Unlocking Justice through Stakeholder Engagement and the Performance of Prison Decongestion Programs in Nairobi Remand, Kenya

Phoebe Adhiambo Ogallo, Stella Karimi Silas & Thomas Gisemba Onsarigo
The Catholic   University of Eastern Africa
Email: adhiambophoebe19@gmail.com

Abstract: This study examined the role of stakeholder engagement in shaping the performance of prison decongestion programs at Nairobi Remand Prison, Nairobi County, Kenya. Drawing on Performance Theory, Expectancy Theory, and Systems Theory, the research employed a descriptive design with a sample of 269 stakeholders, including prison officers, prosecution counsels, magistrates, and court clerks. Data collected through structured questionnaires and key informant interviewJournals achieved a 97% response rate and were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and NVivo 14. Results revealed that stakeholder engagement had a statistically significant and positive influence on program outcomes, contributing to reduced overcrowding, improved fairness in case handling, enhanced staff work conditions, and more efficient case processing. The study concludes that participatory engagement of stakeholders is critical to the effectiveness and sustainability of prison decongestion efforts. It recommends strengthening collaboration across justice sector actors, aligning stakeholder interests, and establishing feedback mechanisms to enhance accountability and long-term reform.

Keywords: Stakeholder Engagement, Performance. Decongestion Programs, Nairobi Remand, Kenya

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1. Introduction

Prison overcrowding remains one of the most pressing challenges for criminal justice systems worldwide. Decongestion programs, often delivered through community corrections, have been adopted in many jurisdictions as alternatives to custodial sentencing. These programs include probation, community service, parole, fines, and other non-custodial sanctions intended to reduce reliance on imprisonment while promoting rehabilitation and reintegration (Andrade, Sousa, Gonçalves, & Castro-Rodigues, 2023). In Europe, for example, probation hostels and community service schemes have long been recognized as effective alternatives to incarceration (Snacken, 2021). Similarly, in North America, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia, community sanctions are central to correctional reforms, emphasizing accountability, cost-efficiency, and offender reintegration (Aebi, Cocco, & Molnar, 2023). In China, non-custodial sentences play a crucial role in addressing prison congestion while promoting rehabilitation and addressing the root causes of offending (Li & Su, 2020; Lin, Liu, Li, & Ma, 2022).

Across Africa, prison decongestion has gained growing attention as countries grapple with the socio-economic and political consequences of overcrowded prisons. Expanding probation and community service programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Nigeria demonstrates the potential of alternatives to incarceration in alleviating congestion (Davids, 2024; Oise, 2023). Nevertheless, significant implementation challenges persist. In Uganda and Tanzania, for instance, non-custodial measures often face institutional resistance, resource constraints, or cultural preferences for custodial punishment (Olwenyo & Ater, 2022; Materu, 2021). These challenges reveal that the success of decongestion initiatives requires more than legislative reforms—it depends on systematic stakeholder collaboration, sufficient resources, and effective program management.

Kenya provides a particularly compelling case. With 134 penal institutions designed for 34,000 inmates but currently housing nearly 59,000 prisoners, the correctional system operates at almost double its capacity (Kamer, 2022). Over-reliance on imprisonment, coupled with judicial delays and limited application of probation or community service, exacerbates this crisis (Gichana, 2023). The consequences of overcrowding are severe, ranging from deteriorating living conditions and inadequate healthcare to ineffective rehabilitation efforts and increased exposure of minor offenders to hardened criminals (Kimondo, 2020; Anglin, 2023). Overcrowding not only undermines the human rights of prisoners but also places immense financial strain on the justice system, hindering its ability to deliver effective correctional services.

