University of Strathclyde Glasgow

Inspiring Children's Futures support(s) the Sustainable Development Goals

Inspiring Children's Futures

The Fragility of Justice for Children during COVID-19:

Providers' and Policymakers' Perspectives on Implications and Mitigation Strategies

The International **COVID 4P Log Project**

Inspiring Children's Futures | CYCJ Children and Young People's Centre for Justice | PATHFINDERS for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, hosted by the NYU Center on International Cooperation | University of Strathclyde Centre for Sustainable Development

LEARNING SERIES | 9 JUSTICE

Table of Contents

About the COVID 4P Log Project 5

Foreword 7

Key Messages 14

Recommendations 15

In-Depth Insights: Part 1: Exposing the Various Types of Violence Experienced by Children During the Pandemic 19

- Incidents of Violence Against Children 20
- Injustices Against Children in Contact with the Law 22
- Exposure to Gender-Based Violence 24

In-Depth Insights: Part 2: Delivering Justice: Impediments and Innovations 27

- Justice for Children During COVID-19: Delays and Disruptions 28
- Digital Justice 30
- Digital Exclusion 31

In-Depth Insights: Part 3: Structural Barriers to Justice: Governance and Institutions 33

- Lack of Trust in Governance and Institutions 34
- Corruption 34
- Threats to Freedom of Expression 36
- Positive Examples of Collaborations 37

A Note of Caution 38

Conclusion 39

References 40

About this Report 43

About the COVID 4P Log Project

COVID-19 has abruptly thrust the rights and wellbeing of children and families into greater risk around the world. The impact of COVID-19 on children continues to be vast. Risks posed to children's survival and development, to their special protections, education, health and access to food, for example, are being greatly compounded not only by COVID-19, but also by government responses.

With roughly a third of the global population estimated to be under age 18, children[1] account for a huge proportion of our population. Successful delivery of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (henceforth 'SDGs'), which relate to all ages, heavily relies on our ability to effectively and robustly respond to the distinct needs and rights of children. Even prior to COVID-19, our global task to achieve these global goals by 2030 seemed daunting. In the light of COVID-19, achieving the SDGs is even more challenging.

To effectively mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the light of protecting children's wellbeing, and ultimately for our collective societal future, policy and practice responses must be distinctively designed to address children's wellbeing needs.

Policymakers, and those working with children, are at the heart of pandemic responses as they continue to support children's wellbeing, rise to many new challenges, and respond in new, innovative and, in some cases, unprecedented ways. To address the impact of COVID-19 on children in the long term, the COVID 4P Log Project sought to better understand the changing demands on these policies and practices across different cultures and contexts, in 22 countries and five continents.

The **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** is a joint initiative at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, with a collective vision of ensuring that children and young people have what they need to reach their full potential, particularly those who face adversity.

We work in partnership with a wide range of partners nationally and internationally. Children's human rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are the heart of our work.

1. The term 'children' is used throughout to describe all those under the age of 18 years, in line with the CRC's definition of a child. Where 'young person' is used in the Report, this is reflecting that specific age group only.

Foreword

Despite decades-old warnings about the next global pandemic, no one could have imagined a few years ago how dramatically COVID-19 would impact all our lives. Yet we know now how deeply the relationship between people and public institutions has been affected. And that certainly includes the relationship with systems and actors that are responsible for justice in our societies. Amidst these challenges and changes, children have been especially vulnerable, and they are the focus of this learning report.

While the pandemic has demonstrated the ways in which justice systems fall short, it has also presented opportunities to adapt and improve. Understanding what children need and want from the justice system and how they experience interactions with various actors is critical, if we want to improve justice for children. Collecting data and evidence from professionals and from children themselves about what works, helps design targeted policy solutions.

The Justice for All report[1] emphasizes: 'Justice systems fail children when they are victims of injustice. They are often unable to access justice institutions or lack the support to participate in proceedings. They also fail them when they come into conflict with the law. Young people are more vulnerable to the negative psychological impacts of harsh punitive measures. They often have less knowledge and confidence than adults to claim their rights and seek redress.' (Task Force on Justice, 2019, p. 59).

The Pathfinders' Working Group 'Justice for Children, Justice for All'[2] was established to address justice gaps faced by children around the world. Justice for Children has intrinsic importance, and it is critical to enable opportunities for children to reach their full potential. The pandemic has demonstrated just how important it is for justice systems and actors to be tuned into the justice problems children face, and adapt systems and approaches to meet their needs effectively.

Achieving justice for all, was agreed as a global goal in SDG16 of the 2030 Agenda. Clearly, we cannot have justice for all if we leave children behind. This report is an important step to ensuring we understand what children need, help them resolve and prevent the justice problems they face and create a world in which they too have equal access to justice.

Maaike de Langen
Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies
NYU Center on International Cooperation

1. Task Force on Justice (2019). Justice for All – Final Report. https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/_files/ugd/90b3d6_746fc8e4f9404abeb994928d3fe85c9e.pdf
2. https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/justiceforchildren

THE SMARTPHONE APP

The COVID 4P Log is an Android and iOS smartphone app, free-of-cost to app users, that collected the real-time, anonymous views and experiences of practitioners and policymakers who were working across the globe to support children's wellbeing in the light of COVID-19. In answering a series of questions, these volunteer respondents helped us to better understand the ways practitioners and policymakers were responding to those challenges.

During the last quarter of 2020, practitioners and policymakers were invited to download the app to log a 2-minute response to one main question every day, for eight weeks. The questions were both practice and policy-focused, and based on the '4P' children's human rights framework of Protection, Provision, Prevention, and Participation, in order to better understand the ways practitioners and policymakers around the world were protecting children, providing for their unique needs, enabling their participation in decisions that affect them, and preventing harm, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH THEMES

The smartphone app explored respondents' views of several core areas:

1. Learning from the pandemic so far
2. Protection: Ending violence against children
3. Provision: Access to food, health, education
4. Collaborations, flexibility, transparency and trust: Applying evidence from past emergencies to COVID-19
5. Prevention: Children's social and emotional wellbeing
6. Special considerations: Justice, alternative care and disabilities
7. Participation: Responding to #COVIDUnder19- children and young people's findings
8. Preparing to rebuild post-COVID

OUR KEY PARTNERS

Our 17 international Key Partners range from capacity-building organisations, to international advocacy NGOs and service delivery partnerships, to the UN and other inter-governmental agencies. Their support and close engagement enabled the **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** to gather these important insights through the COVID 4P Log smartpone app. Their mention here does not imply endorsement of these findings.

