

The Right to Education: Is it a Reality or a Pipe Dream for Incarcerated Young Prisoners in Malawi?

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Abstract: *Young people are often incarcerated in penitentiaries worldwide. Incarceration is not expected to hinder their access to quality education. This article, guided by Marxist theory, examines the practicality of educational rights at five young prisoners' facilities in Malawi. The study used a descriptive phenomenological qualitative research design to engage the voices of 52 incarcerated and released young people in semi-structured interviews to ascertain if prisoners' quality education was a reality or mere pipedream at young prisoners' facilities. The findings show a disparity between correctional education policies and the actual reality. Due to the inadequacy of resources and the negativity of the prison environment, the facilities failed to provide quality, appealing and motivating education to the already educationally disenchanted incarcerated young people, resulting in low enrolment rates. It was, therefore, concluded that education was still a pipe dream at young prisoners' centres in Malawi.*

Keywords: *Correctional education, Malawi, prisoners' rights, pipe dream, young prisoners.*

Introduction

At least one million young people are incarcerated in penitentiaries worldwide (van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). Incarceration is not supposed to hinder their right and access to education. International human rights laws state that incarceration should not forfeit prisoners' rights to education since incarcerated people also have the right to education (Coyle, 2002; United Nations, 2015). This article is based on qualitative research data from a study conducted between August 2021 and October 2022 at five Young Prisoners' Rehabilitation Centres (YPRCs) in Malawi. It examines the practicality of the right and access to education for their school-aged inhabitants to ascertain if it is a reality or a mere pipe dream (policy rhetoric). The study involved 27 school-aged prisoners and 25 previously incarcerated young people to voice out their lived experiences at five YPRCs in Malawi. After a brief explanation of education in prisons in Malawi, the theoretical framework discusses recent literature around equality of access to education and draws on Marxist theory to question the political will to provide quality education for young prisoners. The methodology section explains the phenomenological research design and includes details of the intense ethical considerations required for this study. The findings detail the two key themes and six sub-themes through the use of the participants' voices to highlight the disparity between correctional education policies and reality.



Education in penitentiary facilities

Countries in the United Nations (UN) recognised the role that education play as a main driver of development through their reaffirmation of the provision of quality education for all through the UN Sustainable Development Goal number four (UNESCO, 2015; UN, 2015a). The goal targets and advocates for the successful completion of quality basic education and accessibility of lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 (UN, 2015a). In this respect, the global citizenry reaffirmed in 2015 that education is a “public good” and “fundamental human right that enables the realization of other human rights”, thus needs to be accessed by all young people regardless of their socio-economic circumstances (UNESCO, 2015, p. 75). These young people include those incarcerated in correctional facilities. Global statistics provide that at least one million young people are incarcerated worldwide (van Hout & Mhlanga-Gunda, 2019). Thus, incarceration should not forfeit prisoners’ rights to education (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020).

Globally, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights article 26(1) states that incarcerated people also have the right to education (Coyle 2002). The UN standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) put an emphasis by obligating the prison administrations to provide educational opportunities to young prisoners. According to Rule 104, “the education...of young prisoners shall be compulsory and special attention shall be paid to it by the prison administration” (UN, 2015b, p. 30). This is because young prisoners are among the thousands of prisoners worldwide that are expected to be released from prisons each year (Bachman & Schutt, 2018; Davis et al. 2014; Formby & Paynter, 2020); hence they should not find it difficult to resume schooling or reintegrate in society after their release.

In the African Union’s Agenda 2063, the issue of access to education for young people in the continent is even prioritised (African Union Commission [AUC], 2015, p.14). It is projected that Africa will have the world’s largest young people population of more than 70% by 2063 which will be crucial for the continent’s development (AUC, 2015). Thus, according to the Africa Agenda 2063, young people need to be well-educated and highly skilled (AUC, 2015). Leaving out the young people incarcerated in correctional facilities in this human capital development endeavour might negatively impact the fulfilment of these aspirations and goals.

In Malawi, statistics show that the country has a youthful population, with 51% being less than 18 years as of 2018 (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2020). Most of these young people usually go through age-related problems and hindrances, including a lack of relevant education and skill sets, affecting their participation in the country’s socio-economic and political development (NPC, 2020). Coincidentally, these are factors found to contribute to juvenile delinquency and incarceration in many African countries, signifying the need for education (Johnson, 2015; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). In responding to this issue, Section 25(1) of the Malawi Constitution stipulates that “all persons are entitled to education” (Government of Malawi [GoM], 2018a, p. 16). Moreover, the long-term national strategy, the ‘Malawi 2063’ aspires to “make it compulsory for every citizen to attain at least 12 years of formal education” especially young people “so that learning outcomes are equitable” (NPC, 2020, p. 37). These young people include those incarcerated in penitentiary facilities.

Specifically, Section 163 of the Malawi Constitution mandates the prison authorities to provide rehabilitation programmes, including education, to incarcerated people (GoM, 2018a). The practice is echoed in the Malawi Prisons Service (MPS) strategic plan, which envisioned the department moving from prison to a correctional service (MPS, 2016). In this strategic plan, 47% of funds estimated for the whole department were allocated to the strategic education objective (Kajawo, 2019; MPS, 2016). The funds were for financing numerous activities such as to “enrol all children in conflict with the law into prison primary and secondary education” as well as extending education access to all correctional facilities, especially YPRCs, which included making education accessible to female prisoners (MPS, 2016, p. 25-33). The funds were specifically for constructing more classroom blocks, a library and science laboratory at each correctional facility, and the recruitment of qualified teachers by 2020. However, empirical

studies on correctional education indicate that the laws and policies granting educational rights to prisoners do not always translate into reality in penitentiary facilities (Hawley et al., 2013). Studies in public policies in Africa have revealed that many countries' policies usually end up on shelves as strategic documents without seeing the light of day (Kayuni, 2017; Ng, 2008).

Nonetheless, the limited research on prisoners' education in Malawi shows the availability of education programmes in Malawi penitentiaries (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). Studies indicate that education started informally as early as 1980 during the one-party regime with the adult literacy programme in the penitentiaries (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). However, prisoners started demanding formal education in the early years of the multiparty democratic dispensation in 1994 due to the new constitutional order which recognised the universal right to education (GoM, 2018a). This was also the era in which Malawi introduced free primary education (GoM, 2020). Therefore, it made sense that prisoners should also enjoy the right to education. Nonetheless, the establishment of formal education gained momentum in the early 2000s when schools were introduced at four maximum prisons in Malawi with the support of the incarcerated former teachers who volunteered to teach their fellow prisoners (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022).