Within this context, stakeholder engagement has emerged as a pivotal factor in determining the effectiveness of prison decongestion efforts. Stakeholder engagement refers to the meaningful involvement of all relevant actors including prison officers, magistrates, prosecution counsels, probation officers, community representatives, and policymakers in the planning, execution, and monitoring of community correction programs (De Marchi, 2020). Research suggests that active stakeholder participation enhances program legitimacy, accountability, and sustainability by ensuring that diverse perspectives and resources are incorporated into decision-making (Cliquennois & Birch, 2020). In practice, magistrates and prosecutors influence sentencing patterns, probation officers oversee reintegration, and community organizations provide support structures that enable offenders to rebuild their lives. When these actors collaborate effectively, non-custodial programs are more likely to reduce prison populations, enhance fairness in the justice system, and promote successful reintegration.

Despite these insights, the Kenyan context continues to demonstrate gaps in stakeholder collaboration. Limited

resources, weak coordination across institutions, and institutional resistance hinder the potential of community corrections as sustainable alternatives to imprisonment (Koome, 2020). This highlights a critical gap in understanding how stakeholder engagement directly influences the performance of decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand Prison one of the most overcrowded facilities in the country.

Addressing this gap is significant for both policy and practice. First, it offers evidence-based strategies for reducing overcrowding, which remains a significant human rights concern and an impediment to the delivery of justice. Second, it highlights the role of participatory governance in correctional reform, underscoring the importance of coordinated approaches that involve all justice sector actors. Finally, the insights can inform broader correctional reforms across Africa and other regions facing similar challenges of overcrowding and limited resources.

Therefore, this study examines the influence of stakeholder engagement on the performance of prison decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand Prison, Kenya. By focusing on stakeholder involvement, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how participatory approaches shape the success of decongestion initiatives, offering policy-relevant recommendations for sustainable correctional reforms.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Prison overcrowding has become a global challenge, undermining the effectiveness of correctional systems and threatening the human rights of inmates. To address this, many countries have adopted decongestion programs through community corrections, emphasizing non-custodial measures such as probation, parole, and community service (Andrade, Sousa, Gonçalves, & Castro-Rodigues, 2023; Snacken, 2021). While such initiatives have demonstrated effectiveness in regions like Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa, their success is largely dependent on stakeholder engagement, program planning, and systematic monitoring (Cliquennois & Birch, 2020; De Marchi, 2020).

Kenya's correctional system is currently under severe strain. With 134 penal institutions designed for a capacity of 34,000 inmates, the country houses nearly 59,000 prisoners, operating at almost double capacity (Kamer, 2022). The situation is particularly acute in Nairobi Remand Prison, which is one of the most congested facilities. Overcrowding has contributed to deteriorating accommodation standards, inadequate healthcare services, increased exposure of minor offenders to hardened

criminals, and rising recidivism rates (Kimondo, 2020; Anglin, 2023). Despite the introduction of non-custodial sentencing, excessive reliance on imprisonment, judicial delays, and limited application of probation or community service continue to exacerbate congestion (Gichana, 2023).

While decongestion programs have been initiated in Kenya, their implementation faces systemic challenges. Weak coordination among justice sector actors, inadequate resources, and limited community participation undermines their effectiveness (Koome, 2020). The absence of strong stakeholder engagement encompassing magistrates, prosecutors, prison officers, probation officers, and community representatives has particularly constrained program performance. Without meaningful collaboration, decongestion initiatives risk becoming ad hoc and unsustainable, failing to achieve their intended goals of reducing prison populations and enhancing rehabilitation.

Therefore, the central problem lies not only in prison congestion itself but also in the insufficient engagement of key stakeholders who influence the design, execution, and monitoring of decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand Prison. Unless addressed, overcrowding will persist, undermining correctional reforms, straining state resources, and violating fundamental rights. This study thus seeks to investigate how stakeholder engagement influences the performance of prison decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand Prison, Kenya, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations for sustainable correctional reforms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Performance theory, originating from theater, anthropology, and sociology and systematized by Schechner in 1985, conceptualizes human and organizational behavior as performative acts extending beyond the stage into everyday life. It underscores the importance of measurable outcomes such as efficiency and quality, while also recognizing the role of culture and social interaction (Stopka et al., 2023). In correctional settings, it explains how roles enacted by inmates and officers influence behavior and provides a lens for evaluating stakeholder involvement and resource use in prison decongestion initiatives (Johansson & Ärlestig, 2022). Complementing this, expectancy theory, introduced by Vroom (1964), emphasizes motivation as shaped by expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, where individuals act based on anticipated rewards (Fang, 2023). Applied to prison reforms, it shows how aligning judicial, prosecutorial, and correctional objectives with

