

# Chapter 8

## Comparative Analysis of Diversion Programs for Children in Kenya and Tanzania

**Antony Wando Odek**

*St. Paul's University, Kenya*

**Victor Wakumile Ndururu**

*Independent Researcher, Kenya*

**Terry Odhiambo**

*United States International University-Africa, Kenya*

**Jane Gift Akinyi**

*Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter presents a comparative analysis of juvenile justice systems in Kenya and Tanzania, with a focus on the implications of diversion programs on child development. Although both countries emphasize rehabilitation over punitive measures, significant gaps in aligning with international standards remain. Through an analysis of secondary data from legislative documents, policy reports, and case studies, the chapter highlights Kenya's structured interventions and their implementation challenges, as well as Tanzania's community-based approach, which lacks detailed guidelines. The study concludes with recommendations for developing training programs, addressing resource limitations, and enhancing research to foster evidence-based improvements in both systems.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-9343-4.ch008

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Youth are a nation's future assets, but they face current concerns such as drug usage and criminal activity. As a result, every jurisdiction in the world is dealing with the issue of juvenile delinquency, which refers to children's behaviours that deviate from criminal law standards and has far-reaching consequences for society and economic growth (Sarwanto, 2023). Juvenile delinquency has become a major issue during the last decade. From 2009 to 2019, juvenile crime rates increased noticeably in many regions (Feld, 2019).

According to a United Nations Office on Drugs and criminality (UNODC) report (quoted in Young & Giller, 2021, p.3), adolescent criminality in Europe increased by 2.6% in 2021, compared to 1.7% the previous year. Similarly, other regions saw various rates of growth: South East Asia by 0.7%, Latin America by 3.9%, and North America by 1.8%. The unusually high proportion of youth crime in Latin America has been related to the drug economy that exists in countries such as Mexico and Colombia (Bagley & Rosen, 2017). The drug trade provides both motive and means for youngsters to engage in illegal activity, resulting in much higher crime rates in these areas.

Juvenile delinquency is also a big concern in Africa, with an increasing number of young people getting involved in illegal activities. Juvenile delinquency has increased dramatically in Africa's quickly developing countries, including Ghana, Kenya, and Nigeria. According to UNIHABITAT, a shortage of employment prospects encourages many young people to engage in illegal activities in order to survive (Young & Giller, 2021). Between 2007 and 2019, juvenile criminality in Africa rose from 3.2% to 5.7% (Walker & Maddan, 2019). This figure emphasises the important need for tailored interventions that not only dissuade criminal behaviour but also help young offenders recover and successfully reintegrate into their communities.

However, effectively tackling juvenile crime requires a balanced approach that combines punitive measures with rehabilitative initiatives aimed at encouraging the development and successful reintegration of young offenders into society. International human rights law recognises the need of treating child criminality differently than adult crime. It is also widely acknowledged that this alternative strategy should prioritise rehabilitation, restoration, and diversion away from the conventional criminal system as much as possible (Dean, 2018)

In this context, diversion programs play a crucial role by steering juveniles away from formal judicial proceedings and towards rehabilitation-focused initiatives. Diversion programs encompass a wide range of components and general interventions, including recreation, advocacy, resource brokerage, vocational or educational training, and group or individual counseling (Chanila et al., 2024). In many countries, diversion is now the main method of dealing with children who are in conflict with

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/comparative-analysis-of-diversion-programs-for-children-in-kenya-and-tanzania/397421](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/comparative-analysis-of-diversion-programs-for-children-in-kenya-and-tanzania/397421)

## Related Content

---

### The Significance of STEM Education for National Security

Tianxing Cai (2021). *Intelligence and Law Enforcement in the 21st Century* (pp. 188-204).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-significance-of-stem-education-for-national-security/284266](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-significance-of-stem-education-for-national-security/284266)

### Facing Harassment Accusations

(2025). *Exploring the Complexities of Criminal Justice* (pp. 253-286).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/facing-harassment-accusations/360078](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/facing-harassment-accusations/360078)

### Visual Criminology: Making Sense of Crime Data and Analysis for Criminology Students

Elaine M. Barclay (2019). *Police Science: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 341-351).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/visual-criminology/219484](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/visual-criminology/219484)

### Digital Forensics in Financial Crime: Blockchain Analytics, Crypto Laundering, and Cross-Border Enforcement Challenges

Smruti Ranjan Sahoo and Puranjoy Ghosh (2026). *The Intersection of Technology and Criminal Justice* (pp. 231-256).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-forensics-in-financial-crime/411355](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-forensics-in-financial-crime/411355)

### Comparative Analysis of Diversion Programs for Children in Kenya and Tanzania

Antony Wando Odek, Victor Wakumile Ndururu, Terry Odhiambo and Jane Gift Akinyi (2026). *Juvenile Justice in African and Western Criminal Justice Systems* (pp. 159-186).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/comparative-analysis-of-diversion-programs-for-children-in-kenya-and-tanzania/397421](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/comparative-analysis-of-diversion-programs-for-children-in-kenya-and-tanzania/397421)