



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI

The right to be heard... also for children in conflict with the law!

Join us in a 2 day seminar on the right of the child to be heard and participate for children in conflict with the law. Learn from high level expert keynote speakers **Jean Zermatten, André Dunant, Benoît van Keirsbilck, Bernard Boëton and Marianne Vlaming**, on the juridical and practical aspects of child participation. Get inspired by best practice stories from different DCI sections and other organisations. Learn how to involve children in advocacy and lobbying. Get (re)connected with your fellow child rights advocates, lobbyists and defenders. Take home practical information, tools and tips for best implementing the right to be heard and participate of the child in juvenile justice.

Defence for Children International

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Defence for Children International

30th Anniversary Symposium

Child Participation in Juvenile Justice

Programme



19 & 20 November 2009 – Geneva (Switzerland)

Maison des Associations and DCI Building

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Ms M. Poffet



VENUES

Day 1 Maison des Associations
Rue de Savoises 15
Tram # 13,14,15 & bus #1 - stop 'Cirque'
Tram # 12, 17 - stop 'Plainpalais'

Reception: Rue de Varembe 1: Tram 13 & 15 direction "Nations": stop Sismondi ou Nations: entry opposite Parking des Nations

Day 2 DCI International Secretariat (meeting room at the ground floor)
Rue de Varembe 1
Tram # 13 & 15 – stop 'Sismondi' (same as Reception)

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Welcome!



DCI 30, CRC 20!

This year DCI and the CRC both celebrate milestone anniversaries. Defence for Children started as a small NGO initiating the drafting of the Convention and then evolved into a leading global movement to promote its implementation, always alert to forms of violations that are overlooked or forgotten. This is how, over the past decade, the movement's international advocacy has prioritised the rights of children in conflict with the law. Focussing on juvenile justice reform to make it more child friendly thus forms the core of DCI's strategic advocacy work.

In this jubilee year, DCI focuses especially on the right of the child to be heard and participate in juvenile justice. Children should always be heard, with care for the child and in a way corresponding with their abilities and stage of development. Participation in decision-making is an even more comprehensive responsibility that requires dedicated professionals, willing and able to use the potential of the children in their best interest. For a child in conflict with the law, this is even more delicate. To get it right, a good understanding of the situation is needed.

Welcome to our two day symposium on Child Participation in Juvenile Justice, where Child Rights advocates, magistrates and academics, practitioners and professionals will share their experience, knowledge and best practices with you. We hope that this symposium will be a stimulating experience for all and that it yields a wealth of thoughts, ideas and strategies on the juridical as well as the practical aspects of child participation in justice matters and in advocacy and lobbying for this right. May it help us all move forward in the realisation of this right of the child or adolescent in conflict with the law and be the starting point of a longer term in-depth reflection worldwide.

We wish you a very good day and hope to meet you at our anniversary reception at our headquarters tonight.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laetitia van Haren'.

Laetitia van Haren

Director Defence for Children International

Day 1- Thursday 19th November

Part I: Good practices of involving children in advocacy and lobbying for children's rights and juvenile justice.

- 09:00 - 09:15 Welcome - DCI Director Laetitia van Haren
09:15 - 09:30 Overview of international standards on child participation and juvenile justice by the moderator, Anna Volz
09:30 - 10:20 Training Youth Advocates- Matthew Jackson YMCA
10:20 - 10:30 Experiences at EuroMUN – Ophélie Mercier

10:30-10:45 *Coffee & Tea break*

- 10:45 - 11:00 Children's Parliament of Prague- Markéta Rattayová (DCI-Czech Republic)
11:00 - 11:20 Children raise awareness on their safety on internet - Mahendranath Busgopaul (Mauritius)
11:20 - 11:40 Questions and discussion on involving children in advocacy and lobbying
11:40 - 12:20 Family Group Conferencing- Rob van Pagée
12.20 - 12:30 Closing remarks 'morning session'

12:30-13:30 *Sandwich Lunch*

Part II: 'To hear or not to hear?' – experiences of juvenile justice professionals and experts in listening to the child.

- 13:30-13:40 Opening speech- President DCI Rifat Odeh Kassis (absent)
13:40-14:40 Main Panel- moderated by Nigel Cantwell
Jean Zermatten
Benoît van Keirsbilck
André Dunant
Davinia Ovetton Bondi

14:40-15:00 *Coffee & Tea Break*

- 15:00-15:40 Questions & Debate – led by Nigel Cantwell.