decongestion targets enhances motivation and performance, though critiques caution its rational-choice bias (Johnston et al., 2023). Systems theory, developed by von Bertalanffy (1968), frames organizations as interdependent wholes where change in one component reverberates across the system (Nursaadah et al., 2022). In Nairobi Remand, it illuminates the interconnections among judicial processes, correctional practices, and reintegration, offering a holistic framework for addressing systemic bottlenecks. Collectively, these theories enrich the analysis of stakeholder engagement and performance in prison decongestion programs.

2.2 Empirical Review

Stakeholder Engagement and Performance of Prison Decongestion Programs

Stakeholder engagement has emerged as a critical determinant of project performance across diverse sectors, including criminal justice reforms such as prison decongestion. It entails identifying, analyzing, and involving all relevant actors in decision-making to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and legitimacy (Xie, Malik, Linthicum, & Bright, 2021). In correctional contexts, stakeholders go beyond correctional staff and policymakers to include inmates, judicial officers, law enforcement, Correctional social workers, probation officers, families of offenders, civil society organizations, and communities (Simiyu & Muhingi, 2025). Effective engagement is therefore more than consultation; it requires sustained dialogue and participatory processes throughout project implementation.

Theoretically, stakeholder theory underscores the need to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders rather than privileging state or institutional priorities alone (Freeman, 1984). Applied to prison decongestion, this implies that policies must reflect the voices of communities receiving parolees, probation services, and NGOs advocating for rights-based approaches. Research indicates that inclusion of diverse perspectives strengthens program acceptance, compliance, and sustainability (Pare Toe, Dicko, Linga, et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence supports these claims globally. In the United States, stakeholder involvement has enhanced outcomes in healthcare, infrastructure, and criminal justice reforms (Triplett et al., 2022). Similarly, participatory engagement in adolescent HIV programs in Rwanda improved mental health outcomes and community trust (Triplett et al., 2022). In Europe, early stakeholder integration has been linked to more legitimate and effective projects, with higher levels of public trust (Martinez et al., 2022; Bruce-Lockhart, 2022). These cases show that

engagement fosters ownership and accountability, thereby enhancing program effectiveness.

In Africa, inclusive stakeholder engagement has been instrumental in shaping policy and reform. In South Africa, involving diverse actors in alcohol pricing policy enriched evidence translation and improved compliance (Gibbs et al., 2021; Ross, Gibbs, & Sparks, 2022). In Nigeria, engagement in infrastructure projects strengthened efficiency and resource allocation, while stakeholder inclusion in public health policies enhanced legitimacy (Nicholas, 2023; Gibbs et al., 2023). These lessons are applicable to correctional reforms, where acceptance of community service or probation depends on community involvement in their design and execution.

Kenya, facing acute overcrowding, reflects similar dynamics. Transparent engagement has been shown to foster trust and promote reform sustainability (Muhandi, 2024). Participatory decision-making increases acceptance of offender reintegration initiatives, though challenges persist. Conflicting interests, resource scarcity, and institutional capacity gaps hinder full engagement (Nicholas, 2023). Communities may resist reintegration if insufficiently sensitized, while judicial officers may resist non-custodial sentencing if excluded from program design. Such barriers highlight the need for deliberate strategies to manage tensions and promote inclusive dialogue.

Critically, tokenistic participation remains a risk. When consultation is superficial, intended only to legitimize predetermined outcomes, mistrust can result, undermining reform efforts (Bruce-Lockhart, 2022). Given the sensitivity of prison decongestion, avoiding tokenism is essential. This requires structured frameworks emphasizing transparency, accountability, and meaningful participation. Mechanisms such as continuous feedback loops, effective communication, and collaborative problem-solving can enhance program ownership and trust (Muhandi, 2024).

