



**#REIMAGINE JUSTICE
FOR CHILDREN**

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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

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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

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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



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!