African Child Policy Forum ACPF
AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP to End Violence against Children
BARNAFRID - Swedish National Center on Violence Against Children LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY
CYCNET
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
European Social Network
Child Rights Coalition Asia
FICE
child rights connect
Observatory of CHILDREN'S HUMAN RIGHTS Scotland
National Child Welfare Workforce Institute LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING
OECD INCLUSIVE GROWTH
REPSSI Psychosocial Wellbeing For All Children
University of Strathclyde Glasgow
Terre des hommes Helping children worldwide.
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN
PATHFINDERS FOR PEACEFUL, JUST AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES Justice for Children Justice for All
GLOBAL SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

PROTECTION
PROVISION
PARTICIPATION
PREVENTION

For the wellbeing of our *children*

Children's human rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are sometimes summarised as the four P's: Protection, Provision, Participation and Prevention. The COVID 4P Log uses this 4P conceptual framework to frame the questions we asked practitioners and policymakers. While the 4Ps are not all-encompassing, they offer an accessible lens through which to explore how practitioners and policymakers from different countries, sectors and organisations see children's human rights being realised.

We asked about good practices, and innovations despite the challenges, that ensured children's human rights were upheld across key aspects of children's lives, in particular those of children whose rights are most vulnerable to being violated. In this project, we explore how practitioners and policymakers are upholding the 4Ps, with the following areas of focus:

PROTECTION

We explore children's rights to protection from exploitation, violence and other abuses, and to effective and child-friendly interventions if these occur. Our questions seek to understand what concrete and effective measures have been enacted to protect children from violence during the pandemic.

PROVISION

We explore children's rights to growth and development, including the right to food, health care and education, play and leisure, and provision of targeted assistance—including economic assistance—to families. We also ask about the special considerations for children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, in particular for children involved in justice systems, in alternative care, and with disabilities.

PARTICIPATION

We explore a child's right to express their views freely, and to have their views given due weight when decisions are made that affect them. Children's participation and intergenerational partnerships are essential ingredients for understanding the impact of COVID-19 on children's wellbeing.

PREVENTION

We explore children's rights to social and emotional wellbeing support. Isolation under COVID-19 has been a common reality for many, and social exclusion of children can undermine their wellbeing. Supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing, and that of their families, can prevent further harms.

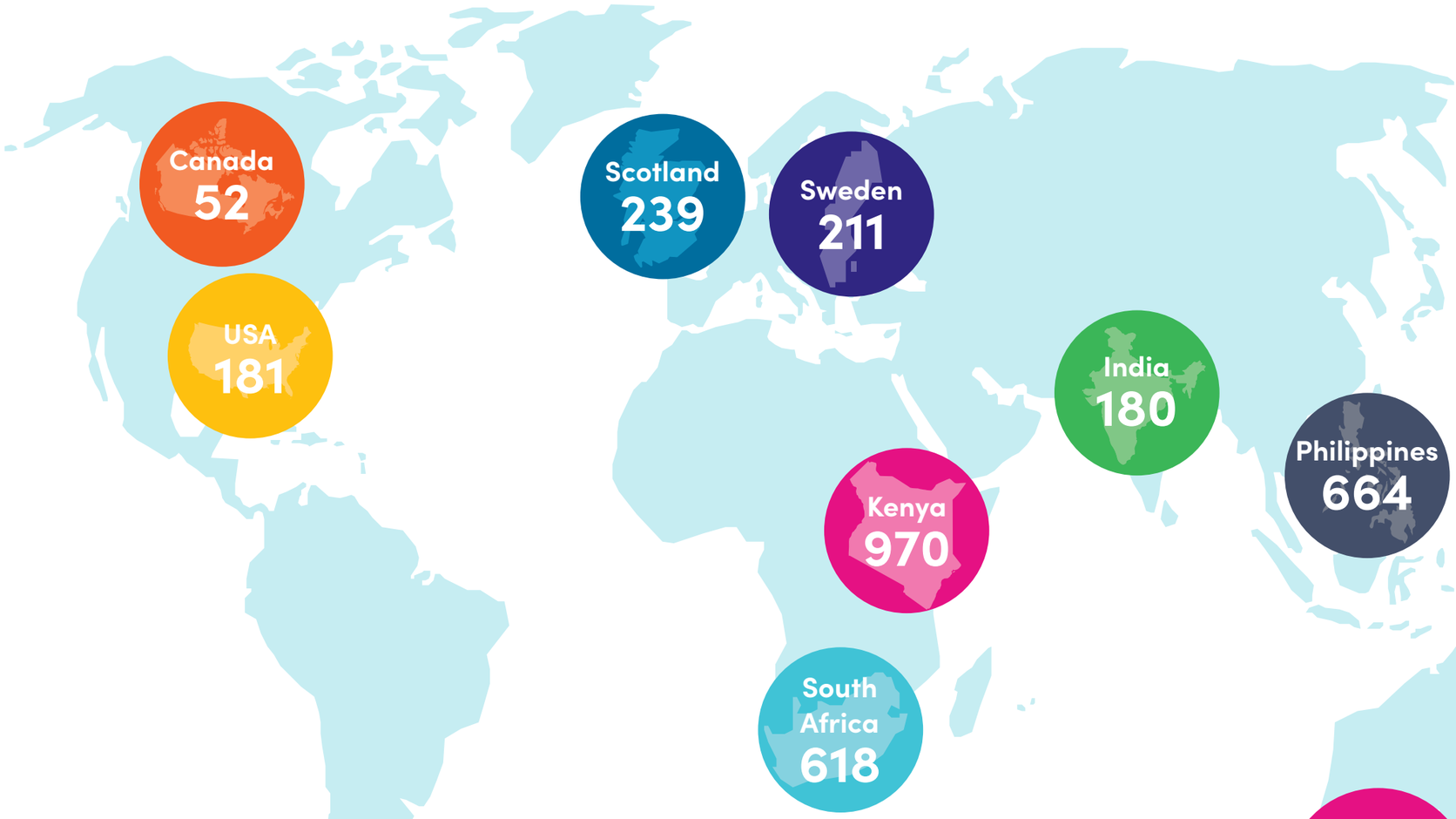
Respondents and Countries Represented in the Eight-Week COVID 4P Log Project

3339 Responses

22 Countries

5 Continents

TOP 8 COUNTRIES BY NUMBER OF RESPONSES



Overall, 247 respondents from 22 countries - including 139 direct service providers, 66 service managers and 42 policymakers - contributed to at least one main app question between the last quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021. 173 respondents were women; 68 - men; 5 - prefer not to say; 1 - other.