Through the years, formal education, which uses the national education system, had been introduced in most prisons in Malawi (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). The Malawi education system uses an 8-4-4 education system consisting of the primary, secondary and university levels (Ministry of Education, 2020). The primary school takes eight years from Standards 1 to 8. At the end of standard 8, learners sit for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLC), which determines their eligibility for secondary education. Secondary school education takes four years; the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) examination is sat in Form 2, and the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) is sat in Form 4 (Ministry of Education, 2020). Prisoners in various penitentiary facilities in Malawi have been sitting for the national education examinations since 2003 (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). In 2020, education was available at 15 out of 30 prison facilities all over the country (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022).

Among the penitentiaries, special attention in providing prisoners' education has been put on incarcerated young people lodged in the YPRCs (MPS, 2015). YPRCs concept was first put into practice in Malawi in 2010 when the MPS set up five facilities to lodge young prisoners (Kajawo, 2019). The Malawi Prisons Act Section 2 defines the term 'young prisoner' as "a prisoner under the apparent age of 19 years" and gives the discretion power to the officer in charge to admit individuals slightly within and exceeding the stated maximum age (GoM, 2018b, p. 1896). Like in many other prisons, the MPS is mandated to introduce educational services in the YPRCs since they incarcerate school-aged young people (GoM, 2018b).

However, gaps still exist in the literature on the meaningfulness of education, especially for the incarcerated school-aged young people in prisons in developing countries. Few studies on rehabilitation and education in Malawi have focused on adult offenders, and to this researcher's knowledge, very few on young prisoners (Stapleton, 2000). There was a need to examine the meaningfulness of the education provided to school-aged individuals incarcerated in YPRCs in Malawi since making education available is usually inadequate. Education should be functionally accessible without institutional barriers (UN, 2015b); to make it a reality for incarcerated school-aged young people and not a pipe dream. This article, therefore, examines the practicality of the right to education at the five YPRCs in Malawi. The article engages the voices of prisoners and their released colleagues in examining the facilities' availability and access to education to ascertain if it is a reality or mere policy rhetoric. The article further explores factors that are likely to affect juvenile prisoners' rights and access to education thus jeopardising its meaningfulness to their rehabilitation process.

Theoretical Framework

This article is guided by Marxist theory. Marxists believe there is always a struggle between social classes (Marx & Engels, 1948; 2018). Marxists assert that educational opportunities are not provided equally to all people in society. They argue that the proletariat are provided with an education of poor quality (Levitas, 2012). Marxists criticised the capitalistic idea that education is a meritocratic system that provides equal chances of success to all people irrespective of their social-economic status (Au, 2018). To Marxists, meritocracy is nothing but a myth which legitimates class inequality and makes people believe that they all have equal chances of success and that grades or measures of success depend on their efforts and abilities (Alvarado, 2010; van Dijk et al., 2020). If they fail, the myth of meritocracy forces them to believe that it is their fault (Alvarado, 2010; Au, 2018; Themelis, 2017). The so-called 'meritocratic' education system reproduces and legitimates class inequality (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Inequality is reproduced since it is carried from one generation to the next. In society, the middle class and other well-off parents use their wealth to ensure their children get a good education from the best schools (Alvarado, 2010). Poor children are more likely to get a poor standard of education, resulting in low educational returns and outcomes (Alvarado, 2010); consequently, class inequality is reproduced.

In the penitentiary context, prison systems are state-controlled repressive environments in the eyes of the Marxists. Althusser (1971) categorised prisons as among what he called the 'repressive state apparatuses' (Althusser, 1971, p. 145; Cole, 2008). Penitentiaries are closed environments in which prisoners are tightly controlled (Farley & Pike, 2018). To the Marxists, the regular prison culture and routines such as security classifications, work parties, lock-downs and headcounts usually impede fundamental human rights (Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Manzini, 2015). It is also argued that security is usually considered a priority in most penitentiaries at the expense of rehabilitation activities such as education (Farley and Pike, 2018; Manzini, 2020).

However, in the rehabilitation lens, penitentiaries, especially those incarcerating school-aged young prisoners, need to be spaces for rehabilitation and education (Davis et al., 2014; Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Meijer, 2017). Coates (2016) refers to education in prisons as the pillar of effective rehabilitation, while Gehring (2017, p. 1) refers to it as the "hidden heritage" of prison reforms (p. 1) because education, even though it is usually overlooked, has always been a crucial rehabilitative activity (Finlay & Bates, 2018). Education is essential because it provides chances for prisoners' meaningful lives during and after their release, making them less likely to re-offend (Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Jäggi & Kliever, 2020; Pike & Hopkins, 2019). Finlay and Bates (2018) argue that education "enables a natural process of self-transformation." Farley and Pike (2018) believe that education improves cognitive processing and enables prisoners to develop and embrace long-term life prospects. Farley and Pike (2018) also observe that engaging in education enables prisoners to strongly identify themselves in status above that of prisoners or criminals, which is rehabilitative in its own right since it enhances positive or pro-social identities (Farley & Pike, 2018; Pike & Hopkins, 2019). This is why it is argued that school-aged incarcerated young people deserve access to education that meets "the minimal standards of mandatory public education" (Jäggi & Kliever, 2020, p. 2).

Therefore, from the Marxist perspective, inequality is legitimated when young people are warehoused in facilities with no access to quality basic education compared to the one enjoyed by their counterparts outside the penitentiaries. It is dangerous, in the Marxists' words, if "...the bourgeoisie [authorities] fail to offer real education" to vulnerable incarcerated young people (Cole, 2008, p. 30). Consequently, these young people would go back into poverty after their release, hence recommitting more severe crimes for survival. Similarly, their children are most likely to also engage in juvenile delinquency; thus the vicious circle of poverty and crime is propagated by class inequality. This is why scholars condemn the incarceration of juveniles

as an outdated approach to dealing with delinquency since it does more harm than good (e.g. Faruqee, 2016; Farley & Pike, 2018). Farley and Pike (2018) argue that incarceration often disproportionately traps the already disadvantaged “segment of the population who are most likely to suffer from institutional racism, systemic bias, and social injustice” (Farley & Pike, 2018, p. 213) and the process, messing their already few lives’ chances or opportunities.

