stated that he is uncomfortable with the coveralls which prisoners have to wear in prison.

*“-Prison is a place where people constantly watch and control you. They get involved in everything you do. Your clothes, your food, your sleep, everything... For example, we cannot wear the clothes we want. We have to wear these bad coveralls. Always the same color. Everyone is the same color. It makes me very uncomfortable. I don't feel that I am a human.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants stated that when he first entered the prison he was very scared, did not know what to do and felt very helpless. The participant did not feel safe because he did not know what awaits him in this new environment and he had concerns about other prisoners.

*“-I was so scared the first time I entered to prison. I have the wind up. I didn't know what to do and I felt so helpless. I didn't know what awaited me inside. When we entered the campus in the prison vehicle, what I saw was a crowd in prisoner clothes behind the wire fences. Everyone behind the fence was waiting for the new arrivals to get out of the vehicle.”* (Ex-Prisoner 1, Male 44 years old).

The participants explained their feelings when they first entered the prison with metaphors such as "feeling like hitting a wall", "a cold environment", "uncomfortable", "scary" and "feeling helpless". Crawley and Sparks (2006) define this as “entry shock phase”. In their research, academicians state that prisoners adopt an accepting or pragmatist approach in the face of this undesirable situation.

Some of the participants felt that they were in an unsafe environment when they entered the prison and they were afraid that other prisoners or guards would harm them. Participants stated that they had emotional and behavioral changes to cope with these situations. One of the participants stated that he was very scared when he entered the prison and he was worried that other prisoners or guards would physically harm him, therefore he became withdrawn and tried not to stand out.

*“-Obviously, I was very scared when I first entered the prison. How can't be? I was going to stay in the same place with many dangerous people. There are groupings in prisons. You know? Yeah. Some kind of gangs. The strong come together and clobber the weak or those who cause them trouble. You would be wrong if you thought the wardens would protect you. They also sometimes beat prisoners. That's why I was so worried when I sentenced to prison. I tried not to stand out. Tried not to have problems with anyone.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

Another participant stated that he was worried that other prisoners might use violence against him in the prison, which was a situation encountered in prisons. The participant stated that it is necessary to protect himself in order not to be exposed to violence from other prisoners, and even to resort to violence if necessary to protect himself.

*“-Getting in jail is an eerie feeling. Especially the first year. It can take up to a year for you to be admitted in prison. My concern was that other prisoners beat me. I was anxious about this. This is a situation that happens in prisons. Yes, the strong beat the weak. They find a way. They push you in the queue, throw something at you and say oh it was an accident. You have to resist it. You must protect yourself. If necessary, you should also resort to violence to protect yourself. I know it's not a good thing. But to protect yourself. Not because you like to beat someone else.”* (Ex-Prisoner 8, Male, 44 years old).

In this context, Gilligan and Lee (2004) say that the prison environment allows prisoners to be harsh and only experience and reflect a group of emotions. They report that prisoners sometimes resort to counter-violence to protect themselves from other prisoners who try to rob, assault or rape them. These behaviors of prisoners towards each other caused them to develop emotional coping strategies against this situation (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2003) .

Meeting a previously known person on first entry to prison helps prisoners to feel relieved. One of the participants stated that he knew that two people he had known before were also in the same prison and that knowing that they were there relieved him a little. He explained that he thought he could get help from them until he got used to the situation in prison.

*“-When I sentenced to prison for the first time, I knew that there were two people in the same prison with whom we had been selling bhang before... Actually, I was very nervous for the prison, as I did not know what awaited me inside there...You know it is not a well-known place. But it was a little calming for me to know that there are some familiar faces in there. They could help me until I get used to prison conditions.”* (Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

Another issue that the participants mentioned about the prison environment is the density in the prisons. The fact that the participants have to live in such crowded living spaces is a factor that makes it difficult for them to adapt to this environment. One of the participants stated that the prison was very crowded, they have difficulty sleeping in the wards, and stated that the authorities have to find a solution to this situation, at least they have the right to sleep properly.

*“- Believe me, it is very difficult to spend a day here. Conditions are not good at all. It is not fair. Ok? We live here almost on top of each other. You must see our wards at night. Many of us are lying on the floor. Side by side. Someone’s foot and arm hitting you, your foot and arm is bothering someone else. Do you understand? We need a solution for this. The authorities need to find a solution to this. At least we should be able to sleep properly at night. We work during the day and we need a rest at night. But we can't even get that.”* (Prisoner 16, 27 years old, Kigo Prison).

The overcrowded population of prisons creates a problem for prisoners and prisoners' efforts to integrate with the society after prison around the world. This issue has been mentioned a lot in the literature (Van Zyl Smit & Appleton, 2019). On the other hand, Uganda has the

sixth overcrowded prison population in the world with the percentage of % 293, 2 (McCarthy, 2018).

One of the most important reasons for the overcrowding in prisons in Uganda is the long-term detention of people whose trial still goes on in prison. This situation is against the local and universal law. The government is reported to have imprisoned suspects for years without charge or trial (U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2021).

For this reason, it seems that the participants are right in their reproaches and policy makers and managers need to find a solution to this issue. Robins (2009) in his study about prisons policy of Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia, similarly saw that prisons were overcrowded and suggested that courts be encouraged to use non-custodial methods of punishment and compulsory community service as a solution to this problem.

Another issue that participants criticized and complained about prisons in Uganda was the lack of toilet and bathroom facilities which is also related to the lack of physical capacity. One of the participants stated that they could not find water for basic cleaning needs and they still meet their toilet needs in the old way with the bucket system, this situation was very offensive and that he feels bad about this.

*“-It's not good to experience prison. Conditions here are not as they are outside. Conditions are pretty bad here. There is no way to clean properly. There is no water to wash our hands. We have no water to bathe, no place to take a bath. And you know what? We cannot even go to the toilet at nights. Yeah... can you imagine this? We do our toilet with the bucket system. Still... there is one or two buckets in each ward. This is a very humiliating situation. I am ashamed of this. But that's the case here.”* (Prisoner 8, 44 years old, Kauga Prison).

Another participant similarly stated that they could not find water even for basic cleaning needs, there was almost no possibility to take a bath, there were a few containers that could be used for bathing, and that these were generally used by the prisoners in the position of



leaders who were supported by the guards. The participant stated that other prisoners could not take a bath for a long time, they tried to be cleaned somewhere near the wall because they could not wash in the container, and in this case they had no privacy.

*“-You stay away from many things while in prison. You have to. I'm talking about the basic things. Meeting even your basic needs is a complete challenge. For example, we could not find water. Taking a bath was almost impossible. There were only a few containers for us to take a bath. To get into it and bathe. But not everyone could use the container. They were not giving us time to use it, and just some prisoners were using it. You know... the prisoners who liked and supported by the guards. We, the rest of us, were sometimes trying to clean ourselves under a wall if we could find some water. We had no privacy there either. Do you understand? Conditions were bad. We were trying to wash ourselves as much as we could with the water we could get. This was very insulting.”* (Ex-Prisoner 12, Female, 48 years old).

One of the participants stated that he did not feel like a human being in prison, the conditions were very bad and they could not even take a shower when they came after working at the prison farm until the evening. The participant stated that there was almost no possibility of bathing in the prison, enough physical conditions were not provided in this regard, and stated that the bath time was reduced to one prisoner in one minute due to the high number of prisoners and the lack of adequate physical facilities.

*“-I don't feel like a human being in prison. The opportunities are very insufficient here. We cannot even meet our daily needs. We work on the farm until the daytime evening. Sometimes we work in the field in dust, dirt and mud. Another day we look at the animals on the farm, we carry their excrement. But when we return to prison in the evening, we cannot take a bath. Augh. Can you imagine this? The whole ward smells like a shit at night. No bathroom facilities. We need to wash in the place covered with a few tins. It is so crowded that they are waiting for us to bathe in a minute. How can you bathe in a minute while*

*you're so dirty? Moreover, it is necessary to carry water. And I hate this."*

(Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

Another participant mentioned that there are not enough sanitation facilities in the prison and they are not provided with materials and facilities for cleaning. The participant mentioned that this situation made them feel worthless and could adversely affect the health of the prisoners.

*"-Prison is not a nice place. No. my experiences with that place are not good. Conditions are not fair. It was very difficult to reach even the most basic things. Simply no water to clean. We were barely supplying our drinking water. Or even no toilet. At night, we meet our toilet needs in very primitive conditions in the ward. No toilet paper for toilet. No soap for cleaning. Sometimes even if we got soap from people who come to visit, someone steals the soap. It felt so worthless to me that even the most basic things were not given to us. I know that this situation was not good for our health. How will we be protected from diseases if we cannot be cleaned regularly?"* (Ex-Prisoner 14, Female, 36 years old).

Uganda prisons have a huge shortage of water, sanitation and hygiene. Looking at the physical conditions, Uganda prisons are likening to refugee camps. While the prison population is constantly increasing, the facilities offered to prisoners remain insufficient (Ndemere, 2015). The lack of water, hygiene and sanitation in Uganda prisons has been identified many times. Inmates' lack of proper sanitation, lack of access to cleaning supplies, and lack of proper toilet facilities adversely affect the health of prisoners (Bamutaze, 2012).

Some of the participants complained that their work in prison was very difficult, that they were working under severe conditions and that the wages paid were very low. One participant stated that after he was imprisoned he was constantly working in the prison farm, doing hard work in the corn or cassava field all day, but they gave him only two hundred and fifty Uganda's shillings per day, which was very little.

*“-Prison means difficult conditions for me. I sleep here in the evenings. Then I get up early in the morning and go to work at the prison farm. I am doing hard work in the corn or cassava field. I work for a long time. Almost 12 hours a day. But, you know what they pay me for this? Only two hundred and fifty Uganda’s shillings. Can you believe this? Huh? I work hard in the field from morning until evening and they pay me not enough to buy even only one banana.”*  
(Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

Another participant mentioned the difficulty of working in the prison farm. The participant stated that the difficult working conditions in the prison were the real punishment, instead of the prison itself. He explained that they work under difficult conditions every day and that they are given a funny wage in return.

*“-Sometimes I feel they keep me in prison for work, not as if I committed a crime. Working conditions are real punishment instead of prison itself. Because they make us work every day. Do you understand? Everyday... We get up early in the morning, after breakfast, we get on a truck, go to prison farm and work until evening. We come back to the prison late in the evening. They make a counting. And we fall asleep. We wake up early in the morning and the same things happen over and over again. And... uh... They pay us a funny fee for this hard work.”* (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).

One of the participants stated that the working conditions in the prison led her to many questionings and that she started an interrogation within herself about the criminal behavior she was involved in, the punishment she was imposed, and the attitudes of the officials towards prisoners.

*“- They were taking me to work in prison farms while I was in prison. It was not easy to work there. The guards were constantly waiting by us and it was not possible to avoid work. If we slowed down a little, they were immediately warning us. The work was starting early in the morning and lasting until evening... This situation made me think about my life and what happened. I was*

*asking myself every night, why did I commit a crime ...Why do the guards treat prisoners like that? (Silence). Would you even believe it, I was asking myself why I was born in this country and under these conditions? (Laughs) It was hard time.” (Ex-Prisoner 4, Female, 42 years old).*

The participants experience emotional breakdowns, the inadequacy of physical facilities, the harsh working conditions in the prison farms, the lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities, the violent incidents etc. while entering the prison. Against these problems, prisoners try to find solutions with their own capacities. However, it is important to support prisoners in this process by taking necessary precautions by prison administrations.

### **5.3.3. Prisoners’ Relations with Other Prisoners and Prison Staff**

Within the scope of the research, the participants were asked how their relations with other prisoners and prison staff were during their imprisonment. It has been tried to understand whether these relations have an effect on compliance with prison and on social life afterwards. The prisoners generally had an insecure approach towards each other if they did not know each other before prison. The prisoners who started to get to know each other as the days passed in prison increased and chose friends for themselves according to their personal characteristics and events in prison. While these friendships have had a positive effect on some of them passing through the prison process more easily and integrating with the society, they have had negative effects for others. In their relations with prison staff, the majority of the participants did not trust prison staff and stated that they did not establish a sincere relationship with them. The main reason for this is that ill treatment, violence and even torture practices against prisoners by staff in prisons in Uganda still continue.

One of the participants stated that he did not talk to other prisoners for a long time in prison, except for everyday things, unless necessary. He said that if he had someone he knew before he entered the prison, he would have been more easily friends with them, but he had difficulty trusting the people he met in prison for the first time.

*“- When I entered the prison, I tried not to talk to other prisoners for a long time. I was just talking about simple everyday ordinary things. Like good morning in the morning, good evening in the evening. How could I trust the people I saw here for the first time? No... I could not talk anything personal to them. If I had met someone I knew before, of course I would like to talk to him. I wish there was someone here that I knew before and whom I could trust.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

One participant said that at first he did not talk to anyone in prison unless he had to, he only did what he was told, and that it was difficult to trust people without knowing them. The participant stated that the more they get to know people over time, the easier it is to choose whom they can trust.

*“-I was first shocked when they put me in prison. I did not talk to anyone for a long time unless I had to. I was doing whatever they told me to do. To chat with someone, you need to trust them but it is not easy to trust someone in prison. However, as time goes by you get to know people, you can choose who you can trust.”* (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants stated that she preferred not to have close relations with other prisoners and did not know how other prisoners would behave towards her when she was in prison. The participant also stated that prisons do not have a good reputation in the community, so she tried not to make many friends in prison.

*“-When I entered the prison, I was worried about the other prisoners, frankly, so I tried not to have a close relationship with the other prisoners. Yeah. I did this. I didn't know how they would treat me. How can I know? Right? In addition, prisons don't have a good reputation in society. I was planning to complete my sentence as soon as possible and get out of prison. Therefore, I was careful not to get close to them and I always maintained this attitude. Near the end of my sentence, there were a few people I trusted and knew to talk, but not many.”* (Ex-Prisoner 5, Female, 28 years old).

One of the participants said that although he is someone who could be easy friends, he was not sincere with other prisoners during the first weeks in prison and did not know why. He stated that after a few weeks in prison he gradually began to get to know people, observed them and became friends with some people as a result.

*“- I am normally someone who can be easy friends. So, you know, I like talking to someone, meeting new people... But I couldn't behave like that for the first few weeks while in prison. I couldn't be sincere with them. Why was that? (Short silence) Actually, I don't know either. I guess I was a little nervous. Then gradually I began to observe and get to know them. So, I managed to be friends with a few people that we have in common.”* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

One participant stated that he was sent to the same prison with his friends with whom he was involved in the crime, so he did not try to meet new people and be friends at first, and hung out with these people whom he knew before. The participant also stated that over time, he established friendships with a few more people in prison.

*“-The first time we were sent to the same prison with my friends. Yeah, we were sent to the same prison with J... and F.... Therefore, when we came to prison, I continued hanging out with them until I got to know the environment. I mean, I didn't make an effort to be friends with someone new. Because I already had friends with whom I could talk about things I wanted to share. You got? But over time, after getting to know the environment, I can say that I became friends with a few more people.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

Although the participants stated that they were not very willing to communicate with other prisoners when they first entered the prison, those who entered the prison for the second and third time stated that they communicated more easily this time. Even the participants said that when they entered the prison for the second or third time, they saw that some of the prisoners they met when they first entered the prison were still in prison. While some of these

prisoners continuing their first sentences, others, like the first group of the research, were released from prison but came back to prison for another crime.

One of the participants stated that when he entered the prison for the second time, he did not have difficulty in establishing friendships with other prisoners, he felt more comfortable in this regard because he now knows how things work better.

*“- As I said it was not so easy the first time. I took care not to be friends with anyone for a long time. However, when I entered the prison for the second time, I felt more comfortable about this. Because now I knew how things work in prison, do you understand? Yeah, I think I can better evaluate the people here now. I can recognize those who came to prison for the first time by the expression on their face, they usually have the expression which I had my first time.”* (S.L., 26, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants stated that when he entered the prison for the second time, some of the people he met while serving his first sentence are still in prison; he continued his friendships with them so he does not need to try meet new people.

*“- Some familiar faces were still there when I entered the prison the second time. A few people I met while serving my first sentence were still in prison. I guess I hadn't been able to stay out long enough. (Laughs). I liked the fact that when I went back to prison, some people I knew were there. I started hanging out with them again. Although we didn't have much time to hang out because of work on the farm and other prison things, I didn't have to look for new people I could trust.”* (Prisoner 10, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

A participant who has been in prison for the third time also stated that when he entered the prison for the second and third time, he communicated more easily with other prisoners than when he was in prison for the first time. The participant also stated that he committed the crime that caused him to go to prison for the third time with his friends whom he had met while in prison before.

*“- There was no problem with my relationships with other prisoners. I can't say that there is a problem right now also. You can adapt to the environment more easily when you enter the prison more than once. But being close friends with prisoners is sometimes not a good thing. I am currently in prison because of someone I met and befriended in prison. Yeah... Unfortunately... (Short silence) I shouldn't have listened to him. But I couldn't stand his persistence. I also needed money. But we wouldn't steal those motorcycles if he wasn't so persistent.”* (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

A participant from the second group stated that while she was in prison, she had an average relationship with other prisoners that she had one close friend, that she continued to meet with this friend after the prison and this friend helped her in many issues.

*“- I had a normal relationship with others in prison. No, I didn't have a problem with the people there. It doesn't mean that I am sincere with all of them. I had one friend with whom I was sincere. She helped me during my first weeks in prison. She was trying to comfort me. As if she was not in prison either (laughs). We were staying in the same ward with her. I had many nightmares at nights during my first times. She was coming and talking to me. Her sentence ended a few months before mine. She continued to support me after I got out of the prison”.* (Ex-Prisoner 13, Female, 31 years old).

Regarding their relations with prison staff, the participants generally does not trust the prison staff and described them as people who constantly gave orders to them, watched them and caused difficulties.

One of the participants said that he does not like the wardens and the wardens were like bosses who constantly gave orders to prisoners.

*“-The wardens... no I can't say I like them much. They are just like bosses who constantly tell us what to do and what not to do. You'd better follow their words. Otherwise, they make you upset.”* (Prisoner 16, 27 years old, Kigo Prison).



One participant said that he never trusts the wardens, does not want to share anything personal with them, and that only superior-subordinate relationships exist between the wardens and prisoners.

*“- I don't trust the wardens, sebo. No, I don't. They are like watchdogs wearing uniforms. I never want to share anything personal with them. Why should I share? They are the superiors. We are the subordinates. This is the relationship here.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

One of the participants stated that he did not have any problems with the wardens because he obeyed the rules in the prison and did what wardens said.

*“- I had no problem with the wardens. Because I was obeying all the rules in prison. If you don't follow the rules, you'll run into trouble with them. You can't do anything if they mistreated you. Therefore, it is best to follow the rules and do what the wardens say and not have problems with them.”* (Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).

One of the participants stated that the wardens were tough people and therefore she did not share anything personal with them. The participant stated that the wardens were there to maintain the functioning system in the prison; they do not have to chat with the prisoners.

*“- The wardens are tough people. They are not there to be friends or chat with us. They are there for keep the system working. That's why I've always been at a distance with them. I mean, you don't share anything personal with them. They don't want to chat with you either. Their status does not allow this. You won't get in trouble with them as long as you follow the rules in prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).

Another important issue conveyed by the participants regarding prison staff is the violence and ill-treatment in prisons. Events related to violence and ill-treatment in Ugandan prisons sometimes appear in the press and in international reports.

One of the participants stated that the guards resorted to violence when there was a disagreement with the guards in the prison. The participant also mentioned that if the prisoners did not want to work or did not work fast enough, they were subjected to violence by the guards.

*“- You don't want to have problems with them here. This will cost you dearly. If you cause trouble to the wardens, they will beat you. So bad... Even if you don't want to work, you will be beaten. If you don't work well you will be beaten. They'll beat you if they don't think you're working fast enough. If you say you are sick, they think you don't want to work and beat you again. You better listen to what they say and work hard. They don't treat people here like a human.”*  
(Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant's statements provide an insight into the harsh working conditions in Ugandan prisons, the exploitation of prisoner labor and the ill-treatment of prisoners. One of the most important problems that need to be solved in Uganda prisons is the fact that the prisoners in the prisons are working for very low wages in almost a slavery order and the violence, humiliation and ill-treatment of the prisoners.

#### **5.3.4. Family Relations behind the Bars**

Many authors have stated in the literature that maintaining family ties during the prison process has positive effects on reintegration with the society after prison (Farrall & Calverley, 2006; Mills & Codd, 2007; Healy, 2012; Farrall, Sparks, Maruna, & Hough, 2012; Rocha, 2014). Similarly, it is stated that the continuation of root family and wider family relations facilitates social reintegration after prison by providing emotional and practical support (Girshick, 1996). Wider families have an important function in activating the prisoners' social capital. Root families develop their social capital stocks over time and are in a better position to provide support when needed (Farrall, 2004).

A study of the family relationships of prisoners found that 45% of prisoners lost family contact during the prison period, while 22% separated or divorced from their partners (Brand, 2016). Berg and Huebner (2011) mention that researchers frequently stated that prisoners who maintain social ties with their families have lower rates of recidivism, and in their own research, they found that family ties have affect on reducing the recidivism of ex-prisoners after being released from prison.

On the other hand, children whose parents are in prison show more trauma symptoms than other children. In addition, the risk of experiencing negative consequences such as more behavioral problems, substance use, low academic achievement, increased risk of involvement in criminal activities, mental and physical health problems increases. It is important for children whose parents are in prison to communicate and connect with their parents through methods such as visits, phone calls and letters, in order to maintain family communication during and after the prison and to prevent the children from encountering the problems mentioned (Poehlmann-Tynan, 2016). For this reason, the prisoners' continuing their relations and communication with their children while they are in prison is a factor that facilitates their reintegration with their families and society after prison, and also positively affects the development of their children.

Within the scope of the research, questions were asked to the participants to understand their relationships with their families during their imprisonment. During the interviews, the majority of the first group participants stated that their relations with their families were negatively affected during the prison process, they were not visited by family members and their communication was almost lost. Similarly, some participants stated that their spouses or partners separated from them while they were in prison.

One of the participants in the first group stated that family relations did not go well after he was imprisoned, his wife divorced him and she never came to visit. The participant stated that only his father visited him in prison, that he could only come once every time he entered the prison, and when he entered the prison for the last time, he could not come to visit because his father was not alive.

*“- As I told you before, our relationship with my wife was not going well. This was a great opportunity for her when I got my first prison sentence. She asked for divorce... and we divorced. Then she never came to visit me anyway. (Silence) No, I can't say that I had many visitors while I was in prison. Only my father had come. In my previous prison sentences. Just once for each time. He did not come to prison during the last sentence, he could not come. Because he died. If he was alive he would probably come again once. (His eyes were tearing).”* (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants in the first group stated that when he was sentenced to prison for the first time, the person with whom he had lived for ten years left him, she never visited and did not contact while in prison. The participant was still angry with his partner who left him.

*“- I was with V..... for ten years before my first prison sentence. But she left me after my first prison sentence. Do you understand? And she left the children to my mother. You know that's not fair, it is not fair at all. Why did I go to prison? Huh... I stole some stuff, okay? But why did I steal? For my family. To give them a better life. It was a risk, yes I know that but it wasn't good that she left me... Then we never met. She never came to see me in prison. She didn't contact me.”* (Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

Another participant from the first group stated that his family was angry with him for not working with his family in the village, and therefore no one from his family came to visit. He also mentioned that only his brother came to see him when he was first imprisoned, then nobody came, and he did not talk to anyone from his family by phone.

*“- My relation with my family was not very good before I was sent to prison. They were angry with me for not staying in the village and not working with themselves. That was what they want. I thought that if I could find a job in the city, I would make more money and be happy. (Silence) My brother came to visit me once when I entered to prison for the first time. I don't think he came because he missed me and wondered. He had just come to see the situation.*

*When I entered the prison for the second time, nobody came. I did not talk to anyone from my family on the phone. This is my life now. I left my family behind now.”* (Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

One of the participants stated that he never met with his partner who left him after he was imprisoned. He mentioned that his mother came to visit him once and nobody came to see him other than his mother from his family. He stated that when his mother came to visit him, he brought his eldest son with her, that he felt very embarrassed to his son saw him in prisoner clothes, and that the child was afraid of the situation in prison.

*“- D... never called me after she left me. My mother was taking care of the children. When I first entered to prison, my mother came to prison for a visit with my eldest child. But I was embarrassed that my child saw me like that. You know? I didn't like it when he saw me in this prisoner coverall. (Silence) My son was also anxious. Seeing a lot of guards and prisoners' coveralls in wire fences bothered him too, he was a little scared. I asked my mother not to bring my son to prison again.”* (Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).

During the interviews, most of the participants stated that they wanted to keep in touch with their children on the one hand, and were uncomfortable with meeting their children in prison conditions on the other. The participants experienced a dilemma and internal tension due to this situation. For example, one of the participants stated that his wife visited him several times with his child while he was in prison, this situation made him happy, but at the same time, he suffered a guilty conscience because of this situation. The participant mentioned that he wants to see and keep in contact with his child; but that his child's coming to prison because of him and that he was disturbed by the images on the prison campus upset him.

*“- My wife visited me several times in prison. She also brought one of our children while coming to visit. The oldest one. Their visit is nice for me; I was happy about that. But, you know what? I actually feel remorse. Yeah, a regret. My child has to come to prison because of me... To see me... But here he doesn't see only me. You got me? He has to go in to the prison campus to see me... And*

*all those security measures. (Silence) Guards, prisoners in the garden, these bad buildings. He sees all these and gets discontented. I want to see my family on the one hand, and I don't want them to experience this on the other hand. This is a difficult situation, sebo, really difficult.”* (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).

Lanier (1993) found that the relationships of imprisoned fathers with their children had an effect on the emotional states, depression and anxiety levels of the prisoners. Visher, Bakken and DeCamp (2013) state that fathers who lived with their children before entering prison and who were regularly visited by their children after they were imprisoned, took more care of their children after their release, which facilitated their reintegration into society. Moreover, these fathers had higher rates of loyalty to the work they found and the rate of substance use decreased. La Vigne, Shollenberger and Debus (2009), emphasize that the father-child relationship has a critical effect on social reintegration. Therefore, visits of prisoners by their children should be facilitated in prisons, and measures should be taken to alleviate the concerns of prisoners about their children's visits in Uganda.

The second group of participants somehow continued to have relations with family members while they were in prison and were visited by family members. This situation supports the finding in the literature that maintaining family relations by prisoners while in prison positively affects their social reintegration efforts with the society after prison (Farrall & Calverley, 2006; Mills & Codd, 2007; Healy, 2012; Farrall, Sparks, Maruna, & Hough, 2012; Rocha, 2014).

One of the participants in the second group stated that it was sad to stay away from her family while she was in prison, she was most upset that she could not see her child and that her husband occasionally visited her in prison.

*“- We are away from our family while in prison. This is something that really upset people. I was upset the most for being away from my child while I was there. They said that because my child was little, she could stay with me, but I didn't want to raise my child in prison. I could not let her stay in prison. She*

*was a child after all, and prison is not a nice place for children. My mother took care of my child while I was in prison. When I was in prison, my husband would come to visit me from time to time. My husband brought my child to visit several times, but I asked him not to bring the child. Because ... I don't know, I think it saddened me that my baby sees me in prison. Yes, I didn't want her to see me there, remember me like that.”* (Ex-Prisoner 5, Female, 28 years old).

One of the participants stated that it was annoying to stay away from his family in prison but his wife came to visit him while he was in prison, his wife's visits made him feel good and for a while he felt as if he was out from the prison.