The represented countries were (in alphabetical order) Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Ethiopia, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, Palestine, the Philippines, Montenegro, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom (England), United Kingdom (Scotland) and the United States of America (USA).

The top eight countries by highest number of respondents were Kenya (60), the Philippines (48), South Africa (41), Scotland (32), India (14), the USA (12), Canada (11), and Sweden (8).

A total of 3339 responses were generated across the eight weeks of questions - with eight countries, Kenya (970), the Philippines (664), South Africa (618), Scotland (239), Sweden (211), the USA (181), India (180), and Canada (52) - accounting for 93% of all responses.

The remaining countries had the following numbers of respondents and responses, respectively: **Malawi** (2/52), **England, UK** (1/52), **Israel** (1/40), **Montenegro** (1/27), **Greece** (5/13), **Belgium** (1/10), **the Netherlands** (2/10), **Ethiopia** (2/4), **Lebanon** (1/4), **Palestine** (1/4), **Australia** (1/2), **Bangladesh** (1/2), **Italy** (1/2), and **Mexico** (1/2).

169 (68%) respondents worked for NGOs; 31 (13%) - for the government; 22 (9%) - for civil society organisations; 11 (4%) - in the private sector; 10 (4%) - other; and 4 (2%) - unknown.

Respondents represented a range of sectors such as child and youth care, advocacy, community-based services, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, child rights, children and family services, education, social services, working with refugees, juvenile justice, maternal and child health, housing, and others.

247 Respondents

139 Direct Service Providers

66 Service Managers

42 Policymakers

Key Messages

- This report draws from survey responses to the COVID 4P Log for Children's Wellbeing Project from **247 children's sector professionals based in 22 countries across five continents**. Informed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related to the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies' work to accelerate action to implement the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (SDG16+), this report documents how **justice for children was hindered or upheld** during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The findings acutely illustrate the **fragility of justice** for children during the COVID-19 emergency. Respondents reported **frequent violations** of children's fundamental rights such as the right to an adequate standard of living; right to protection from economic exploitation and hazardous work; right to protection from all forms of violence; right to special protection; and right to be heard. Those were compounded by **inefficient governance and leadership**.

- Multiple forms of violence against children during the pandemic were reported — at home, in the community and online – particularly **abuse within the home, child sexual exploitation, child marriages and child labour**. Girls were reported as increasingly vulnerable to violence and exploitation during COVID-19, which required a swift and responsive criminal justice system, in addition to targeted outreach and public awareness efforts.

- Virus containment policy measures often produced **adverse unintended consequences** for children's rights. For instance, some children in contact with the law were **retained with adults** at non-specialised law enforcement facilities. Reports were also received of **police-led violence** against children in breach of curfews.

- Innovative measures such as using **digital technologies** were highlighted as a means of counteracting **delayed justice** and ensuring continued and prompt service delivery. However, children often had starkly uneven access to these types of digital provision — entrenching their **invisibility within society** and hindering justice.

- **Corruption and ineffective law enforcement** were reported in several countries – further reducing children's access to justice and undermining the trust in justice-serving institutions.

- Reports were also received about severe **constraints on freedom of expression**, as was the case in some respondents' inability to stage peaceful protests and raise awareness of injustices against children.

- It is our hope that this cross-national evidence about injustices against children and their contributors, together with reports of adaptive responses to those human rights challenges, informs comprehensive measures to uphold **the full spectrum of children's rights** during and outwith future emergencies.

Recommendations

To address violence against children and gender-based violence, governments should urgently:

- Prioritise collaborative forms of working between sectors, government agencies, non-governmental and civil society organisations;

- Improve data recording and monitoring practices (to better understand the full impact of the pandemic). Priorities for people-centred justice data are outlined in the 'Grasping the Justice Gap'[1] discussion paper.

- Ensure education, prevention and intervention programmes targeting pertinent issues such as gender-based violence are properly resourced.

Governments should ensure the rights of children (below 18 years old) in contact with the law should not be diminished as a consequence of the pandemic, and should actively seek to:

- Engage diversionary measures (e.g., pre-court);

- Provide alternatives to custody (e.g., within the community); and

- Coordinate the immediate release from detention of children who can be accommodated in a safe manner by their family and communities.

In order that all children (below 18 years old) can successfully access and benefit from digital justice, governments should:

- Re-double efforts aimed at eliminating digital exclusion;

- Regularly gain children's views in relation to digital justice provisions;

- Ensure safeguards for children's privacy and participation in digital justice provisions.

Corruption undermines children's pathways to justice. Governments must work to eliminate all forms of bribery and corruption throughout public institutions, and pro-actively enable mechanisms and supports for children to effectively access justice (for instance, child-friendly complaints mechanisms).

Governments must ensure that the right for individuals across all societies to make themselves heard peacefully on matters of social justice is safeguarded.

1. Grasping the Justice Gap: https://medium.com/sdg16plus/grasping-the-justice-gap-to-enable-people-centered-justice-56e58c94c251

Figure 1: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The adoption of 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' in 2015 by the United Nations presented 'a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity' (UN, 2015). Crucial to the Agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all United Nations Member States that coalesce around the themes of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships (see 'Figure 1'). At the heart of this Global Agenda is a commitment to reaching the 'furthest behind first'.[1]

Advancing justice is central to SDG 16, which seeks to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'. This commitment to justice overlaps strongly with targets and indicators contained within a number of other Global Goals, particularly SDG 5 ('Gender Equality') and SDG 10 ('Reduced Inequalities').

The Task Force on Justice[2], in the Justice for All Report (2019), highlights that the justice problems people face are not distributed randomly; but that some groups will be more likely to experience injustice than others (Davidson et al., 2019a)[3].

"In response, in order to accelarate action to achieve justice for children, the Pathfinders 'Justice for Children, Justice for All' project are advancing a new understanding of justice: "...not only aiming to overcome the challenges children face in accessing legal justice, but also promoting justice as an enabler of children's opportunities and development to their full potential."