In conclusion, evidence from global and African contexts demonstrates that stakeholder engagement is indispensable for the success of prison decongestion programs. It strengthens effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy while promoting offender reintegration through community trust. Yet, challenges such as conflicting interests, inadequate resources, and tokenism must be addressed through robust, inclusive strategies. Stakeholder engagement is, therefore, not merely a procedural requirement but a transformative process critical to sustaining correctional reforms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel design, which allowed simultaneous collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to explore the dynamics of prison decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand Prison (Gichana, 2023). Quantitative data were collected through structured surveys, while qualitative data were obtained via semi-structured interviews. The parallel design ensured that both forms of data were collected independently, and subsequent triangulation enhanced the validity of findings by corroborating results from multiple sources (Kumar & Praveenakumar, 2025).

3.2 Study Area

The research focused on Nairobi Remand Prison, a central correctional facility in Nairobi County. Unlike other prisons in Kenya, this institution was chosen for its unique operational context and its central role in managing high prisoner inflows. The study examined project management processes, including planning, execution, stakeholder involvement, monitoring, and evaluation, to assess how they influenced the success of decongestion initiatives. Ultimately, the study sought to highlight how structured project management could improve the outcomes of prison decongestion strategies.

3.3 Target Population

The target population comprised 550 prison staff, including 525 prison officers and 25 prosecution state counsels, as well as 100 key informants made up of 10 magistrates and 90 court clerks (Harrison, Reilly, & Creswell, 2020; Gregar, 2023). In total, the population of interest was 650, with the quantitative component focusing on prison staff and prosecution counsels, while qualitative insights were drawn from magistrates and clerks.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

To ensure representativeness, the sample size was calculated using Yamene's formula (1967) at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, yielding 231 participants. Stratified random sampling was used to separate prison officers and prosecution counsels into homogeneous groups, after which proportionate random sampling selected 220 officers and 11 counsels. Purposive sampling identified 12 key informants, comprising 4 magistrates and 8 clerks. This ensured adequate

representation across categories while maintaining methodological rigor.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection employed mixed tools to capture both breadth and depth. Structured questionnaires, designed around six thematic areas—background information, stakeholder engagement, project planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation, and overall program performance—were used for the quantitative study. Likert-scale questions enabled systematic measurement and statistical analysis. For the qualitative component, key informant interviews with magistrates and clerks employed open-ended questions to gain deeper insights into judicial perspectives, alternative sentencing practices, and systemic challenges affecting decongestion programs.

Pilot Testing, Validity, and Reliability

Pilot testing was conducted in Kiambu prisons with 23 participants (10% of the study sample) to assess clarity, feasibility, and instrument reliability (Muasya & Mulwa, 2023). Feedback led to revisions that improved content and construct validity, ensuring coherence with the study objectives (Mukumbang, 2023). Internal consistency reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.7 adopted as the benchmark for acceptable reliability (Hirose & Creswell, 2023).

Reliability analysis results

To ensure internal consistency of the research instrument, a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was conducted for all five key constructs in the study.

Table 1: Reliability results

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Stakeholder Engagement	6	0.868	Good Reliability
Planning	6	0.900	Excellent Reliability
Execution	6	0.713	Acceptable Reliability
Monitoring	6	0.802	Good Reliability
Performance	6	0.702	Acceptable Reliability

Source: Field data (2025)

The results showed that all variables had alpha values ranging from 0.702 to 0.900. All the variable had alpha above 0.70, indicating strong internal reliability (Schober, Mascha & Vetter, 2021. This implied that the items measuring stakeholder engagement, planning, execution, monitoring, and performance of decongestion programs were consistent and dependable. Therefore, the instrument used was appropriate and robust, enhancing the credibility of subsequent analysis and findings**.**

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Ethical approval and research permits were obtained from the university, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), and prison authorities. Data collection was conducted with the assistance of trained research assistants. Participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Sensitive information was handled carefully to minimize risks, and data security protocols were observed to ensure integrity.

