

Brain Sciences and How It Affects Children Accused of Crimes

Expert meeting



15,16,17 May 2023

Route d'Hermance 471 Hermance, Switzerland.

Introduction

Children and young people (CYP) who come into contact and / or conflict with the law are likely to have neuro-disability (ND). Neurodisability is an umbrella term that encapsulates a variety of congenital and acquired conditions which have an impact on the brain or central nervous system. There are a broad range of conditions included within this definition (for example Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, acquired brain injury, foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, learning disabilities). However, impairments frequently affect domains like cognitive processing, emotion regulation, memory, behaviour (including difficulties with inhibition of inappropriate behaviours), social skills, and physical disability. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with 'neurodiversity' or 'neurodevelopmental disorder'. We choose here to use the term neurodisability, to recognise that our societal practices and norms can be disabling for children with these conditions, and can contribute to their criminalisation.

Children in the criminal justice system are innately vulnerable as a result of their age and level of developmental maturity. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (Article 37) identified that arrest and any detention of a child should *"be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time"*. In addition, General Comment 24 on juvenile justice, states that children with ND are significantly overrepresented in those who enter custody. The comment states that children with ND should have their needs identified whilst detained, but, foremost, should not be at risk of being imprisoned in the first place. Proper identification of their needs enables appropriate safeguards and accommodations to ensure the protection of their rights without discrimination. However, there are several systemic barriers faced by children with ND which result in their rights not being realised.

This expert meeting aims to identify how United Nations member states may protect the rights of children and young people with Neuro-disability (ND) who are in contact and/or in conflict with the law. Neuro-Disabilities may often underlie behaviours that are systemically criminalised. This meeting will present examples of policy and practice developments in this area – pre-judicial, judicial and in custody. Key experts in this field will provide examples of good practices, and we will establish a working group to encourage future innovations. The results of this expert meeting would not only improve lives of those affected, but also, we argue, reduce future crime.

Justification

Scientific research demonstrates that the number of people with ND is much higher amongst children and adults in the criminal justice system than in the general population. This is a whole-system problem: Children with ND are particularly vulnerable to childhood trauma, and to exploitation by organised crime groups. They are more likely to be taken into state care as children, more likely to be excluded from school, and may struggle to access appropriate healthcare. They may be taken into police custody, tried, and sentenced without any recognition of their needs and how they may impact behaviour. As a whole-system problem, we require whole-system responses. This starts with criminal justice professionals, but extends to legislation around education, health, and social care practices too.

Causal associations between TBI and violent crime have been shown in various international investigations. Children and young adults with neuro-disabilities and in particular TBI being three times more likely to be criminalised than the general population. Due to the lack of appropriate support, national authorities simply do not always have adequate procedures in place to ensure that children with neurological disabilities do not end up trapped in criminal justice systems, despite the fact that a neurological disability represents an increased and significant risk factor for this outcome. Not only do NDs increase risk of initial criminalisation, without proper understanding from prison staff they are at increased risk of harsher sanctions within prison (e.g. getting in trouble for forgetting an appointment, or being exploited by organised crime groups), and poorer rehabilitation outcomes (e.g. being re-criminalised for forgetting a probation appointment, or for not having the executive function ability to plan to get there).

In the criminal justice system, children with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are particularly over-represented. TBI occurs when the brain is subject to a blunt force or laceration, often caused by falls, accidents (including motor vehicle accidents), violence, and assaults. Evidence suggests that rates of any TBI in the general population are about 8-10%, with 2% having a moderate-severe TBI. Whereas, in incarcerated populations approximately 60% have a TBI of any severity, and 15% have a moderate-severe TBI likely to result in ongoing disability. Emerging evidence finds that these rates are even higher amongst women and girls. Typically more than half of people within the criminal justice system (secure facilities) are found to have some form of TBI involving a degree of “knock out”. The greater (depth and time of) Loss of Consciousness (LoC) the more likely long-term problems are with cognition and behaviour. The majority of those with moderate to severe TBI (more than 20/30 minutes LoC) have persisting personality changes - for example being more irritable or with temper issues.