*“- It is really annoying to have to live away from one's family. Especially for someone who loves his family. While I was in prison, I was far away from my family, but our communication continued. My wife was coming to visit me. When she came to visit, she was bringing our child as well. Their visits were helping me to feel happy and supported. When they came to visit, it was as if I was away from the prison environment for a while.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

One of the participants in the second group stated that the person who visited him the most during his imprisonment was his brother, and that his brother's coming to visit made him feel valuable. The participant also mentioned that his partner, who left him, visited him a few times in prison, but he can not blame her for not coming more.

*“- The person who visited me the most while I was in prison was my brother. He came to visit once in two months at the latest. He was telling me what happened outside. You know, we do not know what is going on outside while in prison. It made me happy that my brother told something when he came. His coming to my visit made me feel valued. I was telling myself, look, I'm not completely abandoned here. J... came to see me a few times. I can't blame her for not coming more because we already broke up.”* (Ex-Prisoner 1, Male, 44 years old).

One of the participants stated that he was living with his family before he went to prison, his family came to visit him when he was in prison and his parents visits gave him morale.

*“- I continued to see my family while I was in prison. Rather they continued to visit me. I was living with together my family before prison, so our ties were not broken. They were coming to my visit almost once a month. Their arrival was giving me morale. It feels good to have someone come in on visiting days. Some prisoners don't have a visitor for years. And you can easily understand that they are upset about it.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

One of the participants stated that while she was in prison, her family came to visit her once, but she told her family not to come to visit. The participant stated that her family was living in a place far from the prison, coming and going to the prison was a financial burden for her family so she did not want them to come to visit because she did not want to leave his family in financial difficulties. The participant stated that although her family did not come to visit, they continued to talk on the phone at regular intervals.

*“- My mother and father visited me once when I was in prison. When you are in prison, your visitor's arrival is actually something that makes you feel good. Yeah. But I told my family not to come to visit me. Because the place where they live was far from prison. To come to the prison to see me means wasting money and time. No, no. I couldn't ask this from them. My family has no money anyway. I don't want them to be any worse economically. After that they didn't come to visit me, but we continued talking on the phone. I was calling them when I found time and get permission from prison staff.”* (Ex-Prisoner 13, Female, 31 years old).

The participants were visited not only by their spouses or partners but also by their parents and siblings while in prison. The participants who were visited by family members and relatives while in prison evaluated these visits positively and stated that the visits supported them psychologically.



In their study Bales and Mears (2008) found that visiting prisoners by family members in prison reduced and delayed repeat offending behavior in Florida. The study of La Vigne, Shollenberger and Debus (2009) also found that family support after release is very important, even more important than prisoners anticipated. In their studies, they stated that while they received concrete support in cash, transportation and accommodation issues from relatives of prisoners released from prison, they also received emotional and moral support. Cochran (2014) found in his research that inmates who maintain connections with their social networks outside of prison while in prison, reduce their recidivism rates, and the timing and consistency of prison visits also affect their reoffending behavior.

### **5.3.5. Health Issues in Prison**

Often the incidence of chronic and infectious diseases and mental disorders is more common among prison inmates than among the general population in the community. Although the healthcare services needed in prisons are partially provided, access to mental health services remains insufficient (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). In studies conducted with prisoners, older prisoners reported more medical health problems than younger ones (Lurigio, 2001). While prisoners can benefit from health services in prison, they have difficulties in accessing health services about communicable diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis, which should be closely monitored by healthcare personnel after release (Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy, 2001). Mallik-Kane and Visher (2008) found, in their research, that 8 out of 10 prisoners in male prisoners and 9 out of 10 prisoners in female prisoners had health problems requiring treatment or follow-up. They state that half of the male participants in their study and two-thirds of the female participants are diagnosed with chronic health problems such as asthma, diabetes, hepatitis and HIV / AIDS. The authors also mentioned that among the participants, there were quite a lot of complaints about mental health, such as depression, not just physical. On the other hand, this is not the only mental problem of prisoners released from prison. Chikadzi (2017) states that prisoners who stay in prison for a long time are likely to experience an inferiority complex. The author mentions that prisoners released from prison tend to compare themselves with their peers, and as a result of this comparison, they think

that they missed many advancement opportunities and therefore fell into an inferiority complex. On the other hand, James and Glaze (2006) report that the prevalence rate of mental health problems in this population is two times higher than reported.

Health services provided in prison are important facilities for people who cannot access health services due to poverty in the community. The critical point here is to link the health services provided in prison with community-based services, making former prisoners who cannot access health services after being released from prison accessible to the health system (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Within the scope of the study, the participants were asked about their health status in prison. The state of benefiting from the health services in prison and their evaluation of these services were tried to be understood. The narratives of the participants reveal that they faced ordinary health problems that are normal in the country in daily life in prison, basic health services are provided in prison, but access to this service is not always easy. The participants had complaints such as mental burnout and depression other than physical health problems they had experienced in prison. Some of the participants mentioned that they felt worthless and useless after the prison process.

One of the participants stated that he fell ill in prison, had a fever, and that his back was very painful, but when he reported the situation to the authorities, they did not take him seriously. The participant stated that the wardens were arbitrary in sending sick people to the infirmary; they send anyone they wanted to the infirmary, but did not allow anyone they did not want to go to the infirmary.

*“- I got sick during my first prison sentence, sebo. I had a fever... Very bad... And my back was aching so much. I had trouble even walking and talking. Because of this pain... I told the guards about this... but you know, they didn't even take me seriously. I said I wanted to see the doctor. A aahh... They didn't allow it. They only allow anyone they want. For this, you must have a good relationship with them. So, you gotta be flattering on them, you understand? Because if they don't want to, they won't send you to the infirmary... Anyway, I*

*slept in pain for two days. The next day they were convinced and allowed me see the doctor. The doctor said there was a problem with my kidney and I spent two days in the infirmary for treatment.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

One of the participants stated that he had stomach discomfort, vomited for a long time and diarrhea while in prison. The participant stated that although he was sick, they did not want to allow him to go to the infirmary and the wardens accused him of making excuses for not working in the prison farm.

*“- I’m not a person who gets sick very often, but last year my stomach got sick. I was vomiting and had diarrhea. Oh yeah I was in a very bad situation. I wanted to go to the infirmary. But the officers did not want to send me. Can you believe that?... They saw that I was throwing up. I was literally writhing. One of the guards came and said no, you don’t have anything serious; you’re making excuses for not wanting to work on the farm. It was very hard to convince him to let me go to the infirmary. The doctor said I might have been poisoned by something and he gave me medicine.”* (Prisoner 8, 44 years old, Kauga Prison).

Some participants also reported suffering from malaria, which is not very unusual for Uganda. One of the participants stated that he had malaria while in prison, went to the infirmary, was given medication and recovered in a short time.

*“- I did not have any serious health problems while in prison. I had malaria once. My condition didn’t look very good... but it is normal to have malaria. Malaria is something common here... anyway, the guards sent me to the infirmary. They gave me medicine there. I rested for a few days and got better.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participants stated that they experienced not only physical health problems but also mental health problems in prison. One of the participants mentioned that he became depressed when he was sentenced to prison for the second time. The participant stated that

he started to think that he could not fix his life anymore, that he thought things would not go well for him from that point and that he was constantly unhappy. The participant stated that he received support from the psychologist in prison for this.

*“- To be honest, I did not have a physical health problem in prison. However... I felt broke down mentally. During my second prison sentence... I mean this one...I was constantly questioning myself. It is too bad that I spent my life... my teenage years in prison. I was constantly thinking about these issues. I had no idea how to save my life from that point on. And I was always unhappy. Do you understand? I can't say I am very happy now also...(Silence) but I can say that I accept a little bit more... There is a psychologist who comes here a few days a week. She also suggests me to accept the facts in my life. She tells me to accept them and move on.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

Participants in the second group also mentioned similar health problems to the participants in the first group. Occupational accidents and related injuries can also occur from time to time in vocational courses in prisons and on farms. One of the participants in the second group stated that he injured himself in the arm during the carpentry training in prison, that he was very afraid after the accident, but that they took him to the infirmary and that he recovered after the intervention of the health staff.

*“- I didn't get sick when I was in prison ...But I had a bad accident... Very bad. I had attended carpentry training in prison...I had to cut a board. I was cutting it with a chainsaw. Suddenly I did not understand how it was. I have actually tried this many times before. But I still don't understand how it happened that time. A little distraction... I injured my arm with the saw. I was so scared. I was really so scared. It was bleeding. But thanks god I was lucky it wasn't cut too deep. There is still a scar on my arm. (Shows his arm). They sutured my arm in the infirmary. And they did dressing to the wound for a few weeks.”* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

One of the participants stated that she was not physically ill, but suffered a mental collapse while in prison. She expressed that she felt very worthless while she was in prison, and depicted the prisoners by likening the prisoners to a dog stuck in a cage.

*“- I did not get sick while in prison. But there is something wrong, annoying there. That makes you feel bad... I mean, mentally. In fact, this is something that makes people sick inside. Maybe not physically but in mind. (Points her head) Ok? You got me? I was feeling a mental breakdown when I was there. I mean, we were not there like a human. We were like stucked... like a confined animal. Yeah, yeah.... I literally felt like a confined dog in a cage, and that kept me unhappy.”* (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).

During the interviews with the participants, the participants were asked what kind of support they received regarding the health problems they encountered in prison. In the interviews conducted, the main difficulties and challenges faced by prisoners in terms of the health problems they face in prison were either the lack of adequate health service provision or that they had problems in accessing this service due to the attitudes of the prison staff, even though the provision of health services. On the other hand there is a lack of capacity in the provision of health services in rural prisons compared to the prisons in the city. In general, it was stated that in all of the prisons interviewed, services for the mental health of prisoners were not provided or the services provided were insufficient. It was learned that there was a psychologist in Luzira prison who came to the prison a few days a week, interviewed prisoners and provided psychological support. However, it was mentioned that there was a staff member working under the definition of “social welfare officer” in prisons in Uganda to provide basic level support to prisoners, but it was not easy for these prisoners to reach the officer for service.

One of the participants from Masaka prison stated that he felt pain in his lungs and throat and had a fever while he was in prison, when he asked to see the doctor, wardens refused his request, and upon his insistence they let him see the doctor later, but this time the doctor said that he had no medicine left and that he could not give him medicine.

“- I got sick once. My throat and lungs were aching very badly. I had a fever. I told the guards that I wanted to see the doctor. But they did not allow me. I went to them several times, almost begged. Yeah, bastards... Then they let me see the doctor. But guess what happened this time. The doctor told me there was no medicine left to give me in the infirmary. Do you see? This is what they deem worthy of us. Suffering.” (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

A participant from Kauga prison stated that although he did not experience any physical problem, he had a psychological health problem and became depressed. He stated that being closed and locked in a participatory place psychologically destroys people and defined himself as a hopeless man. The participant mentioned that he was thinking about death and killing himself. When asked whether he received support on this issue, he stated that there was no professional in prison that he could get support for and said that he prayed for God to save his soul.

*“- ... But I had something psychological. Depression. You know. The prison is not good a person's psychology. Being confined and locked somewhere. It is demolishing...I lost my joy of living. I was thinking about death. I was thinking about killing myself. Cause I lost everything. I am a hopeless man.”*

*“-Oh sorry. Did you get any support for this situation?”*

*“- In here? In prison?... No, no. There is no one that you can get a support for this here. Yeah, you can see a name plate on a door written social welfare officer, if you look for. But where is that mystical person? I am saying mystical cause its being is mysterious. I never see him or her. Though, I don't know what does he do? We don't have a shrink or a psychologist here. You need to find your own way. Or you need to ask help to Lord every day and night. I hope he saves my soul.”* (Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

The legal regulations in Uganda regulate that people who are classified as insane and mentally abnormal cannot stay in prison and require that these people be treated in a mental

hospital (Kalid, 2007). Therefore, there is no participant with severe mental disorders among the interviewees.

In general, the health services provided to prisoners in prisons are insufficient and deficient, and that prisoners face obstacles in trying to access these services in prisons with basic health services. On the other hand, another important issue is the lack of adequate support for the mental illness of prisoners in prisons. It is clear that a capacity building is needed in this regard. Furthermore, linking the health services provided to prisoners in prison with community-based services after prison, as Travis, Solomon and Waul (2001) noted, will both ensure that poor people who cannot reach the health system receive health care and facilitate their integration into the community.

### **5.3.6. Education and Vocational Training in Prison**

Garland (2018) recommends that prisoners' time in prison be used to teach them how to read and write and vocational skills. Teaching illiterate people to read and write in prison and providing vocational skills to those who do not have any profession will help these people to reintegrate with the society and live in accordance with the law after they are released from prison (Nsalasatta, 2003). If prisoners learn to read and write in prison and receive basic education, they will increase their motivation to continue their education life after they are released from prison. Vocational training will make it easier for them to get a job or earn a living by starting their own business (Pisciotta, 1983).

Hoselton (2018) states that among those who participated in an education and vocational skills activity in prison, the rate of those who re-committed a crime and entered prison is 20%, but for those who do not attend any training or vocational skills course, this rate rises to 40%. The author also notes that the prisons in Uganda lack physical facilities for education (Hoselton, 2016). According to the research conducted by the Uganda Human Rights Commission, the recidivism rate of prisoners who did not attend prison education was determined as 65-75% (Uganda Human Rights Commission, 2016). On the other hand,

despite all these obstacles and difficulties, there are also prisoners in Uganda prisons who learn to read and write, have completed their school and have success stories (Ariko, 2010).

According to the website of the Uganda Prison Service there are crop production, poultry, animal husbandry, agroforestry, metal works and fabrication, art and craft, tailoring, printing, education, music dance and drama, vocational training programs for the prisoners (Uganda Prisons Service, 2021). However, unfortunately, the website of the Uganda prison service does not have any details on the prisons in which prisons these programs are implemented, how many prisoners have benefited from these programs etc.

When I visited the Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters in the process of getting permission for research, I asked them if there were any reports, annual plan documents etc. prepared by the headquarters on these issues and asked them to share with me. However, they refused my request saying that there is no report on these subjects.

It was stated that in Luzira and Kigo prisons visited for research, despite the inadequate physical and human resources capacity, the prisoners were given training on both formal education and vocational skills. It was stated that formal education cannot be given mostly in Masaka and Kauga prisons due to the deficiencies in both physical capacity and human resources, and only some vocational trainings are tried to be given.

One of the participants mentioned that he did not go to school in his childhood and so he did not even know how to read and write. The participant stated that he learned how to read and write by continuing his education in prison during his first prison sentence, and now he started his primary school education in prison while serving his second sentence, and he is happy because of this.

*“- Oh yes there are some educational opportunities here. There are also those vocational training things... I told you that I didn't go to school when I was a kid. So I could not even learn how to read and write. However, I was tempted to start education in prison. Yeah. I did. I was already here, and there was an opportunity. So, why not? However, it was difficult to follow the lessons in the*



*evenings on the days we worked on the farm. But I can say that I learned how to read and write while serving my first prison sentence. And now I started my primary school education here. I am doing well for now. I am happy for this.”*

(Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).

One of the participants stated that he felt lucky to have education opportunities in prison. The participant stated that he completed his education until the 5th grade of primary school during the first two prison sentences and that he wanted to finish the 7th grade of primary school in his current sentence. The participant said that he wanted his children to finish their school and that his own education story could be a good example and success story for them.

*“- I can say that I am lucky in this regard. Because I couldn’t go to school in my childhood. You know, money matters... and there was no school or anything. I’ve told you before. Yeah. When I entered the prison, I learned that primary school education was given there and I started education. During my first two prison sentences, I completed primary school until P5. I resumed my education during this sentence. I think this time I will finish primary school. (Laughs). This can be a good story and example for my children. I want them to finish their school. I will support them to finish their school when I get out of prison.”*

(Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).

One of the participants stated that there is no formal education in prison. The participant mentioned that there were a few classrooms in an old block in the prison but no lessons were held there. The participant stated that they worked all day in the prison farm until the evening, and the authorities described it as vocational training but does not find it logical. The participant defined this situation as “exploitation”.

*“-If you ask them about education, they say there is education program in prison. But I wish there was. There are a few rooms in the old block. Those are the classroom. Yeah. But there is no lesson there. No lesson is given. There is no teacher either. I did not finish primary school when I was a kid. I dropped out of school. If there was a lesson here, I would like to continue the lesson. But*

*do you know what we are doing? We work on the farm. We work until the evening. I guess they name this work as vocational training. Crop production. Bullshit... I wouldn't call it education. This is not training. This is exploitation.”*  
(Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

A participant interviewed at Masaka prison also stated that normally prisoners should be provided with educational opportunities, but prison administrations prefer to make them do prison work instead of guiding prisoners to education. The participant mentioned that the prison commander makes money for the prison in return for the prisoners' work. The participant stated that he dropped out of primary school in the 3rd grade in his childhood and wanted to continue his education in prison if he had the opportunity.

*“- There should be educational opportunities in prisons. There are classroom signs on the prison campus here. But they are just signboards. Because we are not going there. We are working. I mean we mostly work. Some days we work in the farm, some days we work in construction, some days we dig wells. Water wells. I think this is the prison commander's choice. He can give us a classroom, find a teacher, but he sends us to work. Because that way we are not here in prison all day long. And he makes money for the prison in return for our work. I left primary school in 3rd grade. If there was a chance for education in prison, I would prefer to continue my education.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

Participants in the second group mostly stated that they benefited from formal education and vocational training in prison. This is in line with the statement written by Gaetz and O'Grady (2007) that prisoners must have access to education, vocational training and counseling services while in prison in order to be successful in their efforts to integrate with the society after they are released from prison.

One of the participants said that he completed primary school in prison and therefore felt lucky and proud of himself. He mentioned that when he told his education story to his children, his children were surprised by this.

*“- Yeah, I was lucky; there were some educational opportunities in prison. I completed primary school in prison. I left primary school in the 4th grade when I was a kid. But when I got the opportunity to complete the school in prison, I did. Frankly, I'm proud of it, you know? My children cannot believe when I tell this. (He laughs) They are surprised that I was both imprisoned and graduated from school.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

Similarly, one of the participants in the second group said that she learned to read and write in prison after the age of 40 and was very happy because of this. She explained that learning to read and write in prison was a great achievement for her. She mentioned that while she was hopeless in prison, starting literacy course was a hopeful factor for his later life.

*“- Yeah ... You know sir, I learned how to read and write in prison. Moreover, after my forty. Yes, I succeed it. Don't you think this is fantastic, sir? I am very happy about this. Yeah. I think it is an important achievement, especially in prison. I was very unhappy and desperate when I went to prison. I was asking myself, what to do when I got out of prison... This gave me hope when I started the literacy course. I said to myself that if I could learn to read and write at that age, I would be able to live again when I got out of prison. This gave me strength.”* (Ex-Prisoner 6, Female, 57 years old).

Some of the participants in this group also stated that they attended vocational training in prison. One of the participants stated that he attended a carpentry training while in prison. The participant stated that he learned basic woodwork and that learning something gave him self-confidence. The participant also mentioned that since he did not have any problems with the guards in the prison, they did not mind his attendance this training.

*“- I attended carpentry training while in prison. They teach the basics things there. Things like peeling the bark of the boards, thinning them, drilling screw holes etc. but you know what? That made me feel good. Ok? How can I say? It gave me self-confidence; do you understand? I was learning things and producing something. I wasn't doing it alone, of course, but I was helping. But*

*if I was a problem with the guards, they wouldn't let me participate in this training. Okay? I didn't give them any trouble. So, they didn't forbid me.”* (Ex-Prisoner 15, Male, 33 years old).

Some of those who attended vocational training courses in prisons said that they could earn money after they were released from prison thanks to the skills they learned in these courses. One of the participants explained that she attended a vocational training course while she was in prison, learned how to make small souvenirs in this course, and after leaving prison, she made these souvenirs and tried to sell them to tourists, thus trying to support her family economically.

*“- I learned to make souvenirs while staying in prison. Little things. Actually, to be honest, when I attended the course I was just thinking about slacking prison work. (She laughs). But this has been useful for me. Yes. I mean, it was beneficial for me to attend the course. There I learned to make small figures out of cloth, soap and clay. I can make beautiful cute babies out of cloth pieces. I also make and paint things like figures and plates out of clay. And I'm trying to sell them to tourists. The place where I live is close to the Jinja waterfalls. Too many tourists come to the waterfalls. I sell the things I do to them on the roadside. I don't make a lot of money, but I don't give up. So, I can support my family economically.”* (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).

Gordon and Weldon (2003) found that the rate of recidivism of those who attended a vocational training while in prison was 8.75%, and the rate of recidivism of those who attended both formal and vocational education was 6.71%. In the research, the rate of recidivism of those who did not attend any training program was found to be 26%. Researchers say that education is a change agent in this regard, and vocational and formal education has a positive effect on reducing the recidivism rates of prisoners.

Similarly, many studies reveal that formal education and vocational training have a positive effect on reducing the recidivism of prisoners (Hull, Forrester, Brown, Jobe, & McCullen,

2000; Fine, et al., 2001). Therefore, providing prisoners with formal and vocational training in prison will reduce the rate of recidivism and make the society safer.

Seiter and Kadela (2003) state that participating in more than one program in prison reduces recidivism. In addition to formal and vocational training in prison, the authors recommend training such as dealing with stress, managing personal relationships, planning their financial situation, and filling out the forms necessary to reach the services needed in daily life.

The work in prison must be in strength-based approach. Strength-based work is expected to be both enjoyable and rewarding for inmates, rather than punitive. Burnett and Maruna (2006) stress the importance of distinguishing the vocational skills that will be offered to prisoners in strengths-based practice from traditional prison work and community service work. These two can in some cases be justified on corrective grounds such as "learning a skill". However, we cannot consider most traditional forms of prisoner employment, such as factory work, kitchen work, cleaning, to be "strengths-based" or "restorative". Because these practices are not voluntary efforts that make prisoners visible, enabling them to enter community-oriented "helping" or leadership roles. Strengths-based approaches aim to "focus on projects designed to meet community needs, build community capacity, and repair the harm caused by crime to affected communities" (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

According to international standards, the safety and health measures taken for non-prison workers must also be taken when inmates are employed as workers. However, it is reflected in human rights watchdog reports that Ugandan prisoners are beaten so that they can walk barefoot, close together and quickly across rough terrain "like a herd of cattle," to be taken to farms (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Working under these conditions seriously endanger the health of the prisoners. On the other hand, inmates who become ill are not offered adequate treatment. Worse still, some of the prisoners whose treatment requests are denied are reported to have died while working on farms (U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2021).

Participation of people in employment will contribute to family income. This will contribute to the development of family relations and increase their self-esteem, and will also positively

affect their mental health (Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2004). However, people who have been imprisoned are among the most difficult groups to get a new job after leaving prison, as they are often low in education and involved in illegal income-generating jobs before entering prison (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003; Baer, et al., 2006). For these reasons, the education and especially vocational training opportunities to be offered to prisoners in prison are important for them to participate in employment and stay away from crime in the post-prison period.

### **5.3.7. Supportive Actors in Prison**

The importance of supporting the prisoners with a number of formal and vocational training activities during the time they were in prison was mentioned in the previous chapters. In addition to these trainings, it is also important to support prisoners spiritually and psychologically in prison. Individuals affiliated with religious institutions have been providing support to people who have been imprisoned and released from prison in European and American prisons since the 1700s. Unfortunately, policy makers and stakeholders of the punishment system have not sufficiently made use of faith and spirituality in offender rehabilitation (Roman & Roman, 2019).

Stansfield, Mowen and O'Connor (2017) state that religious and moral support has a strong positive effect on the reduction of inmates' substance use. Religion can help prisoners with how to treat others and how to react in difficult times. It can contribute to making them believe in something greater than themselves, thus reducing prison stress. A healthy religious orientation in prison supports an optimistic view of the world and provides resources for society. Religious belief, activities, actions, experiences and inner religiosity are all important factors for the compliance and behavior of prisoners (Koenig, 1995).

Among the interviewees within the scope of the research, those who said that they worshiped in prison and chatted with a religious official said that these supported them in coping with the difficulties they experienced during the prison process. One of the participants said that he goes to meet with the prison chaplain from time to time, and talking to him made him feel

relaxed. The participant stated that the priest read to him quotations from the Bible, gave him advice and tried to follow these advices.

*“- Every now and then I go and talk to the prison chaplain. I'm telling him. Whatever... General stuff... Of course, sometimes I also share special things. He listens whatever I tell. Even his listening to me makes me feel good by itself. Actually, I think I mostly go him when I'm bored here. (He laughs) Talking to him makes me feel relaxed. He reads to me the words of God and gives advice. He tells me to stay calm even if I get angry with others. He says that if I follow the rules in the prison and the rules of God, peace will find me. I keep his words and try not to fight with anyone. This is the support I get for myself.” (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).*

One of the participants said that he attended the prison chaplain's sermon on Sundays in prison, and that the Sunday sermons mentally distanced him from prison conditions, even for a short time. The participant stated that while listening to the sermon, he sometimes questioned his own life and actions, regretted his crimes, and shared these feelings with the chaplain. He also mentioned that the chaplain is giving advise him to be a good person when he gets out of the prison.

*“- Here I began to attend services held by the chaplain on Sundays. I think this helps me. I mean when I listen to his sermon, I feel like I'm not in prison. At least mentally... I mean this helps me get out of here mentally. I even learned a few church hymns (He laughs). I can't say that I am normally a religious person. But when I sentenced to prison for the third time, I started to think that something was wrong with me. I thought I had to change something. And at the recommendation of a friend, I started attending Sunday sermons. You know, after I started to attend sermon, I began thinking about my own life and the crimes I've committed. I regret about my actions before prison. I told these feelings to the priest. He listened to me. He said that when I decided to be a good person, my previous sins would be forgiven. He said that I could continue*

*to be a good person after I got out of prison. So, there is still hope for me, sir. (He smiles)". (Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).*

The participants who stated that they meet with religious officials in prison mostly mentioned that the religious officials give them hope, encourage them to leave behind the crimes they committed in the past and inspire them to be good people after they get out of prison. One of the participants mentioned that talking to the imam in prison is helping him to feel better. The participant explained that the imam is not there every day and comes some days of the week, and talking to the imam and listening to his advice makes it easier for him to feel good and endure the difficulties he faces. He mentioned that when he told the imam about the difficulties in his life, the imam gives him examples of the difficulties that the prophet had and advise him to be patient.

*"- The imam comes to the prison a few days a week. That is, the person appointed by the grand mufti... Yes, what was I saying? I love chatting with him when he comes to prison. So, you know, he knows a lot of things better than us. It makes me feel good when a knowledgeable person listens to me. I sometimes talk to him about the problems I faced here in prison. He listens to me and gives advice. Gives examples from the life of the prophet Muhammad about the difficulties I have experienced. This motivates me to be patient. The conversations we had with the imam are one of the things that supported me in prison." (Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).*

Some of the second group of participants stated that they met with religious officials in prison during their stay in prison and these interviews were supportive for them both during their stay in prison and after prison. One of the participants said that she continued prison chaplain's sermons while she was in prison, that these sermons helped her maintain hope in her and that the chaplain's listening to her made her feel like a human being. The participant mentioned that she started working voluntarily in a church after she was released from prison and the church continued to support her.