3.7 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied in data analysis. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics—frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—summarized the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation and simple linear regression, were employed to test relationships between project management practices (stakeholder engagement, planning, execution, and monitoring) and the performance of decongestion programs. The regression model used was:

$$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+e$$

where *Y* represented the performance of decongestion programs, and *X1–X4* represented project management cycle stages.

Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to complement quantitative findings, ensuring richer insights into judicial and institutional perspectives.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to research ethics. Informed consent was sought from all participants, who were briefed on the study's purpose, risks, and benefits. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, with sensitive data securely stored and access restricted. Non-maleficence was observed to ensure participants faced no harm from involvement. The research complied with institutional review and national ethical guidelines, ensuring transparency, honesty, and respect for participants' rights.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 247 questionnaires administered to the staff at Nairobi Remand, 224 were successfully filled and returned, yielding a very high response rate of 97.0%. further, the study conducted 10 KIIs with the respondents.

Table 2: Summary of Response Rate

Data Collection Tool	Administered	Successfully Returned/Completed	Response Rate
Questionnaires (Staff)	247	224	97.0%
Interviews with Key Informants	12	10	

Source: Field data (2025)

The response rate (97.0%) was considered high, commendable, and adequate for the analysis. The high responses could be attributed to the institutional approach by encouraging the respondents, the subject might find the research directly relevant to the daily work environment and policy interests of the respondents, motivating their participation. Assurance of confidentiality and anonymity may have encouraged open and honest responses. However, the 3.0% non-response could be due to the busy schedules, work shifts or leave during the data collection. According to Babbie (2020), a response rate above 70% is considered good, reducing the likelihood of non-response bias and ensuring that the findings are robust and generalizable within the institution.

Additionally, out of the 12 planned interviews with key informants, 10 were successfully conducted. The 10 was achieved due to pre-scheduling and follow-ups and the qualitative significance of the interviews. The 2 key informants who did not respond to the interviews cited unforeseen scheduling conflicts and urgent duties
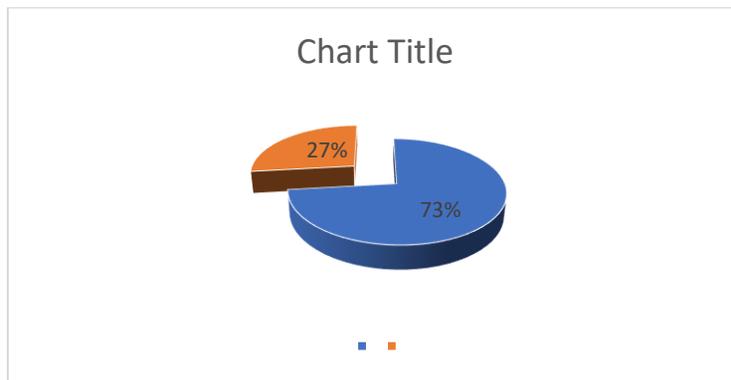
4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The study analyzed the descriptive statistics of background information: gender, years worked by the respondents, age, and education. such as frequency and percentages. They were used to describe the characteristics of the sample and support the general understanding of the research question.

Gender

The study sought the gender of the respondents

Source: Field data (2025)

Figure 1: Pie chart of the gender of the respondents

The study found that 73% of the respondents were male (n = 164), while 27% were female (n = 60), indicating a clear gender imbalance among staff at Nairobi Remand Prison. This distribution reflects the male-dominated nature of correctional institutions in Kenya, where most frontline and operational roles are traditionally held by men due to the physically demanding and security-intensive nature of the work (Mburu & Ombaka, 2021).

The study analyzed gender to understand how staff engage with and influence the performance of prison decongestion programs. The male and female officers may differ in their approach to stakeholder engagement, execution of plans, or communication styles, all of which are important components of effective decongestion efforts.

4.3 Years worked by the respondents

The study analyzed the frequency by years of service at Nairobi Remand Prison among the respondents.