The Marxists, therefore, advocate for equal access to education by all children. Marxists included the provision of free education to all children as one of the ten most important principles in the Communist Manifesto (Marx & Engels, 2018). They even advocate for the abolition of many forms of exploitation of children, such as child labour, that would disadvantage them from acquiring similar education as accessed by other children. Marxism as a theory is still relevant today. According to UNESCO (2015), offering education to people is not enough. It should be of good quality to enable individuals to achieve economic and social goals. Society should not be seen as treating young people outside prisons differently from those incarcerated (Heslin, 2016). If the law entitles every young person to quality education as a right, young prisoners should also enjoy that entitlement since they are the neediest group.

Instead of using education as the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971; Cole, 2008), the education of young prisoners can be a tool for rehabilitation, positive identity development and personal change (Durrant, 2018; Farley & Pike, 2018; Jäggi & Kliwer, 2020; Pike & Hopkins, 2019). In the Marxist lens, education can contribute to a more productive economy and freedom if accessed and provided equally to all persons unimpeded by prejudice and social status (Bowles & Gintis, 2002). Therefore, incarcerated young people need quality education. In this article, the theory is helping in questioning the reality of the right to education for incarcerated young people. The theory further guides in gauging class inequality in young prisoners’ education that could reduce it to a ‘pipedream’.

Methodology

This article is based on qualitative research data from a study conducted between August 2021 and October 2022 at five YPRCs in Malawi. This qualitative segment used a descriptive phenomenological research design in which the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with prisoners and released prisoners. Using this design, the researchers generated rich and in-depth data from individuals who had lived experiences regarding the incarceration phenomenon and how it impacts young people’s right to education (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dubey & Kothari, 2022). This is because phenomenological research aims at understanding the phenomenon through the participants’ lived experiences (Giorgi et al., 2017). The interviews allowed the young prisoners to tell their stories regarding their incarceration and how it affected their education rights. Statistics on prisoner populations and the number of registered students at each facility were also accessed to triangulate participants’ perceptions of enrolments.

Study Participants

The study involved a total of 52 participants; 27 school-aged prisoners and 25 previously incarcerated young people (released within three years). Five serving male prisoners were purposively selected at each facility based on the predetermined vital characteristics such as school attendance versus non-school attendance, gender and age variations to accommodate participants’ maximum variations (Tracy, 2020). Two female prisoners were purposely added to the prisoners’ sample from their population of five, the only young females found at one facility. Five released prisoners at each facility were selected and identified using quota and snowball sampling techniques (Bachman & Schutt, 2018; Tracy, 2020). Reachable released prisoners were identified and contacted by combining these techniques. The contacted participants were used in tracking other released individuals fitting the same study criteria through peer referrals. The study, therefore, involved prisoners aged 17-25 ($m=19.7$) and released prisoners aged 19-27 ($m=22.5$). Prisoners and released prisoners were targeted because they were

the right people to voice out about the incarceration phenomenon in YPRCs (see Roni et al., 2020; Shafi, 2020). The lived experiences in the YPRCs were better and precisely described by the “experienter[s]” of incarceration at the targeted facilities themselves (Giorgi et al., 2017, p. 186).

Data Collection

The study used two semi-structured interview guides for serving prisoners and previously incarcerated released individuals. The interviews were conducted in Chichewa, the Malawi national (vernacular) language. They were also audio-recorded to reduce possible errors in transcription and interpretation of the participants’ stories. Each interview took approximately 40 minutes to complete in a single sitting. For the serving prisoners, the interviews were conducted in privacy (in offices and classrooms) within the facilities. For the released individuals, the researcher allowed every prospective interviewee to choose any place comfortable for them for face-to-face interviews to reduce costs on their part. For the telephone interviews, the researcher allowed the participant to choose the right and comfortable time, which enhanced connectivity and flexibility (Shafi, 2020).

The interviews included questions related to the participants’ perceptions of education accessibility, levels and quality of education available, and the meaningfulness of education as a rehabilitation tool. The interviews also probed on the adequacy of resources (materials, infrastructures and educators), how the incarceration environment impact on their learning, and general factors affecting the school-aged prisoners’ rights and access to education at the YPRCs.

Data Analysis

In the analysis phase, the phenomenological analysis approach was used based on the procedures indicated in Giorgi, (2009) and Giorgi et al. (2017), through which the recorded interview audios were first translated and transcribed from their original Chichewa to English languages by the first author with caution to avoid losing their original meanings. An independent language expert checked the transcripts to reduce transcription errors. The analysis phase followed multiple readings of the transcripts by the researchers to gain an overall sense of the meaning of all the texts. Multiple stories and lengthy descriptions derived from the 52 transcripts were narrated to provide an accurate description of the texts. The descriptions were broken into ‘meaning units’ and categorised to pave the way for proper analyses (Giorgi 2009; Giorgi et al., 2017). In this way, different meaning units were selected and identified as codes and themes in the MS text editor. A macro (ExtractCommentsToNewDoc) in MS word was run to extract the coded data from prisoners’ and released prisoners’ transcripts, which were eventually exported to excel sheets, enabling the organisation of themes and sub-themes. This process created a richly descriptive narrative account of the stories of prisoners and released prisoners.

Research Procedures

Approval to conduct this study was collected before data collection. The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee (Ref: 2021/07/07/13450549/05/AM) and approval from the Malawi prison authorities to involve the serving and released prisoners from the five YPRCs in this study. The researcher used the principles of connectivity, humanness and empathy (CHE) advocated by Brown & Danaher (2017) and Shafi (2020) in establishing interaction rapport with participants in interviews to mitigate the power dynamics and imbalances. Using CHE principles, the research participants were briefed regarding the purpose, procedure and ethical issues. The researcher explained and showed the ethical clearance letters to the participants to indicate that permission was granted for the study to enhance acceptability. This was done in line with the principle of connectivity (Shafi, 2020). Moreover, the researcher strived to maintain atmospheres of informality during

the interview sessions by, among other things, conducting the interviews in Chichewa, Malawi's local languages, and wearing simple clothes to reduce the traditional distance between the researcher and participant in line with the principle of humanness (Brown & Danaher, 2017).

After this initial rapport-building phase, the participants were requested to sign or fingerprint the research consent forms before participating in the study. The interviews with serving prisoners were conducted in safe spaces (empty offices and classrooms) free of intrusion and eavesdropping by third parties to enhance confidentiality (Shafi, 2020). Anonymity assurance of individual participants, as well as the researcher's emotional intelligence and self-awareness of potential power disparity issues with the participants and between the participants and prison officers, assisted in rebalancing the power dynamics (Brown & Danaher, 2017; Shafi, 2020).