(Davidson et al., 2019a, p. 11)

1. https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda. https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/
2. An initiative of the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, The Task Force on Justice brought together a distinguished group of justice leaders and experts to accelerate delivery of the SDG targets for justice for all. The Pathfinders are a group of 39 UN member states, international organisations, global partnerships, civil society and the private sector, who work to accelerate action to implement the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (sdg16+)
3. Davidson, J.; Elsley, S.; Giraldi, M.; Goudie, A.; Hope, K.; Lyth, A.; Van Keirsbilck, B. (June 2019a): Justice forChildren, Justice for All: The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+ A Challenge Paper. Scotland: CELCIS-InspiringChildren's Futures, University of Strathclyde Retrieved from: https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/_files/ugd/6c192f_f5ad9c32f99947448cc56754dcaad75a.pdf

Figure 2: 'Justice for Children, Justice for All' – 10 Calls to Action[4]

The Pathfinders for Justice's SDG 16+[5] child-specific 'Justice for Children 10 Calls to Action' (see 'Figure 2') offers a valuable framework through which the COVID 4P Log findings can be viewed and understood.

The COVID 4P Log findings offer an insight into several key justice-based dynamics that have emerged during the pandemic, and underscore that although innovation and other beneficial practices have been evident during this period (e.g., the shift to digital justice provision and instances of collaborative working), many longstanding societal challenges have potentially been compounded (e.g., gender-based violence, violence against children, the rights of children in contact with the law, trust in public institutions).

If SDGs are to be fully achieved over the next decade, then the COVID 4P Log findings reveal that further intensive and concerted efforts are required to ensure that the prevailing 'justice gap' is fully closed and all children within society can access and benefit from a form of justice that is people-centred and needs-focused.

4. https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/justiceforchildren
5. The Pathfinders are a group of 39 UN member states, international organisations, global partnerships, civil society and the private sector who work to accelerate action to implement the SDG targets for peace, justice and inclusion (sdg16+)

In-Depth Insights: Part 1

Exposing the Various Types of Violence Experienced by Children During the Pandemic

Globally, children being subjected to various forms of violence and abuse predates the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, consistent with other international literature, the COVID 4P Log findings suggest the impact of Covid-19 had brought about additional challenges in respect of these issues — particularly, increasing the incidence and severity of certain types of violence against children, as well as exacerbating exposure to relatively new types of risks (for example, in the virtual environment). Fore (2021) has emphasised that the shutting down of schools during the pandemic – where traditionally teachers may have been able to detect the signs of a child experiencing violence or abuse – has meant that such instances may have potentially gone unreported.

Additionally, although the increased use of digital technologies during the pandemic has brought clear benefits for children (notably, in terms of access to education), it has also been associated with dangers around online abuse and exploitation. Crucially, Fore (2021) has underlined the need for a fuller assessment of the distinct relationship between the onset of the pandemic and violence and abuse against children. Therefore, there is an urgent need for comprehensive and accurate 'baseline' data to be collected globally.

This section overviews evidence from the COVID 4P Log indicating providers' and policymakers' concerns about the nature, severity and consequences of violence against children, including gender-based violence, that had occurred during the pandemic.

Incidents of Violence Against Children

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

SDG Target 16.1:
Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

SDG Target 16.2:
End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Call to Action 5:
Prevent all forms of violence against children

Reinforcing the need for more robust data on the issue to draw firm conclusions about the impact of the pandemic, violence against children was a persistent theme within the Covid 4P Log findings, with respondents identifying a wide range of concerns:

"...some children are with abusive or neglectful parents 24/7 without the respite of school."

Policymaker, Government, Scotland

"Because of the quarantine the children are not allowed to go out in their home. most of the children experiences violence at home during this pandemic..."

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

"Children being harmed by adults in the various forms. This as a result of increased poverty and resultant increase in the stress that comes with this."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, South Africa

"... children became engaged more in social media in which they can share their feelings and thoughts, but in the other side it also became a medium for online sexual abuse and exploitation especially for children in the communities."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Philippines

"India is facing huge number of cases of child sexual abuses, rapes and online child sexual exploitation"

Direct Service Provider,
Non-Governmental Organisation, India

"Supportive preventions and early intervention programmes are needed in addition to responsive services"

Service Manager,
Non-Governmental Organisation, South Africa

For episodes of violence against children, such as those evident in the findings, to be fully understood and prevented, then there is an urgent need for governments and stakeholders working in this area globally – reflecting Fore's (2021) call – to improve data recording and monitoring practices. This would aid the understanding of the extent to which public health emergencies increase children's exposure to varying forms of violence. Relatedly, the COVID 4P Log findings emphasised the need for education, prevention and support programmes in this area to be adequately resourced. As an NGO service manager working in South Africa emphasised:

Such actions are key, when set against the deleterious impacts of Covid-19, and with a view also to realising UN SDG 16.2 (see also Art. 19 UNCRC 1989; Call to Action 5) aimed at ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

Injustices Against Children in Contact with the Law

SDG Target 16.3:
Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

Call to Action 3:
Prevent unnecessary contact with the justice system and the criminalisation of children

Call to Action 7:
Eliminate arbitrary and unlawful detention and restrict the deprivation of children's liberty to exceptional circumstances

Within the context of SDG Goal 16, the pandemic has brought with it a variety of challenges for the rights of children who are in contact with the law (UNICEF, 2021a,b; Dyer, Lightowler & Vaswani, 2022) – a group within society which existing evidence tells us are already extremely vulnerable to having their rights undermined (Nowak, 2019; UNICEF UK, 2020). Responses within the COVID 4P Log shine a light on some of these challenges, and particularly, the difficulty in reducing transmission and spread whilst also safeguarding the rights of children in contact with the law. For example, as an NGO direct service provider working in Palestine communicated:

"One of the main challenges was related to the children in conflict with law, who need special care houses and child friendly justice practices, as per the CRC article 39. However, during the pandemic sometime retained children are kept with adults at non-specialized police centers. This was to avoid any potential infections of Covid 19, in case the retained children may have the virus, so they should be kept away from other children at the care houses centers..."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Palestine

The very practical health challenges associated with the pandemic and the complexity of the health response mean that policies with well-justified intentions can produce 'unintended consequences'.