Table 3: Years worked by the respondents at Nairobi Remand

Response	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	32	14.3
(1-3 years)	107	47.8
(4-6 years)	63	28.1
(7-10 years)	15	6.7
More than 10 years	7	3.1
Total	224	100.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The results indicate that the majority had worked for 1–3 years (47.8%, n = 107), followed by 4–6 years (28.1%, n = 63) and less than 1 year (14.3%, n = 32). A smaller proportion had served 7–10 years (6.7%, n = 15) or more than 10 years (3.1%, n = 7). These findings suggest that most staff are relatively new or mid-level in experience, which may reflect recent staff recruitment, transfers, or workforce turnover within the correctional system. Staff with fewer years in service may bring fresh perspectives and adaptability, which are crucial in implementing evolving reforms like decongestion programs. Conversely, the low percentage of highly experienced staff could affect institutional memory and policy continuity. The findings mirrored the Wangari and Kithinji (2020) finding that the government staffing policies and transfers often result in relatively high turnover, especially among junior or mid-level staff in correctional institutions with officers in such facilities working below five years at a single institution before being moved). However, staff experience levels significantly affect the efficiency and success of policy implementation in correctional facilities (Mutuma & Muriuki, 2020).

4.4 Age distribution

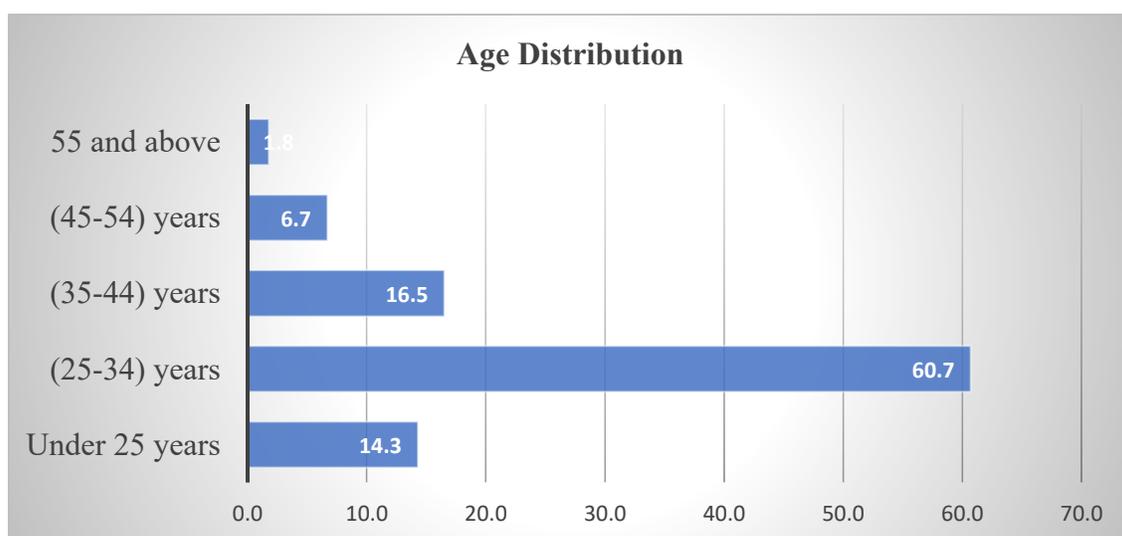The study analyzed the age categories the respondents belonged.

Figure 2: Bar graph of age distribution

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The results indicate that the majority of respondents were aged 25–34 years (60.7%, n = 136), followed by those aged 35–44 years (16.5%, n = 37) and under 25 years (14.3%, n = 32). Smaller numbers were aged 45–54 years (6.7%, n = 15) and 55 years and above (1.8%, n = 4). This distribution suggests that the workforce at Nairobi Remand is predominantly young to mid-aged, with more than three-quarters (75%) of staff being below 35 years old. This indicates the nature of recruitment drives, civil service age structures, or staff attrition patterns. According to Osei and

Boateng (2021), staff age significantly influences perceptions and adoption of criminal justice reforms, with younger personnel showing more flexibility and higher engagement in new operational approaches.