*“- While I was in prison, I continued to listen to the chaplain's sermons on Sundays. When I was there, I felt very hopeless. But talking to the chaplain helped me to not lose my hope completely. I told you before that in prison I felt like a dog in a cage. (Silence). Yeah... But you know, when the chaplain listened to me, I felt like a human. This was really important to me. Someone to listen to me, to address me. The chaplain encouraged me to continue my connection with God and the Church after I get out of prison. After I got out of prison, I started volunteering at the church. This gave me significant support. Because people trust and respect the church and the people associated with it.” (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).*

Similarly, another participant said that he was happy to talk to the prison chaplain while he was in prison, and that the chaplain's speeches encouraged him to be a good person and not harm others. The participant mentioned that sometimes he could not meet with the chaplain long enough because there were many people in prison who wanted to meet with the chaplain on Sundays.

*“- I loved to listen to the chaplain when I was in prison. When the sermon was over, I would try to have short conversations with him. I mean, you know, he used to read passages from God's book and say nice words. I used to think about being a good person after talking with him. About living without harming others. I mean, his speeches would motivate me in this regard. But on Sundays after the sermon, there were too many people who wanted to meet with the chaplain. Therefore, sometimes I could not chat with him as much as I wanted.” (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).*

One of the participants stated that he talked to the imam who came to the prison while he was in prison, that his conversations with the imam were supportive for him during the prison process and that his devotion to religion increased compared to his life before he was imprisoned. The participant said that it is more important for a free and respected person from outside of the prison to chat with them while they are in prison than it is for the prisoners to

chat among themselves. The participant also mentioned that after he was released from prison, he went to the mosque in the neighborhood more often and tried to help the imam there voluntarily in his work.

*“- When I was in prison, I was chatting with the imam in charge when he came to the prison. He was listening to me. I was telling him about myself, my family and my life. You know, we were just chatting. Chatting with him made me feel valued. You got me? In fact, you can chat with other prisoners in prison, but it is more important and valuable for someone who is not convicted in prison and respected in the society to come and chat with you in prison. (Silence) After our conversations with him, I actually became a more religious person. After I got out of prison, I started going to the masjid in the neighborhood. I'm trying to help the imam there with his work. While he teaches the children the Qur'an, I help clean the masjid and fill the water containers for those who will perform ablution.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

It is noteworthy that when the participants in both groups were asked about the actors that they thought supported them during the prison process, they first mentioned religious officials in prisons or the support of friends. It was motivating for some participants that their friends to listen to them give ideas and support against the problems experienced during the prison process.

One of the participants said that when he needed support, he asked his friend for help, that it was not easy to find a reliable friend in prison, and that he feels lucky to have a good friend. The participant also mentioned that his friend not only supported him with money but also listened to him when he wanted to talk and gave advice on issues that bothered him.

*“- I usually go to my friend A.. B.. when I'm in trouble or need help with something. He usually supports me. You know, it's hard to find good friends in prison. Yeah, yeah it is not easy to find reliable friends here. So, when you find a good friend you don't want to lose it. A.. B.. is like that for me. I can say that I am lucky with this. He lent me money several times. Of course, I also paid my*

*debt. Apart from that, when I want to talk, he listens to me and advises me on things that bother me.” (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).*

Another participant stated that the closest people they can get support from in prison are other prisoners, but they cannot ask for help from everyone. The participant mentioned that he knows whom he can trust because he has been in prison a few times, that he has two friends who support him and that he is grateful to God for this reason.

*“- The person I can get the closest support from here may be one of the prisoners here, like me. But you can't ask everyone for support and help, sir. No, no you can't trust everyone. You need to know people. Since I have been to prison a few times, I know who I can trust. I have two trusted friends here. Sometimes we share our meals, sometimes we look out for each other while we work on the farm. So, it is. Thank God I have friends who support me when I need it.” (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).*

The participants especially emphasized the feeling of "trust" when describing the friends, they received support from. They stated that they could not trust everyone, especially when choosing the people, they wanted support and help in prison.

On the other hand, the fact that the participants first mentioned the religious officials or other prisoners in prison while answering the questions about the support mechanisms is thought to be related to the absence or insufficiency of the professional support mechanisms in the prisons.

### **5.3.8. Lack of Professional Support and Supervision Mechanisms in Prisons**

Under normal circumstances, prisoners in prisons are expected to receive support from professional welfare workers such as social workers and psychologists. However, from this point of view, the situation in Uganda is not encouraging at all. Mudoola (2018) states that there are only 80 social workers in total working within the Uganda Prison Services. Considering the large prison population of Ugandan prisons, it is impossible for the existing

social workers to serve these people. However, the services and support that social workers provide to prisoners is very important for both prisoners and the people they interact with. They help prisoners reintegrate into society and maintain family ties after prison, by counseling them. Thus, they help reduce the rate of recidivism of prisoners after they are released from prison. In addition to the inadequacy of the qualified workforce to provide counseling services to prisoners in the prison, physical capacity deficiencies such as the wards where counseling services will be provided draw attention.

In the interviews with the participants in both groups, the participants used expressions confirming this situation. The majority of the participants did not meet with a social worker or psychologist in prison. One of the biggest shortcomings of Ugandan prisons for the prisoners in terms of adapting to the prison process, getting support for the problems they face and preparing them for the post-prison period is the very insufficient number of professional staff.

One of the participants said that there are no social workers and psychologists in the prison, that he does not receive professional support in the prison, and that the society does not care whether support is given to the prisoners in the prison. This attitude affects the participant emotionally negatively and causes the participant to feel worthless.

*“- No, no, I didn't get any support from anyone like that here. Actually, I don't think there are any social workers or psychologists in this prison. If there is I would have heard of it. I don't think anyone has an agenda to give professional support to the prisoners here anyway. I think they kicked the people here to the curb. I don't think they have the money or staff to spare for those in prisons.”*

(Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).

Another participant stated that he did not meet with a social worker or psychologist in prison, and that no support services were provided to the convicts by professional staff in the prison where he stayed. The participant mentioned that even if there is a professional working in prison, they do not have time to meet him because they work on prison farms all day. The participant turned to spiritual and religious resources to solve his support needs.

*“- No, of course, I didn't meet with a psychologist or a professional in prison. We don't have any of them in prison. Uganda is not such a country. No, it is not a country where you can sit and talk with professionals and do therapy in prison. Yeah, sir. Tell me, even if there is a social worker or psychologist in prison, when can we meet with him? We work all day on prison farms. Will they be here when we come in the evening? No. If we want support, we must pray to God. What else can we do? God have mercy and protect us.”* (Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

It can be thought that the prisoners staying in the prisons in the urban areas are relatively lucky in this regard. Two of the participants in Luzira prison stated that each of them had met once with a social worker who came to the prison voluntarily from Makerere University. Similarly, one of the participants in Kigo prison also stated that he met with a volunteer social worker from Makerere University.

One of the participants in Luzira prison said that talking to the social worker who was a volunteer from the Makerere University made him feel good. He mentioned that he waited for her to come back and talk to him, but when she did not come, he was somewhat disappointed.

*“- I can't say that I get regular support. I once interviewed a social worker. She is not a permanent worker here. She said that she works at Makerere University and that she came here voluntarily. She talked to me almost for half an hour. Actually, she mostly listened and I talked. She asked questions while talking. About my family, about me... You know, questions about what I want to do after I get out of prison. I thought she would come back and talk to me. But after that I never saw her again. It's good to see someone listening to you every once in a while. I wish she would come again. Who knows, maybe she came, but she came a day when I was working on the farm and she couldn't find me.”* (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).

One of the participants said that he met with a volunteer social worker from Makerere University during his first prison sentence. The participant stated that the social worker informed him about some legal issues, directed his cousin to follow up his file, and thus helped him.

*“-Professional support... Yeah, during my first prison sentence I met with a social worker. He said he was working for Makerere. Yeah, he had come from the University. He had come voluntarily. You know, he helped me. That time I didn't know about much the prison system, I was like a noob. Anyway... you know what? Sometimes suspect's files get lost while transferring from police to the DPP. I mean to the public prosecution. And then you are at the mercy of the police and the prosecutor. You are in trouble. So, you need someone to follow your case. The social worker informed me about this. And he contacted to my cousin and guided him to follow my file. That's how he helped me. It was a good man.”* (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

A participant from Kigo Prison also said that he met with a volunteer social worker from Makerere University. The participant stated that they had a conversation with the social worker and told him about a farmer program that he could apply for after he got out of prison.

*“- During my first prison sentence, we had a little chat with a social worker. Yes, I remember. She was a good person. She said she came to prison as part of a volunteer effort. I think she was working at Makerere. We talked about my life and my criminal history. She asked me what I wanted to do after I got out of prison. I said I had no idea. She told me about a program. She mentioned that a government agency supports some farmers. He told me that I could apply for this program after I got out of prison. It was such a meeting. I did not meet with another professional after that.”* (Prisoner 14, 50 years old, Kigo Prison).

The interviews made confirm Mudoola (2018)'s statements. The vast majority of prisoners does not have access to professional support mechanisms and state that they could not meet with a social worker or psychologist. However, professional support staffs in prisons provide

a critical resource for inmates, by helping them to addressing key issues in behavioral health and care management. It is expected from prison professionals that to support prisoners in prison, as well as prepare them for life after prison and facilitate the transition from prison to society (Wilson, 2010). Considering the critical role, they play for both the prisoners and the society, the need for social workers and psychologists of the Ugandan prison system is once again understood.

In addition, in the interviews, the number of participants in the second group who met with a social worker or psychologist in prison is higher when compared to those in the first group. While three people in the first group stated that they met with social welfare worker, seven people in the second group stated that they met with a social welfare worker in prison.

One of the participants in the second group said that while she was in prison, she met with a social worker several times and that the social worker encouraged her to attend a literacy course in prison. The participant mentioned that the meeting with the social worker was a source of motivation for her and had a positive effect.

*“-Yes sir, while I was in prison, I met with a social worker a few times. Actually, she was about my daughter's age. Yeah, she was a sweet and kind person. Do you know, she was the one who encouraged me to take a literacy course in prison in the first place. This was really a source of motivation for me. At our first meeting, she asked me about my story. She wanted me to tell her about my life. In our other meeting, she asked me if I would like to attend a literacy course. I was very surprised at first. But she convinced me. But you know it's good that she convinced me of that.”* (Ex-Prisoner 6, Female, 57 years old).

Another participant said that four or five months after he was imprisoned, a social worker talked to him and asked him if he had any problems. The participant stated that they could not meet with his girlfriend and child after he was imprisoned, and that his girlfriend could not come to see him because she had no money. The social worker spoke to the participant's girlfriend on the phone, referred her to Buena Charity Services, and helped her visit the participant in prison. The participant stated that he was very happy about this.

*“- Oh yes, how I could forget. While I was in prison, I met with a social worker. He had helped me. When I went to prison, my girlfriend and my child could not come to see me for a long time. You know, they had no money. How could they come? Four or five months after I went to prison, the social worker spoke to me. He asked if I had a problem here or something. I said that I hadn't seen my girlfriend and son since I went to prison and that I missed them very much. He asked me why they didn't come. I said that they could not come because they don't have money; they could not walk that far. He said he would try to help me with that. About a month later, my girlfriend and my son came to visit me. The social worker phoned my girlfriend, directed them to Buena Charity. They gave my girlfriend some money from Buena to come to visit me to the prison. This made me very happy... (Tears in his eyes). It was an amazing feeling that he was trying for me. I was so happy.” (Ex-Prisoner 15, Male, 33 years old).*

Another participant stated that she felt nervous at first when she was in prison, had nightmares at night, and therefore had difficulty sleeping. The participant told that during this process, the social worker in prison invited her to talk. So, she could tell about her sleep problem to the social worker and the social worker referred her to a doctor to help her in this regard.

*“- When I first entered the prison, I had trouble sleeping at night. Besides the physical conditions being completely unfavorable, I was very nervous. For the most part, there was no proper place to sleep. In the meantime, I was very unhappy and upset about being in prison. I was thinking about my children, my parents and I couldn't sleep at night. I used to wake up with bad dreams when I went to sleep. During this process, I met with the social worker. Rather, she invited me to interview. She said that she tries to meet with the newcomers to the prison as much as possible, but she could not meet with everyone because she had to meet with too many people. She was a good person. She was polite. I told her about my sleep problem. She gave me a paper so I could see the doctor. Oh, it wouldn't have been easy to see the doctor otherwise. She said the*



*doctor could give me medicine to sleep. So, it happened. I visited the doctor and he gave me a medicine. I was able to sleep thanks to that drug until I got used to the prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 4, Female, 42 years old).

In the interviews, the participants who had the opportunity to meet with a social worker in prison gave a positive feedback about these interviews. Matejkowski, Johnson and Severson, (2014) state that social workers in prisons evaluate new inmates by interviewing them, create a treatment support plan for inmates based on this assessment, guide them to physical and mental health systems, and monitor their progress. In the interviews with the first and second group participants, the statements of the participants who had the opportunity to meet with the social worker assert that the social workers in prison are trying to fulfill these roles. However, the low number of social workers in prisons is a fact. For this reason, it is not possible for all prisoners to meet with social workers and receive professional support.

### **5.3.9. Preparation for Release**

All correctional systems are expected to have some form of pre-release plan for inmates (La Vigne, Davies, Palmer, & Halberstadt, 2008). The pre-release plan for prisoners in prison should identify problem areas for prisoners, make assessments and diagnoses in these areas, and develop ways to provide related services. Individual needs and strengths are taken into account when preparing the plan. The wider realities in society are then considered (Mellow & Dickinson, 2006).

The ideal pre-release plan should be a process that begins at the admission stage and continues in the months following release. However, in many applications, the pre-release plan starts a few months before the release, and includes only giving civilian clothes to the prisoners and transportation from the prison (La Vigne, Davies, Palmer, & Halberstadt, 2008).

When it comes to the completion of prison terms and the release of prisoners, it is better to prepare ahead of time, rather than simply releasing them into the community. For this reason,

within the scope of the research, questions such as whether preparations were made for them before they were released from prison, and whether help was offered to the prisoners before they were sent to the community after their sentence was over. However, the participants in both groups stated that they did not receive any support regarding the preparation and adaptation process during their imprisonment and during the release from prison, and that there was no try to prepare them for their new life after prison.

One of the participants stated that before he was released from prison, no one did anything to prepare him for the post-prison period, and the day before he was released from prison, the prison commander said that they would release him one day later. He said that when he got out of prison, he didn't know what to do and he was literally “stunned”.

*“- A preparation? No, no. No one did anything to prepare me for this before I got out of prison. Do you know how it happened? The commander called me. Yeah. Just before the end of my sentence. He told me you'll be free tomorrow, pack up. Yeah. That's it. That's all that was said. The next day they had me sign some papers and I left. And when I walked out the door, I was horribly stunned. Yes, that's the right word, I was stunned. I didn't know what to do.” (Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).*

Another participant stated that the prison administration is not interested in preparing them for the post-prison process, that what they are interested in is making prisoners work on farms. The participant stated that while they were in prison, no work was done to prepare them for life after prison, and that they were just left out when the sentences were over.

*“- What they are interested in while we are here is to make us work until evening and tire us. Leaving us out like something useless when our sentence is over. Yes, exactly like that. This is how they look at us. What do you think? That they care about us? No, they don't care about us. They want to get rid of us. While we are in prison, they want us to do what they say, let's not cause trouble, work on the farm and then leave. That's what they're interested in. I don't think they're interested in treating us or giving a good life. So, they don't do anything for us.*

*No, no one did anything to prepare me for this before my sentence ended.”*  
(Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

One of the participants stated that no one offered help to him during his release from prison; he was thrown in front of the door like garbage when his sentence was over, and that this situation made him feel very helpless and worthless. The participant mentioned that he did not know what to do after he was released from prison, that he did not make a plan for this, and that those staff in prison did not support him.

*“- No sebo, no one offered me any help before I got out of prison. Do you know how it happened? When my sentence was over, they left me with my belongings in front of the door. Like a garbage. Yeah, that's how I felt when they took me out. They left me like garbage. At that moment, I felt so helpless and worthless. While in prison, they worked me on the farm all the time, gave me bad food. Then they just left me in front of the door. I didn't know what to do after I got out. I didn't think of what to do. I didn't have a plan. The prison staff did not support me either. How will I go to my village, how will I find a job, how will I feed? They did not support at all.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

One of the participants in the second group stated that the prison staff did not provide any support to prepare her for the post-prison process, and that only her family supported her. The participant mentioned that she did not know what she would do if she did not have a family that accepted her after prison, and that she continued her life with the support of her family.

*“- You know, before I got out of prison, the people who worked there didn't give me any support. No, they did not offer any support. I was lucky to have a good family. Only my family supported me. They came to take me home the day I was released from prison. I don't know how I would have gone home if they hadn't come. I had no money. It's not just going home, of course. You know. If you're out of prison, life is hard. People don't look at you like they used to. I don't know*

*what I would do if my family didn't accept me. I could not have continued without their support.” (Ex-Prisoner 5, Female, 28 years old).*

Another participant stated that she was not given any support and assistance by the prison administration before she was released; she met volunteers from Buena Charity Services shortly before she was released from prison, and they gave her some money for her transportation from prison to her house.

*“- Honestly, no one from prison helped me. That’s how they are. They are rude to us. I don't think they are helpful. People from Buena helped me. Shortly before my release from prison, some volunteers had arrived. They brought some soap, notebooks and pens to the prisoners. That's when I met them. I told them that I had a short time to get out of prison and that I had no idea how to get home. And believe me I really had no idea. Yeah. I didn't have any money and I couldn't walk that far from prison. They gave me some money. This is how they supported me.” (Ex-Prisoner 12, Female, 48 years old).*

Although the management of the release process is of critical importance, the interviews conducted within the scope of the research show that there is no professional planning in prisons in Uganda to prepare the prisoners for the post-prison process. Some of the prisoners who are lucky in this regard are supported by their families and some of them are supported by volunteers from non-governmental organizations. It is clear that in the Uganda prison system there is a need for planning to prepare inmates for the post-prison process. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations working on this issue should also be supported.

Detentions for longer than normal standards, overcrowding, poor healthcare, dilapidated facilities, hard labor and sometimes even violence and torture are the biggest problems in Ugandan prisons (Oppenheimer, 2005; U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2006 ;ICPS, 2008; UHRC, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2011). Sometimes the situation goes beyond torture and violence against prisoners, with prisoners being hanged by the guards (Mufumba, 2010; Wimba & Adure, 2010).

Unfortunately, even by 2020, it is reported that torture and ill-treatment still continue in the Ugandan prison system, and people with dissident political views continue to disappear. This is not just for normal people living in the country. For example, Francis Zaake, a member of parliament from the opposition party, was arrested and detained from his home by the Uganda Police Force (UPF) and the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF) in 2020, and was tortured in prison. Although the judge ordered Zaake, who was taken to court later, to stay in the hospital and receive treatment, the officials took him back to the prison without taking him to the hospital. It has been reported that Zaake developed permanent health problems in his body (Uganda 2020 Human Rights Report, 2020).

#### **5.4. LIFE AFTER PRISON**

Prison life with deprivation, violence and harsh conditions is quite challenging. In some cases, even basic human life is ignored. However, life after prison can sometimes be worse for ex-prisoners. A professor of psychology and law at New York University, Dr. James Gilligan defines prolonged incarceration as "*soul murder*" and describes it as "*destroying of someone's personality, the sense of their own aliveness*" (Broman, 2019). Therefore, it is important to investigate the post-prison life experiences of prisoners.

There are many factors that affect the ex-prisoners' reintegration with the society after they are released from prison. Factors such as mental health problems, substance use (Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy, 2001; Gaes & Kendig, 2002), depression, low self-esteem (Fletcher, 2002), physical health problems (Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy), and behavioral problems such as anger management (Heinrich, 2000) are among these. On the other hand, there are various support mechanisms used by ex-prisoners to cope with the difficulties they face. For example, family can be a very rich source of psychological, social and financial support against difficulties encountered (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Mallik-Kane and Visher (2008) also say that criminal researches show that prisoners coming out of prison mostly rely on family members such as their parents, grandparents, siblings etc. Financial assistance (Wikoff, Linhorst, & Morani, 2012), stable employment (Visher & Travis, 2003), social support both during and after prison (Bales & Mears, 2008), maintaining a job, having relation with a

partner and association with a child (Bahr, Harris, Fisher, & Armstrong, 2010) are also among the supportive factors for a successful reintegration after prison.

Within the scope of the research, questions were asked to understand which support mechanisms such as family, social relations, financial support, non-governmental organizations etc., in order to reintegrate with the society after being released from prison and what kind of difficulties they encountered in this process, such as finding a job, transportation and housing.

#### **5.4.1. Family Relations after Prison**

According to the answers given by the first and second group participants to the questions about their relations with their families after being released from prison, it can be said that the participants in the second group received more support from their families than those in the first group. This inference supports the statements of Berg and Huebner (2011) and Mallik-Kane and Visser (2008).

Some of the participants in the first group stated that their bad family relations got worse after they went to prison and their marriages ended. For example, one of the participants, who stated that their relationship with his wife was not good before he went to prison, said that he and his wife divorced after being sentenced to prison for the first time, and that he tried to communicate with his wife again after he got out of prison, but he was unsuccessful.

*“- Yeah, it cannot be said that our relationship was good before prison. I told you. When I first went to prison, she had an important opportunity. Yeah. She took this opportunity. She used my entry into prison. It was a good excuse for her... And we divorced. But when I got out of prison, I tried to talk to her. Yeah, I did it. I found her number from a friend and called. I thought maybe we could try again. At least for the kids. But she didn't accept it. She said there was someone new in her life. She said our meeting or talk wouldn't make any sense. She didn't support me in any way. I was the bad guy to her.” (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).*

The participant tried to be together with his ex-spouse again, but this did not happen because his ex-wife started living with another person. The participant stated that his ex-wife did not support him in any matter after he was released from prison. The participant was also asked about his relationship with his children after he was released from prison. The participant stated that his children continue to live with their mothers; they do not meet with him, he went to his children's school a few times and tries to meet them, but that his children didn't feel ok with this.

*“- The children were staying with their mothers. I wanted to visit them a few times at school. But you know. They knew that I stayed in prison and get out. They didn't like me going to school to see them. Yeah, I could sense it. They were constantly checking to see if their friends had seen us while they were talking to me. They didn't want their friends to see me. The next time I went, my eldest son said to me that he doesn't like me coming to school to see them. I didn't go to see them afterwards. After all I'm already in prison again. They don't come to visit me either. Maybe their mother is telling them that I am a bad person. Or, whatever... Maybe I just haven't been a really good person and father.”* (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participant asserts that he did not receive any support from his family. It is also noteworthy that the participant is blaming his ex-wife and himself for this situation. Another participant in the first group similarly stated that his partner, with whom he was living, left him after he was imprisoned, and that she did not want to meet with him after he was released from prison.

*“- I called A... after I got out of prison. And what did she do? She said it's over now. She said she didn't want to live with me anymore. I felt very bad. She didn't come to see me when she was in prison. But how could I know. I didn't think she wouldn't want to see me when I was free. You know, we shared a lot together. I told her that I would not go to prison again and that I wanted to be with her. She didn't accept it. I couldn't keep my word anyway. As you see, I am*

*in prison again. I wish we could be together and she support me.” (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).*

Although the participant never visited by the person with whom he lived after entering the prison, it seems that he had a hope that they would be able to live together again after he was released from prison. However, events do not develop as the participant expected. This situation affects the participant emotionally in a negative way.

Another participant said that he and his wife divorced before receiving his first prison sentence, and that his wife took the children and left them with his own mother. The participant stated that after he got out of prison, he learned that his ex-wife started living with another man, that he saw his children a few times, but stopped visiting them because he had nothing to give them. The participant mentioned that he did not receive any support from his wife.

*“- I told you my wife and I divorced before I got my first prison sentence, sir. She took the children and left them with her own mother. She must think they wouldn't have a good life with me. (Silence) When I first got out of prison, I found out that she was living with another man. I had to get used to it and there was nothing I could do. I saw her once. Yeah... We talked a little. She said she had chosen another life for herself. She said that the children are also fine with her mother. When she visits her mother, she was seeing the children. I also went to see the children a few times. But you know I was living alone... I didn't have money. I had nothing to give to the children. So, I stopped visiting them. I can't visit much from now on even if I wanted to. I'm in prison again. By the time I'm out, the kids will be grown up and I don't think they'll want to see me either.” (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).*

The participant did not receive support from his ex-wife after he was released from prison and did not keep visiting his children. Currently, he thinks that if he is released from prison again, his children will not want to meet with him, and he feels hopeless about this.



According to the narratives of the participants in the first group the majority of the participants in this group had negative family relations during their admission to prison, these relations worsened after they were imprisoned, and they could not get support from their nuclear families after they were released from prison. Also, from the narratives of the participants in the second group, it can be said that they were more fortunate than the participants in the first group in terms of receiving support from their nuclear families after they were released from prison.

One of the participants in the second group talked about the emotional support that her husband provided her after she was released from prison. The participant explained that she was worried about her husband divorce from her because she was in prison, but that her husband did not get divorced, that she felt nervous during the process of getting used to the society again after she was released from prison, and that her husband supported her in this regard. The participant also stated that their children are reactive towards her and her husband supported her about children's attitude towards herself.

*“- I was good with my family before the prison. They also supported me after I got out of prison. My husband was kind to me about this. I know he loves me. Yeah... (She smiles). When I first entered the prison, I was afraid that he would divorce me, but he didn't. He treated me well when I got out of prison. He told me everything will be alright. It was a little difficult for me. You know. Stay in prison for a while. (Silence) After that, some things don't feel the same as before. You have to get used to it again. My husband was patient with me. I was pretty nervous for a while after prison. My husband was tolerant to me. It took time for the kids to get used to my come back. My husband supported me about the children's attitude. Then the children realized that I had not left them. They were thinking I left them. But god knows I didn't leave them.” (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).*

The participant stated that she was worried about her husband getting divorced from her when she went to prison. The participants from both groups have similar concerns, and the

narratives of the participants generally support the abandonment of the spouse who is in prison. However, her husband supported the participant in the nervousness she experienced after the prison process and in her relations with the children. This support provided by her husband facilitated the post-prison process for the participant.

One of the participants in the second group talked about the economic support that his wife provided him after he was released from prison. The participant explained that he could not get a job for a long time after he was released from prison; his wife tried to meet the needs of the house and supported him financially.

*“My wife has been very supportive of me after I got out of prison. She took care of children when I was in prison. I couldn't find a job for a long time after I got out of prison. During this time, my wife met the needs of our family. Yeah, Sebo. She works in a souvenir shop in down town. She doesn't actually make much money. But you know, even a few shillings are very important. Especially when I was unemployed, even the few shillings she earned and spent to us were very important.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

His wife provided financial support to the participant after he was released from prison and that the participant evaluated this support positively. This supports the statements of Berg and Huebner (2011) that the family can be an important social and economic resource against the difficulties encountered after prison. It is also common that the prisoners coming out of prison mostly rely on family members such as their parents, grandparents, siblings etc. (Mallik-Kane & Visher, 2008).

Within the scope of the research, questions were asked to understand the relationship of the participants with their parents after prison as well as before prison. The narratives of the participants in both groups reveal that the participants who had negative parental relationships before the prison sentence had negative relationships with their parents after they were released from prison.

One of the participants in the first group stated that he did not meet with his parents after he was released from prison and that he did not want to meet them because they left him when he was a child. The participant said that his parents did not call him after prison and they did not support him.

*“- I didn't talk to them after I got out of prison. I didn't want to meet. Why would I want? In the end, they left me. They didn't support me before I was jailed, why should I think they'll help me later? Nah. I did not meet with either of them and did not ask for support. They never called me either, sebo.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

Another participant in the first group said that when he got out of prison, he went to the village to his family because he had no money and thought that his family could give him food. The participant stated that his family gave him food and a place to sleep for a few days. The participant left the village after his family wanted him to stay in the village and take care of the cattle.