Another common neuro-disability is ADHD which research has found clinically diagnosed in 30 percent and 26 percent of the youth and adult prison populations respectively, which are significantly higher rates than the general population and there is substantial comorbidity with other problems, such as mental health and drug misuse. ADHD is often under-diagnosed in girls and women who are incarcerated. Such issues triple the risk of suicidality.

It is clear that a different strategy is needed to prevent children with neurodisabilities from becoming involved or trapped in the criminal justice system. A significant step forward in this regard would be greater awareness about neuro-disabilities within the group of professionals that come into contact with children in conflict with the law, including judges, magistrates, police officers, lawyers, probation officers, youth workers, in order to improve prevention and response.

Specific objectives

- To highlight the need for judicial professionals to take into account Neurodisabilities in the management of children and young people in contact with the law, as recommended by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- To make justice system professionals in contact with children accused of crimes or suspects of crimes and particularly those who sentence, - aware of the prevalence and impact of Traumatic Brain Injury & other NDs in children and adolescents.
- To understand the role of NDs in complicating existing trauma, and to enable adapting practice to account for deficits and difficulties that may be present following identified TBI.
- To enable Justice personnel in identifying possible ND in those on their caseload using screening tools.
- To encourage changes in justice systems by screening for TBI and comorbid NDs to enable better support of children and young people to reduce incarceration and crime.

Target audience

Suitable for professionals and support workers from the justice systems, child law, penal law, health and mental health backgrounds. Case workers, therapists, lawyers, judges, police officers, independent advocates, or any professional that works with children in conflict and in contact with the law.

Expected outcomes

- The basis for the elaboration of an agreement on how to account of Neurodisabilities in the management of children and young people before the law
- The definition of actions (e.g. screening and support) for justice officials to identify TBI and complicate existing trauma and then enable practice to evolve in the area.
- To establish a working group to encourage and share good practice across states for screening for TBI and better management of affected children.
- To propose the establishment of follow up mechanism for enhancing support in future for initiatives/ Call for action to end criminalisation of children with ND

Youth Experiential Learning Simulation (YExLS) (at *Esplanade Pont-Rouge 2, 1212 Lancy, Switzerland. Monday 15 May, 10:00-12:00 hrs*)

Take a walk in my shoes / See what I see / Hear what I hear / Feel what I feel

There is a gap between what systems are intended to provide for young people and how youth actually experience those systems. This is especially true for youth in the foster care, juvenile justice, and homelessness systems, who frequently have to navigate myriad referrals, rules, cultures, and biases to access the services they need in education, social services, courts, behavioural health, employment, and more.

The Youth Experiential Learning Simulation (YExLS) is an attempt to help bridge that gap. Developed by professionals who have worked in youth serving systems for decades in collaboration with youth with lived experience of those same systems and further refined

through the participation and feedback of judges, social workers, teachers, probation officers, and more, YExLS seeks to help participants get a better sense of what it is like to be youth navigating public systems while also pursuing their own dreams, following their own interests, and surviving their own traumas.

YExLS is gamified but is not a game. During a two hour session, participants spend roughly half the time navigating the room, pursuing the interests and goals of their assigned character. Each participant's experience in the simulation is unique. Like life, participants may find their way made easier or more complicated by their decisions or by chance.

The second half of the simulation is where we process, where we figure out what just happened, and where we start to game plan specific, real world solutions that we can take back with us to the real world.

When it really works, the community you make in the simulation will continue these conversations for months or years to come. Experience → Diagnose → Repair → Iterate → Share

Participants

Name	Organisation	Title	Interest Topic/Expertise
Huw Williams	University of Exeter, UK	Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Psychology Dept.	
Cedric Foussard	Terre des hommes	Access to Justice (A2J) Global Learning and Advocacy Advisor Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator World Congresses & Preparatory Meetings Coordinator	
Mariana Perez Cruz	Terre des hommes	Global Initiative on Justice With Children consultant	Child-friendly justice, child-centred justice, digital justice
Brian Blalock	Youth Law Center	Senior Staff Attorney	Children's behavioural health services, juvenile justice and child welfare systems, youth legal entitlements.
Angela Vigil	Baker McKenzie	Pro Bono Partner and	Mental health services