Moreover, a pilot study was conducted at one of the adult prisons to ensure the instruments' reliability. The study used the "test-retest method" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 155). Hence, minor issues and errors noted on the instruments were rectified. The trustworthiness of data was ensured through the triangulation of multiple sources (Maxwell, 2012). Data collected from prisoners were compared with data from the released individuals. The results were also brought into the conversation with the existing scholarly literature to significantly contribute to academia.

Findings

The findings have been arranged into two main themes; education was inconsistently available and the offered education programmes were poorly enrolled due to several factors. Each of these themes is discussed in turn. The second theme regarding factors contributing to non-enrolment is further presented as six sub-themes. In this article, participants are identified using the code "YP" (young prisoners) or "Ex-YP" (ex-young prisoners) combined with their respective facility codes and their given unique numbers.

Education was inconsistently available and accessible at YPRCs

This study found that education was available and accessible to young prisoners at many YPRCs in Malawi. Out of the five facilities, the study found that education programmes were provided at only four facilities, except at Facility 5. Respondents from the four facilities reported that some levels of education (primary and secondary school) were freely accessible to whosoever wished to enrol at their facilities, especially the convicted prisoners. At Facilities 2 and 3, even young prisoners on remand were reported to have been allowed to enrol and benefit from the education programme, as some prisoners narrated.

Yes, everyone, especially the convicted, is allowed to enrol in this school for both secondary and primary school sections. The remandees...if one shows commitment and sincerity, they are still allowed... In fact, they encourage long-sentenced prisoners because they can achieve more in this kind of programme (F3/YP/12).

Everyone who wants to enrol is allowed. Everyone, even those on remand, they are allowed to be attending classes since classes are done within the cells' area. So, even those in the shamba working party [involved in working in the maize field] are also allowed to enrol. It is about someone's decision as to whether they should be schooling whilst here or not. But education is free and very accessible (F2/YP/07).

The school-attending prisoners and their released counterparts at the facilities where education was provided indicated to have benefited from the education programmes. One young prisoner said that before being incarcerated, he never had an educational opportunity:

Before I came here, I never had this education opportunity I have here; free education. I can see that my future has taken a good turn with this education, and I am assured of reformation (F1/YP/05).

Even some released prisoners, mainly from Facilities 1 and 3, bared witness to the benefit of education programmes at YPRCs.

I benefited because it helped me acquire a lot of knowledge. Currently, I am running a business, and I know that I am able to run the business well because of the knowledge gotten at prison school. I am also doing a Motor Vehicle Mechanics course, of which the entry qualification is MSCE, which I got from the same facility (F3/EX-YP/11).

These findings are consistent with findings from studies in many African countries which report that many young prisoners' facilities provide education opportunities to prisoners (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020; Johnson, 2022; Makuwerere, 2020; Msoroka et al., 2018). Young prisoners are admitted at borstal training centres in Ghana and Kenya, where they access education services (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Fambasayi & Moyo, 2020). In Lesotho, education is mandatory for juvenile offenders (Johnson, 2022). In South Africa, education is seen as both a constitutional right and a "foundation stone for rehabilitation"; hence is provided to all prisoners (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012, p. 73). Johnson (2015) indicates that South Africa has juvenile correctional centres that are known as 'centres of excellence' where young people are provided with quality education. Furthermore, these findings illuminate the importance of education for young people incarcerated in correctional facilities, concurring with what was found in many studies elsewhere that education enhances the rehabilitation of individuals (Farley & Pike, 2018; Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020; Pike & Hopkins, 2019). This is also consistent with the Marxist idea of education in The Communist Manifesto, which states that education can be beneficial if the same quality of education is freely accessible to all young people (Alvarado, 2010; Au, 2018).

However, the study revealed inconsistencies in the provision of education programmes among YPRCs in Malawi. This study revealed that all young people incarcerated at Facility 5 were completely denied access to education since education programmes were not provided at the facility. According to one 18-year-old boy:

Here there is no school. This is not good. We are not being given an opportunity to proceed with our education while here. Without school, our educational opportunities as young people here are being lost...If school was available here, I would have enrolled in Standard 6 to continue with my education (F5/YP/22).

All young people including the school-aged boys were coercively involved in farming as their major activity while serving their sentences at Facility 5.

The only thing I do here is work at the farm. This activity is not beneficial because farming here is like punishment...farming here is like bullying or teasing... We go to the farm early in the morning. When we return here in the afternoon, we don't rest since we go back in the afternoon (F5/YP/25).

Apart from Facility 5, education programmes were also not provided in the female section of Facility 2 (the only facility incarcerating females in this study). The two young female prisoners reported that they were not enrolled in any education programme at their facility.

We are not enrolled in school... [But] most of the girls who are at this facility

are illiterate. They are being denied a chance for education which our male colleagues on the other side are provided. This is not right. If possible, they should introduce a school in this female section (F2/F-YP/26).

These findings denote a notable inequality in the provision of education to young people in Malawi's YPRCs. These disparities in educational opportunity especially between incarcerated male and female prisoners are also reported by the studies conducted in many African countries (Agboola, 2016; Korzh, 2021; Ryder, 2020). Nonetheless, education programmes needed to be made accessible equally and equitably to all prisoners of all genders, especially the school-aged incarcerated at YPRCs (Hawley et al., 2013; Jäggi & Kliever, 2020; UNESCO, 2015). The findings in this theme concur with the Marxists' claims that educational opportunities are not provided equally to all people in society (Levitas, 2012; Marx & Engels, 2018).

Poor school enrolment and its contributing factors

Despite education being reported as available and beneficial to the young prisoners incarcerated at the four YPRCs, the interviews with various participants in this study showed that most prisoners at those facilities were not enrolled in education programmes. In a bid to verify and triangulate this claim, the school registration records at all facilities were consulted to calculate the percentages of young prisoners registered and involved in education against the facilities' populations. Based on the data collected in October 2022, only 24% of the population of young prisoners (N=748) were enrolled in education programmes at YPRCs in Malawi. This implied that the majority (76%) were not engaged in any educational activity. These findings concur with what was found in a previous study done in 2020, which reported that more than 80% of prisoners in all penitentiary facilities in Malawi were not schooling, even though more than 90% were school dropouts (Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). In the Marxist lens, this is unacceptable since all young people need education (Cole, 2008; Heslin, 2016; Marx & Engels, 2018).