*“-After I got out of prison, I went to my parents. Yes, I went to the village. Because I had no money. I thought my parents could at least give me food. Yeah, they gave me food, a place to sleep. I stayed with them for a few days. Then they told me that I should live with them in the village and look after the cattle. I said no. I didn't accept that. I didn't want to live in that village and look after the cattle. No, this was not the life I wanted. I wanted to earn a lot of money and have cool life. I turned back to the town. But it didn't happen. I failed. I'm in prison again.”* (Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

A participant from the second group said that she had not met her parents since she ran away from home, her father died and she did not want to meet with her mother. The participant stated that her mother could not support her and described her mother as an irresponsible person.

*“- You know what, to hell with them. I haven't seen them since I ran away from home. I do not care. Dad is gone, he is dead. I don't think my ma will support me. She is an irresponsible person. Nah, I don't care. I learned that I have to be strong myself. I have nothing to share with my ma. I don't mind meeting or getting in touch with her.”* (Ex-Prisoner 12, Female, 48 years old).

Some of the participants, who stated that their parental relations were good before entering the prison, described their parental relations positively after prison. For example, one of the participants in the first group stated that his mother takes care of his children while he was in prison, and gave him food for a while after he was released from prison. The participant mentioned that his mother had a supportive attitude towards him.

*“- Yeah, thanks to my mother, she takes care of my children while I am in prison. After I got out of prison, I went to my mother. She gave me food for a while. But I couldn't expect that from her for long. She was already giving me a great support by taking care of the children. If I could find something to earn a little money, I was buying food for her and the children. My mother was always supportive of me in that process, she didn't treat me badly.”* (Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).

The participant's mother supported her son by taking care of the children of his son when he was in prison and by giving him food and a place to stay after he was released from prison.

One of the participants in the second group mentioned that his family supported him both emotionally and economically after he was released from prison. This support was important for the participant to adapt to the society after the prison process.

*“- After I got out of prison, I started living with my parents. I don't know what I could do without them. It is difficult to find a place to stay after getting out of prison. And you know, life is totally hard if you have no money. You may have to steal something. I'm lucky; I'm staying with my family. They supported me for a long time for accommodation and food. I know they treated me well. They*

*could choose not accept me home after I got out of prison. But they took me home and said everything would be alright. They gave me a chance to start over.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

The participant states that his family's acceptance of him back to home after his release from prison is an important support, and that he may have to steal because he has no money after he is released from prison. This statement also gives a clue about the recidivism behavior of prisoners who cannot find economic and social support after being released from prison.

Similarly, another participant in the second group mentioned that her parents provided her with social and economic support after she was released from prison and said that she still continues to live with her parents.

*“I'm ok with my parents. We don't have a problem. I started living with them after I got out of prison. Where else would I live? I don't have a job, I don't have a house, I can't pay a rent, I have nowhere else to go. Yeah. My parents supported me after prison. You know, I live with them, they share their food with me. I help with housework to my mom. I don't have a job right now. But rarely I find daily jobs in the fields and earn very little money. I try to support my family with the money I earn.”* (Ex-Prisoner 13, Female, 31 years old).

The period following release from prison is a critical process for a prisoner to return to old habits and commit a crime again. For this reason, it is very important to support the prisoner emotionally, economically and housing in the process following release from prison in order to prevent involvement in crime again (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Family ties and positive relationships provide emotional support to ex-prisoners against the stressful challenges of reintegration into society (Agnew, 2005). Strong family ties make ex-prisoners look at life more optimistically and confidently, while at the same time providing an important support in coping with the difficulties encountered (Laub & Sampson, 2003; Burnett, 2004). According to the literature, some studies reveal that having a good family relationship contributes significantly to the cognitive change of ex-prisoners, and that

cognitive change and transformation is a whole with relational bonds (Berg & Huebner, 2011). Therefore, positive family relationships constitute an important source of support and strength in the social reintegration process of ex-prisoners.

#### **5.4.2. Social Relations after Prison**

Social and peer relations have an important place in understanding and evaluating criminal behavior (Giordano & Rockwell, 2000). Within the scope of the research, it was tried to understand how the social relations of the participants changed before and after the prison, the reflection of the prison process on social relations and how social relations affected the post-prison process.

In the first group, the participants who defined their social relations negatively before entering the prison, defined their friendship relations negatively after prison.

One of the participants in the first group said that he did not have many friends before prison, that he did not make any new friends after he was released from prison, and that he did not want to see anyone. The participant stated that after he got out of prison, he tried to survive physically in difficult conditions and did not want to meet anyone; he did not want anyone in his life.

*“- Before prison, I didn't have many friends. I told you this. I didn't make any new friends after I got out of prison. To be honest, I didn't want to see anyone. I didn't want to talk to anyone. I preferred to be alone. I didn't go anywhere unless I had to. I tried to live in a shack. I didn't want anyone. You know? I do not like anybody. I don't want anyone in my life.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

The participant, who did not have many friends before entering the prison, showed more introverted behaviors after leaving the prison. After the prison process, participants have become less willing to communicate with people.

Prisoners lose positive friendships which they have before they enter prison for reasons such as criminal activities and substance abuse stories. This may cause them to isolate themselves socially from society. The self isolation of ex-prisoners from social relations after their release from prison is a factor that complicates social reintegration into society (Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle, & McPherson, 2004).

Some of the participants stated that their friends did not want to meet with them after they were released from prison. One of the participants mentioned that he wanted to meet with his friends after he was released from prison, but his friends did not accept this request in a positive way.

*“- After I got out of prison, of course, I wanted to meet my old friends. But when I want to hang out with them... How to explain? They didn't want me. Yeah. They didn't want me to hang out with them. For them, I was an ex-prisoner. Not an old friend. It was like this that time. They treated me as if I was going to infect them with a disease. Whenever I wanted to meet them, they found an excuse. They threw me off. There was nothing I could do.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

Some of the participants in the first group mentioned that their neighbors' attitudes and behaviors towards them changed negatively after they were released from prison. One of the prisoners in Kauga prison said that he returned to his old neighborhood after he was released from prison, but that the attitudes and behaviors of the people he used to know changed towards him and they did not welcome him. He stated that his neighbors were talking to each other while he was passing by the street, and that they were trying not to make eye contact with him.

*“- When I released from prison, I went back to my old neighborhood. You know, where else I could go...The place you know is the safe place. But people in my old neighborhood didn't welcome me the way they used to. Something had changed. I mean the people I knew there were not like the people I knew. They didn't want to talk to me. They were trying not to make eye contact with me. But*

*when they saw me crossing the road, they were talking to each other in low voices while pointing me. If you saw them, you could tell they were talking about me.”* (Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant returned to his old neighborhood, which he thought would be safer for him after prison, but could not find the support he expected there. The participant experienced disappointment and sadness about the behavior of the people he knew before he went to prison.

Some of the participants in the second group were able to continue their social relations with their friends and neighbors after they were released from prison, and tried to provide them with social support through non-governmental organizations and religious structures. Considering that they are not involved in crime again, it is thought that these factors support the participants in hold on to life after prison.

One of the participants said that even though some of his old friends did not want to meet with him after he was released from prison, some of his friends continued to see him. The participant stated that he understood who his real friends are during this process. Two of his friends, who continued to talk to the participant, lent him money until he found a job.

*“- I had friends who didn't want to see and talk to me after prison. But with a few of my friends our relation continued. This allowed me to get to know my real friends. What my friends who continued to see me and trusted me did was really valuable. I am grateful to them. Two of them even lent me money until I found a job. I continue to meet with them; we watch football matches together like in the old days.”* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

The participant talks about how valuable the support his friends provided him after he got out of prison. The fact that his friends provided economic support to the participant until he found a job and that they continued to meet with him unlike his other friends were very important support for the participant.



Rhodes (2008), in his research on the impact of social ties on the employment of ex-prisoners, emphasizes that social relations have a decisive and important role in securing and maintaining the employment of ex-prisoners.

Some of the participants in the second group stated that, unlike the ones in the first group, their neighbors don't have a negative attitude towards them after they were released from prison. One of the participants told that after she got out of prison, she returned to her mother's house and started to live with her mother. One of the participants told that after she got out of prison, she returned to her mother's house and started to live with her mother. The participant stated that her neighbors did not have a negative attitude towards her, and that her neighbors appreciated her trying to help her family and not abandoning her children after she was released from prison.

*“After I got out of prison, I went back to my mother's house. I started living with her. I had no money to stay elsewhere. My mother took care of my children while I was in prison. Neighbors... they knew that I was in prison. But yeah, they didn't treat me badly after I came back. At first, they didn't talk much, but there wasn't much I could do about it. I tried to take care of my children and help my mother. After a while, my neighbors began to appreciate my not abandoning my children and my mother. They started talking to me. They told me it was good behavior for me to not leave my family and try a better life after prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 4, Female, 42 years old).

Some of the participants told that they obtained the support they could not find from their old friends through religious structures after they were released from prison. For example, a participant stated that she did not meet with many of her former friends after she was released from prison, but she did not feel the absence of them because she made new friends thanks to the church.

*“- You know, after I got out of prison, many of my friends didn't want to see me. But I didn't mind it too much. Because thanks to the chaplain in prison, I set a new path for myself. After I got out of prison, I started volunteering at the*

*church. So I met a lot of new people. I have new friends who forgive my past sins and do not judge me for it, instead of those who do not want to meet me because of a sin and crime I have committed before. The priest of the church also listens and supports me whenever I need it.” (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).*

The participant's meetings with the chaplain in prison helped her develop a support mechanism in her post-prison life. The participant states that she started a new life with this support mechanism.

Most of the participants in the second group also mention Buena Charity Services as a factor that strengthens their social relations. In this regard, Buena Charity Services contributed positively to the lives of many ex-prisoners as an NGO. For example, one of the participants told that he met Buena's volunteers in prison, contacted them after he was released from prison, and that he did not feel lonely with these volunteers.

*“- After I got out of prison, I didn't have many friends with whom I could meet again. But I was lucky to meet volunteers from Buena in prison. I started seeing them after I got out of prison. In Buena, I also started participating in volunteer activities. So, I didn't feel alone. It was good for me to talk to people who made mistakes like me and learned from it. This is what I tell those who come to Buena. I tell them that they are not alone. There may be people in society who don't like us, but we can love people like us. We know each other and don't judge ourselves with the mistakes in the past.” (Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).*

Buena Charity Services provided significant social support to the participant who did not have many friends to meet with after he was released from prison. The participant, who met with other ex-prisoners there, did not feel alone himself and tried to support the people who came to the NGO after him.

When the narratives of the participants are considered, the first group of participants who describe their social relations negative before entering prison, had difficulties in developing new relationships after prison. These requests of some participants who wanted to communicate with their old friends were not met positively. Negative attitudes of neighbors towards the participants who were released from prison also made it difficult for ex-prisoners to maintain their old relationships and discouraged them from establishing new relationships. On the other hand, being able to reconnect with old friends, develop new relationships, and receive supportive attitudes from neighbors, religious structures and non-governmental organizations have been supportive factors for ex-prisoners to continue their lives after prison.

#### **5.4.3. Unemployment and Poverty**

In the literature, it is narrated that employment enables individuals to maintain their lives, pay their bills, meet their housing needs and establish wider social networks, thus facilitating reintegration into the post-prison society (Petersilia, 2003; (Visher & Travis, 2003; Visher & Courtney, 2006). On the other hand, employment will also reduce the involvement of individuals in crimes based on economic problems. For this reason, questions were asked to understand how the employment and economic situation of the participants changed after they were released from prison.

In the interviews, the participants stated that they faced economic difficulties after being released from prison, had difficulties in finding a job due to their prison history, and unfortunately, some of them were again involved in economic-based crimes and re-entered the prison.

One of the participants in the first group said that after he was released from prison, he had a hard time economically, could not get support from his family and could not find a job because he was an ex-prisoner. The participant mentioned that he did hard work in exchange for only something to eat, collecting the food thrown in the market.

*“- After I got out of prison, I had a lot of trouble in terms of money. I had no money. I couldn't get any money from my family because we were not good because of prison sentence. It's hard to find a job and everything is much more difficult if you're an ex-convict. I asked for a job from many people, but no one wants to give a job. I lived in bad conditions. Sometimes I collected discarded food from the local market, and sometimes I did hard work just in exchange for something to eat.”* (Prisoner 1, 23 years old, Luzira Prison).

The statements of the participant reveal that being an ex-prisoner makes it more difficult for him to find a job, and this situation exposes him to bad conditions economically. Stigmatization is one of the most important barriers to finding a job for ex-prisoners. The stigmatization associated with prison history negatively affects the potential of ex-prisoners to reintegrate into society (Travis, 2005).

A participant in the first group, who is serving a third prison sentence, told that he faced serious difficulties in finding a job and economically in both his releases from prison. The participant stated that it is difficult to live in a poor society, but it is much more difficult to live as an ex-convict in a poor society.

*“- After I got out of prison, I was like crap economically. Yeah, that was exactly my situation. I was released from prison twice. I was broke in both. I've been looking for a job but no one wants to give a job. Once they find out that you were in prison, people don't trust you. Yeah sebo, they don't trust you. Even before I sentenced to prison, I was bad economically and it was difficult to make a living. Because we are a poor country. But after I got out of prison, I realized that it was even more difficult. Living in a poor country as an ex-con is even harder. I wish there was something I could do about it. You can't live without money. I wish I had money and I didn't have to steal.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

The statements of the participant reveal that he had a difficult time economically after he was released from prison, he had difficulties in finding a job because he was stigmatized by the

society since he was an ex-convict. As a result of these, the participant was involved in another economic based crime and showed recidivism behavior.

People who have to deal with many structural inequalities in an already poor society also have to deal with the stigma associated with their prison history after their imprisonment. This stigma constitutes a significant weakness for ex-prisoners. While struggling with poverty, which is one of the most important problems created by the socio-economic order, the social work profession works to protect the human rights of the poor and to ensure that they benefit from social justice. One of the foundations on which Rawls's concept of justice is based on that social and economic inequalities provide the best perspectives to people in the worst conditions (Rawls, 2005; as cited in Küçükkaraca, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to combat the stigmatization that makes it difficult for ex-prisoners to join employment after prison.

Social workers working within the framework of the empowerment approach are based on the ecosystem perspective and forces orientation. They work for a purpose of maximize social participation and minimize stigmatization. To this end, they try to develop clients' coping mechanisms and reveal their strengths (Cankurtaran Öntaş, 2004). Thus, with the social work interventions to be made within the framework of the empowerment approach, the economic earning opportunities necessary for ex-prisoners to continue their lives after prison will be revealed and strengthened.

Holzer, Raphael and Stoll (2003) state that the limited education levels and cognitive skills of ex-convicts make it difficult for them to find a job, and even if they find a job, they have a low income. The statements of some participants are suit with the authors on this issue. One of the participants said that he could not find a job for a long time after he was released from prison, that it is necessary to have a diploma in order to get a job in any institution, and therefore his chances of finding a job decrease.

*“- It wasn't easy economically after I released from prison. I did not know what to do about it. I went to many places in the city center and said that I was looking for a job. At first, I did not say that I had just got out of prison. If I had said that in the first place, they probably wouldn't even talk to me. What they usually asked is if I had a diploma or certificate. When I said I didn't have a diploma, they said there was no job for me. It is difficult to find a good job without a document, sebo. I couldn't find a job for a long time. Then I worked for a short time at a motorcycle repair shop. But the fee they gave me there was very low.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participant asserts that he did not know what to do after he was released from prison to earn money, he feared that his prison past would prevent him from finding a job, and he felt helpless about it. The participant's statements show that employers ask for diplomas or certificates in their job applications. Moreover, some studies reveal that some employers are reluctant to hire people with a criminal record even if they meet the qualifications for the positions or more (Pager, 2003).

Those who can receive support from sources such as family or friends until they are able to earn an economic income after they are released from prison are the lucky ones. Although temporary, this support helps to delay or prevent their re-offending.

One of the participants in the second group said that after he was released from prison, his family supported him economically and it was difficult to find a job. The participant stated that he is now working in a part-time job and is grateful to Allah for this.

*“- Of course, it was very difficult economically. But I consider myself lucky. Because my family supported me. At least they provided accommodation and food. I don't know where I would have stayed otherwise. Finding a job is very difficult. While many people are looking for a job, an ex-con is not preferred. But now I have a part time job. I'm washing car at a gas station. I thank Allah for this. At least I'm making some money.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

The participant states that it is difficult to find a job after being released from prison, similar to what the participants in the first group said, and employers do not prefer ex-convicts who are released from prison because there are too many job seekers.

Another participant in the second group mentioned that a few of his friends supported him economically after he was released from prison. This kind of support provided by family and friends after being released from prison is very valuable.

*“- The first four or five months after getting out of prison were pretty tough. I was skint. I told you before. Two of my friends supported me in that difficult time. They lent me money. Their doing this gave me a boost. I don't know what I would have done without their support. They are my "OB". I feel lucky to have them. I also had a hard time finding a job. But after a while, one of these friends of mine convinced his boss to hire me as well. We are working together now. That period was like a miracle for me.”* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

The participant's narratives show that the first three to four months after being released from prison were generally tough. Other interviews conducted within the scope of the research also support this. The financial and moral support of his friends was an important factor in the participant's ability to continue his life in society after his release from prison. Getting a job with his friend's reference can be considered a really big advantage.

Even if some participants find a job after being released from prison, they may lose their jobs when their employers learn about their prison history. This makes it difficult for ex-prisoners to establish a stable economic life. Ex-prisoners who do not have a regular economic income have difficulty in meeting their basic needs and thus they can become involved in crime again.

One of the participants explained that he had a difficult time economically after he was released from prison, so he even thought of begging. The participant said that he found a job with difficulty, but his boss fired him after learned that he was an ex-convict.

*“- I had a very difficult time in terms of money after I got out of prison for the first time. I even thought of begging. Then I found a job, albeit difficult. I started washing dishes in a restaurant. But that didn't last long. The boss somehow found out that I was out of prison. He called me and said he can't work with me anymore. So, I lost my job. This bothered me very badly. What was I supposed to do? How would I survive? They don't give us a job, then they put us in jail for stealing. This is not fair at all.”* (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).

Weiman (2007) states that revealing a criminal history can hinder labor force participation. This participant was fired after his boss learned that he was an ex-convict.

The participant's statements confirm that ex-prisoners who cannot find a job tend to commit theft. There are statements supporting this in the narratives of the other participants in the first group. The participants who could not find a job or lost their job after being released from prison generally turned to crimes such as theft and extortion in order to obtain money.

After prison, some of the participants could not find a job due to their criminal records, and some of them were dismissed by their employers because of their prison history, even if they found a job. The fact that these participants turn to crime again (usually theft, robbery etc.) as a result of not being able to find a job and losing their jobs gives us information about the crime cycle in the country and the disparity in the economic structure.

The realization of social justice is one of the core values of social work. This value includes *“working to remove inequalities and promoting the fair distribution of goods and services among people and groups”* (Banks, 2008).

Unfortunately, the structural problems that make people's lives difficult in economic terms in Uganda are not only the lack of social justice and the poor people's inability to get a share of social welfare. Another important problem that deepens the poverty in Uganda and causes the economic and social welfare not to benefit everyone equally is intertribal rivalry, although people are often hesitate to talk about it.



While one of the participants explained that he applied to many places to find a job after prison, he mentioned that it is difficult to find a job for a person if s/he is not member of Banyankole tribe.

*“- After I got out of prison, I applied to many places to find a job. But I couldn't find a job. No, finding a job was not easy. This is more difficult for some. You know. If there is a job opportunity, they first ask if people close to them need a job. And one of them gets the job. If you are not a Munyankole it will not be easy to find a job. Maybe you can find a job, but in good works they will have priority.”* (Prisoner 8, 44 years old, Kauga Prison).

The intertribal rivalry in Uganda is experienced in the economic field as well as in many other fields. This situation affects the poor in the country even more negatively. From the point of view of ex-convicts, this situation negatively affects their efforts to reintegrate into society after prison, like every other factor that makes it difficult for them to continue their lives economically.

This situation reveals that there is a serious problem in terms of social justice in Ugandan society. The concept of social justice is handled differently by law and sociology. In terms of law, the concept of social justice means that everyone is equal in front of the law. Sociologically, it aims to share the welfare of societies in a fair way, to prevent social stratification and excessive differences between existing classes (Topakkaya , 2009).

Social justice, by its very nature, creates social rights and envisages the protection of those who are economically and socially weak in society (Çoban Kaynak, 2017). Social justice is a principle at the center of the social work profession and science. Therefore, it is clear that new policies should be determined and implemented at the macro level in order to eliminate this structural inequality in Uganda and to ensure social justice in the society.

Although the participants' statements about the economic and employment situation after release from prison were mostly negative, a few people who had the opportunity to benefit from vocational training courses in prison talked positive things about it.

One of the participants told that he had difficulty in finding a job after he was released from prison, but after a while he found a job in a small atelier that produces furniture. The participant stated that the carpentry course he attended in prison was beneficial for him to find this job.

*“-After I got out of prison, of course, I looked for a job. After all, I had to make money. And yes, this process was not easy, sebo. Many people did not want to give me a job. But eventually I got a job in a small work place. A place that makes furniture. They also do repairs. I took a carpentry course in prison. When I went to the workshop, I said that I understand these works. They gave me a chance and I helped them with a few jobs. When they were convinced that I know the job, they gave me a job. Thank god I have a job.” (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).*

The statements of the participant reveal that the carpentry training he attended in prison was beneficial for him to find a job and continue his life after he was released from prison.

Unemployment is reported to cause stress, low self-esteem, depression and self-doubt among ex-prisoners. If employment opportunities are not provided to ex-prisoners, this will bring negative consequences for both ex-prisoners and society (Small, 2005). Their inability to participate in employment after prison constitutes a significant weakness for ex-prisoners. Participants who acquire certain skills in vocational training courses in prisons can earn money after getting out of prison thanks to these skills, and gaining their economic freedom facilitates the process of reintegration into society. Therefore, acquiring skills that facilitate participation in employment in vocational training courses has a strengthening effect on ex-prisoners. Laub and Sampson's (2003) research with 500 male participants also reveals that there is a negative correlation between employment and criminal behavior. Similarly, Berg and Huebner (2011) state that having a good job after being released from prison reduces the likelihood of re-offending among ex-prisoners.

That is why it is important to increase and diversify the number of vocational training courses that strengthen prisoners economically and emotionally by facilitating their participation in

employment after leaving prison, and offering them to prisoners in prisons on a voluntary basis.

#### **5.4.4. Housing Problems and Homelessness after Prison**

Previous researches have revealed that ex-prisoners who are already disadvantaged are more socially excluded when they are homeless while trying to reintegrate into society (Seymour & Costello, 2005; Brand, 2016). Mayock, Corr, and O’Sullivan (2008) state that homelessness is essentially criminogenic because many of those who try to live on the streets tend to engage in acts such as begging, shop-lifting and larceny which cause prison sentence

Within the scope of the research, the problems and obstacles faced by the participants after getting out of prison regarding housing and accommodation were tried to be understood, and it was tried to discover whether the problems experienced had an effect on the social reintegration process.

The majority of the participants in both groups stated that they did not make any preparations or plans for housing when they were released from prison. Therefore, prisoners who are not prepared for this process by the prison administration and who are not supported by the current system in housing face a significant obstacle when they leave the prison.

One of the participants said that when he was released from prison, he never thought about where he would stay afterwards, so he was stunned after he got out of prison.

*“- No, no... I had no preparations or plans for what I would do or where I would stay after I got out of prison. I can't tell you how baffled I was after I got out of prison. I was like stunned. I felt myself petrified. It was a very bad feeling. I felt so lonely.”* (Prisoner 9, 39 years old, Masaka Prison).

The statements of the participant shows that how unprepared he was for this process. This situation also negatively affected the emotional state of the participant. Another participant similarly explained that he did not have a plan for where he would stay after he was released from prison, and that he avoided thinking about this issue while in prison.

*“- No, unfortunately I didn't have any plans for this and when I got out of prison it scared me a lot. I guess when I was in prison I was afraid to face it. So, I tried not to think about this at all. When it came to my mind, I always said myself that I would think about it when I released. But when I got out of prison, the problem was waiting for me there. Yeah, I needed a place to stay and I didn't know what to do about it.”* (Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).

The participants did not make a plan and preparation for where they would stay before they were released from prison. However, they are not the only ones who do not prepare for this. It has also been discussed in the previous chapters that the prisoners are not prepared for this process by the prison administrations and that the prisoners are not supported by the current judicial system. Lack of support and release plan for ex-prisoners after release from prison contributes to homelessness and recidivism (Novac, Hermer, Paradis, & Kellen, 2006).

Most detainees and convicts in prisons, whether convicted of a criminal offence or not, leave prison without a safe place to live after they are released from prison (Roebuck, 2008). McKernan (2017) argues that the experiences and challenges of ex-prisoners who are homeless should be examined when creating alternatives that encourage ex-prisoners to reintegrate into society.

During the research most of the participants in both groups stated that they faced difficulties in terms of accommodation after they were released from prison, and that the landlords and hostel owners did not want to rent houses and rooms to those who were released from prison.

One of the participants said that after he got out of prison, he went back to his old neighborhood thinking that people would be more understanding towards him, but unexpectedly, even people who knew him before he went to prison did not want to give him a rental place. The participant mentioned that this situation made him feel bad emotionally.

*“- After I got out of prison, I went back to my old neighbourhood. You know. I thought I would feel comfortable there. I thought I'd find support. But no. That didn't happen. Even people I know didn't give me a place to stay. I didn't ask*

*them for a free room. I said I would find a job and pay my rent. But they didn't accept. That was so bad, you know? I felt really bad. There was no charity and support.” (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison)*

The participant was not given a room for rent, even by people he knew before entering the prison. This change of behavior towards himself by people he knew surprised the participant and made him feel bad emotionally.

Another participant explained that he tried to stay in the hostel after he was released from prison, that one of the employees there knew him, so the hostel owner did not give him a room. The participant later said that the owner of the hostel asked him to pay almost twice the normal room rate and asked him to pay a week's cash in advance.

*“- I went to a hostel close to my old neighbourhood. I wanted to find a place to stay and then look for a job. I didn't want to be on the street. One of the people working at the hostel was someone who lived in my old neighbourhood. He recognized me. He said they couldn't give me a room. When I asked why, he said I am a criminal. But when I said my prison sentence finished and I am free, he didn't listen to me and called his boss. The owner of the hostel also said that he would not give me a room. I begged him to give me a room. You got me? Sir this was bad. (Silence) After that he asked me to pay almost double the normal rate for a room. And told me to pay for a weekly stay in advance. Of course, I couldn't pay because I didn't have any money”. (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).*

The ex-prisoners face stigmatization while accessing housing and accommodation services and this is an important obstacle. This obstacle, which is encountered, damages the sense of mutual trust and makes difficult for the ex-prisoners social re-integrate to the society.

The housing problem experienced after being released from prison brings other problems with it. For example, poor housing conditions can also cause health problems. (Gaetz and

O'Grady (2007) state that homeless people are known to have poor health in general, and that there is a cause-effect relationship between being homeless and poor health.

One of the participants explained that he could not find a place to stay after he was released from prison, so he built a place to sleep in the suburbs outside the city using the materials he collected himself. The participant stated that the place where he stayed was unprotected and dirty, and therefore he caught malaria.