		Exec. Director of Global Pro Bono	effect on representation, trial advocacy and sentencing of children.
James Tonks	Haven Clinical Psychology Practice Ltd.	Managing Director/ Consultant Paediatric Clinical Neuropsychologist/ Clinical Psychologist	brain injury acquired in childhood.
Stan Gilmour	Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit	Director	Neurodisability and criminal justice
Mathilde Chevignard	Rehabilitation Department for Children with acquired neurological injury. Saint Maurice Hospitals, Saint Maurice, France	Senior consultant in Pediatric Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	childhood acquired brain injury
Catherine Wiseman-Hakes	McMaster University	Assistant Clinical Professor	traumatic and acquired brain injury (and other neurodisabilities) in children and youth. brain injury as a risk factor for criminalization.
Dilek Çelik	Eastern Mediterranean University/ Youth Re- autonomy Foundation Turkey	Assistant Prof.	Preventive NGO programs and early intervention
María Pilar CHIRIBOGA HURTADO	Terre des hommes	Clinic psychologist	Child delinquency prevention
Gemma Creek	Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust	Speech and Language Therapist	TBI screening and response
Taghreed Jaber	Penal Reform International	Regional Director for MENA	Children accused of crimes
Ashley Tunstall	State of Colorado (USA)/Division of Youth Services	Director of Behavioral Health & Medical Services Division of Youth Services	intersecting considerations of neurodisability for those who are involved in the justice system
Lucy Dawes	Consultant	Independent	Research into policy making
Valerie Chmara	Psychosocial Support	UNODC	children accused of

	Specialist		crimes and suffering from mental health disorders
Vicky Kemp	University of Nottingham	Principal Research Fellow	children in police custody.
Lori Schroeder	Children's Law Center of California	Attorney	impact of Neuro-disability on case outcomes for dual status youth involved in criminal and child welfare systems
Hope Kent	University of Exeter, UK	PhD Researcher	Education, data, screening
Yann Colliou	International Child Rights Institute	Co director	
Imma Guerras Delgado	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Coordinator, Child and Youth Rights Unit	
Florence Laufer	Prison Insider	Director	collection and dissemination of information on the use of imprisonment and prison conditions
Ha Ryong Jung (Michael)		Child Rights Lawyer	
Maria Bray	Terre des hommes	Protection And Psychosocial Manager	
Shekhar Saxena	Havard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.	Professor of the Practice of Global Mental Health Global Health and Population	
Anna Bertschy	Terre des hommes	Press Officer	Media attention/ coverage
Ina Verzivolli	UNICEF	Child Protection specialist	System strengthening approach, access to justice for children, inter-sectorial collaboration and integration of services
Sophie Barbey	Terre des hommes	Deputy Director of Operations	
Helen Griffiths	Office of the United Nations High		

	Commissioner for Human Rights		
Marta Gil	Terre des hommes	Deputy Head Programme Access to Justice	Mental Health and Psychosocial responses, children in contact with the law, Intersectionality approaches.
Lourdes CARRASCO COLOM	Terre des hommes	Technical Advisor Child Protection	

Online participants

Alexandra Martins	UNODC Global Programme to End Violence against Children	Head of programme	
Jodie Leonard	Boyle Tricks Leonard Ltd	Solicitor	Youths / adults in the criminal justice system
Jonelle K. Sandel	Division of Youth Services, Colorado Department of Human Services	Director of Psychological Services	Children in detention, special needs, trauma informed methodologies
Simon Hardwick	Devon & Cornwall Police	Youth Justice Inspector	child centred policing, trauma informed methodologies
Olivia Rope	Penal Reform International	Executive Director for Penal Reform International,	
Leigh Schrieff-Brown	University of Cape Town, South Africa	Applied Cognitive Science and Experimental Neuropsychology Team	
Avril Calder	IAYFJM/AIMJF	Former president	courtroom experience of young offenders.
Maria João Leote de Carvalho	CICS.NOVA FCSH	Researcher	
Grace Agcaoili	UNICEF	Justice For Children Global Lead	
Lucy Marie Richardson	UNICEF	Child Protection Specialist	
Judy Dettmer	National Association of State Head Injury	Director of Strategic Partnerships	