International children's rights standards do emphasise the principle that children in contact with the law should not be held with adults. General Comment No. 24 in para. 92 states that:

"92. Every child deprived of liberty is to be separated from adults, including in police cells. A child deprived of liberty is not to be placed in a centre or prison for adults, as there is abundant evidence that this compromises their health and basic safety and their future ability to remain free of crime and to reintegrate..."

Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2019, para.92

The difficulties in ensuring that children's rights in detention are upheld during the pandemic have consequently been a key focus of Technical Notes (see for example, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action & UNICEF, 2020). These have recommended the use of diversionary measures, alternatives to custody, and the immediate release from detention of children who can safely be accommodated by their family and communities.

Positively, available data from UNICEF (2021a) indicate that, since March 2020, over 45,000 children, across 54 countries, have been released from detention. However, it does remain the case that many children remain in detention worldwide, and those who do are spending unacceptable amounts of time isolated in youth detention (Dyer, Lightowler & Vaswani, 2022).

Instances of police-led violence against children were also reported in the COVID-19 log data:

"Inability to defend them from government perpetrators such as the police who are leading the violence. Examples are humiliating punishment for children who are violating curfew ordinances, police officers sexually abusing children [...]"

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

These are conditions referred to as 'structural violence' (Nowak, 2019), pointing to the role of governments in directly perpetuating abusive institutional conditions and decision-making. Such recommendations possess clear synergy with UNICEF (2021b), reinforcing the Calls to Action 3 and 7 (Davidson et al. 2019b), which advocate for children's unnecessary contact with the justice system to be prevented, and the restriction of deprivation of children's liberty to only be in exceptional circumstances (see also, Art. 37(b), UNCRC 1989).

Exposure to Gender-Based Violence

5 GENDER EQUALITY

ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

SDG Target 5.2:
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Call to Action 5:
Prevent all forms of violence against children

Violence against women and girls was ubiquitous within society prior to the onset of the pandemic. More than one billion women lacked legal protection from sexual violence by an intimate partner (UN Women et al, 2020), and there is evidence to suggest COVID-19 has further intensified the issue (see Dlamini, 2021; UN Women, IDLO, World Bank & Task Force on Justice, 2019). In a 2020 thematic brief, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) determined that:

> *"...the risk and consequences of [gender-based violence against women and girls] may be exacerbated by lockdown policies implemented by many countries throughout the world, the disruption of economic, social and protective networks, sudden changes in family functioning, stress, increased substance use and decreased access to services."*
>
> UNODC, 2020, p.1

The impact of COVID-19 social distancing measures — where there has been a requirement in many countries to stay within the home — is likely to have increased the risk of intimate partner violence occurring, whilst home settings are also locations where women and girls can be exposed to sexual, along with other types of violence (UNODC, 2020). The theme of gender-based violence was emphasised within the COVID 4P Log findings, with several respondents drawing attention to:

> *"...increased GBV in home and domestic violence..."*
>
> Service Manager, Non-Governmental Organisation, South Africa
>
> *"More reported cases of gbv, more reported cases of unwanted pregnancies."*
>
> Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Kenya
>
> *"A lot of children have fallen into the wrong hands in the name of being helped and as a result teenage pregnancy has been on the rise."*
>
> Service Manager, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

The pandemic also creates specific obstacles for responsivity to instances of gender-based violence, with courts proceedings being interrupted and case backlogs developing. In addition, police time and resources have been re-directed to the immediate pandemic response, and localised services and amenities such as phone-support hotlines and shelters aimed at meeting the needs of victims — potentially reduced or halted altogether in some instances (UNODC, 2020). Within this context, difficulties in securing justice and supporting the needs of victims of gender-based violence have become evident. For this reason, in a 2020 Guidance Note on ensuring access to justice in the context of COVID-19, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), made it clear that:

> *"Developing a strategy for prioritization of critical cases, while continuing to protect the rights of defendants, should be part of the COVID19 response planning and preparation. For example, priority should be given to cases involving child offenders (and detention of children should be a last resort for the shortest time); crimes against children; violence against women and children; accountability for serious crimes; and where the statute of limitation may apply."*
>
> UNODC & UNDP, 2020, p.14

Ensuring that governments and relevant institutions prioritise responses to gender-based violence, both during and following on from the pandemic, is, therefore, vital.

Within the COVID 4P Log findings, attention was drawn by respondents to the importance of psychological support, supportive policing and safe spaces. As an NGO service manager from Kenya explained:

> *"Psychological support helps the child survivors to understand that they are not to blame and help prevent self stigma. Shelter allows the survivors to live away from the environment of abuse and prevent out of court settlement. Supportive policing makes it easier for witness protection, evidence preservation and arrest and presentation of the suspected perpetrators to court for justice."*
>
> Service Manager, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

In-Depth Insights: Part 2

Delivering Justice: Impediments and Innovations

The arrival of COVID-19 has had far-reaching and profound impacts on justice service delivery. Ensuing lockdowns and restrictions – although differing in type between countries – routinely regulated person-to-person contact, placed restrictions on individuals' ability to travel and promoted working from home-based settings. These various measures created practical challenges for ensuring that 'access to justice' could be effectively maintained within countries and not subjected to 'disruption and delay'. A 2020 report by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Law and Justice Foundation (LJF) underlined that:

"The most pressing need that justice systems have been facing during the crisis thus far has been to ensure the availability of justice services despite the constraining social distancing, or even complete lockdown measures."

OECD & Law and Justice Foundation, 2020, p.1

Accordingly, this section highlights project findings related to barriers to justice, as well as to agile responses engaged with, or recommended, by COVID 4P Log respondents. Those are situated within a broader policy context.

Justice for Children During COVID-19: Delays and Disruptions

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

SDG Target 16.3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

Call to Action 2: Promote justice systems, whether formal or legally plural, that guarantee equal access, benefit, protection and support to children.

The theme of delayed justice was highlighted within the COVID 4P Log findings, with one Director (organisation type unknown) working in Kenya pinpointing 'closure of courts and delayed justice system' as a key barrier to effective service delivery, whilst a government policymaker working in the United States highlighted the need for a 'more timely and uniform response by court systems from county to county and division to division across the state'.

Disruptions to justice also related to prematurely releasing alleged perpetrators of violence, as well as to children's prolonged contact with perpetrators due to movement restrictions:

"Perpetrators of sexual violence sometimes released without being presented in court as the police are not lowed to keep suspects in crowded police cells"

Service Manager, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

SDG Target 9.C: Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020

Call to Action 8: Promote and ensure the empowerment and participation of children in all decisions that affect their lives.