*“- I had no place to go after prison. I couldn't find a place to stay. No one helped me on this. If I had money, I could find a place to stay...I couldn't stay on the street in the city. The cops wouldn't leave me alone. So, I went out of town, to the suburban side. I made something like a hut with the things I collected from here and there. I was sleeping there. But that place was a very unprotected and dirty place. I was finding food in the trash nearby, but I got malaria because of the mosquitoes that came to the trash. That was definitely difficult time.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participant could not find support for a place to stay after the prison, however, he experienced an economic based housing problem. He tries to solve the problem of housing with his own means, but due to physical conditions, the problem of housing brought health problems.

Housing problems can cause re-involvement in crime, as stated by Mayock, Corr, and O'Sullivan (2008), as well as health problems. One of the participants said that after he was released from prison, he could not find a place to stay, tried to live on the streets for a while, then stole to feed himself and rent a place to stay. The participant was imprisoned again for theft he committed.

*“-After I got out of prison, I had no place to stay. I looked for a place to stay in a few hostels, but they didn't give me a place because I didn't have money. I couldn't rent a house anyway when I couldn't even find a room for rent. I stayed here and there on the streets for a while. Then I realized that I couldn't keep it*

*up any longer. I had to find money. I needed money both to eat well and to sleep in a decent bed. So, I broke into a restaurant after midnight and stole the money I found. I also stole some food. But then I got caught.”* (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).

In the narratives of most of the participants, it is noteworthy that they do not have money to find a place to stay after they are released from prison. This economic-based problem confronts us as an important obstacle to the social reintegration of the participants into the society after they are released from prison.

In particular, the housing problem to be experienced during and immediately after the first release shock can easily lead ex-prisoners to recidivism (Li, 2018). Being in prison for a long time can lead to the problem of homelessness after being released from prison, both for economic reasons and because of the stigma that can be experienced due to the prison past. Being homeless also increases the risk of recidivism for ex-prisoners. Therefore, an ex-prisoner who is homeless can easily enter the cycle of homelessness and crime (Dore & Daly, 2015).

As with other problems encountered after being released from prison, receiving support from the social environment, such as family and friends, facilitates the participation of ex-prisoners in social life. Some participants in the second group stated that they received support from their family or friends in terms of accommodation after they were released from prison.

One of the participants explained that his girlfriend supported him for accommodation after he was released from prison. The participant expresses his gratitude for this support.

*“- After I got out of prison, I had no place to stay. My girlfriend helped me with this. She rented a small place for herself and my son while I was in prison. She told me to stay there with them. I hugged her and cried. (Gulping). You know, this was very valuable. She didn't give up on me. She could be with someone*

*else. Yeah...But she chose to live with me. I am grateful to her for that.”* (Ex-Prisoner 15, Male, 33 years old).

In the participant's previous narratives, he states that his relations with his girlfriend continued positively even while he was in prison, and this positive relationship continued as a support to the participant after he was released from prison. This support clearly helped the participant to avoid recidivism.

Another participant in the second group similarly mentioned that she is living with her parents after she was released from prison. The participant states that she has no idea where she would stay if she could not stay with her family, and she does not even want to think about this situation.

*“-Yes, as I told you. I'm living with my family. I am lucky to have a place to stay. My parents gave me a place to stay and food. I don't know what I would do if they didn't take me home. I had nowhere else to go and stay. I don't even want to think about this situation.”* (Ex-Prisoner 13, Female, 31 years old).

It is extensively discussed in the literature that crime and imprisonment increase the risk of becoming homeless (Seymour & Costello, 2005; Mayock, Corr, & O’Sullivan, 2008; Corr & Mayock, 2012; Brand, 2016). In the interviews, the participants living with their parents or trying to maintain their lives in adverse physical conditions did not describe themselves as homeless. However, Dore and Daly (2015) state that people who are under the following conditions can also be considered homeless: those who live with their friends and family, those who stay in a hostel or bed and breakfast, those who live in conditions that adversely affect their health, those who are sick or disabled but do not live in a place with suitable physical conditions.

#### **5.4.5. Health Related Issues after Prison**

Mallik-Kane and Visser (2008) state that ex-prisoners with physical health problems, mental health problems and substance abuse problems have many different social integration



experiences compared to the “average” ex-prisoner. The authors also state that the vast majority of prisoners with health problems do not receive treatment while in prison, and the rate of treatment decreases even more after they are released from prison. However, the incidence of infectious and chronic diseases in prisoners is quite high. For example, HIV and hepatitis rates in prisoners are 10 times higher than in the general population (Satcher, 2007). People released from prison more tend to get sick than the general population, and it is common for these individuals to have more than one disease (Davis & Pacchiana, 2004).

The health problems that ex-prisoners face during their reintegration process after they are released from prison significantly affect their reintegration experience. For this reason, understanding the problems experienced in this process and policy makers deciding on these issues will facilitate the reintegration of ex-prisoners into society. Within the scope of the research, questions were asked to the participants about their health status and the problems they faced after they were released from prison. The participants faced various health problems after they were released from prison and they could not find enough support for the solution of these problems.

One of the participants explained that after he was released from prison, he could not eat well and live in good conditions due to economic poverty, so he caught malaria after a while. The participant stated that although he overcame malaria after a while, he had a problem in his lungs later on, but he could not afford to pay for the hospital and medicine costs.

*“- My health was not going very well. Because I was not living in good conditions. I tried to stay strong. But I couldn't eat well enough. I did not have the financial means to do so. I wasn't sleeping in a good place at night. After a while I got malaria. After I barely got over malaria, my lungs started to have a problem. Sometimes they hurt too much. I'm having trouble breathing. But I don't have money to pay for hospital or medicine.”* (Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

The inadequate economic conditions played a role in the health problems he faced after he was released from prison. Likewise, the poverty is the main reason for the lack of access to health services.

Interviews reveal that no planning has been made for ex-prisoners to access health services when they need them after they are released from prison. One of the participants said that after he got out of prison, a cyst appeared in his neck area, and after a while it started to grow and hurt. The participant stated that he went to the hospital, but they said that the cyst should be removed by surgery, but he could not afford it and there was no support mechanism for this situation.

*“- A little while after I got out of prison, a cyst appeared on my neck here. (Pointing to the swelling on his neck). I didn't care for a while. But then it started to hurt. As time passed, I began to feel that it was growing. I decided to go to the hospital. But you know. If you are poor, no one will take care of you. In the hospital, someone always asks for money. Even to see the doctor. After seeing the doctor, money is also required for treatment. At the hospital they told me that it had to be surgically removed. But I couldn't afford it. There was no support for it. Nobody cares. The state or authorities do not support this issue.”*  
(Prisoner 4, 56 years old, Luzira Prison).

In the participant's narrative, the phenomenon of bribery in the country draws attention. In addition, the necessity of free access to the health system for the inmates leaving the prison, at least in cases that require urgent intervention and surgical operation, emerges.

There are participants who can somehow find a solution to their health problems. However, these solutions are still not provided by the Uganda government or local resources. One of the participants told that he had an operation due to cataract in his eye after he was released from prison. The participant stated that the surgery was performed by Turkish doctors who came to Uganda voluntarily.

*“- I had trouble seeing for some time. I had a problem with my eyes. This made me feel bad. After a while I released from prison, LC 1 told me that volunteer doctors would come to our region. He said I could go and show them my eyes. So, did I. They came from Turkey with a volunteer organization. They said I have cataract problem in my eyes. They operated on my eyes. Without asking any money. Can you believe that? It was an incredible thing. It was like a complete miracle.”* (Prisoner 8, 44 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant was quite happy with the treatment he received. He seems very impressed by the fact that the treatment that he could not obtain with his own means was offered to him free of charge. But not everyone in Uganda is so lucky. Especially women face many health problems during pregnancy and childbirth and have difficulty in accessing health services. When the economic and social problems of being an ex-prisoner are added to all these, the situation becomes even more difficult.

*“- I am generally in good health. But after I got out of prison I had a miscarriage. I was like 3 months pregnant. I was working in the field. I had to work. You know the situations. I didn't think anything would happen to the baby. We were collecting cassava and stuffing them in sacks. Then I wanted to help my friend lift the sack. I suddenly felt a terrible pain in my belly and groin and fell to the ground. And so, it was. I aborted my child. I also lost a lot of blood. I felt very bad. I couldn't get over it for a long time. Ok, we had 3 kids. But still I feel very sad.”* (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).

She had to work in difficult conditions and in works that required physical strength when she was pregnant. It is clear that this situation is economically based. The participant also experienced sadness due to the loss of her child and her health was in danger due to the miscarriage she had experienced.

Another participant mentioned that her baby died because she could not go to the hospital and gave birth in bad conditions. The participant stated that she also lost a lot of blood during the birth and fainted.

*“- After I got out of prison, I had a hard time with my health. But you know what was the most difficult? When my baby died. She could only survive for close to an hour. Oh, my baby... I was pregnant. I couldn't go to the hospital for delivery. When my pain started, they called the witch doctor in the village. It was very difficult for me. I suffered a lot. I couldn't even find the strength to scream. I passed out after a while. When I came to myself, I was feeling very tired and weak. I had my sister with me, along with the witch doctor. They both were looking sad. I asked for my baby. They were not saying anything. Then my sister said the baby was dead. She was born very weak, she said. Oh my baby. They didn't want to show her body. I insisted. I took her in my arms for the last time. Her face was almost purple. And was very cold. (She cries).” (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).*

Due to insufficient conditions during birth, the participant both lost her child and her own health was in danger. While describing the event, she still could not get over the trauma of the event, and she cried while talking about her dead baby.

According to 2019 data, the infant mortality rate in Uganda is 33 babies per 1000 births. The average infant mortality rate in the world is 28.2 per 1000 births (The World Bank, 2021). The infant mortality rate in Uganda is above the world average and is still high. This is a negative statistic for the whole Ugandan society. On the other hand, when the negative effects of being released from prison are added to this already negative situation, things get even more difficult for ex-prisoners.

Another health problem that Ugandan prisoners face after they are released from prison is substance use, more precisely the use of bhang in the local language. While this situation affects their health negatively, it also causes them to commit crime again. Mallik-Kane and Visser (2008) state that ex-prisoners with a history of drug use and possession have a high tendency to re-offend in relation to making money illegally.

One of the participants said that after he got out of prison, he started using bhang, it was something that gave pleasure and energy at first, but then it caused a lot of headaches and dizziness.

*“- I told you that I started using bhang sometime after I got out of prison. This was something very enjoyable and energizing at first. But then it started to cause a lot of headaches and drowsiness. Headache and dizziness were quite high. I did not go to the doctor or hospital for this. If I went, they would tell me not to use bhang. But I didn't want to give up the pleasure when I used it.”*  
(Prisoner 5, 20 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant did not receive support from a doctor or hospital regarding substance use. As can be seen from his crime story, he later received a second prison sentence for drug dealing. He stated that he was not successful in finding a job after he was released from prison and that he sold drugs because he wanted to earn a lot of money.

Another participant, who had a history of substance use before prison, stated that he continued to use substances after he was released from prison, but he did not see it as a health problem.

*“- After I got out of prison, I didn't have a serious health problem and didn't go to the hospital. But you know I kept using bhang. Some say it's an important health problem. But I don't know. I think it's something that relaxes me. Yes, it can cause things like dizziness after using it. But when I use it, I feel happy and relaxed for a while. The problem for me is that I have to find money to buy it. In other words, it causes more economic problems from my point of view, not health. Therefore, I didn't seek a treatment for this issue.”* (Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

Considering the other narratives of the participants, they generally use marijuana to relax, and after a while they start to sell the product they obtained from the manufacturer or other sellers to earn a lot of money. However, they do not consider marijuana use as a serious

health problem and justify it according to themselves. It is clear that there is a need for an informative study aimed at society on this issue. On the other hand, it is thought that there should be programs for the effects of substance use and treatment in prisons for prisoners.

#### **5.4.6. What is Changed? Before and After**

Within the scope of the research, information was tried to be gathered about the family relations, social relations, employment status, accommodation and health conditions of the participants in both groups after they were released from prison, and the themes that emerged in these areas were conveyed. Many emotional and psychological life events, mostly negative, were experienced by the participants during their efforts for social reintegration with the society after prison. The prison experience itself and the difficulties encountered during the efforts to reintegrate with the society have caused changes in people's perspectives on themselves and life.

These changes can give us an idea about how and why the participants who completed the social reintegration process after prison and those who could not complete the social reintegration process and were dragged into crime again and again finally lost their link with the society.

For this reason, the participants in both groups were asked questions to understand the emotional, psychological and social changes about themselves and the life before and after prison.

The majority of the participants in the first group mentioned that they lost their trust in people, society and the system after their prison sentence. The loss of trust of former prisoners in the society they lived in after prison constitutes an important obstacle to reintegration into society. (Helfgott, 1997; Solomon, Gouvis, & Waul, 2001).

One of the participants in the first group said that a compelling place like a prison changes people and what changes about him is that he loses trust in people.

*“- Yeah I understand. Life changes us. Especially a difficult place like a prison changes people. Yeah... (Short silence) I think what it changed for me is that I don't trust people anymore. Because I saw the real face of people. People only have interests and benefits. You got, sebo? People disappointed me. After I got out of prison, my old acquaintances did not want to talk to me. They turned their back on me. People in prison may also mistreat you just for a little more food. They may push and shove you just for sleeping in a better place at night.”*  
(Prisoner 3, 33 years old, Luzira Prison).

The participant states that after he got out of prison, his acquaintances did not treat him as before and did not support him. This situation can be evaluated as a reflection of the stigmatizing behavior towards ex-prisoners in the society. However, as Baumeister and Leary (1995) stated, people try to be accepted in the society and they do not like to be excluded. A series of emotional and behavioral disturbances may occur in people who feel rejected and excluded. Another issue that the participant conveyed about his loss of trust in people is the behavior of other prisoners in the prison. That is, not only the behaviors of his old acquaintances in social life after he was released from prison, but also the behaviors he encountered during the prison process were effective in his loss of trust in people. Being exposed to bad behavior in order to get more food in prison and to sleep in a better place in the ward is also related to the inadequate conditions in prisons and the presence of more inmates than the capacity of the prisons.

Another participant from the first group mentioned that the biggest change he experienced after the prison process was losing his trust in people. Although the participant wanted to start a new life after his first sentence, he states that he went back to prison because his partner committed fraud and blamed him.

*“- Yeah, change. I used to trust people. But you know what, I don't trust people anymore. I think this is the biggest change I have experienced. After I got out of prison, I tried to start a new life. But my partner screwed me up. I trusted*

*him but got jail time again for his fraud. And the cops believed him, not me, because I'm an ex-con. So are the judges. I don't trust them either. They are not doing their job well.*" (Prisoner 14, 50 years old, Kigo Prison).

The participant states that since he is an ex-convict, the police and penal system employees believe in his partner, not him, and therefore the blame falls on him. Therefore, the participant has lost confidence in the system and other people for this reason.

Some of the important changes that the prison process caused on the participants were a decrease in the sense of self-worth and personal value. One of the participants said that after he got out of prison, he thought that he would never be a normal person in the public eye again, and that he could no longer do the things he used to do.

*"- Ugh, I think a lot of things have changed. It had already changed when I went to prison for the first time. Nothing would ever be the same. Ugh... People, society wouldn't see me the way they used to. When I went to prison, Victoria left me. You see, even the mother of my children doesn't care about me. In my old neighborhood. When I got out of prison, I saw that they didn't care about me. They didn't even want to talk to me. Huh. Nothing will be the same. I can't be the same as before. I can't get this thing off me anymore."* (Prisoner 6, 35 years old, Kauga Prison).

The participant asserts that he experienced a decrease in his sense of personal worth, that he could no longer be the same as before, and that he accepted this situation. The lack of support from his family and social environment during and after the prison period and the stigmatization of the society against him were effective in this change he experienced.

Thomas (2021) states that serving a prison sentence may be the most important, stressful and potentially most depressing event in the prisoner's life. In addition, self-esteem is an important factor in determining low mood. It is common for people who show symptoms of depression in this way to see themselves as worthless.



Some of the participants emphasized the feeling of fear while talking about the changes they experienced about themselves after being released from prison. The life experiences of entering the prison and the prison process caused them to develop an intense sense of fear. One of the participants said that after he got out of prison, he started to live in constant fear, afraid of being among people and encountering the police.

*“- Of course, a lot of things about myself have changed. But the thing that affected me the most was that I felt insecure. Yeah... I was afraid. (Short silence) I started to be afraid of so many things. While walking on the road, I was afraid if a passing car honked. I was afraid of meeting people's eyes. When I see the police walking down the street, I change my way because I was afraid. I was scared at night trying to sleep in my shed outside the city. You got me? I became a very afraid person.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

Haney (2002), mentions that the adoption of a punitive approach rather than a rehabilitative approach due to the deficiencies in prison personnel and other resources, the excessive use of prison discipline by the prison staff, and the suppression instead of finding solutions to the problems that arise in prisons have an increasing effect on the level of tension and fear on the prisoners. As Segawa (2019) mentioned the current staff ratio is not enough in Ugandan prisons. and this lack of resources complicates the adoption of rehabilitative approaches in prisons and instead leads to the implementation of disciplinary approaches. This situation causes the prisoners to experience emotions such as fear and anxiety intensely, and causes negative emotional and behavioral changes.

The participants in the second group, on the other hand, generally talked about the mechanisms that support them, such as family members and social circles, while talking about the changes about themselves after prison. One of the participants in the second group told that she was afraid that her husband would divorce her during the prison period, but that her husband did not divorce her, however, the husband supported her after she was released from prison. She mentioned that her thoughts and evaluations about her husband changed after this period.

*“-For example, my assessment of my husband changed after prison. I mean, I can say that I understood his value better. When I went to prison, I was terrified that he might divorce me. But he didn't. He helped me a lot after I got out of prison. His importance to me has increased. You know. He was there when I needed him. I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't supported me. Likewise, my view of my children has changed. When I didn't see them, I realized how much I missed them. I will do whatever it takes to never be separated from them again.”* (Ex-Prisoner 10, Female, 35 years old).

Even though she was separated from her family during the prison period, her family ties became stronger, especially when she was waiting for her husband to divorce her, on the contrary, his support gave her strength. Besides her longing for her children brought her not to want to be separated from them again and supported her to desist from crime.

While describing the change about himself another participant in the second group mentioned that he set himself a goal of being a good example to his children. The participant stated that he stopped using bhang for this purpose and tried to live his life in accordance with the law.

*“- The biggest change about myself is that I set a purpose for myself. I told myself that I would be a good example to my children. Because it was very difficult to stay away from them in prison. And I never want my children to go to prison one day. I promised myself to be a good father and example to them. I strive for this purpose. For example, after I got out of prison for this purpose, I never used bhang. Although it is difficult, I got a job and I try to live according to the law. Yeah sebo, that's the change after prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

In their study, Swanson, Lee, Sansonea and Tatum (2011) revealed that the relationship between fathers and their children after prison and their perceptions of this relationship contributed positively to social support evaluations. It is suggested that the role of parenting, which is an aspect that increases the motivation for fathers in the face of negative situations,

should be supported in programs that support social reintegration, together with methods such as employment and shelter after prison (McKay et al, 2018).

Another participant in the second group mentioned that after prison, he decided not to live only for himself and to help other people, especially prisoners in prison. He explained that it was good for him to take part in helping other people and volunteer work.

*“- After prison I realized that I shouldn't just live for myself. There were others in life, and helping them made me feel good. Buena helped me a lot in this regard. It is good for me to be in solidarity with ex-convicts like myself here. Here we are doing something together. We do volunteer work. With the money we collect, we buy and take small things to the prisoners in the prison. Like the folks in Buena once helped me. Buena has actually given me a purpose, and that is very valuable. Before prison, I guess I was living aimlessly. But now I have a purpose of helping people, especially desperate people in prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).

It is important for the participant to mention that he has a purpose. It is thought that the voluntary activities he has done and the purpose he has set for himself contributes to his social re-integration with the society after prison and helps him not to be involved in crime again.

Participants in the second group do not do volunteer activities only with Buena. Some participants also mentioned that they take part in voluntary activities within the scope of their religious beliefs. These activities make it easier for them to rejoin social life after prison.

*“- After prison, I became more attached to God. Yes, believe me, I wasn't that kind of person before I went to prison. So, I was not a religious person. But when I felt so hopeless in prison, the chaplain's sermons gave me hope. This made me connect with God. Offered me a chance at salvation. And I didn't want to lose that bond. I continued to go to church after prison. I started participating*

*in volunteer activities at the church. People who come to church also treat me well because I regret my past sins. Now I'm doing my best to be a good person in God's way.*" (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).

#### **5.4.7. The Challenges Faced in the Reintegration Process**

After being released from prison, prisoners face many problems and challenges in the process of reintegration into society (Seiter & Kadela, 2003; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009; Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012). If ex-prisoners are not supported in the face of these problems and challenges, their social reintegration process will be interrupted and will fail. This will increase the probability of being dragged into crime again.

Life in a prison setting is quite different from life in society. For this reason, prisoners who have been in prison for a long time have difficulty in adapting to this new environment after they are released from prison (Davis, Bahr, & Ward, 2012). Understanding the difficulties faced by the participants while reintegrating into the post-prison society will be helpful in determining the strategies to be developed to overcome these difficulties. In addition, it will provide an idea about which difficulties the participants in the first group interviewed within the scope of this study had difficulty in coping with, and how the participants in the second group coped with the difficulties they faced.

One of the issues that challenged the participants after they were released from prison was not being prepared for the post-prison process. Participants who find themselves outside of prison without any preparation are in for a shock. One of the participants in the first group explained that the first of the difficulties he faced was the uncertainty caused by not knowing what to do or where to go. The participant mentioned that this situation made him feel lonely and worthless.

*"- Yeah, I faced many difficulties after I got out of prison. But you know what made me feel the worst, Sebo? My sentence was over. I got out of prison. I just stood there in front of that gate. I didn't know what to do. I felt myself in the*

*middle of nothingness. Actually, I should have been very happy. But maybe I even forgot how to be happy. I had no idea what to do, where to go. There was no one waiting for me. I can't tell you how worthless, lonely and insignificant I felt.” (Prisoner 7, 37 years old, Kauga Prison).*

The participant's narrative reveals the importance of the work that needs to be done on the prisoners' release and their preparation for life after prison while they are in prison.

Another issue that the majority of the participants in both groups stated that they had difficulties after their release from prison is economic problems. The main reason for this problem is that ex-prisoners cannot be included in employment and are unemployed after they are released from prison.

One of the participants from first group said that after he got out of prison, things did not go as he expected, he looked for a job for a long time but could not find it. The participant stated that he was ashamed of himself and his family because he could not earn money, and that he had to beg for food.

*“- After I got out of prison, things didn't go the way I wanted. Everything was very difficult. Especially if you don't have money, everything is very difficult. I was broke after I got out of prison. I searched for a job for a long time but could not find it. It was a very bad feeling not being able to take money home. I was ashamed of myself and my family. I had to beg people for food.” (Prisoner 2, 29 years old, Luzira Prison).*

Similarly, another participant from the second group mentioned that the biggest difficulties he faced after he got out of prison were unemployment and lack of money.

*“- The hardest thing after getting out of prison is not having money. Actually, this is what makes life in Uganda the most difficult. If you don't have money, you can't buy food, you can't buy clothes, you can't go to the hospital, you can't buy medicine. You see? And most of the time no one cares about it. If you don't*

*have a job, you don't have money, and you don't have anyone to support you, you have to wait for your death. And in a bad way. Unfortunately, this is the reality of life here. And finding a job is not easy. Finding a job after prison is more difficult. For example, I don't have a diploma. I don't have any special abilities. It is very difficult to find a job even in simple and mundane jobs.*" (Ex-Prisoner 8, Male, 44 years old).

The reasons explained by the participants in their stories of not being able to find a job are consistent with the literature. According to the literature, the most important barriers to employment by ex-prisoners are: limited academic and professional knowledge, illiteracy, lack of recent work experience, low self-esteem, homelessness, substance abuse and health problems (Sarno et al., 2000; Metcalf, Anderson, & Rolfe, 2001; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders , 2003; Haslewood-Po'csik, Brown, & Spencer, 2008).

One of the challenges faced by ex-prisoners after their release from prison is deteriorating family, spouse and partner relationships. These relationships can be adversely affected upon entry to the prison, and it is difficult to repair these relationships later on.

One of the participants said that when he received his first prison sentence, his partner left him, leaving his children with his mother. He mentioned that he wanted to start a new life with his partner again after his first prison sentence was over, but he could not make it.

*"- The thing that challenged and worn me the most was D... leaving me and not accepting to be with me again. I can't tell you how upset I was when she rejected me. But we could be together again. We could make a fresh start. But she didn't give me that chance. She chose to be with someone else when I went to prison. She didn't give me a chance to make up for the past."* (Prisoner 13, 43 years old, Kigo Prison).

His entry into prison negatively affected his relationship with his partner, and although he tried to fix this situation after he was released from prison, his partner did not accept this.

Relationships and communication with family members during and after prison have long been recognized as important for the reintegration of prisoners into society (Tewksbury & Demichele, 2005; Bales & Mears, 2008). The process of release from prison and reconnection with the community includes a critical transition period. Social support has the effect of facilitating this transition period (Visher, Kachnowsk, La Vigne, & Travis, 2004; Maruna & Toch, 2005). Therefore, the social reintegration processes of ex-convicts who are deprived of this social support are interrupted. This data becomes more meaningful when it is considered that the participants in the first group, who have problems in the process of social integration and commit crimes again, state that their family relations are more negative than those in the second group.

Housing problem is also an important problem for the ex-prisoners coming out of the prison. All but one of the participants in both groups stated that they did not have a house of their own before entering the prison. When the negative effects of being sentenced to prison are added to this situation, the participants who could not get support from their families and social circles after prison had a very difficult time in terms of accommodation.

One of the participants said that after he was released from prison, he walked for a long time to the city because he had no money, and then a minibus agreed to drop him off in the city. The participant stated that he ate leftovers when he was hungry, so he tried to produce short-term solutions to some difficulties, but could not find a solution for accommodation. He explained that he needed to earn money to rent a place to stay and that he needed time to find a job and save money. The participant had to sleep on the street because he could not do this.

*“- I told you how they left me at the gate when my prison sentence was over. They left me there like garbage. I was astonished. I walked, walked, and walked towards the town... Finally, a taxi (local minibus) agreed to drop me into the city. I found something to eat from things thrown aside here and there. But in the evening I had no place to stay. I had no place to sleep. That's what really upset me. I had to earn money to find a place to stay. I had to find a job for it. I needed time for all these things. But I urgently needed a place to stay.*

*Unfortunately, I had to sleep on the streets. This made me feel so bad.”*

(Prisoner 12, 24 years old, Masaka Prison).

Another obstacle faced by inmates released from prison in Uganda during the process of social reintegration into society is the drug and alcohol use and the lack of treatment programs related to these issues. Drinking to intoxication, binge drinking, and underage alcohol consumption are common in Uganda. For this reason, Uganda is shown among the countries with the largest proportion of risky drinkers (Swahn, Palmier, & Kasirye, 2013; Kalema & Vanderplasschen, 2015). In addition to the prevalence of alcohol consumption in the country, marijuana use was also common among the participants since it is easy to produce in rural areas.

One of the participants explained that he used alcohol to cope with the difficulties he faced after he was released from prison, and that using alcohol helped him to forget the difficulties he experienced to some extent.