	Administrators (UK)		
Valera, Eve M.	Harvard University		
Ursula Kilkelly	University College Cork	Chartered Director and Head of the College of Business and Law	
Ton Liefwaard	Leiden University	Vice-Dean	
Manu Krishan	Global Campus of Human Rights.	Manager of the Global Study dissemination and follow-up initiation activities	
Koulla Yiasouma	North Ireland Commission for Children and Young People	Former Commissioner for Children and Young People	
Amanda Kirby	Cardiff University/ Do-IT Solutions	Honorary Professor /CEO	

Programme

Monday 15 May

Online from 14:30 CET <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84741514455>

Time	Description
9:00-10:00	TRAVEL TO BAKER MCKENZIE OFFICE <i>Mini bus</i>
10:00 -12:00	SIMULATION YELxS Baker McKenzie Office Geneva (Esplanade Pont-Rouge 2, 1212 Lancy, Switzerland) Angela Vigil - Pro Bono Partner and Executive Director of Global Pro Bono, Baker Mckenzie. USA Brian Blalock - Senior Staff Attorney, Youth Law Center. USA
12:00 - 13:30	TRAVEL TO BROCHER FOUNDATION <i>Mini bus</i>
13:30 - 14:30	RECEPTION LUNCH <i>Brocher centre</i>
14:30 - 15:00	WELCOME AND AGENDA FOR THE EXPERT MEETING <i>Brocher centre</i>

	<p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p> <p>Cédric Foussard - Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator , Terre des hommes Foundation. France</p> <p>Mariana Pérez - Global Initiative Justice With Children Project Manager, Terre des hommes Foundation. The Netherlands.</p>
15:00 - 15:30	<p>TOUR DE TABLE <i>Conference room at the Brocher centre</i></p> <p>Each participant introduces themselves</p>
15:30 - 15:45	<p>COFFEE BREAK <i>Brocher centre</i></p>
15:45 - 16:30	<p>YELXS FOLLOW-UP INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Angela Vigil - Pro Bono Partner and Executive Director of Global Pro Bono, Baker Mckenzie. USA</p> <p>Brian Blalock- Senior Staff Attorney, Youth Law Center. USA</p> <p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p> <p>Hope Kent - PhD Researcher – Advanced Quantitative Methods/Psychology, University of Exeter. UK</p>
16:30 - 17:00	<p>OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p> <p>Cédric Foussard - Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator, Terre des hommes Foundation. France.</p>
19:30	<p>DINER & NETWORKING <i>Villa Brocher</i></p>

Tuesday 16 May

Online from 9:15 CET <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82449907308>

Time	Description
8:30-9:15	REGISTRATION & WELCOMING COFFEE <i>Brocher centre</i>
9:15 - 9:30	<p>INTRODUCTION <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p>

	<p>Cédric Foussard - Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator , Terre des hommes Foundation. France.</p>
9:30 - 9:45	<p>INAUGURATION <i>Conference room</i> Dr. Shekhar Saxena - Professor of the Practice of Global Mental Health, Harvard T H Chan School of Public Health. USA.</p>
09:45 - 11:00	<p>ROUNDTABLE 1: RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON CHILDREN WITH NEURODISABILITY IN CONTACT WITH THE LAW: SIZE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM <i>Conference room</i> Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK (15 min) Hope Kent- Phd researcher, Exeter University. UK (15 min online) Roundtable Discussion- Reflection on the evidence base, discussion of whole - system exclusion and criminalisation (45 min in person and online) Comments: Professor Leigh Schrieff(online) and Lucy Dawes.</p>
11:00 -11:15	<p>COFFEE BREAK <i>Brocher centre</i></p>
11:15 - 12:30	<p>ROUNDTABLE 2: UNMET CLINICAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH NEURODISABILITY IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. <i>Conference room</i> Prof. Catherine Wiseman-Hakes- Assistant Clinical Professor, McMaster University. Canada (15 min) Dr. James Tonks- Consultant Paediatric Neuropsychologist, Haven Clinical Psychology. UK (15 min) Roundtable Discussion- How can unmet clinical needs lead to harsher sanctions in prison/probation/court rooms? How do comorbid needs have an impact? (45 min in person and online) Comments: Ashley Tunstall, Dr. Jonelle Sandel(online), M.D. Mathilde Chevignard and Gemma Creek</p>
12:30 -13:30	<p>RECEPTION LUNCH <i>Brocher centre</i></p>
13:30 - 14:45	<p>ROUNDTABLE 3: RESPONSES TO CHILDREN WITH NEURODISABILITY FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. <i>Conference room</i> Stan Gilmour - Director Violence Reduction Unit, Thames Valley Police. UK (15 min) Dr Vicky Kemp- Principal Research Fellow, University of Nottingham. UK (15 min) Roundtable Discussion- What can bodies in the criminal justice system do differently? How do we incite change? (45 min) Comments: Lori Schroeder, Brian Blalock, Jodie Leonard(online)</p>
14:45 - 15:00	<p>COFFEE BREAK <i>Brocher centre</i></p>
15:00- 16:30	<p>ROUNDTABLE 4: JUDICIAL AND LEGAL INSTRUMENT TO REDUCE CRIMINALISATION OF CHILDREN WITH NEURODISABILITIES</p>