In a bid to understand the reasons for these high rates of non-enrollment, participants were asked to explain factors which they thought contributed to the low school enrolment of many incarcerated school-aged young people at the YPRCs. Six sub-themes emerged, namely: limited levels of education were inconsistently available, low quality of education demotivated enrolment, discouragement due to their involvement in some work activities, prisoners' lack of interest in education, the negative learning environment, and physical abuse and ill-treatment.

Limited levels of education were inconsistently available and accessible

This study found that YPRCs in Malawi did not provide a wide range of educational levels to suit the majority of prisoners' educational needs contributing to some school-aged individuals not being involved in education. Firstly, the data shows that young people who were in the post-secondary educational stage were left out since not even a single facility offered any college or technical skills development programmes. The study found that only basic education (primary and secondary) was available at most of the YPRCs. An example was one 18-year-old boy who was a first-year student at one of the public universities before his incarceration.

I couldn't continue with my bachelor's programmes here because it is not possible. I decided to just enrol in the secondary school level...to make myself busy to avoid staying idle here...It is just I realised that here, the only thing that looks to have significance is school. I just wanted to have something to do while staying here (F4/YP/19).

Ironically, recent studies conducted at adult prison facilities in Malawi report that technical and vocational skills training programmes were accessible to adult prisoners at maximum security prisons (Kajawo, 2019; Kajawo & Nyirongo, 2022). These were the same programmes

that were not provided at YPRCs which were desperately needed by some incarcerated young people. Non-provision of tertiary education in correctional facilities is not uncommon in Africa. Studies report that many African correctional facilities were usually limited to providing primary and secondary education levels (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Chigunwe, 2014). However, studies report the provision of college and university education to incarcerated people in some African countries such as in South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Johnson, 2015; Msoroka, 2019). Aheisibwe and Rukundo (2017) cite the 'Inmates University Study Centre' as an open learning centre established in partnership with Makerere University that provides diploma and degree study programmes to prisoners in Uganda. In South Africa, prisoners obtain university certificates, diplomas and degrees in correctional facilities mostly through open and distance learning offered by various universities, including UNISA (Johnson, 2015). The absence of tertiary education in YPRCs was limiting educational access to some prisoners who had already completed the basic level.

Secondly, among the facilities providing basic education, one facility did not provide post-primary studies (secondary education). The study revealed that only primary education was available at Facility 2 even though it was clear that some incarcerated young prisoners there needed secondary education. Consequently, most ex-secondary students at the facility were involved in farming or engaged as volunteer teachers for primary school students. One 19-year-old young man who was in Form 2 (secondary school) before his incarceration reported to have been engaged as a teacher instead of continuing with his education.

Since there is no secondary school here, I was asked by the education coordinator if I can assist in teaching these primary school students as I was waiting for a possible transfer to another facility. I assist my fellow prisoners as their teachers. I have been volunteering as a teacher for four months. But I desperately wanted to continue with my education in Form 2 as I was already disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic's school suspension but I don't have that opportunity here (F2/EDU/09).

This meant that those young people who were in secondary schools before incarceration were not given any chance to continue with their education at this facility thereby contributing to the low-enrolments. These findings show that many school-aged prisoners at the YPRCs in Malawi were systemically denied an opportunity to continue with their education during their incarceration.

Low quality of education demotivated enrolment

The general perception of all interviewees in this study was that the education was of low quality in the YPRCs' schools which discouraged many incarcerated young people from enrolling. The interviewees indicated the inadequacy and unavailability of essential teaching and learning resources such as library services, classrooms, prescribed textbooks, science laboratories and other accessories such as books, pens, notebooks and mathematical instruments as contributing to their perceived low-quality education in the YPRCs in Malawi. According to one prisoner from the city-situated facility:

The education at this facility is of very low quality... the facility lacks resources making the education here to be not motivating. That is why many students eventually lose interest and start absenting themselves... But for some of us, we still attend because we just don't want to waste our time (F4/YP/18).

Another 22-year-old student at Facility 1 reported that the inadequacy of learning resources was putting students at a disadvantage in national examinations since they were unable to access the resources their colleagues in the community schools were accessing.

We lack many resources, such as books, laboratory equipment and materials. Imagine I take science subjects such as physics and chemistry but feel violated as I have to write my examination with no preparations. This is putting us at risk of failure. We have a library room, but there are no books that we can use. Nowadays, access to information is eased by the use of the internet. But here we have no gadgets to use for the internet since they are not allowed. So we don't have books; we only rely on the teachers' notes. This is putting us at a great disadvantage in terms of examinations (F1/YP/04).

The low-quality education at YPRCs' schools was even confirmed by the released prisoners.

The education was of inferior quality. The resources were usually not available. It usually took the personal efforts of the particular prisoner to do well by sourcing those resources from relatives and family. Another challenge is class time is very small. The school has no lab and a library for students (F2/EX-YP/07).

The participants also reported the inadequacy and, in some facilities, absence of qualified teachers as the main factor contributing to low-quality education provided in the correctional schools. The facilities were yet to recruit qualified secondary school teachers since they had only qualified primary school teachers who were also not adequate. Thus, primary school teachers were also teaching secondary school classes. These few qualified primary school teachers were complemented by untrained members of staff and prisoners as volunteer educators at some facilities. This was voiced out by almost all participants, including a 20-year-old student at Facility 3. According to him:

Most of our teachers are fellow prisoners. We only have four members of staff involved as teachers. Since they are uniformed prison staff, sometimes they are engaged in other duties hence they miss their classes. This affects our education (F3/YP/11).

The involvement of untrained educators was generally not motivating to students because they were not serious with their teaching duties since they lacked the necessary teaching skills. According to one prisoner who was engaged as an educator, involving unqualified prisoners as teachers was counter-productive.

Involving prisoners like me in teaching here is not productive. I have my own problems here regarding my life, and I am not that educated to teach others; we only teach because there are no teachers...This is because trained teachers know the teaching methodologies apart from knowing what they are teaching. But people like me only teach out of the experience and because I learned those things in my education (F2/EDU/06).

Thus, the uniformed members of staff were only involved in teaching mainly during their spare time, resulting in frequent suspension of classes thereby making schooling not interesting to those prisoners who were willing to learn at those prison facilities.