Part III Creating a culture of child participation

- 15:40-16:15 Examples: Sierra Leone: Cinema On Wheels; Lesotho - Sarah Field
16:15-17:00 The childproof courtroom' - pedagogy of hearing the child' - Marianne Vlaming

Mr. Asger Kjaerum, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, Geneva ; akj@irct.org

Mr. Ibrahim Diouf, Save the Children Sweden; Ibrahim.D@waf.savethechildren.se

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Mr. Luigi Fratini, Goutte d'Eau, Geneva; info@childsupportnetwork.ch

17:00-17:30

Closing remarks **Day 2- Friday 20th November**

Part IV
18:00-22:00

Reception and festive book launch at DCI building. Linking theory and practice: tools & tips for advocacy and lobbying on child participation in juvenile justice.

09:00-09:30

Welcome at DCI HQ; Rapporteur recaps day 1

09:30-10:00

'Creating a political will'– Bruce Abramson

10:00-10:30

Training juvenile justice professionals in creating space for child participation– Bernard Boëton

10:30 - 10:45

Coffee & Tea break

10.45 - 11:00

Short introduction to "Aflatoun"- Bram Stoffele

11:00-11:50

Workshop 'The Use of Communication tools to promote child Participation in juvenile justice'– Virginia Murillo (DCI-Costa Rica)

11:50-12:00

Coffee & Tea Break.

12:00 -13:00

Workshop 'New DCI communication tools' – Anna Volz, Barbara Robinson & Kate Stevenson (DCI-International Secretariat)

13:00—13:30

The way forward for DCI and conclusion of the symposium

13:30-14.30

Cold lunch and farewell.



Afternoon: Possibility for private consultations with DCI International secretariat or Human Rights Bodies for DCI sections. Also possible to go to Sion to the CRC celebration organised by prof. Zermatten's Institute

SPECIAL OFFER

Buy the DCI Jubilee book '**DCI-a History of Child Rights in Action**' and you will also get the following DCI-International Secretariat Publications:

- Education in Chains ;
- Advocacy Handbook to GC no.10;
- Ending Violence Against Children in Justice Systems

PRICE: 50 CHF or plus for "Donors of DCI" / 40 CHF or plus for "Friends of DCI" / 30 CHF for Students

(available at the Jubilee Reception)

N.B. Older publications will also be made available. A donation for them is welcome !

Part I: Best Practices of Involving Children in Advocacy and Lobby for Children's Rights and Juvenile Justice

'Training Youth Advocates', presented by Matthew Jackson

The World Alliance of YMCA's (Youth Care International) shares its experiences on training youth advocates. One of their examples is their training of a group of youngsters to advocate for their rights in juvenile justice at the Human Rights Council. In the UK and Ireland, Y Care International is one of the biggest providers of global youth work, a new and emerging youth work discipline that helps young people make sense of a complex world and take positive action for change. This Global Youth Work programme is open to young people in 230 YMCAs across the UK and Ireland. Global youth work uses informal education to help young people explore the global perspective of local issues that impact on their lives. By exploring the links between their lives and the lives of young people across the world, they not only learn about the global realities of these issues, but use these to analyse their personal and local realities too. This gives them a fresh perspective on their lives and behaviours. Activities include prison work, a reconciliation and peace programme, a Global Life Skills course and a training programme ('Changing Your World') which trains young people in advocacy and lobbying skills. In addition, a large network of youth workers involved in global youth work has been set up.

Matthew Jackson is the Director of Global Youth Work and International Advocacy at Y Care International. He holds a BA in Politics and Education and an MA in International Studies and is a qualified Youth Worker. He is also a visiting lecturer at De Montfort University, Leicester. Matthew has been with Y Care for over five years, prior to which, he set up and ran a school education programme about the Arab world and worked as a parliamentary officer for the Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU), running campaigns and lobbying on Palestine, Iraq and other issues. Matthew has also coordinated projects with young people in Gaza and the West Bank and Zimbabwe.

'Children's Parliament of Prague', presented by Markéta Mertlová

DCI Czech Republic closely cooperates with the Children's Parliament of Prague. Parliaments which represents the active engagement of schoolchildren with their teachers, fellow students and parents. The idea is to give a place to children to express themselves, to let them say what they want and feel. They are mainly educated about their rights, children participation, but also about drugs, sexual awareness issues, soft skills etc. We try to cooperate and educate teachers and their parents in the same fields of interest too. It is not a game, children create their own projects, they solve problems at their schools through the parliaments. (www.dpp6.com)

Markéta Mertlová is an active youngster herself. She studies Medicine and combines that with being the vice-president of DCI section in the Czech Republic. She is the main

Participants

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Participants List

Symposium panel speakers

Prof. Jean Zermatten; Mr André Dunant, Mr Bernard Boëton; Mr Benoit Van Keirsbilck.
Mr Nigel Cantwell (Moderator).