"Staying long hours with the perpetrators, distorted support system due to curfew and movement restrictions"

Direct, Kenya, organisation type unknown

Digital Justice

As a means of addressing such concerns, engaging digital methodologies (such as videoconferencing) in the form of virtual court hearings, has become a central feature of preserving access to justice during the pandemic (International Commission of Jurists, 2020). This shift towards employing virtual court hearings, when set alongside COVID-19 regulations, was referenced by one non-governmental organisation direct service provider from Palestine:

"At the beginning of COVID 19 pandemic, the main challenge was the lockdown and movement restrictions, as it was not possible to reach out children in person. The court's hearing are still conducted through video calls at the Israeli Jurisdiction system."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Palestine

As demonstrated in the COVID 4P Log findings, the adaptability and flexibility of delivering justice virtually during the pandemic have been significant (although not without challenges) – and have moved beyond simply judicial settings — to incorporate the delivery of a range of justice-based services developed to meet the needs of service users (see for example, Brown & Vaswani, 2022). This broader usage of digital methodologies as a means of meeting the needs of service users during the pandemic was recognised by a government direct service provider from the Philippines who explained:

"we administered justice online to victims survivors of sexual harassment."

Direct Service Provider, Government, Philippines

More generally, the increasing use of digital methodologies during the pandemic to preserve access to justice and maintain other aspects of key service delivery has undoubtedly been of importance and often innovative. As one NGO direct service provider working in South Africa explained:

"The organisation put together a training programme that taught child and youth care workers how to assist children, youth and families during the lockdown using a virtual programme..."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, South Africa

This digital transition has not been without challenges, however. Amongst these challenges has been mitigating the potential risks for children related to new technologies in virtual court hearings, as well as the issue of digital exclusion, with the United Nations (UN) Deputy Secretary-General recently stating that 3.7 billion people – the bulk of them women and mostly in developing countries – are still offline (UN, 2021). With regards to children and young people, a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) report determined that: 'Globally, 2.2 billion children and young people aged 25 years or less – two-thirds of children and young people worldwide – do not have an internet connection at home.' (UNICEF & ITU, 2020, p.2).

Importantly, the COVID 4P Log findings may not reflect children's views on virtual court hearings and other components of digital justice. As expressed by several respondents, children's views had not been gathered during the pandemic.

Digital Exclusion

Resonating with this context, the challenge of digital exclusion was a theme highlighted by several respondents in the COVID 4P Log, with a non-government organisation service manager from India emphasising:

"Initially during lock down it was very difficult to reach out to children who did not have phones or any sort of connectivity."

In addition, a civil society organisation service manager in the Philippines shared:

"the biggest challenge was supporting children mostly on online means. At the start you will need to check their connectivity access and teach them how to use online platforms..."

Not all children could benefit from this transition to digital provision. As one NGO policymaker working in Greece reported:

"Children in refugee camps lack access to wifi connection and devices"

Given the ambition of UN SDG Target 9.C. to significantly increase access to information and communications technology and provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in the least developed countries by 2020, there evidently remains an urgent need to extend digital access (and increasingly access to various forms of digital justice) to those populations of children who remain economically disadvantaged.

It must also not be overlooked that, as digital technologies are increasingly subsumed into justice delivery, for children, the shift to digital forms of justice provision (for example, in the form of virtual court hearings) can pose specific challenges to the realisation of their rights, including to their effective participation in proceedings (Art. 12, UNCRC 1989). This is something which should not be neglected (see Lynch & Kilkelly, 2021; see also, CRC General Comment No.25). Children's views on how they engage with such technologies should be regularly collected (see UN, 2008). As a Civil Society Organisation policymaker in the Philippines shared, there is a need to ask '...them directly and not assume that as adults we know what they want'. Reflecting this position, Call to Action 8 (Davidson et al. 2019b) explicitly calls for the promotion of children's participation in all decisions that affect their lives.

In-Depth Insights: Part 3

Structural Barriers to Justice: Governance and Institutions

The lack of trust in public institutions is highlighted in the 2019 Task Force on Justice report 'Justice for All' as a significant barrier to justice:

"In many countries, the police and judiciary are among the least trusted institutions. Many ordinary people expect to have to pay bribes when they seek justice. Even more know that they will not enjoy a level playing field when faced by an opponent who has more resources and better connections."

Task Force on Justice, 2019, p.40

Where individual or localised instances of corruption take place, this can ultimately work to weaken the fabric of the rule of law at a systemic level — in turn, directly impacting upon societies' most vulnerable groups such as children. Reflecting this point, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2013 acknowledged that in human rights terms, corruption 'denies access to justice for victims, it exacerbates inequality, weakens governance and institutions, erodes public trust, fuels impunity and undermines the rule of law.' (OHCRC, 2013)[1].

In effectively responding to instances of violence against children, as well as other injustices within wider society, the actions of government and public institutions (e.g., police, social care etc.) within countries play a critical role which cannot be underestimated – a role which often involves significant collaborative partnership efforts with third sector organisations and NGOs to meet these challenges.

This section presents an evidence-informed discussion of structural challenges to delivering justice highlighted by COVID 4P Log respondents, such as trust, governance and collaborative working.

Lack of Trust in Governance and Institutions

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

SDG Target 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

SDG Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

SDG Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Call to Action 9: Secure sustained political commitment to accelerate the achievement of high-quality justice for children.

SDG 16.5 has the ambition of significantly reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, whilst SDG 16.6 aims to develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. Here, certain COVID 4P Log responses did reveal a level of dissatisfaction over the effectiveness of these actors, and in certain instances, in relation to specifically aspects of justice:

"The challenge is really the effectiveness of the government policies and services in place that are supposed to protect children. Until now, the best services are still being provided by private NGO service providers. There is also no trust in the police and public social work provision."

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

"1-Inefficiency in law enforcement. The police take a lot of time to apprehend perpetrators of violence. 2- Judgement to these cases in court also take long. [...]"

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

Corruption

Corrupt practices were singled out as undermining the trust in, and efficiency of, the judicial system and other government bodies in several countries:

"Less corruption from government would have allowed more services to those who need it the most."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, South Africa

"But the collaboration has been very limited because the main government agencies have not been as collaborative as they should be. The Office of the Vice President has shown how much can be done in collaboration with other organizations. But the agencies directly under the President have been very corrupt and very suspicious of efforts by NGOs and other organizations."