4.5 Education Level

The study sought the highest level of education attained by the respondents.

Table 4: Education level

Education level	Frequency	Percent
O Level	46	20.5
College/Technical	102	45.5
Undergraduate	59	26.3
Masters	14	6.3
Doctorate	3	1.3
Total	224	100.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings show that most respondents had attained a college or technical level of education (45.5%, n = 102), followed by those with undergraduate degrees (26.3%, n = 59). Additionally, 20.5% (n = 46) had reached O Level, while 6.3% (n = 14) had master's degrees and only 3 (1.3%) held doctorates. This indicates that the majority of staff are moderately to highly educated, with nearly 80% having post-secondary education. The relatively high educational attainment among correctional staff suggests potential for effective understanding and implementation of institutional reforms such as prison decongestion programs. It also reflects the government's commitment to employing skilled personnel in the criminal justice system. As observed by Nyaga and Atinga (2020), the education

level of correctional officers significantly correlates with the successful implementation of rehabilitation and decongestion strategies, as it influences their decision-making and reform-oriented behavior.

4.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The first study objective was to establish the influence of Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder Collaboration, Stakeholder Communication, Stakeholder Participation, Stakeholder Training and Performance of Prison Decongestion programs in Nairobi Remand, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 5: Respondents' Opinions on Stakeholder Engagement

Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
Stakeholder communication is maintained throughout the prison decongestion initiatives, ensuring clear and consistent information flow.	7 (3.1%)	9 (4.0%)	78 (34.8%)	87 (38.8%)	43 (19.2%)	3.67	.936
There is no proper communication to all the stakeholders involved in decongestion initiatives in Nairobi Remand Prison.	1 (0.4%)	8 (3.6%)	62 (27.7%)	96 (42.9%)	57 (25.4%)	3.89	.840
Stakeholder participation is adequately encouraged and facilitated in the planning and execution of prison decongestion programs, allowing for active involvement from all parties.	5 (2.2%)	7 (3.1%)	44 (19.6%)	110 (49.1%)	58 (25.9%)	3.93	.883
All staff members are trained on how to handle issues pertaining the programs being implemented.	5 (2.2%)	7 (3.1%)	38 (17.0%)	108 (48.2%)	66 (29.5%)	4.00	.891
Not all staff members are trained on how to handle issues pertaining the programs being implemented.	7 (3.1%)	5 (2.2%)	71 (31.7%)	94 (42.0%)	47 (21.0%)	3.75	.917
The training provided on prison decongestion programs is not effective, and many officers lack technical skills and knowledge.	7 (3.1%)	3 (1.3%)	71 (31.7%)	95 (42.4%)	48 (21.4%)	3.78	.905

Source: Field data (2025)

The findings reveal that several aspects of stakeholder engagement in prison decongestion programs were positively rated by respondents. A majority agreed that stakeholder communication is maintained throughout the initiatives (M = 3.67, SD = .936), ensuring a clear flow of information. This was echoed by KII 04 (male), who stated,

"We receive regular updates from the department and management on what's expected, especially when there are major releases or policy shifts."

However, some KIIs expressed differing experiences; KII 07 (female) noted,

"Sometimes we get the communication too late, or not at all, especially frontline officers."

On stakeholder participation, 75% agreed it was actively facilitated (M = 3.93, SD = .883), with KII 03 (female) explaining,

"We are often invited to meetings and allowed to share our views before any major decongestion operation begins."

Regarding staff training, which had the highest mean (M = 4.00, SD = .891), KII 08 (male) supported this sentiment, saying,

"All the officers were trained last year on the new parole procedures and reintegration programs."

These positive views align with Ouma and Okoth (2021), who emphasize that consistent stakeholder involvement improves project outcomes, especially when training and communication are prioritized.

On the other hand, some items revealed contradictions or concerns. Although many agreed that communication is maintained, a significant portion still agreed with the statement that there is no proper communication to all stakeholders (M = 3.89, SD = .840).

KII 02 (female) remarked,

"Most times, only senior officers get the full picture—junior staff have to rely on rumors."

