



**#REIMAGINE JUSTICE
FOR CHILDREN**

unicef 
for every child

CCPCJ Thematic Discussions on the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration

Pillar II: Advancing the Criminal Justice System

**Addressing the vulnerabilities of children and youth in contact with the
criminal justice system**

7 December 2022

The #Reimagine Justice for Children Agenda

unicef 
for every child



Reimagine Justice for Children: The Agenda

Every child ...



6 policy asks are:

- Interconnected and mutually reinforcing
- Communications formulations
- Not a checklist

Reimagine Justice for Children: The Agenda

Central to the Reimagine J4C Agenda is:

- **States' accountability** for the human rights of children
- **Non-discrimination**
 - Active attention to overrepresented children in justice systems
- The **legal empowerment of children and youth**
 - Including those with lived experiences of the justice system
- A call to **end the detention of children in all its forms**

End the Detention of Children

unicef 
for every child



End the detention of children

- COVID-19 forced child justice systems to partially or completely cease
- Pandemic became an opportunity to transform justice systems for children
- These efforts saw the **unprecedented release of 45,000 children from detention in at least 84 countries**
- **Evidence is clear** – it is possible to **prevent** and **safely** release children from detention



A 15-year-old boy bursts into tears after being reunited with his father upon release from a child detention centre in Tongji, Bangladesh.

We know what works

...and where we need to focus our investments:

- Countries which invested in **diversion** and **non-custodial measures** before the pandemic, were better prepared to release children and apply alternatives
- Countries that introduced **innovative solutions such as ‘virtual courts’, online training for justice professionals and online post-release support** were able to maintain justice and social services despite lockdowns...and improve access to justice
- Countries **where the justice system worked in an integrated manner with social services**, with appropriate case work, working closely with social workers/SSW, and providing post-release support were able to **safely** release large numbers of children and **prevent re-offending**

We need to sustain and double down on these efforts and not lose the momentum!

Promote the Legal Empowerment of Children

unicef 
for every child



Legal Empowerment of Children

The Reimagine J4C Agenda calls for:

- Greater **investments in legal rights awareness** for children in justice and welfare systems
- The recognition of a **child's legal standing** and the **right to be heard** in relevant judicial and administrative proceedings
- Access to **free legal aid, representation and services**
- The **integration of social work** and child specialization within the justice sector
- Support for **strategic litigation** on justice for children

Legal Empowerment of Children

4 key-strategies:

- **Education** - provide children with effective access to education regarding their legal system
- **Expression** - enable children to express their views freely about issues that affect them, and to advocate for their rights, both individually and collectively
- **Access to remedy**- facilitate children's access to local, national and international judicial and quasi-judicial forums and legal processes, to access legal remedies
- **Safety** - foster a child-friendly and safe environment for children to use the law and the legal system

Source: Legal empowerment to Advance Climate and Environmental Justice for Children in East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF EAPRO, 2022

Key Resources

- [#Reimagine Justice for Children](#), UNICEF 2021
- [Technical Note: COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty](#), UNICEF and Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, April 2020
- [UNICEF's Executive Director issued a Statement calling for the urgent and safe release of children and the use of alternative measures to detention](#), UNICEF, April 2020
- [Access to Justice for Children in the era of COVID-19: Notes from the Field and Learnings from the Field](#), UNICEF, December 2020
- [Detention of Children in the Time of COVID-19](#), UNICEF 2021
- [More than 45,000 children released from detention during COVID-19 pandemic; evidence that child-friendly justice solutions are possible – UNICEF](#)
- [Estimating the number of children deprived of liberty in the Administration of Justice](#), UNICEF, November 2021
- [Legal empowerment to Advance Climate and Environmental Justice for Children in East Asia and the Pacific](#), UNICEF EAPRO, 2022

Thank you!