Policymaker, Non-Governmental Organisation, Philippines

"Corrupting justice by well connected culprits"

Service Manager, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

"Poverty, cultural practices and corruption are among the barriers"

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

"[...] 3 -compromise, most of the time, perpetrators of these acts do compromise the victims, parents and even law enforcing officers by offering money or other goodies to drop or derail these cases."

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

Threats to Freedom of Expression

The right to peaceful assembly is a fundamental right as expressed in Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and as UN General Comment No.37 (2020) also stresses:

"The right of peaceful assembly is, moreover, a valuable tool that can and has been used to recognize and realize a wide range of other rights, including economic, social and cultural rights. It is of particular importance to marginalized individuals and groups."

UN Human Rights Committee, 2020, para.2

The COVID 4P Log responses highlighted the way in which the wider political context within a country could have profound impacts on freedom of expression – and specifically, where this relates to raising awareness of injustices towards children. A number of respondents from the Philippines raised concerns about their restricted opportunities to peacefully protest against such injustices:

"...there was a case of extreme violence against children in our country [...] It was really challenging not only could we not stage a protest as expression of our indignation, but it was also particularly difficult during this time because of the preeminence of politics in the country. The case died just like that. It is sad because even when we promote child helplines and tell children to report, the existing laws and mechanisms could not protect them."

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

"As an advocacy group, traditionally, we hold street rallies together with dialogues with policy makers to move cases forward, now it is hard to make that presence felt because of the movement restrictions."

Service Manager, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

"...this may be particular to our context and in countries all around the world, social movements are also challenged due to the shrinking civic spaces, sadly, socially and now even physically. Social protests are now difficult to mount and even when we express ourselves in social media, it may not also be safe. This time also endangers our lives as activists and the future of activism."

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

The negative consequences of these freedom restrictions on child sector professionals' ability to engage in advocacy were also evident in Kenya:

"The ban on meetings where it meant that we could no longer do advocacy sessions or public opinion sessions"

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Kenya

Those freedom restrictions imposed on child advocates and allied professionals are likely to have concerning implications for acknowledging the voice of the child (Art. 12 UNCRC 1989). In light of SDG 16, Target 16.10, which relates to the protection of fundamental freedoms, the right for individuals across all societies to express themselves peacefully on matters of social justice is a principle that must continue to be safeguarded globally.

Positive Examples of Collaborations

Positive relations with government and public institutions (and their representatives) during the pandemic were referenced within the COVID 4P Log, with certain respondents stating that what helped their own work and allowed for effective responses were:

"Coming together of multiple agencies to address increased risk of violence against children due to covid19"

Policymaker, Academia, South Africa

"Good collaboration among Child protection workers, government officers, communities and chiefs..."

Direct Service Provider, International Organisation, Malawi

"Collaboration work with other local Civil Society Organisation partners, private sectors and government stakeholders"

Direct Service Provider, Civil Society Organisation, Philippines

"Networking with all partners working on child welfare, including healthcare providers, the police, Dcs, and other partners"

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

"I have seen the local NGOs and CBOs working closely with the local chiefs, the department of children services, supporting and funding activities and some doing advocacy and awareness on children rights"

Direct Service Provider, Non-Governmental Organisation, Kenya

A Note of Caution

While the survey generated useful insights into the respondents' work in relation to children and families, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to a number of factors.

- The numbers of respondents are modest, so the findings may not be representative of the experiences and challenges faced in those countries or sectors.
- The survey engaged practitioners and policymakers only. The findings may not reflect children's or their caregivers' views.
- The findings reported here have been produced by the COVID 4P Log research team and, due to the format of the smartphone app survey, the findings cannot be shared with the respondents for commentary or review.
- The findings are derived from a short-form survey and lack context. Respondents' engagement with the survey varied, which may have affected the completeness of the data.
- We are aware some respondents had difficulties with engaging with the app due to workload pressures and technical issues, which might have affected their response rates.

Conclusion

Generated in the last quarter of 2020, the COVID 4P Log findings help shine a spotlight on several key justice-based dynamics to have emerged during the pandemic.

When viewed through the lens of both the SDGs and 10 Calls to Action, they underline that although innovation and other beneficial practices have been evident during this period (for example, the shift to digital justice provision and enhanced collaborative working), many longstanding societal challenges have potentially been compounded – particularly, gender-based violence, violence against children, the breach of the rights of children in contact with the law, the lack of trust in public institutions, and others.

If the ambition of realising the SDGs is to be ultimately achieved, the COVID 4P Log findings reveal that further intensive and concerted efforts are required to ensure that the prevailing 'justice gap' is fully closed, and all children within society can access and benefit from forms of justice tailored to meet their needs.

References

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action & UNICEF (2020). Technical Note: COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty. Retrieved from: https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/covid-19_and_children_deprived_of_their_liberty_v1_lowres_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=37576

Brown, A. & Vaswani, N. (2022). Understanding Digital Criminal Justice Provision in Glasgow. Retrieved from: https://www.cycj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/GCC-Digital-Justice-Report-Jan-2022.pdf

Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019). General Comment No.24 (2019) on children's rights in the child justice system. CRC/C/GC/24, Geneva: Switzerland.

Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021). General Comment No.25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. CRC/C/GC/25. Geneva: Switzerland.

Davidson, J.; Elsley, S.; Giraldi, M.; Goudie, A.; Hope, K.; Lyth, A.; Van Keirsbilck, B. (June 2019a): Justice for Children, Justice for All: The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+ A Challenge Paper. Scotland: CELCIS-Inspiring Children's Futures, University of Strathclyde Retrieved from: https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/1newwebsite/departmentsubject/facultyofhumanitiesandsocialsciences/documents/The_Challenge_Paper.pdf

Davidson, J., Elsley, S., Giraldi, M., Goudie, A., Hope, K., Lyth, A., & Van Keirsbilck, B. (2019b). Justice for Children, Justice for All: The Challenge to Achieve SDG16+ Call to Action. Glasgow: CELCIS - Inspiring Children's Futures, University of Strathclyde. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/_files/ugd/6c192f_23f7a997509d40388a689da6f0059a82.pdf

Davidson, J.; Foussard, C.; Goudie, A.; Hope, K.; Shields, S. (2022). Justice for Children: Agenda for Action. Glasgow: Inspiring Chidlren's Futures, University of Strathclyde

Dlamini, N, J. (2021). Gender-Based Violence, Twin Pandemic to COVID-19. Critical Sociology. 47, pp.583-590.