*“- To tell the truth, if I could find a little money during the day, I would buy waragi with it and drink. That would make me feel good. It would lessen my fear. It was helping me not to thinking about the miserable life I was living. So, I had to earn a little bit of money during the daytime somehow. If I couldn't make money, I was stealing little things. So, when it was evening and came to my shed, I was looking for the waragi to drink it.”* (Prisoner 10, 26 years old, Masaka Prison).

The participant states that he stole when he could not find money to buy alcohol. Alcohol use not only affects his health, but also causes him to commit crimes again. However, there is no mechanism that can support him in quitting alcohol use.

Similarly, another participant told that he used marijuana after he was released from prison, that he could not give up on it, and that he stole to obtain drugs.

*“- Of course, a lot of things had changed after I got out of prison. And there was a lot of challenging stuff. The thing that pissed me off the most was not*



*getting bhang. I couldn't work things out with my family. I couldn't find a permanent job. (Short silence) In that case, the only thing that could give me some relief would be to smoke a little. I couldn't give up on it. But I couldn't buy whenever I wanted because I didn't have the money. So, I was stealing little things from here and there. I was selling the things I stole or giving them to the supplier and getting bhang.” (Prisoner 11, 37 years old, Masaka Prison).*

The participant mentions that after he was released from prison, he could not fix his relationship with his family and could not find a regular job. He states that he also uses marijuana to get away from stress and to relax.

Another important theme that emerged while the participants were describing the difficulties they faced after prison was their stigmatization as an ex-convict in the society. One of the participants stated that the biggest challenge he faced after being released from prison was being an ex-convict itself. He mentioned that being known as a former prisoner brought many other difficulties.

*“- Being in prison once is a challenge in itself. You know why? Because once you sentenced to prison, even if you released from the prison later, everybody sees you as an ex-convict. They don't treat you like they used to. Nothing will ever be better than before. After getting out of prison, it is difficult to find a job and it is difficult to find a place to stay. Because like I said, it's hard being an ex-convict. The hardest thing for me after getting out of prison was being an ex-convict.” (Prisoner 14, 50 years old, Kigo Prison).*

The narrative of the participant reveal that the stigma he has experience affect him psychologically negatively, and he begins to think that nothing will be better than in the past. Pager (2003) mentions that most ex-prisoners coming out of prison seem to carry a debilitating stigma of their past on their shoulders. Petersilia (2003) also emphasizes that ex-convicts will have difficulty in finding a job because of the stigma they have experienced in the society.

The stigma faced by the prisoners after prison causes difficulties in many other areas. For example, one participant mentioned that he had difficulty in finding a place to stay due to the stigma he experienced.

*“I went to a hostel close to my old neighborhood. I wanted to find a place to stay and then look for a job. I didn't want to be on the street. One of the people working at the hostel was someone who lived in my old neighborhood. He recognized me. He said they couldn't give me a room. When I asked why, he said I am a criminal.”* (Prisoner 15, 36 years old, Kigo Prison).

The themes revealed in the interviews reveal that the main challenges ex-prisoners face in their efforts for social reintegration after release from prison are: not being prepared for the post-prison transition period, economic difficulties and unemployment, deterioration of family, spousal and partner relationships, homelessness, drug and alcohol use, stigmatization.

#### **5.4.8. Supportive Factors for Social Re-Integration**

Within the scope of the research, questions were asked to understand the factors that assist and support the social integration of the participants in the second group after their release from prison. Thus, it was tried to understand what the participants in the first group missed, where they lost the link that leads to integration with the society, and how the participants in the second group re-established their bond with the society. Thereby the emerging supporting factors were tried to be determined and it was aimed to contribute to the suggestions to be developed as a result of the research.

The support of family, spouse, partner and social environment is an important factor in the efforts of the participants in the second group to integrate with the society after the prison process. The majority of the participants in the second group stated that they continued to have connections with their families, spouses, partners and social circles even while in prison, and that they were visited by these people in prison.

This situation supports the literature about that maintaining family relations by prisoners while in prison positively affects their social reintegration efforts with the society after prison (Farrall & Calverley, 2006; Mills & Codd, 2007; Healy, 2012; Farrall, Sparks, Maruna, & Hough, 2012; Rocha, 2014).

One of the participants in the second group said that the thing that helped him the most after he got out of prison was the support of his family, especially his wife. The participant stated that his wife came to visit him while he was in prison, and those visits had a positive effect on him.

*“- Of course, my family and especially my wife helped me the most in this process. Not just after prison, Sebo. My wife supported me while I was in prison. I mentioned that she came to visit me when I was in prison. That was something that gave me hope to be a good person and move on with my life after I got out of prison. I don't know what I would have done without her support after I got out of prison.”* (Ex-Prisoner 9, Male, 36 years old).

Maruna and Toch (2005) underline the importance of visits to the prison in enhancing the success of inmates' post-release social reintegration efforts. The authors note that these visits offer the only face-to-face opportunity to preserve and restore relationships that have been disrupted by imprisonment. The narratives of the participants in the second group also support the statements of the authors.

Another participant in the second group mentioned that the most helpful thing for her to continue her life after prison was the support of her family. The participant stated that her husband supported her emotionally and economically and this was very important for her.

*“- The thing that helped me the most was my family. Their presence and their support for me. My husband has been very supportive of me emotionally. My children didn't treat me bad either. (Short silence) I had nightmares at night for a long time. My husband used to tell me that all this will pass. It also helped me*

*financially. I could not afford to live on my own and earn money”.* (Ex-Prisoner 14, Female, 36 years old).

Lack of emotional support and financial inadequacy are among the most difficult issues for ex-prisoners coming out of prison. Agnew (2005), states that family ties and relationships provide emotional resources to ex-prisoners in the process of reintegration into society. Laub and Sampson (2003) also emphasize that emotional support provided by spouse, parents and children is necessary for desistance from crime. The participant's statements support these informations in the literature.

One of the participant in the second group explained that the thing that helped him the most after he got out of prison was the support of his old school friends. The participant mentioned that his friends supported him economically until he found a job, and even helped him to find a job.

*“- Shall I tell you what helped me the most? Yeah, my OBs (Old school friend in local language) helped me. When I got out of prison, I had no money. I couldn't find a job for a while. At that time, my friends lent me money. They told me everything will be alright. They bought me food. Yeah, they have shown that they are my real friends. They also helped me find a job later on. You see how they helped me.”* (Ex-Prisoner 3, Male, 31 years old).

Hochstetler, DeLisi and Pratt (2010) conducted a study of former inmates who had peers who could support them financially, listen to their problems, and help them desist from crime. The research revealed that ex-offenders who do not have peers who can provide them with social support and trust after the difficult prison process may continue their behavior in and before the prison, have hostility towards the society and have difficulty reintegrating into the society. Considering what the participant told, he has peers who support him economically and listen to his problems, and this is a supportive factor in his social reintegration into society. Visher and Travis (2003) state that ex-prisoners who receive social support from their peers reoffend less than ex-prisoners who do not have peer support. Taylor and Becker

(2015) states that the support provided to ex-prisoners by their peers encourages social reintegration and reduces the risk of recidivism.

In the interviews, the majority of the the participants in the second group mentioned that non-governmental organization (Buena Charity Services) also supported them in the process of reintegrating with the society after prison. One of the participants in this group said that after he was released from prison, the volunteers in Buena supported him emotionally and economically, this helped him, and after a while he started to voluntarily help other ex-convicts in Buena.

*“- I cannot deny Buena's support and help after I was released from prison. I told you I don't normally have many friends before going to prison. When I got out of prison and started coming to Buena, I made friends here. The volunteers here supported me. When I felt alone and helpless, they sat with me and listened to me, and it was good for me. They helped me find and rent a place to stay. They helped me pay my rent. Now I join the volunteer work here and I try to help the prisoners who just got out of the prison. This makes me feel useful.”*  
(Ex-Prisoner 7, Male, 25 years old).

The participant asserts that the volunteers in Buena helped him with his basic needs, which are his accommodation and economic needs, after he was released from prison. In addition, the friends he made there provide emotional support to the participant. These are invaluable contributions to someone who has just come out of prison.

Non-governmental organizations support ex-prisoners not only emotionally and economically, but also in terms of creating new resources so that they can continue their lives after prison. For example, Buena organizes small vocational training courses for its members from time to time, which gives former prisoners the opportunity to find work and earn money, while contributing to their self-confidence.

One of the participants told that she attended a tailoring and embroidery course held in Buena and at the end of the course a sewing machine was given as a gift by the embassy of a foreign

state. She mentioned that she started to earn money by doing small jobs with the sewing machine.

*“- Oh, I got so much support from Buena after prison. I met people like me here. Here we support each other in solidarity. Oh, of course, most importantly, I learned how to sew in the tailoring and embroidery course held here. It wasn't easy, but now I can sew some dresses. After the course, some of the course participants were given a sewing machine as a gift. I think the Dutch embassy funded it. Sorry for my memory... I'm sewing clothes for a shop with that machine.”* (Ex-Prisoner 6, Female, 57 years old).

NGOs and society play a key role in social reintegration of ex-prisoners into society (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). Uggen and Janikula (1999), found a negative relationship between volunteering and being arrested in their study. Miklósi and Juhász (2019) state that the activities of non-governmental and charitable organizations in the first year after the eviction play an important role in the realization of social reintegration. In order for reintegration to be successful, it is important to consciously coordinate all stakeholders with the voluntary and active participation of the ex-prisoner.

Another factor that helps ex-prisoners reintegrate into society after prison is their religious beliefs and religious institutions such as churches and mosques. One of the participants was impressed by the interviews she had with the prison chaplain in prison and stated that she became a more religious person after prison. The participant mentioned that she was grateful to God for forgiving her sins and she never committed a crime again with the strength of her belief in God.

*“- Oh, you know, God saved my soul. While I was in prison, the speeches of the chaplain there impressed me a lot. I was following his speeches every week. After I got out of prison, I became a more religious person than before. I realized how dark I was living. Oh anyway, I go to church often now. I do volunteer work at the church. The priest at the church also appreciates my work. Helping people brings me closer to the God. And my strong belief in god*

*keeps me from doing anything bad. I am grateful to God for forgiving my sins.”*

(Ex-Prisoner 4, Female, 42 years old).

Very similarly, another participant mentioned that he became a more religious person after he was released from prison. The participant stated that he helped the imam in the mosque in his neighborhood, he gave him advice and this makes him more hopeful for life.

*“- ... I also became a more religious person after prison. I started going to the masjid in the neighborhood and helping the imam with his work. I help clean the masjid. I fill water containers for those who will perform ablution outside. I take care of the trees in the garden of the masjid. The imam gives me advice on life. He talks about the merits of what I do. He says that if I continue my life as a good person, I will get rewards for it both in this world and in the hereafter. And that gives me hope.”* (Ex-Prisoner 2, Male, 27 years old).

The narratives of both participants, reveal that the conversations they had with the clergy relieved them, gave them hope, and each participant participated in voluntary activities in religious institutions.

Another factor that supported the participants who were successful in their social reintegration efforts in the reintegration process was vocational courses in prison. These courses provided an opportunity for ex-convicts to find a job after prison and contributed to the economic field, which is one of the areas they need the most.

One of the participants told that he attended a metalwork course while in prison, learned some basic things there, and that he was able to find a job after he got out of prison thanks to that course.

*“- When I was in prison, I attended a course on metalwork. I learned things like iron cutting and welding. This course helped me a lot after I got out of prison. A contractor decided to give me a chance. I started working in construction with the things I learned. I work in cutting and welding reinforcing bars. I can*

*continue my life with the money I earn. Of course, I don't earn too much but at least I earn something.” (Ex-Prisoner 1, Male, 44 years old).*

Similarly, another participant said that thanks to the handicraft course she attended while she was in prison, she found a part-time job after she was released from prison and it was supportive for her.

*“- I attended also a course on handicrafts while I was in prison. After prison this was also useful for me. So, I got a part time job in a shop in the downtown. I make little figurines for them, I paint them. You know what, I usually do figures of Jesus and Virgin Mary. These are both very popular in the market and I am happy to bring them together with more people.” (Ex-Prisoner 11, Female, 37 years old).*

The statements of the participants reveal that they found a job and made a profit economically through the courses they attended in prison. As the participants were able to find a job and earn money, they were able to continue their lives more easily after prison.

It is difficult for people in prison to find a job after prison, as they often have a low level of education and are involved in illegal work before prison (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2003; Baer, et al., 2006). That's why the provision of vocational courses and activities for inmates in prison will help them find a job and continue their lives after they are released from prison. Studies in the literature also support this. Among those who have attended any training and vocational skills course in prison, the rate of recidivism after leaving prison is stated as 20%. However, the rate of re-offending increases to 40% after leaving prison for those who do not attend any training and vocational skills course (Hoselton, 2018).



## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1. CONCLUSION**

The interviews were conducted with 16 prisoners who were sentenced to prison before and again involved in crime after completing their sentence and 15 ex-prisoners who were not sentenced to prison again in at least 3 years after completing their prison sentence within the scope of the research. For this purpose the social re-integration experience of both groups after prison were tried to be understood. The findings obtained through in-depth interviews with both groups about the participants' pre-prison life, prison process and post-prison social integration experiences are presented in the previous section.

Finally, the recommendations developed as a result of the findings and the interpretations obtained, within the scope of the research made will be presented.

#### **6.1.1. Life before Prison**

In the interviews about the pre-prison life of the participants, the participants in the first group generally had problems in family relations, were in accusatory attitudes towards the attitudes and behaviors of their spouses and partners and some of them inflicted violence on their spouses and partners. The majority of the participants in the second group described their pre-prison family relations as positive, assumed responsibility for the family and made an effort for family relations. The family, as an important source of social capital, is a factor that provides support to prisoners during the prison process and facilitates reintegration into society after prison. The participants, who had good family relations before the prison, are visited by their family members during their imprisonment and their communication is not completely broken. Positive family relationships that continue throughout the prison process become a supportive power for ex-prisoners after prison. Therefore, participants with bad family relationships and those whose relationships do not improve are deprived of this important resource and power in the process of reintegration into society.

In the participants' narratives about their root families, it was stated that both groups did not have good root family relationships, mostly due to their parents' divorce, alcohol and drug use and violence against them.

On the other hand, it is thought that another factor in the negative family relationships of the participants in both groups is that the children are exposed to domestic violence. Those who had a history of violence in childhood experienced adaptation problems in their social lives during adolescence and adulthood. For people who do not receive adequate support from their parents, this means that they are deprived of social capital and cannot benefit from an important resource while struggling with the problems they face.

The narratives of the participants about their economic situation reveal that both groups tried to live in economically difficult conditions before going to prison and were in poverty. The main reasons for this are that they cannot find a permanent job, that they earn very little even if they find a job, and that there is discrimination between tribes while participating in employment.

Inadequate employment opportunities, lack of social protection and low wages are among the most important economic problems. While the vast majority of society suffers from poverty, those who can find work live in poverty for very low wages. Unfortunately the poverty has become a culture and way of life transferred within the family. The fact that poverty has become a culture spreads a strong sense of fatalism and a sense of helplessness. Competition between tribes and abstract borders reinforce the culture of poverty.

The participants in both groups were affected by the poverty in the country, their economic situation was bad, and they actually continued the poverty that was transferred to them from their parents and even passed it on to their own children.

In the research, poverty in Uganda appears as both a cause and a consequence of many basic human rights violations in the country. Thus, poverty reproduces itself constantly and causes new violations. Similarly, it initiates and maintains the poverty-related crime cycle. Therefore,

in order to break the cycle of poverty in the country, it is necessary to raise awareness of the people living in the country about basic human rights and to struggle to achieve these rights.

The educational status of the participants was generally low. When compared in terms of educational status in my research, the educational status of the participants in the second group was better than those in the first group. While the number of people in the second group with any diploma is 11 (9 P.L.E., 1 O level, 1 A level), only 5 people in the first group have a school diploma (4 P.L.E., 1 O level). This situation makes the researcher think that the high level of education makes reintegration into society easier. In addition, having a high level of education is a factor that facilitates participation in employment.

Another important distinction regarding the educational status of the participants emerges in rural and urban areas. Those who cannot go to school and cannot continue their education generally come from rural areas. One of the important reasons why the participants could not go to school and continue their education is the poverty in the root family. Parents prefer to work their children instead of sending them to school due to economic insufficiencies. Poverty causes families and school-age children to show low interest in school attendance. In the next stage, children are taken from school to work to contribute to the family economy and it causes the problem of child workers. The poor families tend to take their children from school and employ them as workers.

Child labor is one of the most important reasons why children cannot attend school in Uganda. Participants in both groups in the study could not continue their education life due to the poverty of their root families, and had to work at a young age to earn money and support the family budget. In this regard, the government didn't take the necessary measures in the context of international conventions so that children can continue to school.

Among the other factors that negatively affect the educational life of the participants, there are divorce in the root families, drug and alcohol addiction of the parents. The educational life of children from broken families progresses worse than children living with their families, they exhibit more problems in their school life and they have more problems with their peers. On the other hand according to the literature, people who are exposed to violence

by their parents who are addicted to drugs and alcohol experience loss of self-confidence, have difficulty in acting independently and making decisions. Therefore, it is thought that empowerment-based social work interventions should be implemented by developing protective mechanisms for people who grew up in broken families and were exposed to abuse and violence by their parents, starting from childhood.

Some negative attitudes of parents and society towards modern education negatively affect the educational life of the female participants. There are families in Uganda, especially in rural areas, who oppose the modern understanding of school in connection with the cultural value attributed to female virginity, and girls are not approved to go to school. These people are concerned that girls who go to school will easily lose their virginity and become sex workers. Unfortunately, some politicians also support the stance on this issue.

The economic poverty of the participants significantly affects the housing conditions. Among all the participants, only one participant stated that he had his own house, but that it was also inherited. The other participants stated that they tried to live in houses with bad physical conditions and that they had difficulty in paying their rents. Although there were no participants from either group who said that they were homeless before entering prison, the places where the participants met their sheltering needs were in a very bad physical condition. Both the poor physical facilities of the places they stay and the difficulty in paying the rent expenses are related to the economic poverty they are in. Homelessness can initiate the criminal cycle in many cases. For this reason, people in need of shelter in the society should be supported and economically strengthened in order to meet at least their basic shelter needs.

Some of the participants lived with their parents due to economic poverty. On the other hand, living with their parents for a while after being released from prison works as a supportive mechanism. Parents' support for their children in housing is a strength for the participants who have this opportunity.

Regarding social relations, the participants in the first group generally made negative characterizations when describing their social lives before entering the prison. Participants in the second group, on the other hand, described their social life as more positive than those

in the first group. Those who describe their social relations as positive generally have positive and supportive close relatives. This situation makes us think that the participants in the second group have better social capital than those in the first group and they receive support from this social capital. These positive family relationships and social capital they have constitute an important source of power for them.

The participants in both groups had diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and scabies, which are common in the country and some of which are contagious, during their life before prison. However, the participants regarded these diseases as normal and adopted a fatalistic approach to the diseases. Most of the participants cannot access health services adequately due to the poverty they have experienced. This poses a weakness for the participants. Arrangements need to be made so that people in the country can access at least basic health care. Another obstacle to accessing health services is the prevalence of bribery in the country. In many health institutions, it is necessary to pay bribes in order to be treated and examined by a doctor.

The participants, especially those in the first group, consumed the drug called bhang, which is mostly grown in rural areas, and the alcoholic beverage called waragi, which is also locally produced from bananas, in their life before prison. Some participants state that they use drugs and alcohol for socialization purposes. Uganda is the second country with the highest alcohol consumption per capita, surpassing the American and European countries in terms of per capita alcohol consumption. On the other hand, it is reported that 2.6 million people smoke cannabis in Uganda. While alcohol and substance abuse should be an important agenda item in the country, it is often neglected in this regard. It is known that children, especially in rural areas, drink waragi, a local drink, collectively with their families and neighbors. This situation has become a kind of cultural situation. However, the fact that alcohol consumption becomes an addiction weakens individuals both economically and in terms of health.

### **6.1.2. Prison Life**

When the crime stories of both groups are taken into account, the background of criminal behavior is primarily poverty. The involvement of the participant group in crime generally started with acts such as theft, robbery and breaking in committed due to financial poverty. Another important reason for the participants' involvement in crime was related to substance and alcohol use. One of the first steps to be taken in order to reduce the crime rates in the country and to prevent the convicts who have been released from re-entering the crime cycle should be to end the cycle of poverty in the country. Although economic poverty started the crime cycle in the first place, ex-prisoners who were already poor before entering the prison become even poorer and turn to crime again due to the many difficulties they face after leaving the prison.

The participants had a very difficult time in the first entry into the prison, which was defined as the "entry shock phase". While talking about their feelings for the first time they entered the prison, they mentioned that they had difficulty in accepting that they had been imprisoned, they often expressed their emotional state with expressions such as "helpless", "scared", "worthless" and "not feeling like a human being". Participants described the prison as "cold" and "emotionless" place where they were "constantly watched" and they complained about the stigmatizing nature of prisoner's uniforms. Prisoners also complained of occasional violence in the prison by other inmates and prison staff. The expressions used by the prisoners to describe their emotional state at the entrance to the prison reflect how powerless they feel. In fact, while the prison sentence itself is a punishment, the negative conditions in the prison environment are a secondary punishment. Whereas the aim of the prison should be to enable them to desist from crime and being rehabilitated rather than punish them. For this, it is necessary to make a planning by the professional staff at the entrance to the prison, and to ensure that the "entry shock phase" experienced during the entry process is overcome with as little damage as possible.

The other main problems that the participants expressed about the prisons in the interviews are as follows: the prisons are too crowded, lack of facilities such as toilets and bathrooms,

or they are at a very primitive level, working under harsh conditions in prison farms and receiving very low wages in return. The total official capacity of prisons in Uganda is 19,986 people. However, the number of detainees and convicts in these prisons is 67,318. Therefore, the occupancy rate of the prisons increased to 336.8% according to their official capacities. This situation causes people in prisons to try to live their lives in conditions that are contrary to their basic human rights. Inmates try to sleep and rest in overcrowded wards, often not even finding a place to sleep. When this situation is considered together with the harsh working conditions in prisons, it negatively affects both the physical and mental health of the people staying in prisons. One of the most striking reasons for this situation is that 51.8% of those staying in prisons in Uganda are pre-trial detainees, which shows the inadequacy of the Ugandan criminal justice system and fundamental human rights violations. According to current legal regulations; Although the maximum period of detention is 60 days for cases that can be heard by the Supreme Court and its subordinate courts, and 180 days for cases that can only be heard by the Supreme Court, this is not followed in practice. It is thought that keeping people in detention for such a long time has political reasons as well as providing manpower to the working system in prisons.

Inadequate and primitive physical capacity for basic needs such as toilets and bathrooms that prisoners have to use in prisons prevents the inmates from perceiving themselves as individuals or as human beings. Those who do not have the opportunity to live humanely and who have been exposed to these traumatic conditions in prison for a long time have difficulties in the process of social reintegration with the society after they are released from prison.

When talking about their relationships with other prisoners, the participants stated that they could not trust "others" in general and talked about the grouping among the prisoners. The participants generally stated that they did not trust the people in prison in the first place. Especially during the first time they enter the prison, they become more anxious and do not communicate with other people unless they have to.

While describing their relations with the prison staff, the participants stated that they found the prison staff excessively authoritarian, did not trust them, did not share anything personal and the prison staff sometimes used violence against the prisoners.

The criminal justice system in Uganda lacks adequate resources and is unable to deliver justice. This situation increases overcrowding in prisons and prolonged and detention under hard conditions. According to the international human rights standards, prisons in Uganda fail to meet standards and are in a very bad condition. More than half of the population in prisons in Uganda are people whose judgements have not been finalized yet and their court proceedings are still ongoing.

These people are subjected to forced labor under very difficult conditions, cannot benefit from health opportunities and are subjected to violence when they do not want to work. This violence can sometimes lead to injury or even death.

Most of the participants stated that their family relations were adversely affected by this situation after they were imprisoned. In particular, the majority of the participants in the first group stated that they divorced from their spouses after they were imprisoned or that their partners left them. Another negative effect of prison life on family relations is the decrease or even the end of inmates' communication with their children. Most of the participants stated that although they wanted their children to visit them in prison, they did not want their children to see them in prisoner uniforms, they did not want them to be affected by the negative prison conditions, therefore they had a dilemma. Some of the participants also stated that their relationship with their parents ended while they were in prison. The relations of the participants with their spouses, partners, children and parents, which started to deteriorate with the process of entering the prison and ended during their stay in prison, cause ex-prisoners to not benefit from the support of these people after they are released from prison. Therefore, these people are deprived of an important social capital support. This situation causes them to feel more alone and helpless in the process after they are released from prison, and to try to live in worse economic conditions. These conditions are also an important factor in the tendency of ex-prisoners to commit crime again.



The participants in the second group described their family relations more positively compared to those in the first group, were visited by their family members in prison, and maintained their communication in some way. It was stated by the participants that visits of family members while in prison provided them emotional and psychological support. However, the economic poverty experienced by family members is an obstacle that limits prison visits. Especially family members living in remote areas cannot come to visit the prison because they cannot afford the transfer fees.

When the narratives of the participants in the first group and the second group are compared, the fact that the participants in the second group can maintain their family relations during their imprisonment plays a facilitating role in the process of reintegration into society. Therefore, in order for the prisoners to maintain their family relations while they are in prison; arrangements such as facilitating family visits, meeting prisoners and their family members in more humane conditions, and travel allowance for those who cannot visit their relatives in prison for economic reasons should be made.

In prisons which located in urban areas, formal and vocational training opportunities are offered to inmates, with limited opportunities and this situation provides a significant advantage for the prisoners. However, these opportunities are unfortunately not available in rural prisons due to lack of physical capacity and human resources. On the other hand, in urban prisons, where there is some form of formal and vocational education, prisoners are directed to work on farms instead of participating in training programs. The work of these prisoners, who work in difficult conditions on farms, is tried to be called vocational training.

The vocational courses in prisons should be voluntary with the aim of teaching inmates a profession and gaining a skill. However, the practice in prisons in Uganda has unfortunately turned into exploitation of the labor of prisoners rather than providing them with vocational skills.

Thousands of prisoners are forced into hard labor in Ugandan prisons. Prisoners plant and harvest crops in the fields, clean, collect firewood and carry water from wells. Prisoners are often forced to work in oppressive conditions in heat or rain. Sometimes they being deprived

food, water or bathing opportunities. They are beaten, handcuffed, stoned as punishment for being slow or even burned if they refuse to work. Children, the sick, the elderly and pregnant women are also forced to work in Ugandan prisons, and they are beaten if they do not want to work.

International legal standards place significant restrictions on the employment of prisoners in prisons. In accordance with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by the United Nations as a guide in this regard, prison work must be non-irritating and of a professional nature. Furthermore, prisoners should be allowed to choose the jobs they want to work in. The jobs in which prisoners work should not be conducted with financial profit for prison managements. No prisoner should be forced to work for private organizations such as private landowners. However, prisons in Uganda do not comply with these international standards. Moreover, prisoners in Ugandan prisons are hired to private individuals and institutions as labor force. This means the systematic exploitation of the labor of prisoners in prisons. These difficult practices in prisons negatively affect the physical and mental health of the prisoners and unfavourably affect their efforts to reintegrate with the society after prison.

Moreover, many prison labour methods do little for inmates to use and develop their strengths. The primary difference between empowerment-based work and traditional prison work is that work based on strengths is accepted voluntarily, while traditional prison work is ordered as punishment by the judicial organs.