Therefore, this study found that education provided at Malawi YPRCs was generally perceived as of low quality by participants, contributing to low enrollment as well as discouraging continued attendance by many incarcerated young people. This quality of education is similar to the one the Marxists labelled as the proletariat's education provided by the bourgeoisie as an oppression tool of the marginalised groups of society (Levitas, 2012). This is the poor quality education that the bourgeoisie think suits the proletariat to suit their working-class

status, which works in the bourgeoisies' interests since it reproduces and legitimates class inequality (Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Levitas, 2012). Previous studies concur with this study's findings regarding the inadequacy of resources in correctional education programmes in Africa (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Bella et al., 2010; Ismaila, 2020). In Nigeria, Bella et al. (2010) reveal that the education offered in many Nigerian juvenile facilities was marred with many problems, including the inadequacy of school infrastructure, teachers and funds. Similar challenges were reported in Uganda, Nigeria, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Zambia at young prisoners' centres (Ajah & Ugwuoke, 2018; Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Johnson, 2022; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019; Samanyanga, 2016). This just shows that prisoners' education programmes are hardly allocated resources in many jurisdictions.

Involvement in other work activities thwarts educational efforts

This study also found that the involvement of young prisoners in work activities contributed to the majority not being enrolled or dropping out of education programmes. According to this study's participants, it was difficult for most young prisoners to work in certain permanent work parties and continue attending education classes in the YPRCs. Firstly, it was highly likely that students assigned to the most prestigious and lucrative work parties would drop out of school to concentrate on the newly assigned work activities. These were the activities in which prisoners were required to work outside the facilities' four walls enabling them to access the outside world. As one released young prisoner indicated, it was his greatest wish to be put into those lucrative work parties, but he was never lucky. Instead, he just joined education and resumed Standard 8, which he had dropped some years before his incarceration.

That place is difficult, especially when you are just staying inside. I wished I could be put in sanitation or any other work party that regularly went outside, but I never had that chance. It is the prison officers who allocate people to various work parties and activities. If you are not on good terms with them, you cannot be put in any good work party. Only those prisoners who have a special relationship with those prison officers are given those opportunities for those work parties. So I was never put in any work party. Hence, I just joined the school. I started in standard eight (F4/EX-YP/17).

In contrast, a 20-year-old (standard seven dropouts) reported having earned the trust of the facility authorities and got promoted to the status of nyapala (prisoners' in-charge). He was made to be in charge of the facility's sanitation party, which meant he would no longer be involved in the most onerous work party of farming. This is what he had to say when he was asked to justify his non-enrolment in education.

School is good, but I am usually busy with other things I do at this facility. I am busy in the sanitation working party; I also go out to search for firewood and I am a nyapala. So I just decided not to involve myself in education (F2/YP/07).

Young prisoners even reported that some of their colleagues were attracted to the work parties that enabled them to frequently go outside at the expense of their educational pursuance since they provided a rare opportunity for them to access and use contrabands such as chamba (Indian hemp) which were difficult to access and use inside the four walls.

Some of the prisoners use drugs such as chamba. So they usually know that if they are to enrol in school, most of the time they will be in class hence they won't have time to go outside to smoke their chamba because it is literally impossible for a prisoner to smoke inside the facility. So even for those who really wish they could enrol, they would not trade off with the opportunity of going outside to get

a chance to smoke (F1/YP/04).

The young people were willing to trade off their educational opportunities for instant temporary gratifications. Studies reveal that young prisoners are likely to seek temporary short-term gratifications because of their immaturity, naivety and vulnerability to peer influence (McMahon & Jump, 2017; Nagin et al., 1995; Suzuki & Wood, 2018). Thus, it made sense that young people would opt for activities that produce more immediate gratification than education if they are not properly counselled or guided.

Secondly, it was also highly likely for young prisoners not to enrol or drop out when they were involved in work (manual labour) that was considered painful. The study found that many school-aged prisoners were reportedly not schooling because of their involvement in farming.

I initially enrolled in Standard 3 and even started attending classes. But after some time, I decided to stop attending classes. I stopped attending classes because of the workload... They forcefully involve everyone at this facility in farming, including students. They don't leave anybody to study. We were working in the farm in the morning, and attended classes from 1 pm to 2 pm, usually just for an hour and sometimes two. So I was always tired, so I decided to stop (F2/YP/06).

This narrative represented the norm in the perceptions and feelings of the majority of young prisoners involved in this study. Farming was consuming most of the precious time of incarcerated young people including those involved in education.

These findings show that the involvement of young prisoners in particular work parties discouraged their enrolment in education. However, the involvement of students in other work activities is not an exclusive Malawi experience since studies in other parts of the world, including Slovakia and Zambia, have also reported the same (Lukacova et al., 2018; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019). According to these studies, students in correctional facilities had minimal time to learn in a day since lessons were usually conducted in the afternoons after the prisoners had knocked off from their manual work when they were too exhausted to concentrate on academic work (Lukacova et al., 2018; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019). This makes the penitentiary environment difficult for students to excel in their studies since there is hardly time for them to read their books.

Prisoners' lack of interest in education

This study found that despite other factors, the prisoners' enrolment and continued attendance to educational activities in YPRCs were greatly dependent on their intrinsic interest and motivation. This also could be because of their ages which were related to immaturity and naivety discussed earlier, which affected their decisions on life goals and priorities (McMahon & Jump, 2017; Nagin et al., 1995). In this study, most of the prisoners at the facilities where education was available lacked interest in education even though the education was free. A 21-year-old released young man who was already a standard seven dropout before his incarceration had this to say:

I saw that school would take me a long time to achieve my goals. I know myself. I know that I don't have that interest in education... School is not for everyone. Some of us just have to do other things (F3/EX-YP/14).

One 18-year-old boy who dropped out of school in standard two and joined a robbery gang in his community confessed that he never liked school, even before his incarceration.

As a matter of fact, I never liked school, even at home. My parents wanted me to continue with school. Other extended family members also supported me in continuing with school. But school has never been my thing (F4/YP/17).

Another 20-year-old young man, who reported dropping out of school in standard seven before his incarceration, acknowledged that education was accessible to everyone who wanted to enrol at Facility 2 but was not enrolled. He felt there was no need to enrol because his economic status would not allow him to continue schooling after his release.

Education is free and accessible to everyone who wants it here, but I am not interested in enrolling. Firstly, I don't see any future in further pursuance of education after my release from this facility. It is only here that one can get free education. I will need to look for money to pay for my education after my release, besides paying for my bills and basic needs. I cannot manage. So the money I might have will need to be used productively rather than just wasting on fees. All I wanted from education was to be able to read and write, and I can do that; hence I don't need any more education (F2/YP/07).