Dyer, F., Lightowler, C., & Vaswani, N. (2022) Exacerbating, illuminating and hiding rights issues: COVID-19 and children in conflict with the law, The International Journal of Human Rights, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2022.2060205

Fore, H, H. (2021). Violence against children in the time of COVID-19: What we have learned, what remains unknown and the opportunities that lie ahead. Child abuse & neglect, 116, (Pt 2), 104776.

International Commission of Jurists (2020). Videoconferencing, Courts and COVID-19 Recommendations Based on International Standards. Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/res/ji/import/guide/icj_videoconferencing/icj_videoconferencing.pdf

Lynch, N., & Kilkelly, U. (2021). 'Zooming In' on Children's rights During a Pandemic: Technology, Child Justice and COVID-19. The International Journal of Children's Rights, 29, 2, pp. 286-304.

Nowak, M. (2019). United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc/united-nations-global-study-children-deprived-liberty

OECD & LJF (2020). Access to justice and the COVID-19 pandemic: Compendium of Country Practices. Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/governance/global-roundtables-access-to-justice/access-to-justice-compendium-of-country-practices.pdf

OHCRC (2013). Opening statement by Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights: Panel on 'the negative impact of corruption on human rights'. Retrieved from: https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2013/03/opening-statement-navi-pillay-high-commissioner-human-rights-panel-negative?LangID=E&NewsID=13131

Task Force on Justice (2019). Justice for All – Final Report. Center on International Cooperation. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/_files/ugd/90b3d6_746fc8e4f9404abeb994928d3fe85c9e.pdf

UN (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child: Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/

UN (2008). UN Common Approach to Justice for Children. New York: UN.

UN (2015). Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1. Retrieved from: https://sdgs.un.org/publications/transforming-our-world-2030-agenda-sustainable-development-17981

UN (2021). With Almost Half of World's Population Still Offline, Digital Divide Risks Becoming 'New Face of Inequality', Deputy Secretary-General Warns General Assembly. DSG/SM/1579. UN Press Release. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/dsgsm1579.doc.htm

UNICEF (2021a). Detention of Children in the time of COVID-19. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/media/110196/file/Detention-COVID-Children-2021.pdf

UNICEF (2021b) Reimagine Justice for Children. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/documents/reimagine-justice-children

UNICEF & ITU (2020). 'How many children and young people have internet access at home? Estimating digital connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic.' New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF UK. (2020). A Rights-Based Analysis of Youth Justice in the United Kingdom. [Report Author: A. Brown]. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org.uk/youth-justice-in-the-uk-a-rights-based-analysis/

UNODC (2020). Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) response – UNODC Thematic Brief on gender-based violence against women and girls. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/UnicefUK_YouthJusticeReport2020_screen.pdf

UNODC & UNDP (2020). Guidance Note: Ensuring Access to Justice in the Context of COVID-19. Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/Ensuring_Access_to_Justice_in_the_Context_of_COVID-191.pdf

UN Human Rights Committee (2020). General comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly (article 21). CCPR/C/GC/37. Geneva: Switzerland.

UN Women, IDLO, UNDP, UNODC, World Bank, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (2020). The Justice for Women Amidst COVID-19 report. Retrieved from: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Justice-for-women-amidst-COVID-19-en.pdf

UN Women, IDLO, World Bank & Task Force on Justice (2019). Justice for Women: High Level Group Report. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/_files/ugd/90b3d6_ee8d978dc0474be2a52edd856adbd151.pdf

About this Report

This Learning Report has been produced by the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, UK. **Inspiring Children's Futures**, with its many partners, has a strong track record of multi-level, multi-sector global engagement, policy development and practice improvement.

This Learning Report is part of a series of reports on the findings of the COVID 4P Log smartphone app survey. Together, the reports from this series form the second of a three-part 'Inspiring Children's Futures in Light of COVID-19' programme.

This programme is gathering evidence on protecting children's wellbeing in past epidemics; informing better policies and practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; and influencing change in the long shadow that COVID-19 will cast over the recovery phases ahead.

With our partners, we are strengthening global, national and local approaches to ensure that we are collectively delivering on the Justice for Children, Justice for All SDG 16+ Call to Action to 'respond to children's distinct needs, and realise their full range of rights and opportunities, to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all'. [1]

1. https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/justiceforchildren

Authors:
Jennifer Davidson, Dimitar Karadzhov and Sophie Shields at the **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures**, and Aaron Brown, **Children and Young People's Centre for Justice**, University of Strathclyde.

Please cite this work as: Brown, A.; Davidson, J.; Karadzhov, D.; and Shields, S. (May, 2022). 'The Fragility of Justice for Children During COVID-19: Providers' and Policymakers' Perspectives on Implications and Mitigation Strategies. Findings from the International COVID 4P Log Project'. Inspiring Children's Futures Learning Report Series 9/2022. www.InspiringChildrensFutures.org

This project, and the material in this Learning Report, have been funded by the Scottish Funding Council Global Challenges Research Fund. The contents do not necessarily reflect the funder's policies or views.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material do not imply on the part of the funders or authors the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities or the delimitation of its frontiers.

Acknowledgements:
While their mention does not imply their endorsement, the authors are grateful to our Key Partners: the African Child Policy Forum, African Partnership to End Violence Against Children, Barnafrid National Centre on Violence Against Children, Child Rights Coalition Asia, Child Rights Connect, Defence for Children International, European Social Network, FICE, Global Social Services Workforce Alliance, International Child and Youth Care Network, National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, OECD, Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies, REPSSI, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, The Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland and Terre des hommes, who actively shaped the project, and kindly reflected on early findings, to inform this *Learning Report*.

Finally, we extend our thanks to Fiona Dyer and Nina Vaswani (Children and Young People's Centre for Justice) for their feedback on draft versions; Helen Schwittay for her knowledge exchange assistance; Erin Lux for the data management support; and Graham Wilson for the app development and study design assistance.

www.InspiringChildrensFutures.org

This *Learning Report* may be freely reproduced with the appropriate acknowledgement.

Brochure Design: www.huttoncreativedesign.co.uk

© The **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** at the University of Strathclyde.
May 2022