



# Quarterly Newsletter

January to April 2025



## Four Months In: What We've Built, What We're Becoming!

### A Note from the Founder

The first four months of Ikoku's journey have been a mix of growth, learning, joy and yes, frustration too. Starting something from the ground up isn't romantic. It's real. It's trying to figure out what works and what doesn't.

But more than anything, it's been a time of clarity. A time to justify why Ikoku exists: To create a justice system that treats children as children, not as problems. Not as files or case numbers, but as people with stories, pain, dreams, and potential.

This work is slow, and sometimes it

feels invisible. But it matters. These early steps, though hard-earned, are building something lasting. A shift in how people think, speak, and act when a child is in conflict with the law.

We are growing. As a team. As a voice. As a movement. And while the path ahead remains long, we walk it with hope, with intention, and with deep belief in the children we serve.

Aminat  
Team Lead/ Founder,  
Ikoku Protection and Justice

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The first quarter of 2025 was filled with deep listening, bold learning, and careful action. We focused on the basics. Conducting Needs assessments, trainings, stakeholder engagements, showing up and through it all, we've seen quiet shifts begin to take root.

This edition captures the highlights of our journey so far: the people we've met, the spaces we've entered, and the small wins that remind us we're on the right path.

From police trainings to community dialogues, from courtrooms to conversations online, Ikoku is growing. Slowly, surely, and with heart!



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## First Contact, Lasting Impact.

### Shaping how Uganda's frontline officers respond to children in conflict with the law.

Over the past four months, we've walked into several police stations across Kampala Metropolitan Area. These include, Wandegaya, Jinja Road, Kinawataka, Kololo, Kitintale, Katwe, Kabalagala, Kira, Mukono and Central Police stations. We met Police officers from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU). Some had handled child-related cases for years; for others, this was new ground. But in each session, we sat together with one shared goal: to do better by the children who pass through their hands.

Through our initiative, "Iko-Divert," we are working closely with police officers and Local Council Court representatives to promote diversion. This is the processing and resolution of cases involving children without resorting to formal court proceedings, especially for non-capital offenses.

We unpacked the meaning of child-friendly procedures and explored how small actions like tone of voice, where a child sits, the kind of questions asked. We used role plays, real-life case studies, and honest conversation. And what emerged was powerful!

Many officers admitted that they had never been trained on how to handle children differently. One said, "I thought I was being fair but now I see I was treating a child like an adult in trouble, not a child in need."

In these rooms, we witnessed minds opening. Officers spoke of the pressure they face like limited time, limited resources and yet, they showed a willingness to rethink. To unlearn. To begin again.

At the end of each session, we left behind more than printed copies of the 2019 Police Diversion Guidelines, we left behind a shift in mindset. A recognition that how the system responds at the very first moment can shape a child's entire future.

These sessions weren't just about policies and procedures. They were about humanity. About seeing the child, not just the case.

We're grateful for the openness, honesty, and hope that filled these rooms. And we know this is just the beginning!



A ROLE PLAY SESSION WITH POLICE OFFICERS OF KABALAGALA POLICE STATION.

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In February, we held two community-based sessions with Local Council Court representatives from Kamuli Lubawo and Kireka Kamuli B. As sometimes being the first point of contact when a child is accused of an offence, Local Council leaders hold great power and great potential to divert a child's case away from harmful legal processes and toward healing paths.

We explored practical ways to make justice more restorative at the community level, asking not just what did the child do, but what does this child need?

We also provided legal representation to three children facing theft charges in the Magistrate's Court, a significant milestone in delivering timely support.



## What's Next ?

The work continues, and we're just getting started!

In the next quarter, we'll:

- Deepen our trainings with police officers to strengthen child-friendly approaches and expand diversion practices
- Launch our bi-weekly podcast series, A-forty. A space for real stories, bold conversations, and fresh ideas around juvenile justice
- Offer legal representation to more children in conflict with the law, making sure they are seen, heard, and supported

Every child deserves a justice system that believes in their potential. We're not slowing down!

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## Join Us

Whether you're a policymaker, mental health or legal practitioner, parent or simply someone who believes in second chances, there's space for you in this movement.

Let's reimagine justice, together.



## Partner with us

Email: [info@ikokuprotectionandjustice.org](mailto:info@ikokuprotectionandjustice.org)

Website: [www.ikokuprotectionandjustice.org](http://www.ikokuprotectionandjustice.org)

Follow our journey on LinkedIn and stay tuned for A-forty—launching soon.

Yalama Noi!

## Special Thanks to



*Thank you for reading!*