This young man's education apathy could have partly been attributed to the huge young people's unemployment rates in the country. Even though the number of young people unemployed in Malawi was estimated at 9.5% in 2020, the economically inactive working-age population was estimated at 29% (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2022, p. 17). Therefore, this young man did not see the value of education in his life.

Moreover, in my community, there are many young people who are educated; in my family, we have six or seven educated boys, but it is only one of them who is employed and the rest are still unemployed at home, still dependent on their parents. And for this one who is employed, he had to struggle to get the job. So, I don't think I can gain a lot from education (F2/YP/07).

These results suggest that the low enrolment rate in education programmes among incarcerated young people was mainly due to the structural inequalities caused by economic injustices and poverty propagated by lack of employment opportunities to many young people in the Malawian communities. Consequently, some young people did not see the value of getting an education since the opportunities for meaningful work opportunities were limited. This was exacerbated by the lack of proper counselling, guidance, and motivation within the prison environment to arouse educational interest in young prisoners with school dropout and illiteracy backgrounds. Without proper educational guidance and motivation, it is unlikely for many incarcerated delinquent young people to decide to enrol in school, especially at penitentiary facilities.

The negative learning environment

The environment in which an education facility is located has a critical role in the quality of education provided. Correctional facilities need to provide a safe and peaceful atmosphere of trust and care for effective learning (Ornstein & Levine, 2008; Warr, 2016). However, young prisoners in this study reported that the environment in YPRCs was generally not conducive to education. They complained of disturbances within the classroom area, noise in their cells, poor diet, and overcrowding. One 17-year-old juvenile had this to say:

We have classrooms, but they are disturbed by the noise from the outside. Our accommodations are not good for our studies because we are not allowed to study our notes during the night. Since the nyapalas are tasked to ensure the

security of prisoners in every cell, they suspect that if someone is awake while they are asleep, they might escape. Hence when the nyapalas are going to sleep, everyone is forced to stop whatever they are doing and sleep (F1/YP/05).

One environmental factor affecting school-going young people was overcrowding which was made worse because they were mixed with non-school-going prisoners. This was the cause of the noise. This factor also contributed to the discouragement of many school-aged young people who initially had the willingness to pursue their educational goals in prison.

Honestly speaking, school and imprisonment are not related. We are overcrowded in the cells. It is difficult to study during the night because of the congestion. Imagine you are sleeping on the shamba [the middle part of the floor], and other prisoners who are not students are singing or making noise; how can you study? So the way we sleep is not suitable for studying which ma (F4/YP/16).

This finding was consistent with previous studies that reported that schools in penitentiary facilities face several challenges. The challenges include scarcity of quiet places for students to study or read, congestion and numerous disruptions to schooling caused by the archaic prison laws, and limited class periods (e.g. Aheisibwe & Rukundo, 2017; Mwenya & Chibomba, 2019). Prisons are naturally educationally negative environments which are unlikely to be suitable learning spaces if left without serious checking (Gona et al., 2014; Hopkins & Farley, 2015).

Physical abuse and ill-treatment by prison officers and fellow prisoners

This study found that the prison environment was perceived as not conducive due to the prisoners' physical abuse and ill-treatment. Literature indicates that rehabilitation centres ought not to be arenas of harsh and inhumane treatment of prisoners but for their rehabilitation (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013; Durrant, 2018; Duwe, 2017). This study's findings at facilities three and four did not show any physical abuse or ill-treatment. However, the reported lived experiences were opposite at the remaining three facilities and the male side of Facility 2. Both serving and released prisoners at Facilities 1, 2 and 5 complained of the harsh treatment they experienced perpetrated by some prison officers and fellow prisoners (the nyapalas), especially when working in the maize fields. This inhumane treatment also contributed to their lack of interest in enrolling in school.

This is not a good living place. We experience harsh treatment here. We are whipped when we are working on the farm. Furthermore, we are forced to work beyond our capacity. We do 'ntchito yakalavula gaga' [hard, painful labour]. We do not even have time to rest. The prison warders instruct the nyapalas to make us work hard, so they whip and beat us to make us work harder. We do not even receive soap regularly. Imagine I have one prison uniform, I only wash it once per month (F5/YP/22).

The current and released young prisoners reported that the school-going individuals were not spared in these harsh treatments since they were also involved as labourers in the farms alongside their non-school attending colleagues. It was revealed that many prison officers were not supporting prisoners' education.

They don't support students; in fact, they are harsh to school-attending prisoners. Sometimes when we are in class, the warders would come and take you out to work in the maize field. Many of them don't care about the education of young prisoners. So the teachers have no say because it is believed that all inmates are

in the hands of the security warders, not the teachers. In fact, many of the prison officers were not supporting the school (F1/EX-YP/01).

Many respondents in this study faulted the prison policy of combining education and farming activities at one young prisoners' facility. According to many current and released prisoners, many prison officers at farming facilities did not like those prisoners seriously pursuing their education goals as they considered them as they are using education to avoid working on the farm. To them, prisoners lost their educational privileges when they offended in their communities and were thereby sent to prison for punishment. Thus, prisoners did not deserve education while serving their sentences. Therefore, pursuing education in prisons made many young people primary targets of harsh treatment. As a result, many school-aged young prisoners were discouraged to enroll or continue pursuing their educational goals in the facilities. This was well depicted in one ex-prisoner's narration.

Many prison officers even tell prisoners that they came to prison to be punished for the wrong they did outside. Hence, they need to work on the farm and not just waste time with education which they failed to continue outside. They look at those juveniles as enslaved people. They forget that even the law gives those juveniles the right to education. However, they think education is just an undeserved privilege enjoyed by prisoners. They usually see those prisoners enrolled in education as trying to avoid working in the field, hence trying not to serve their sentence. To them, imprisonment is about hard labour (F2/EX-YP/07).

These are the kinds of prison regimes that abolitionists say "brutalises prisoners, humiliates them, and educates them in the ways of crime" rather than rehabilitating them (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 71). These are the conditions that Marxists observed to disadvantage the already unprivileged young people from acquiring similar education accessed by others. The harsh treatment could demoralise and dehumanise young prisoners, making them not see the value of education. Moreover, this is a blatant abuse of the constitutional rights of juveniles. Section 23 of the Republic of Malawi Constitution states that all children and young people are entitled to be protected from any punishment, treatment, or work hazardous to their physical and mental health and likely to disrupt their education (GoM, 2018a). The participants' observations in this sub-section indicate how harsh treatment of prisoners generally affects young prisoners' decisions to enrol and attend classes.