This indicates potential information bottlenecks. Additionally, while some respondents confirmed the presence of staff training, others agreed that not all staff are trained (M = 3.75, SD = .917) or that training is ineffective (M = 3.78, SD = .905).

Supporting this, KII 06 (male) stated,

"A good number of us have not gone through formal training on decongestion procedures—some just learn on the job."

Similarly, KII 09 (female) noted,

"The training is often theoretical; when challenges come up during implementation, we are left on our own."

These inconsistencies mirror findings by Musyoka and Muturi (2022), who highlighted how partial stakeholder involvement and unstructured training limit the effectiveness of correctional program implementation. The relatively low standard deviations (all < 1) indicate consensus among respondents, showing that the concerns are widespread and not isolated cases.

Table 6: Emerging themes from qualitative data

Theme	Description	Supporting Evidence (Quantitative & Qualitative)
Stakeholder Communication	Communication is generally maintained, but inconsistencies and delays exist, creating information gaps between senior and frontline officers.	Quantitative: M = 3.67, SD = .936 (communication maintained); M = 3.89, SD = .840 (no proper communication). KII 04 (male): *"We receive regular updates…"*; KII 07 (female): *"Sometimes we get the communication too late, or not at all…"*; KII 02 (female): *"Only senior officers get the full picture."*
Stakeholder Participation	Participation is encouraged, with most staff involved in planning and operations, fostering inclusivity.	Quantitative: M = 3.93, SD = .883. KII 03 (female): *"We are often invited to meetings and allowed to share our views…"*
Staff Training	Training is widely implemented and rated highly, but uneven coverage and limited practical application weaken its effectiveness.	Quantitative: M = 4.00, SD = .891 (all trained); M = 3.75, SD = .917 (not all trained); M = 3.78, SD = .905 (training ineffective). KII 08 (male): *"All officers were trained last year…"*; KII 06 (male): *"A good number… have not gone through formal training."*; KII 09 (female): *"The training is often theoretical…"*
Program Performance Implications	Effective engagement (communication, participation, training) enhances decongestion outcomes, but gaps in consistency, inclusivity, and practical training hinder sustainability.	Supported by Ouma & Okoth (2021); Musyoka & Muturi (2022). Low SD values (<1) indicate broad consensus among respondents.

Source: Field data (2025)

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study assessed the influence of stakeholder engagement on the performance of prison decongestion programs at Nairobi Remand Prison. Findings established that meaningful participation of diverse actors—prison staff, prosecution counsels, magistrates, and clerks—significantly enhanced the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of decongestion initiatives. By triangulating quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study demonstrated that stakeholder involvement improved planning, resource utilization, case processing, and acceptance of decongestion strategies. Moreover, participatory engagement fostered trust, accountability, and fairness within the correctional system. However, challenges such as conflicting interests, limited resources, and structural constraints emerged as barriers to optimal implementation. The study concludes that stakeholder engagement is not only a supportive practice but also a determinant of project performance in prison reforms.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Family and Individual Level

Educate incarcerated individuals and their families on the benefits of decongestion programs and create opportunities for restorative justice approaches to reduce resistance to non-custodial sentences.

2. Institutional Level

Strengthen multi-stakeholder platforms within the judiciary and correctional services to facilitate continuous dialogue and shared responsibility in implementing decongestion strategies. Establish structured training

programs for prison officers and counsels on participatory project management and case handling efficiency. Integrate digital systems to streamline case tracking and monitoring, minimizing delays in judicial processes.

3. Community Level

Enhance public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma against offenders benefiting from alternative sentencing, thereby increasing community acceptance. Partner with civil society organizations and faith-based institutions to support reintegration programs for released inmates.

4. Policy Level

Institutionalize stakeholder engagement frameworks within Kenya's correctional policy to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. Allocate targeted resources to support collaborative decongestion programs, including investments in community-based correctional alternatives. Develop feedback and evaluation mechanisms that monitor stakeholder involvement and its direct contribution to program outcomes.

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