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Topic 2: Reintegration and Rehabilitation of Incarcerated Youth
YUNMUN XXXVVII

The rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated youth has become an important international concern as governments recognize the long-term effects that juvenile detention has on these children's futures. Upon release, they face significant stigma when attempting to return to their communities, creating significant barriers to their social reintegration, educational attainment, and employment opportunities.

While the number of children in juvenile detention has been trending downward in recent years[1], the latest global statistic approximates that 290,000 children worldwide were in detention in 2024, making this an issue that still requires the attention of the international community. Reports from England and Wales in 2024 revealed that 61.7% of formerly incarcerated youth ended up reoffending, highlighting the shortcomings of existing rehabilitation efforts.[2] Conversely, there are statistics to suggest that providing educational and vocational support to young newly released ex-convicts can improve post-release outcomes.[3] A 2013 RAND Corporation study found that participants in correctional education programs had 43% lower odds of recidivism. Although this finding was not specific to children, it indicates a broader trend: access to educational opportunities and social support enhances the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration.

Despite promising preliminary evidence, there remain significant challenges in ensuring that formerly incarcerated youth receive the necessary access to educational, employment, and social opportunities. This is especially true in developing countries and low-income communities, where inadequate funding and infrastructure limit access to these services. Therefore, the international community has a joint duty to build more effective rehabilitation systems that integrate education, vocational training, and mental health services to help these children rebuild their lives and become contributing members of society.

The following are some questions to help guide your research:

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[1] https://bjs.ojp.gov/juveniles-incarcerated-us-adult-jails-and-prisons-2002-2021

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2024-to-2025/youth-justice-statistics-2024-to-2025

[3] https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-and-education-departments-announce-new-research-showing-prison-education-reduces, https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/library/publications/search-evidence-based-practice-juvenile-corrections-evaluation-floridas-avon

- Should governments consider alternatives to detention, such as community service programs and mental health services for appropriate cases?
- What measures can juvenile detention facilities implement to minimize adverse long-term effects of incarceration (violence, abuse, neglect), while promoting behavioral change?
- How can governments and communities provide them with access to formal education, vocational training, and life skills?
- What steps can be taken by communities and employers to reduce discrimination and social stigma against formerly incarcerated youth?

These are not meant to be an exhaustive list of topics, so please don't limit your research to these questions! They are meant to act as a springboard for you to start your research and help you develop a well-informed stance for your country, identify gaps in current policy, and propose innovative and practical solutions that appropriately reflect the complexity and gravity of this issue.

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If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at zlam@mail.yu.edu. I am looking forward to hearing your ideas and seeing you engage in thoughtful and informed discussions with your fellow delegates!

Best,

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Chair, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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