The participants stated that they experienced health problems due to the negative physical conditions in the prison and work accidents from time to time. In addition, the inadequacy of health personnel in prisons, the inadequacy of psychological support mechanisms, the inadequacy of medical supplies and drugs are among the main health related problems in prisons. Inadequate health facilities in prisons seriously affect both the mental and physical health of the prisoners.

Another important sub-category that emerged in the interviews about health is the difficulty in going to the infirmary for prisoners with health problems. Even if there is an infirmary in

the prisons, the inmates are not allowed to go to the infirmary when they get sick. The reason for this attitude is that the prisoners are forced to work on farms instead of going to the infirmary and resting. Whereas, according to Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, prisoners must be medically examined to see if they are fit for work and in good health before being put to work in prisons. Furthermore, prisoners may not work more than 60 days a year. It is clear that these rules are not applied in Ugandan prisons. Working conditions of those in Ugandan prisons are not regulated in accordance with international and local laws.

The professional support staff for prisoners is very insufficient in Ugandan prisons. A total of 80 social workers work in the Uganda Prison Services. In addition to this, people who are involved in voluntary activities in some non-governmental organizations also go to prisons at regular intervals to support the prisoners. However, considering the population in prisons, the number of these volunteers is also quite insufficient. The lack of adequate professional support staff in prisons constitutes an important weakness for prisoners both during and after prison. Prisoners try to meet their support needs during the prison process by meeting with religious officials in prisons. The participants mentioned that meeting with religious officials (prison priest, prison imam) and other volunteers in prisons helped them emotionally and psychologically.

In addition to these, they stated that they tried to alleviate the difficulties of the prison by sharing with their friends whom they found "reliable" in prison.

It is stated that a professional preparation process is not provided regarding the post-prison preparation process, and that the prisoners are not prepared for post-prison life by qualified professionals. One of the most important factors that will facilitate and strengthen the post-prison social reintegration process of prisoners is the professional reintegration program that starts with the prison entry stage and continues throughout the prison period and after the prison. With the initiation of the prison or detention process, the needs of the detainee/convict should be determined, and they should be directed to programs that include educational, vocational and rehabilitation dimensions according to the identified needs. Prisoners need to

be prepared for release and supported for social reintegration when the end of their sentence approaches. Supporting the social reintegration processes of prisoners is not limited to this. Ex-prisoners should continue to be given supervision and support after release from prison, even if they have received supervision and support in prison. The training, rehabilitation, support and supervision services to be provided to prisoners on admission, during and after prison will facilitate the use of their powers and assist their social reintegration processes.

Participants who had continued relationships with their families while in prison stated that these positive relationships facilitated the post-prison process for them. Similarly, they stated that volunteer professionals and NGO representatives are trying to help them with their post-prison period.

### **6.1.3. Life after Prison**

The participants whose family relations deteriorated, divorced or separated from their spouses during the prison period had difficulty in restoring these relations after they were released from prison, they were deprived of family support, and this situation made it difficult for their social reintegration with the society. The same is true for participants whose relationships with their parents and children have deteriorated during the prison process.

The broken of relations with their families and society is one of the most challenging factors for ex-prisoners in the process of reintegrating into society after prison. After their release from prison, the rejection of ex-prisoners by family members and ex-communities makes it difficult for them to reorganize their lives. Ex-prisoners who cannot improve their relations with their families and former communities, in this case, contact other criminals and fall into the crime cycle again. Therefore, the loss of family and social ties during the prison process creates a significant weakness for ex-convicts and negatively affects the social reintegration process.

On the other hand, the participants who were able to maintain their family relations during the prison period received emotional and economic support from their family members in their post-prison life. This support was a facilitator in the efforts of the participants for their

social reintegration with the society. Family and social relationships, especially social bonds with children and partners, play an important role in establishing a responsible and legitimate identity for ex-prisoners and desist from crime. In addition, family relationships provide ex-prisoners with the economic and emotional support which necessary for stable employment.

In the context of social relations, some participants stated that their relations with their friends and neighbors deteriorated after they were released from prison, that they faced stigma and exclusion in the society, and that they isolated themselves from social relations as a result of these negative conditions. It is thought that these conditions, expressed extensively by the participants in the first group, make it difficult for ex-convicts to reintegrate into society.

On the other hand, the second group of participants generally had better friends and neighborly relations than the first group, and some of them received support from NGOs and religious structures in the society. This positive relationship and support is thought to support the social reintegration of ex-convicts into society. NGOs can play a key role in reintegrating prisoners and ex-prisoners into society. The support provided by non-governmental organizations is invaluable, especially in countries where there are no professional institutions that support prisoners and ex-prisoners in their social reintegration process. In these countries, volunteers often try to carry out these activities without any support from the government. Buena Charity Services, which is trying to carry out voluntary activities for prisoners and ex-prisoners in Uganda, tries to carry out activities with very limited resources for both prisoners in prisons and ex-prisoners returning to the society after prison. Although they do not able to reach many prisons and carry out activities with insufficient resources, these activities are very important for prisoners in prisons in Uganda and ex-prisoners in the community. Prisoners who stated that they were not treated "like human beings" in the prison environment stated that they felt "like human beings" again after Buena volunteers contacted and supported them. Therefore, the existence of a non-governmental organization in Uganda that tries to carry out volunteer activities for prisoners and ex-prisoners constitutes a very important source of strength for both prisoners and ex-convicts.

One of the areas where prisoners have the most difficulty after prison is their economic situation. Participants stated that they had difficulty in finding a job after being released from prison due to their prison history and the stigma they experienced in the society. Another factor that made it difficult for the prisoners to find a job was their low level of education. Some participants stated that they had to beg because of the economic difficulties they experienced after prison. Social injustice and social inequality play a key role on social exclusion and poverty for the ex-prisoners. Uganda is among the poorest countries in the world and 41% of the country's population lives in poverty. Since Uganda is already a poor country, the majority of the people cannot get a share of the country's economic resources and welfare. Ex-prisoners who are released from prison under these adverse conditions are even more disadvantaged economically. While 9 participants in the first group stated that they had a job before the prison (1 full-time, 8 part-time), none of the participants in the first group could find a job after they were released from prison. This shows that employment supports social reintegration into society. Not being able to earn an economic income after leaving prison creates a weakness for ex-prisoners. Therefore, ex-prisoners should be empowered through methods such as training and vocational skills, by creating programs so that they can participate in employment after they are released from prison. Thus, it will be possible for them to get a share of the welfare in the society and to ensure social justice to some extent.

One of the problems they face in finding a job as stated by the participants is discrimination arising from inter-tribal rivalry. This is one of the structural problems that reinforce poverty and social injustice in Uganda. Poverty and social injustice in the country cause an unjust distribution of wealth in the country, which causes people to committing crime and then to be stuck in the crime cycle with the difficulties they have experienced as an ex-convict. However, the solution of this structural problem does not seem easy in the short term.

Generally, the participants in the second group stated that their family and social relations supported them after prison and they could find a job with the facilitation of these relations. The social ties they have make it easier for people who have been released from prison to

tolerate a lack of both relevant vocational training and experience in the application process while competing with others in employment.

It was stated that another factor which facilitated the participants to find a job after prison was vocational courses. That is, vocational courses in prisons have an economically and emotionally empowering effect on inmates by making it easier for them to find a job after their release from prison. Therefore, increasing the number and variety of vocational courses offered to prisoners in prisons will strengthen the prisoners. In Uganda, the vocational training opportunities are insufficient, especially in prisons located in rural areas.

The prisoners who are released from the prison have difficulty in finding a place to stay due to the lack of a shelter plan during the prison process and close to being released, the economic difficulties and the stigma they experience. This leads to poor housing conditions, homelessness and recidivism for ex-convicts. The housing problem that arises immediately after being released from prison is an important factor in the tendency of ex-prisoners to commit crime again. The economic problems and stigma experienced after prison also make it difficult for ex-prisoners to find housing opportunities.

On the other hand, the participants, who maintained positive family and social relations, were able to receive support from their families and social circles for shelter after they were released from prison. Therefore, positive family relations, which were maintained before and during the prison period, are an important resource and power factor in solving the housing and accommodation problems of ex-prisoners, as well as participation in employment.

In the interviews, most of the participants stated that during their life after prison, they suffered from some infectious diseases that are common in the country and they had health problems related to alcohol and substance use. Although Uganda ranks second in the world in pure alcohol consumption per capita, unfortunately, there is not enough infrastructure and personnel for alcohol and substance addiction treatment in the country. This creates a weakness for both addicts and security in the country.

In addition, some female participants reported that they had miscarriages during their pregnancy and/or their children died during childbirth. The infant mortality rate is quite high in Uganda. Especially in rural areas, trying to give birth with old traditional methods, lack of adequate health infrastructure and qualified doctor are effective in these health problems specific to women.

The participants also faced economic-based health problems such as not being able to meet the health expenses, insufficient nutrition and lack of hygiene conditions. "Bribery", which takes place in many systems in the country, has been expressed by the participants as one of the obstacles in front of the participants in accessing the health system and benefiting from health services. Bribery is an important obstacle to accessing health services, as it is an obstacle to accessing many other services. Bribery is among other important structural problems in Uganda such as poverty, income inequality and inter-tribal problems.

While the participants talking about the changes that the prison process made on them, especially the participants in the first group talked about negative emotions such as insecurity, loneliness, abandonment, lack of self-confidence, fear and hopelessness. Difficult and tough prison conditions can cause negative emotional changes on prisoners. These negative perceptions and feelings especially towards themselves constitute an important weakness in the social reintegration process of ex-prisoners.

The participants in the second group mostly mentioned that they decided to devote their lives to a purpose and to be a good example for their children, their efforts to repair family ties, they started to participate in voluntary activities and their religious beliefs became stronger. Despite all the negative processes experienced by the participants in the second group, devoting their lives to a certain purpose, participating in voluntary activities with non-governmental organizations or trying to be good individuals within the scope of their religious beliefs became a source of motivation and strengths for them in the process of reintegration with society.

After the prisoners are released from prison, the main factors that make their social reintegration into society difficult are the following: the absence of a preparatory work for



post-prison life in prison, unemployment and economic problems, stigma, deterioration of family and social relations, homelessness, health problems negative perceptions and feelings towards themselves in the society.

On the other hand, the family and social relations maintained in and after the prison, vocational courses attended in prison, personal motivation, voluntary NGOs and religious institutions play a facilitating role in the efforts of ex-prisoners for social reintegration with the society after prison. Volunteers in NGOs and religious institutions comply with the rules of these institutions. Therefore, the volunteers are gradually socialized with informal social controls in these institutions. These institutions also help the volunteers to change their behavior without coercion, with the habits they acquire. In my research, the statements of the participants who participated in the voluntary activities of non-governmental organizations and religious institutions also support these findings.

In the research, it was tried to understand how do ex-prisoners who are involved in recidivism and not involved experience the process of social reintegration. When compared in terms of life before prison, the participants in both groups had an economically poor life, their root family relationships were generally negative, they were neglected by their parents, they were exposed to violence from time to time, they had to work at an early age and they suffered from common and contagious diseases in the country. In other words, it was found out that these negative conditions were common for the participants in both groups before they went to prison. Three themes that differ between the first group and the second group regarding life before prison are family relationships, social relations and education level. The participants in the first group expressed their family relations and social relations with negative wordings compared to those in the second group. This shows that positive family and social relations are an important source of strength during and after the prison process, and facilitate coping with the negative effects of the prison process and the difficulties of the social reintegration process. Also better education level has a facilitating role on the social reintegration. The both groups experienced the “entry shock phase” during the prison process, the rigid and violent attitude of the prison staff, compulsory prison work, the difficulty of accessing treatment opportunities, the lack of professional support and

counseling services in prisons. Moreover these conditions destroyed the prisoners' self-confidence and weakens them in the social reintegration process. The differences between the two groups during the prison process were that the second group somehow maintained positive family relationships and benefited from vocational training courses in prisons. This again reinforces the idea that positive family relationships are an important resource of power in the prison and subsequent social reintegration process. The issue of benefiting from vocational courses in prisons gives an idea about the capacity difference between rural and urban prisons and the authority of prison staff in accessing these opportunities. The participants in both groups had economic difficulties after prison, being released from prison made it more difficult to find a job, and the need for shelter was an important problem, but the participants in the second group met these difficulties more easily than the first group with their positive family and social relationships. Volunteer activities in non-governmental organizations and religious institutions are another factors in the fact that the participants in the second group experienced the social reintegration process more easily after prison.

Another issue scrutinized within the scope of the research is which factors affect the social reintegration motivation of prisoners and ex-prisoners. Positive family relationships and social relations, formal and vocational training opportunities, participation in employment, participating in voluntary activities in non-governmental organizations and religious institutions and setting a purpose for their lives are motivation and power sources for ex-prisoners in the process of reintegration with society. However, it is important to emphasize here that the social reintegration process is not just a process in which prisoners should be held accountable and motivated. Because the entire society should be responsible for the social conditions that cause these people to commit crimes, especially poverty. Therefore, social reintegration should be considered as a process that not only based on the motivation of ex-prisoners but also should be facilitated by the community.

Negative prison conditions and forced labor, the absence of a post-prison reintegration program during the prison period, the absence of psychosocial support services to empower prisoners, negative family and social relations, unemployment, homelessness and

stigmatization of the society towards them are the challenges faced by ex-prisoners during the social reintegration process. On the other hand, the research revealed that the deep poverty in the country, the prevalence of bribery and corruption in the public and private sectors, inter-tribal discrimination, the development gap between rural and urban areas, and the existing cultural gender roles for women and girls are the background to these challenges.

The results of both groups' experiences of social reintegration before, during and after prison are visualized in the figures below. In these processes, the factors that negatively affect the participants and cause them to lose their links with the society are shown in black, and the factors that affect them positively and help them re-establish their links with the society are shown in blue.

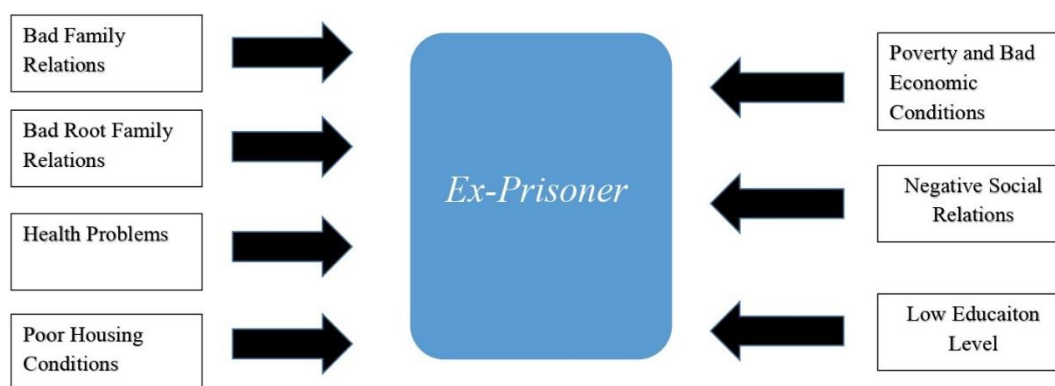
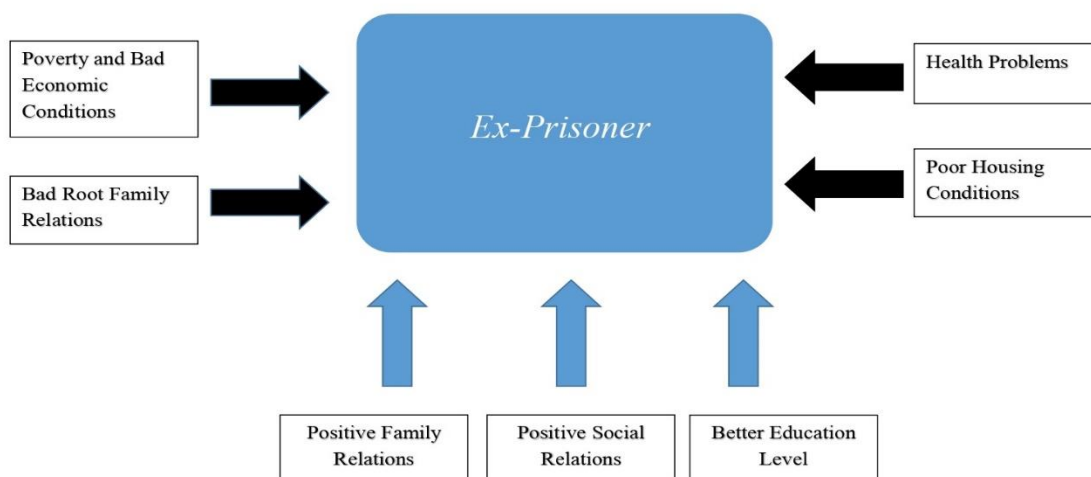


Figure 5: Life before Prison for the First Group of Participants

These negative factors like squeezing the participants from all sides and weaken their link with the society. In this process, similar negative factors also affect the second group of participants. However, positive family relationships, positive social relationships, and having a better education level than those in the first group are the factors that positively affect the participants in this group.



Positive family relations, positive social relations and better education level are supportive factors for the participants and empower them to desist from committing crime again after release.

Figure 6: Life before Prison for the Second Group of Participants

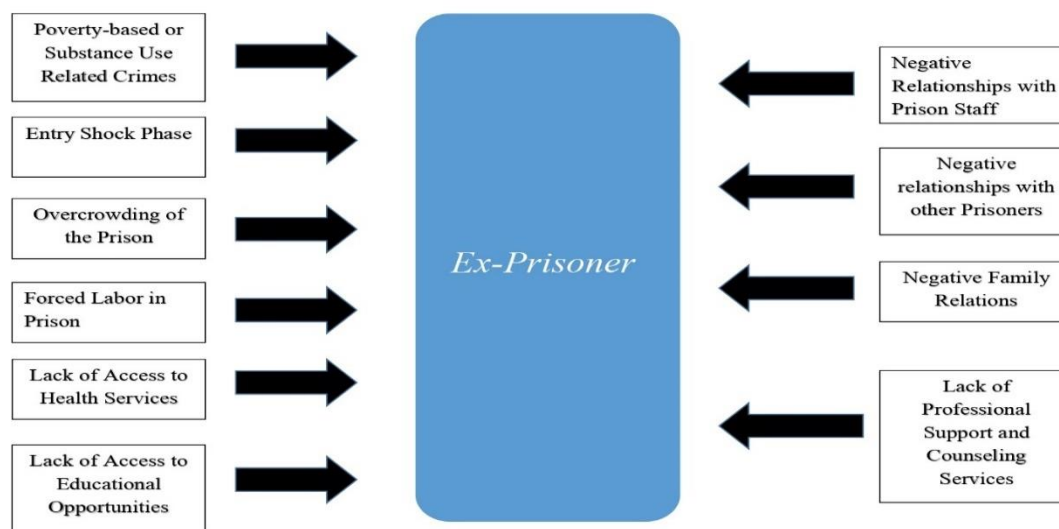


Figure 7: Prison Life for the First Group of Participants

The prison process is very difficult for all participants, and the treatment that is deprived of basic human rights and that does not comply with international regulations affects the participants negatively in this process. In addition lack of access to health services and

educational opportunities, negative relationships with family, other prisoners and prison staff and lack of professional support weaken the participants.

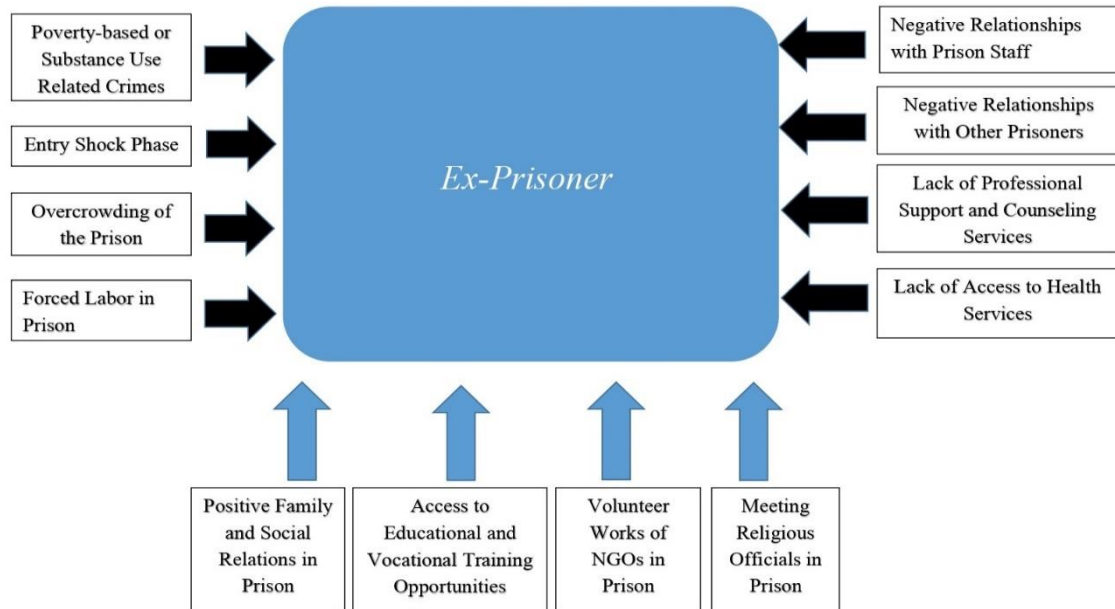


Figure 8: Prison Life for the Second Group of Participants

The second group of participants are also affected by negative factors such as negative conditions in prison, ill-treatment and forced labor. However, the positive family relationships they could maintain in prison, their access to limited formal and vocational education opportunities in prisons, their participation in the activities of NGOs engaged in voluntary activities in prisons and the opportunity of meeting with religious officials in prisons are factors that positively affect and empower them in this difficult process.

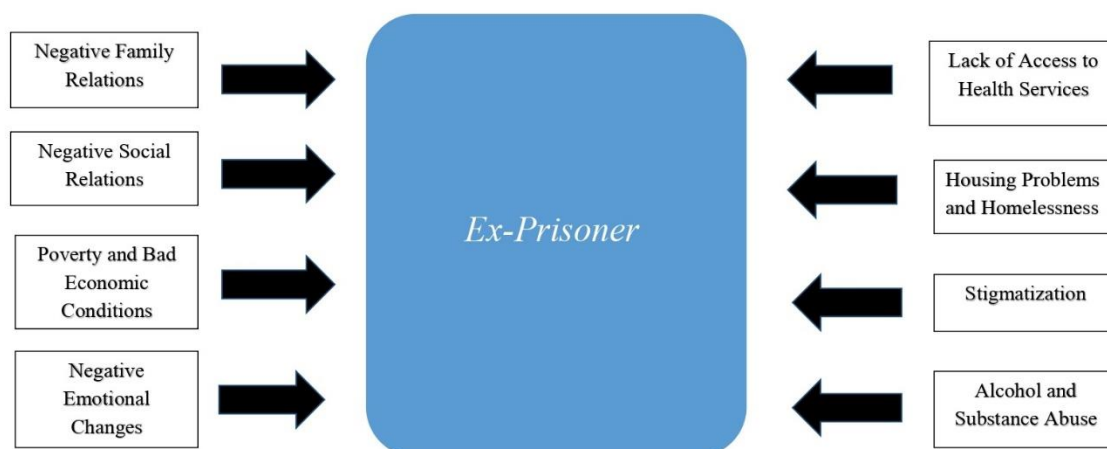


Figure 9: Life after Prison for the First Group of Participants

Negative family relations, negative social relations, poverty, negative emotional changes caused by the prison process, poor housing conditions, homelessness, inaccessibility to health services, stigma, alcohol and substance use adversely affect the reintegration of the participants in the society and weaken them in the post-prison life.

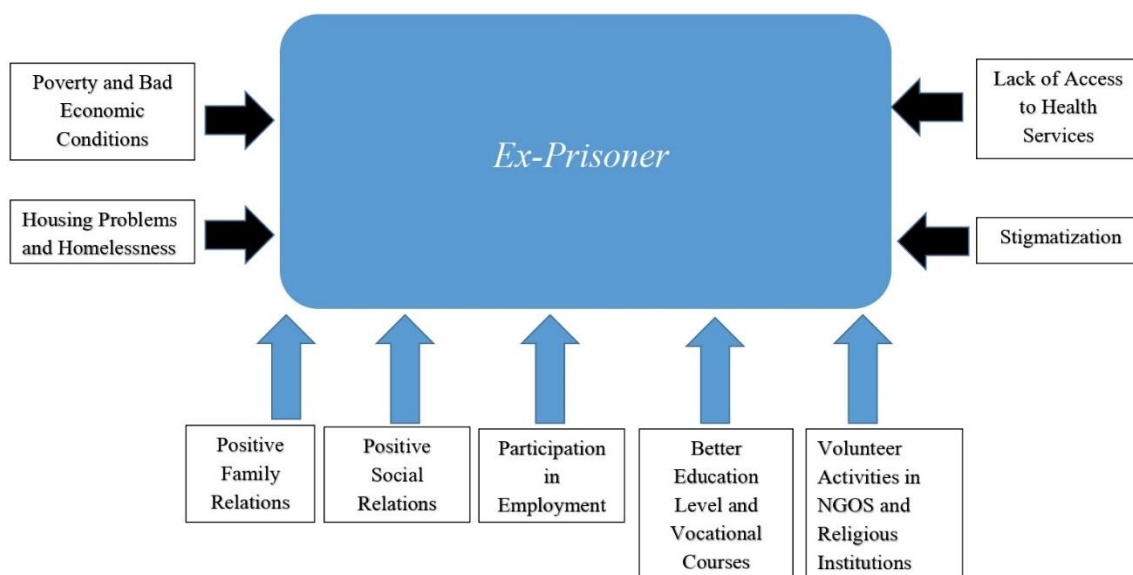


Figure 10: Life after Prison for the Second Group of Participants

While poverty, poor housing conditions, homelessness, inaccessibility to health services and stigma are negatively affecting the social reintegration process of the participants, positive family relations, positive social relations, volunteer activities in NGOs and religious institutions and vocational courses are supporting the social reintegration process after prison life. Therefore, these factors constitute a source of strength for the participants and facilitate the social reintegration process.

As a result of the research, it was aimed to develop recommendations on what strategies could be used by different stakeholders to improve the community reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners in Uganda. This will be discussed in detail under the next heading.

## **6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations developed as a result of the interpretation of the data obtained through the interviews and observations made within the scope of the research will be presented under three headings, as in the presentation of the research findings. These are: Recommendations for before prison, recommendations for prison process and recommendations after prison. While presenting recommendations in these sub-headings, protective and preventive suggestions will be presented at macro, mezzo and micro level in accordance with social work literature.

### **6.2.1. Recommendations for Before Prison**

- There was a significant difference between the first and second groups in terms of family relations. While the participants in the first group stated that they had more problems in family relationships, those in the second group stated that they had more positive family relationships. Positive family ties are an important factor preventing delinquency in the literature. For this reason, positive family relationships are an important source of power to desist from crime. Therefore, it is recommended to develop individuals' knowledge and skills on issues such as intra-familial

communication, parenting roles, and gender in order to develop positive family relationships.