Discussion

The study has exposed the disparity between the Malawian correctional policies presented in the background section and the reality on the ground. Non-resourcing of the education function by the government translated into the provision of inferior quality education. Worse still, education was completely absent at one of the facilities where school-aged prisoners were incarcerated. It is unacceptable to find countries with YPRCs that deny young people access to education in the twenty-first century (Zitko, 2021). It is poignantly confusing to find a 'rehabilitation centre' without rehabilitative activities such as education. 'Warehousing' school-aged young people in prisons without an opportunity for education access should not be condoned in the 21st century. It was not right to listen to the voices of the school-aged young people who were forced to work as enslaved people on prison farms while being denied access to education. Moreover, the available education at some facilities was marred by substantial resource problems, inadequately staffed with unqualified teachers, and limited to only basic education level, rendering it a useless poor quality 'proletariats' education in the Marxists' words (Levitas, 2012).

Malawi had provided an enabling legal and policy framework for providing young prisoners with education. However, what was still missing in the equation was the will of the poli-

cymakers and authorities to adequately finance and resource education. As it was, what seemed to have changed after the new policy was the change of the names from 'prison stations' to 'Young Prisoners' Rehabilitation Centres' (YPRCs) but not the activities. In reality, the facilities were still the "custodial warehouses misnamed penitentiaries and correctional facilities" so that the country could be seen as moving within the global correctional agenda (Cullen & Gilbert, 2013, p. 65). This incarceration picture portrayed the Marxists' idea of the 'repressive state apparatuses' of prison systems (Cole, 2008, p. 30), which needed to be changed.

This study's findings further show that access to education was still blocked by a lack of motivation mechanisms for the young prisoners to enrol and benefit from such educational opportunities. As the findings portray, young people are often psychosocially immature. They generally come into the correctional facilities with histories of troubled pasts, illiteracy, school dropout, suspensions and expulsion, and family problems and poverty (Cole & Chipaca, 2014; Isufi, 2015; Lambie & Randell, 2013; Ou & Reynolds, 2010; Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012). This was likely to make them develop apathy towards education and schooling thereby easily giving up on their educational goals. This could be the reason most of them were reported to be attracted to lucrative work parties that could provide instant gratification instead of pursuing their educational goals for their futures. Therefore, just making education available at YPRCs is not enough. Blomberg et al. (2011) argue that programmes such as formal education that do not provide special education services that are essential to young prisoners with significant learning and psychological problems in penitentiary facilities are usually not effective. The education programmes must be augmented with other programmes that target mindset change (Durrant, 2018; Hollin & Palmer, 2006; Stone, 2020). The school-aged prisoners in YPRCs needed specific programmes that motivate them to realise the importance of education for their pro-social lives, social autonomy and reintegration.

Conclusion

This article has examined the practicality of the right to education at the five young prisoners' rehabilitation centres (YPRCs) in Malawi. Drawing on the findings from the interviews with the 52 participants, the article argues that there was huge inequality in the provision of education to the incarcerated young people in Malawi's YPRCs. Despite education being perceived by young prisoners as beneficial for their continued schooling and successful reintegration after release, it was noted that education was inconsistently available and accessible at the YPRCs. Out of the five facilities, the study found that education was provided at only four facilities. It was noted that all young prisoners at one YPRC and female prisoners were completely denied access to education since education programmes were not provided. Ironically, education was provided to male prisoners at the same facility where all female prisoners were denied access.

The article further revealed that 76% of school-aged prisoners incarcerated at the four facilities where education was available were not enrolled or had dropped out of school. It is argued that the prisoners' enrolment and continued attendance to the available educational activities in YPRCs are greatly dependent on their intrinsic interest and motivation. In this study, enrolment was greatly discouraged by the delinquent young prisoners' immaturity and naivety which affected their decisions on life goals and priorities, thus, opting for immediate gratifications in prestigious and lucrative work parties at the expense of their education. Therefore, the almost absence of learning resources in the YPRCs' schools, their involvement in painful farming activities, and the negativity of the prison environment at most of the facilities characterised by physical abuse and ill-treatments demotivated many school-aged prisoners' enrollment and continued attendance to education programmes. Additionally, some prisoners were automatically left out from enrollment since the facilities did not provide a wide range of educational levels such as tertiary and even secondary education suitable for their educational needs.

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Appendix: Interview Guides for Data Collection

Interview guide for prisoners

1. Note their gender and age. Inquire about their academic qualifications and their previous level of education in the community before their conviction.
2. Encourage him/her to tell their story from their first day in the prison system. For example, how they were received, what were the first programmes or activities they were engaged in?
3. Inquire on the effectiveness of those activities and programmes on their well-being in the correctional system and their lives after their release.
4. Ask if education is offered at their facility. Ask about how education is administered at their facility. E.g. Enrolment, the levels or classes offered, is it compulsory or not? Is it accessible to everyone?
5. Ask if he or she has ever been involved in education whilst in the correctional system. E.g. If they are not enrolled, ask why. Check their level of education, and inquire why they are not enrolled in free education offered in prison when they need it. Dig for more information.
6. If they are or were engaged in education programmes, inquire about their motivation in participating in those education programmes. Also, inquire about the quality of education offered. E.g. issues such as its accessibility to inmates, the prison environment and its effect on their education. Also, inquire about the availability, accessibility and quality of the classrooms, libraries, laboratories, teachers, hostels and food.

Interview guide for previously incarcerated young people

1. Note their gender, age and current occupation. Inquire about the rehabilitation programmes they were involved in when they were at the Young Prisoners' Rehabilitation Centre.
2. Inquire if they have ever been to school before going to the rehabilitation facility. If they dropped out, which class or level of education did they drop out of school? Did they join school whilst in the rehabilitation facility?
3. For those who did not enrol in the education programme. Inquire from them if the facility they were admitted to provided formal education opportunities. If YES, then why did they not enrol for schooling?
4. For those who reported having enrolled for education whilst incarcerated, inquire about their schooling and on why they joined schooling whilst serving their sentences. Inquire about the quality of school facilities and teaching and learning resources in prison schools.
5. Inquire if they think they benefited from the education they got in the prison facility. E.g. did they obtain any certificates? Did they get employed because of the prison education outcomes? What were the challenges they think were faced in the provision of education programmes at their previous prison facility?