



Invitation to webinar to refine and develop proposals for  
**A Model Court For Migrant Children**  
Chaired by Baroness Helena Kennedy of the Shaws

By Zoom in coordination with Routes at the University of Exeter  
on  
**23rd of June 2021**  
from 17:00 to 19:15 UK time (BST)

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**The proposal for A Court For Migrant Children**

Migrant children, especially separated and unaccompanied asylum seeking children face complex decision making procedures and multiple barriers to the effective consideration of their care, protection status, and long term future development needs within the various United Kingdom administrative and judicial systems as presently arranged. Different agencies and courts have distinct responsibilities at different points pursuant to different laws, when tasked with making decisions in the best interests of migrant children.

This is neither effective nor works seamlessly towards that end. These different processes are often in conflict with one another and limited to specific aspects of a task that demands an holistic approach by all those with responsibilities towards these children. The result for many children is poor decision-making, unnecessarily costly, delayed, and multiple proceedings, with agencies, statutory authorities and even courts and tribunals in conflict with each other's decisions and judgments. Within this context, children's rights and protection needs are far too often lost within complex and technical legal and evidential arguments, for example, age assessment, care duties, refugee and other international protection needs, even before the issue of a child's long term best interests and development is considered.

Such a fragmented approach, as it has developed over time, does not have to be the approach taken. It is possible to imagine a process that places the child's interests first, foremost and central to all those procedures, supervised in one judicial arena. It is possible and also necessary.

**An invitation to share our vision**

Earlier this year, various experts, including immigration law, family law, and children law practitioners, as well as members of the judiciary, NGOs, child rights organisations, and child-welfare specialists convened in an expert roundtable to examine proposals for A Model Court For Migrant Children, as part of Methoria's First Rights Programme: Equal Justice for Migrant Children project. This expert roundtable was a major step in examining the prospect of a specialised court to protect the rights and welfare of children by putting the principle of the best interests of the child at its core.

The challenge to ensure that the dignity of migrant children is guaranteed and that experiences of humiliation are prevented remains vast. However, a significant step towards this aim is establishing a court that adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to advance the rights and interests of children based on the best legal and social care practice encompassed within the sphere of international children's rights.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021, you are invited to join Equal Justice for Migrant Children to refine and develop its proposals for A Model Court For Migrant Children. This webinar will provide an opportunity to share the vision of a fairer, more transparent judicial process which aims to better realise the rights of children including their psychological well-being and overall welfare at all stages. While the project was initially focused on the UK jurisdiction, we are interested exploring and sharing how such a model may apply in other jurisdictions.

This gathering, to be chaired by **Baroness Helena Kennedy of the Shaws**, who will highlight some of our previous work, will provide a space for experts to share with you their insights into how this ambitious goal can be achieved. Other speakers include:

- **Professor Ann Skelton**, University of Pretoria and member of UN Children's Rights Committee;
- **Professor Lenni Benson**, New York Law School, Founder and Senior Advisor at Safe Passage Project;
- **Gulwali Passarlay**, former unaccompanied child, activist and author of *The Lightless Sky*;
- And more to be confirmed.

You are invited to join and support the Equal Justice for Migrant Children project in its effort to promote and protect the rights of migrant children through the creation of a more cooperative and unified model of justice.

Catriona Jarvis

Chair, Equal Justice for Migrant Children and Director and Chair of Trustees of Methoria (UK charity no. 1188043).

[www.firstrights.net](http://www.firstrights.net)

Twitter: [@firstrights2021](https://twitter.com/firstrights2021)

We regret that funding does not permit us to provide simultaneous interpreting services for this event. Please contact Ciaran King if you have any questions, including regarding other forms of interpretation or support: [ciarankingltd@gmail.com](mailto:ciarankingltd@gmail.com)

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