- Negative experiences and narratives came to the fore in the relationships of the participants in both groups with their parents. The rates of physical and sexual violence against children in the country are quite high. In the literature, it is stated that children who are neglected and abused by their parents, who think they are not loved and abandoned, tend to criminal behavior more. Poor parent-child relationships constitute a weakness for prisoners in the process of being dragged into crime. For this reason, it is recommended to develop a comprehensive education and awareness program in order to increase the knowledge and skills of the society on child care, parenting and child rights in order to prevent individuals from committing crime.
- In Uganda, 41% of the country's population lives in poverty and the participants in both groups lived in very difficult economic conditions and in poverty before entering the prison. Although there is a general employment problem in the country, those who can find a job are trying to continue their lives as the working poor for very low wages. The social injustice and social inequality are the main reasons for the deep poverty in the country and the majority of the people cannot get enough of the welfare and wealth in the country. One of the main reasons for this is that there is no official minimum wage in the country and that workers are exploited by working with very low wages below the poverty line. Uganda has not accepted and signed the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention published by the International Labor Organization. Although Uganda Parliament prepared a law on the determination of minimum wage according to different sectors in 2019, this law was not signed by the head of state. People who are deeply affected by poverty in the country turn to crime. Therefore, regarding poverty and economic problems, at the micro level, individuals need to develop their competencies and skills and gain self-confidence so that they can participate in employment more easily. At the macro level, for the purpose of breaking the poverty cycle it is necessary to create job opportunities for the poor to participate in employment more easily, to ensure social justice and social equality in



the country, to endeavor for the fair distribution of welfare and wealth, approval of the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention and the law for the official minimum wage.

- The majority of the participants had a low level of education, and most of them had to work instead of attending school. In fact, this situation is mostly due to poverty and inadequate educational infrastructure in the country. Especially in rural areas of the country, school facilities are completely inadequate or in primitive conditions. In addition, poor families employ their children in agriculture and fishery instead of sending them to school. So, the poverty, social injustice and inequality that individuals are born into negatively affect their education life. Therefore, in order to solve the crime problem in the country, individuals need to participate in the education system and participate in the workforce by receiving a qualified education. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to education and primary education should be free. Children should also be encouraged to attend the highest possible level of schooling. According to the same convention, governments should provide money or other support to help the children of poor families. For this, it is recommended to raise awareness of the importance of education for individuals and families, to provide sufficient physical competence and quality education opportunities to the society, and to provide financial support to families who cannot send their children to school due to economic poverty, ensuring that children are sent to school instead of working. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, conditional cash transfers by UNICEF and the Ugandan state to families to send their children to school will contribute to the solution of this problem and strengthen families economically. In addition, in order for children to continue their education life, families who do not send their children to school should be visited by teachers affiliated with the Ministry of Education and Sports and encouraged to send their children to school.
- Another important theme that emerged about the participants' inability to continue their education is that girls are not sent to school or cannot complete their education, especially in rural areas, due to the social meaning attributed to female virginity. The worst part of this attitude is that it is also reciprocated by politicians. This practice

prevents children from reaching the right to education, in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, it is necessary to develop policies to change the understanding of gender in the country and to ensure that girls attend school with legal obligations and sanctions. The Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development should prepare a joint action plan for sending girls to school, within the framework of international agreements, and families should be made aware of sending girls to school. For this, family visits and financial support of families can be used.

- The participants generally suffer from diseases that are common in the country and that are generally contagious and that they adopt a fatalistic approach to diseases. Adopting a fatalistic approach and thinking that they do not have control over their own lives creates an effect that weakens them. In this regard, it is recommended to increase their personal knowledge and skills about hygiene and ways to prevent diseases, to have some control over their own health status and to leave the fatalistic approach.
- The vast majority of participants do not have access to health services. The main reasons for this are; inadequate health infrastructure in the country and corruption and bribery in existing health institutions as in many other areas. Thereby, first of all, necessary legal measures should be taken and implemented in order to prevent corruption and bribery practices in existing institutions. Then, it is recommended to strengthen the health infrastructure in the country, to train and employ adequate and qualified health personnel.
- There is a serious alcohol and marijuana consumption and addiction in the country. However, there is no treatment mechanism and infrastructure related to the fight against addiction. There is a need to build capacity in both physical and psychological health to combat alcohol and marijuana addiction. In addition, the reasons for the participants' alcohol and substance use were generally to get away from the reality of the negative economic conditions they were in for a while, to enjoy life and to socialize. It is recommended to implement projects for the development of physical and human capacity for the treatment of alcohol and marijuana addiction in Uganda,

by providing the necessary financing with the projects of international development agencies and the World Health Organization. On the other hand, it is recommended to develop policies to eliminate the negative living and economic conditions that lead people to use alcohol and drugs.

### **6.2.2. Recommendations for Prison Process**

- The participants were affected by the "entry shock phase" very negatively, and this situation unfavorably affected the entire period of their stay in prison. It is recommended that the process of prisoners and detainees be planned and managed by professionals, from the police process to the prison entrance stage and beyond, considering the psychological conditions of the individuals and the social work principle of that each individual is "unique". In this planning process, scientific and reliable methods should be used when determining risk factors and needs for the "unique" for prisoners, good coordination between all parties, appropriate work schemes including timelines and mutual roles and responsibilities should be defined.
- Ugandan prisons have an occupancy rate of 336.8% according to their official capacity. This situation causes prisoners and detainees to try to sleep and rest in overcrowded wards, in violation of their basic human rights, and to be deprived of basic human hygiene and shelter conditions. One of the main causes of overcrowding in Uganda prisons is long periods of detention. 51.8% of the population in prisons in Uganda consists of people awaiting trial or people whose trials not concluded yet. This situation is against the legal regulations in the country and fundamental human rights. It is believed that the main reason for their long pre-trial detention periods is their detention in prison to work on prison farms and other areas. For this reason, it is recommended to ensure that the criminal justice system works quickly, to implement the necessary legal regulations to end long periods of detention, to improve the physical conditions of the prisons, to provide a more livable environment for the prisoners, and to meet the basic cleaning and hygiene needs of the prisoners, such as toilets and bathrooms.

- In the current situation, the labor of those in prisons is exploited and even, so to speak, they are made to work like slaves. This is a situation that violates basic human rights in the first place. In fact, the practice of arbitrarily imprisoning people in the Colonial period in order to provide cheap labor to work in constructions and hard jobs continues to be applied similarly by different actors in the 21st century. Hence, those staying in prisons should not be forced to do forced labor on prison farms or on the land of private owners. Those aged 18-45 who want to work should be employed under the working conditions of free workers and for a fair wage, for the number of hours determined within the framework of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which is adopted by the United Nations. Working opportunities in prisons should not be with a punitive approach, but should be based on strength-based volunteering, teaching professions and gaining skills. Prisoners should be allowed to choose the job they want to work in, their labor should not be used by prisons for profit.
- Prison staff display a strict, rude and overly authoritarian attitude towards prisoners. Even worse, violence, ill-treatment and punishment practices against those who stay in prisons continue. These practices carry punishment to a very different dimension in prison, which is already used as a punishment method. In fact, prisoners are given punishment within a punishment and this is against universal law. For this reason, it is necessary to provide training to prison staff, especially on human rights and prisoner rights, and to increase their awareness; and it is strictly recommended that violence, torture and abused methods of punishment be put to an end as soon as possible.
- Especially the participants in the first group had difficulties in maintaining their family relations during the prison process, so they could not benefit from this important social capital both during and after the prison. Although the participants, especially those with children, want to meet with their children, they experience a dilemma about prison visits because they are uncomfortable to be seeing by their children in prisoner uniforms. On the other hand, since many relatives of prisoners cannot afford the cost of visiting the prison due to economic insufficiency,

communication of the prisoners with the relatives is lost. For this reason, more suitable environments should be provided for prison visits, and if possible, inmates should be provided to meet with their visitors while wearing civilian clothes. On the other hand, it is recommended that those who cannot visit their first-degree relatives in prison due to being in deep poverty will be provided with a resource by the state to visit their relatives in prison at regular intervals. It is considered that this cost will be lower than the total cost of crime in society.

- The educational opportunities offered to prisoners in prisons improve the inmates' self-confidence and increase their chances of finding a job after prison. However, on the other hand, it is reported that the educational opportunities are insufficient especially in the prisons located in rural areas, and in general, prisoners in Ugandan prisons are mostly forced to work in the fields instead of benefiting from education opportunities. It is recommended that the educational opportunities offered to the prisoners in prisons should be increased and they should be given the best possible choice. Because with the education they will receive, they will be able to develop their own strength and skills, and so their efforts to reintegrate with the society will progress more positively in the post-prison period.
- Two main problems stand out regarding vocational training courses in Ugandan prisons. First of all, there is no space reserved for vocational training courses in prisons located in rural areas, and there are no qualified personnel to give the courses. On the other hand, although there is room for vocational training courses, albeit for show, in the prisons located in the urban area, the labor of the prisoners is exploited instead of providing them with knowledge and skills. However, instead of existing practices, it is recommended to create sufficient physical space for vocational training courses in prisons located in rural areas. Then, it is recommended that qualified trainers be appointed for vocational training courses in prisons located in both rural and urban areas, and vocational training should be offered to prisoners on a voluntary basis that allows them to discover and use their talents and strengths.
- Prisoners face health problems due to inadequate and poor physical conditions in prisons, lack of adequate cleaning and hygiene facilities, and occasional work

accidents. However, the health services provided to prisoners in prisons are quite inadequate. Especially in prisons in rural areas, there is a great deficiency in terms of both physical infrastructure and personnel. On the other hand, prisoners are often not allowed to go to the infirmary when they get sick. Being sick is considered by prison staff as a concocted excuse to escape prison work. Therefore, it is recommended to increase the physical and human resource capacity for health services that prisoners can benefit from, and to take necessary measures to allow prisoners to access health services by prison authorities.

- Ugandan prisons do not have professional staff who can analyze and identify the psycho-social and environmental needs of prisoners and develop practices for them. In Uganda prisons, it is recommended that sufficient number and quality of professional staff be employed in order to determine the psycho-social and environmental needs of the prisoners, to create implementation plans, and to facilitate the entry and exit processes of the prison. For this, students studying in departments such as psychology and social work at universities should be provided with practical internships in prisons under the supervision of their advisors, and professional people should be trained in this field.
- There are quite large differences in physical and personnel capacity between rural and urban prisons. Physical conditions, education, work and health services provided to prisoners in rural prisons are worse than in urban prisons. It is recommended to provide a certain standard in prisons in the country, to eliminate the capacity gap between rural and urban prisons, and to strengthen rural prisons.
- The practices for prisoners in Ugandan prisons are based on a system which is a purely punitive approach rather than a rehabilitative approach. However, the aim of prisons should be based on rehabilitating prisoners rather than punishing them, accepting that society creates the conditions that cause people to commit crimes instead of an accusatory approach towards prisoners, and taking responsibility in this regard. Therefore, there is a need for an important paradigm change regarding the structure and functioning of prisons in Uganda. So, it is recommended to establish a

new system based on basic human rights, rehabilitating and empowering prisoners for their reintegration into society, rather than blaming and punishing them.

### **6.2.3. Recommendations for After Prison**

- Positive family and social relations of ex-prisoners are an important source of support and strength in the process of social reintegration with the society after prison, and that family members and social environment provide emotional and economic support to ex-prisoners after prison. Family members and the social environment, in addition to providing social and economic support, they also help ex-prisoners after their release from prison in the process of joining employment by using their own positive relations with employers. For this reason, it is recommended to carry out projects and programs to improve the family and social relations of ex-prisoners after prison and to improve their communication skills, and to develop counseling and support services to be provided after prison. These programs should be developed and followed up in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, starting with the entry of the prisoners into the prison and continuing after the prison.
- Toxic masculinity behavior patterns that are already in the society and reinforced in the prison environment negatively affect family relations and prevent former prisoners from repairing their family relations. In order to improve family relations and provide a healthy family environment after prison, it is recommended to include awareness, knowledge and skill-building trainings on gender equality, women's and children's rights within the social reintegration program recommended for ex-prisoners.
- "Being an ex-prisoner" is added to all the negative conditions that people who are already poor and involved in crime due to social injustice and inequality in the country have after they get out of prison. In Uganda conditions, where it is very difficult to find a job, it becomes more difficult for ex-prisoners to participate in employment, so they are dragged into deep poverty. These conditions negatively

affect the efforts of former prisoners to reintegrate into society and cause them to commit crimes again. On the other hand, those who have the chance to attend a limited number of vocational courses in prisons can get a job with the skills they have acquired in these courses. It is recommended that ex-prisoners be offered free vocational courses after they are released from prison. Thus, ex-convicts will be empowered so that they can participate in employment, break the cycle of poverty that has an impact on their delinquency, and get rid of the effects of social inequality in society.

- Especially in the absence of state-supported social reintegration programs, non-governmental organizations play an important role in this regard and try to fill this gap. Volunteer activities in non-governmental organizations add meaning to the lives of former prisoners, support them to stay away from crime by giving them a sense of belonging and being a part of a whole, and thus constitute an important source of power for them. In addition to this, it is easier for people who acquire certain skills and have a network within the scope of the activities of non-governmental organizations to participate in employment. For this reason, it is recommended to increase the number of non-governmental organizations working with ex-prisoners and to support these organizations by the state and international organizations and development agencies.
- Another important factor that makes it difficult for ex-prisoners to participate in employment before and after prison is intertribal rivalry. It was stated by the participants that especially the tribe members who hold the country's administration were given privileges in the recruitment process. It is recommended to take measures such as ending this discriminatory practice, treating everyone fairly during the recruitment process, and allocating a certain number of quotas for each tribe in official institutions.
- Another important factor that complicates the social re-integration process of ex-prisoners into society and weakens them after they are released from prison is homelessness. Homelessness, which is closely related to economic poverty, also negatively affects the physical and mental health of ex-prisoners and causes ex-



prisoners to re-enter the crime cycle. In order to break this cycle and to solve the housing problem, it is recommended that the state provide rent assistance to people who are released from prison for a certain period of time, and that shelters should be built with low wages until the prisoners are able to find a job and meet their own rent.

- In the process of social reintegration with the society after prison, ex-prisoners face many health problems due to reasons such as inadequate nutrition, lack of shelter and hygiene conditions, but they cannot access health services. In this case, it is recommended that ex-prisoners be provided with food aid for a certain period of time after they are released from prison, provide basic personal cleaning materials, and make arrangements so that they can access basic health services free of charge.
- Prisoners who were addicted to alcohol and marijuana before the prison easily tend to use alcohol and marijuana due to the negative conditions they encountered after the prison, which negatively affects their physical and mental health, and causes them to turn to economic-based crimes in order to obtain alcohol and drugs. However, there is no program for alcohol and substance abuse of prisoners before and during the prison period. This is a situation that disempowers ex-prisoners in the process of social reintegration into society. Therefore, it is recommended to develop and implement programs for the treatment of alcohol and substance addiction in the country and to benefit from these programs before, during and after prison. On the other hand, it should be ensured that the prisoners do not return to their old social environment, which may lead them to use alcohol and drugs, and they should be supported that they acquire a new environment free from addiction by ensuring their social empowerment.
- Regarding the health problems experienced after prison, the female participants talked about miscarriage during pregnancy or that their babies died during delivery. In this regard, it is recommended to strengthen the health infrastructure in the country, to establish health units for women's health and maternity services, especially in rural areas, and to provide these services completely free of charge.
- Corruption and bribery, which negatively affect many other systems, also negatively affect participation in employment and the health system. Bribery is very common in

Uganda in all areas, and Uganda ranks 144th among 180 countries in the corruption index (Transparency International, 2022). This widespread bribery and corruption in the country also causes the legitimization of crime in the society. Ex-prisoners, who were deeply affected by the poverty in the country after the prison, are unable to pay bribes and receive services neither in employment nor in the process of benefiting from health services. For this reason, they tend to criminal behavior again. Therefore, it is recommended to develop an effective fighting mechanism against corruption and bribery in the country.

- Regarding the changes in the prison process on the participants, the participants in the first group talked about the destructive emotional and psychological changes of the negative prison conditions on them. They expressed the changes they have experienced mostly; insecurity, loneliness, abandonment, lack of self-confidence, fear and hopelessness. Considering this change, it is recommended that there should be a psycho-social support phase in the social reintegration program to be prepared for ex-prisoners after prison. Program development should take an approach that encourages ex-prisoners to see themselves in a new and more positive light, with hope for the future, rather than blaming themselves. So that the effects and trauma of the negative prison conditions experienced by ex-prisoners should be treated in a healthy way.
- On the other hand, the participants in the second group talked about changes related to themselves after prison, such as dedicating their lives to a purpose, making efforts to improve family relations, participating in voluntary activities in non-governmental organizations and religious institutions, and these changes facilitated the process of reintegration into society. For this reason, it is recommended that ex-prisoners get to know themselves and realize their strengths after prison, thus helping them to set a goal for themselves, providing support to improve their family relationships, providing guidance and encouraging them to participate in voluntary activities. "Social capital", which includes supportive family and social relations, must be included in the practices to be developed for the social reintegration of prisoners into society.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION FORM

Dear Participant,

I am studying on a Ph.D. research which is entitled “Social Re-integration of Ex-Offender in Uganda-The Missing Link” at Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences. I am studying this topic under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Özlem CANKURTARAN who is working at Hacettepe University Social Work Department under the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the social reintegration experience of ex-prisoners in Uganda and thus to develop recommendations for prisoners, prison administrations, policy makers and other stakeholders. According to this main purpose of the study answers will be seeking for following questions.

- i. How do ex-prisoners who are involved in recidivism and not involved experience the process of social reintegration?
- ii. Which factors influence prisoners and ex-prisoners’ motivation for social reintegration?
- iii. What are the challenges faced by ex-prisoners in their social reintegration process?
- iv. Which strategies can use by different stakeholders to improve social reintegration of prisoners and ex-prisoners in Uganda?

This study will give an insight into how ex- prisoners in Uganda have experienced reintegration into society

A permission for this research is obtained from the Uganda Prisons Service Prison Headquarters. Furthermore, Ethics Commission Approval is obtained from Hacettepe University Ethics Commission. The questions used in this study were carefully selected by the researchers and they were formed by considering the questions and opinions of the researchers. Therefore, your participation in the interview does not pose any risk. This interview will take place in accordance with your voluntary participation. You can feel comfortable throughout the interview and end the interview if you feel uncomfortable. These and similar situations will not impose any legal, financial or moral responsibility on you and the decision taken in the process will be met with respect and understanding by the researchers. Your thoughts and experiences are very important for the study. What we talk

about during the interview will be used for research purposes only and will not be shared directly with your identity and name.

Our interview can take approximately between 45 minutes - 1 hour. In addition, a voice recorder will be used to note your thoughts and experiences more easily. The recorded information will not be shared with other people and will be deleted after the analysis is finished. The information provided by our esteemed participants will support both science and applications in this field and is very important for us.

Thank you for your participation.

If you have any questions or negative thoughts about the research, please do not hesitate to contact the researchers before you give your consent. If you want to ask questions about the research, during and after the research, you can contact Onur YAŞAR (+256 795 297 173) by phone.

If you would like to participate in the research voluntarily after all this information, please fill and sign the places below.

Date:

I voluntarily participate in this research and accept the conditions above.

Participants Name Surname:

Address:

Phone Number:

Signature:

Researcher's Name Surname: Onur YAŞAR

Phone Number: +256 795 297 173

Signature:



## **APPENDIX 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FORM**

Dear Participant,

My name is Onur YAŞAR and I am a Ph.D. candidate at HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY in Turkey. My research is entitled “Social Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners in Uganda-The Missing Link”. In your position, you have useful information to contribute to the success of this study. You are kindly requested to respond to this questionnaire and all information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The study is for purely academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation

### **1. Life Before Prison**

Can you tell me about your family life before prison? (Relation with spouse/partner/children etc.)

Can you tell me about your work and financial situation before prison? (Were you working somewhere? If yes, was your income satisfactory for you? Etc.)

Can you tell me about your housing situation before prison? (With whom you were living with? Was that your own house or rent? Etc.)

Can you tell me about your education and school life? (Did you attend a school? If yes what kind of education did you get? How do you see yourself when you were in school?)

Can you tell me about your social relations and social life before prison? (Friends, spare time activities etc.)

Can you tell me about your health before prison? (Did you have any serious illness? Did you get any operation? If yes, how did your illness and/or affect your life? Etc.)

### **2. Imprisonment**

Can you tell me about the crime that caused you prison sentence?

Can you tell me about a day in prison?

How do you see your relation with other prisoners?

How do you see your relation with prison staff?

Can you tell me about your relation with your family when you were in the prison? (Relation with spouse/partner/children etc.) Did they come to visit you? If yes, how often?

Did you get any health problem in prison? If yes, can you tell me about it? (What was the illness? What did you do for that? Could you get any help for it from prison management? Etc.)

Were there any courses or activities in prison that you found helpful for your life after prison?

Did you get any supervision from prison authorities for your life after prison?

Were there any one that you get professional support in prison? What kind of support do you get etc.? Can you tell me about this?

Did anyone offer you help to prepare you for your release? If yes can you tell me about who offered and what kind of help was that?

Did you have any plans for your release? If yes can you tell me about them? What did you want to do after your release? (about family relations, working, housing etc.).

### **3. Life After Prison**

When you think about your life before prison and after prison do you see and feel any change about yourself? If yes, what kind of changes you see and feel about yourself?

Did things turn out as you thought they would after your release?

Did anyone offer you help after your release? (to organize a place to live, clothes, transport, treatment, training, job etc.? What was your thought about this offer?

What would you identify as the main things that have helped you after your release? What could be better?

Did you face any difficulty in your daily life for your reintegration after prison? If yes, can you tell me about it? What kind of difficulties you faced?

What were your immediate concerns? What do you find most difficult thing about life after prison?

Do you feel any stigmatization because of your prison record in the society? How does this affect your life?

### **3.1. Family and Social Relation**

Can you tell me about your relationship with your family after release? Have you received support from your family? If yes, can you tell me about that support?

Did you have any problem with your family relation because of your prison sentence? If yes, can you tell me about it? What did you do for this problem?

Can you tell me about your relationship with your friends after release? Have you received support from your friends? If yes, can you tell me about that support?

Did you have any problem about your relation with your friends because of your prison sentence? If yes, can you tell me about it? What did you do for this problem?

Were your neighbors aware that you had been in prison? Have you received support from your neighbors? If yes, can you tell me about that support?

Did you have any problem about your relation with your neighbors because of your prison sentence? If yes, can you tell me about it? What did you do for this problem?

### **3.2. Employment**

Can you tell me about your financial situation after your release?

Could you find a job after your release? If yes, how did you get it? Did someone help you to find a job? If yes, can you tell me about it? (Who helped you? What kind of support was it?)

Can you tell me about your average income before and after prison? Was your income satisfactory for you?

Do you have someone that you need to support for financially? If yes, how does this affect you?

Did you face any difficulty or challenge to find a job because of your prison record? If yes, can you tell me about it? What did you do for this problem?

### **3.3. Housing**

Can you tell me about your living arrangements after release? (Where did you go to stay at first place? Did you have to change your house? If yes, can you tell me about it?)

Could you get any support from someone to find a place to stay? If yes, can you tell me about it? (Who helped you? What kind of support was it?)

Did you face any difficulty or challenge to find a place to live because of your prison record? If yes, can you tell me about it?

### **3.4. Health**

How do you see your health after your release? (Did you have any serious illness? Did you get any operation? If yes, how did your illness and/or affect your life? Etc.)

Did you get any treatment after prison? If yes, can you tell me about it?

How do you feel yourself in general? Do you think you need a psychical or psychological support? If yes, can you tell me about it?

### APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Dear Participant,

My name is Onur YAŞAR and I am a Ph.D. candidate at HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY in Turkey. My research is entitled “Social Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners in Uganda-The Missing Link”. In your position, you have useful information to contribute to the success of this study. You are kindly requested to respond to this questionnaire and all information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The study is for purely academic purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation

Questionnaire No.:

Interview Venue:

Date:

Gender of Participant:

Dear Respondent,

#### A. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. How old are you? .....

2. What is your tribe? .....

3. Which district do you live?.....

4. Marital Status: Are you

Single [     ]

Married/Cohabiting [     ]

Separated/divorced/widowed [     ]

5. Do you have children? Yes [ ] No [ ]

(If no, move to Q.8)

6. Number of Children: .....

7. Who do your children live with? .....

8. Have any of your family members been in prison? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes who? .....

## **B. HOUSING STATUS**

9. Your housing status

Your own home Yes [ ] No [ ]

Rent from the Council Yes [ ] No [ ]

Rent from a private land lord Yes [ ] No [ ]

Live with your parents Yes [ ] No [ ]

Stay in a hostel Yes [ ] No [ ]

Other .....

10. For how long you live there?.....

**C. EDUCATION**

**11.** Did you attend any school?                      Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

(If no, move to Q.16)

**12.** Did you finish your school?                      Yes [  ]                      No [  ]

**13.** If you didn't finish that school at what age did you leave the school?

.....

**14.** Do you have any certificate of those?

P.L.E                      [  ]

U.C.E                      [  ]

U.A.C.E                      [  ]

None                      [  ]

**15.** Where did you sit any of the following exams?

Prison                      Community

P.L.E                      [  ]                      [  ]

U.C.E                      [  ]                      [  ]

U.A.C.E                      [  ]                      [  ]

**16.** Did you ever start an apprenticeship/training programs?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

**17.** Did you complete that apprenticeship/training program?

Yes [  ]    No [  ]

18. Which apprenticeship/training program was it?

.....

#### **D. EMPLOYMENT**

19. Before going into prison were you:

Unemployed [ ]

Employed full-time [ ]

Employed part-time [ ]

Training (apprenticeship/trainee) [ ]

Part-time education [ ]

Full-time education [ ]

20. Have you ever lost a job because of your prison record?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

21. Have you ever had difficulty getting a job because of your prison record?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

#### **E. HEALTH**

22. Did you get any medical operation?

Yes [ ] No [ ]



If yes, What was it?.....

**23.** Do you have any disability?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, What is it? .....

**24.** Did you get any psychological treatment?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, what was it about? .....

**25.** Do you have registration for NSSF? (National Social Security Fund)

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**F. CRIMINAL JUSTICE CONTACT**

**26.** What age were you when you first got involved in criminal activity?

.....

**27.** What age were you when you were first convicted in court?

.....

**28.** How much time have you spent in prison (approximately)?

.....

**29.** What age were you when you first sentenced to prison?

.....

**30.** How many prison sentences have you served?

.....

**31.** How long was your longest prison sentence?

.....

**32.** Have you met any of the following persons in prison?

A Probation Officer [ ]

A psychologist [ ]

A social worker [ ]

Prison Chaplain/Imam [ ]

## APPENDIX 4: ETHICS BOARD FORM

Tarih: 29/01/2020  
Sayı: E-35853172-300-00000976481  
00000976481



T.C.  
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
Rektörlük

Sayı : 35853172-300  
Konu : Onur YAŞAR (Etik Komisyon İzni)

### SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi : 27.12.2019 tarihli ve 12908312-300/00000930364 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz Sosyal Hizmet Anabilim Dalı Doktora programı öğrencilerinden **Onur YAŞAR**'ın **Prof. Dr. Özlem CANKURIARAN** danışmanlığında yürüttüğü “**Uganda'da Eski Mahkumların Toplumla Yeniden Bütünleşmesi-Kaybolan Bağ / Social Reintegration of Ex-prisoners in Uganda-The Missing Link**” başlıklı tez çalışması Üniversitemiz Senatosu Etik Komisyonunun **21 Ocak 2020** tarihinde yapmış olduğu toplantıda incelenmiş olup, etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini saygılarımla rica ederim.

e-İmzalıdır  
Prof. Dr. Rahime Meral NOHUTCU  
Rektör Yardımcısı

Evrakın elektronik imzalı suretine <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/lu-ebys> adresinden 7a856d3d-75e6-4bc3-a1e4-f5955b62edf6 kodu ile erişebilirsiniz.  
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