	<p><i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Imma Guerras Delgado- Coordinator, Child and Youth Rights Unit, OHCHR. Austria (Moderator)</p> <p>Valerie Chmara - Psychosocial Support Specialist, UNODC. Austria (15 min)</p> <p>Prof. Ursula Kilkelly- Chartered Director and Head of the College of Business and Law, University College Cork. Ireland (15 min online)</p> <p>Prof. Ton Liefaard - Full Professor of Children's Rights, Leiden University. The Netherlands (15 min online)</p> <p>Roundtable Discussion- Levers for international change, barriers to policy change (30 min)</p> <p>Comments: Ina Verzivolli</p>
16:30-16:45	<p>REFLECTIONS OF THE DAY <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Angela Vigil - Pro Bono Partner and Executive Director of Global Pro Bono, Baker Mckenzie. USA</p>
16:45-17:00	<p>CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p> <p>Cédric Foussard - Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator , Terre des hommes Foundation. France</p> <p>Sophie Barbey- Deputy Director of Operations, Terre des hommes Foundation. Switzerland</p>
19:30	<p>DINER & NETWORKING <i>Villa Brocher</i></p>

Wednesday 17 May (In-person and online)

Online from 9:00 CET <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85671822845>

Time	Description
9:00 - 9:15	<p>INTRODUCTION TO FINAL DAY - FUTURE DIRECTIONS <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK</p> <p>Cédric Foussard - Global Initiative Justice With Children Coordinator , Terre des hommes Foundation. France.</p>
9:15 - 10:30	<p>CALL TO ACTIONS: REFLECTING ON SHAPING THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR CHILDREN <i>Conference room</i></p> <p>Moderator: Prof. Catherine Wiseman-Hakes- Assistant Clinical Professor, McMaster University. Canada</p> <p>Prof. Jennifer Davidson - Executive Director The Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures University of Strathclyde. Scotland (15 min online)</p>
10:30 - 10:45	<p>COFFEE BREAK <i>Brocher centre</i></p>

10:45 - 12:15	WORKING GROUPS <i>Conference room</i> Prof. Huw Williams - Professor in Clinical Neuropsychology, Exeter University. UK Marta Gil - Deputy Head Justice Programmes, Terre des hommes Foundation. Switzerland
12:15- 12:30	CONCLUSION AND THANK YOUS <i>Conference room</i>
12:30- 13:30	RECEPTION LUNCH <i>Brocher centre</i>

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- www.yexls.com
- Reimagine Justice (UNICEF, 2021)
- Young people with acquired brain injury: Preventing entrenchment in the criminal justice system Gaye Lansdell, Bernadette J Saunders and Anna Eriksson
- What were they thinking? A discussion paper on brain and behaviour in relation to the justice system in New Zealand Dr Ian Lambie Chief Science Advisor for the Justice Sector Date: 29 January 2020
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18. V. Kemp (2020) 'Digital Legal Rights: Exploring Detainees' Understanding of the Right to a Lawyer and Potential Barriers to Accessing Legal Advice' (2020), *Criminal Law Review*.
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