Symposium workshop leaders

Ms Virginia Murillo-Herrera, DCI Costa-Rica; Ms Markéta Rattayová, DCI Czechia; Ms Marianne Vlaming; Ms Sarah Field; Mr Matthew Jackson; Mr. Rob van Pagée;
Mr Mahendranath Busgopaul; Mr. Bram Stoffele; Mr. Bruce Abramson; IS Staff

Symposium steering committee

Laetitia van Haren; Siny Oosterhoff; Anna Volz-Got; Barbara Robinson; Sarah Field

Symposium rapporteurs

Anna Volz-Got; Siny Oosterhoff; Sarah Field; Andrea Chalupova

Special Guests from the City of Geneva

Mr. Rémy Pagani, Maire de la ville de Genève ; webmaster@ville-ge.ch
Mr. Pierre-Alain Dard, Brigade des mineurs, Genève ; mineurs@police.ge.ch
Mr. Orlando Moro, Directeur, Brigade des mineurs, Genève ; mineurs@police.ge.ch
Mr Alessandro Parisotto, Youth participant, International School, Geneva;
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Keynote speakers

Prof. Jean Zermatten, Director International Institute for the Rights of the Child,
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Mr André Dunant, International Association of Youth and Family Magistrates;
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Mr. Rob van Pagée, Director, Centre EchtRecht, Netherlands; ekc@planet.nl
Mr. Bruce Abramson; abramson456@gmail.com
Mr Nigel Cantwell; cantabene@gmail.com

Other guests

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Mr. Dominique Leveillé, former DCI, d.leveille@aic.net
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Ms. Hélène Sackstein, Representative with UN and WHO, World Alliance of Women;

coordinator of Children's Parliament of Prague and a member of the Government Council for Human Rights –Committee for Children Rights.

'Experiences at the EuroMUN', presented by Ophélie Mercier

The EuroMUN is an annual large scale model of a United Nations Conference in which students from all over the world participate. EuroMUN aims to combine academic UN simulations with inter-cultural social events in order to promote multilateral diplomacy and creative forms of education. The topics of the 2009 EuroMUN ranged from piracy in the Gulf of Aden, the political situation in Zimbabwe and in Darfur to terrorism issues and the current financial crisis.

'Understanding how all the other girls of her age lived around the world' has always been a goal for **Ophélie Mercier**. Anxious to discover on this topic she started, ten years old, to sponsor a Malian girl. In 2006 she travelled to Mali to report on the daily life of maids in Barnako and to Romania to report about high level gymnastics. Now she wants not only to do research but to 'act' as well, especially in the field of children's rights. In April 2009 she represented DCI at the EuroMUN. Ophélie studies political sciences and is excited to learn more on how to integrate child rights theory and action.

'Children raise awareness on their safety on internet', presented by Mahendranath Busgopaul

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the CRC and the 30th anniversary of DCI the section in Mauritius took on the challenge to raise awareness for child participation. And what better way to show than asking the children to participate in the project. DCI Mauritius focussed on the safety of children on the internet and organised a National Art Competition. Children used art to communicate what they think is essential when it comes to child safety online.

Mahendranath Busgopaul presents the highlights of this project. Mahendranath is the country coordinator of Mauritius for YES Inc* (Young Entrepreneurship and Sustainability), an international campaign to fight youth unemployment. He is the Secretary-General of the Halley Movement, a coalition of organisations and groups that works to promote development, encourage creativity, and ensures the protection of family welfare. He has served on the board of the National Children's Council in Mauritius and has initiated community based programmes in areas relating to children, young people and the elderly. He has also done research work in various fields and has been a trainer for volunteers in the Indian Ocean Islands region. Mahendranath is board member of the International Association for Volunteer Effort and holds a Bachelors Degree in Public Administration.

‘Family Group Conferencing’, presented by Rob van Pagée

Everything looks better in a circle. When there is a problem in the life of a child, it’s family, friends and neighbours come together in order to solve the child’s problem collectively, with the active participation of all present, seated in acircle! Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is using the own strengths, resources and the voice of big and small people to make a plan and take decisions for the future. Circles are also organised after a criminal offence committed by a minor. In that case the offender and the victim come each with their own following to discuss the offence and agree to the best way to repair it (restorative justice). By FGC children keep the directorship of their lives in their own hands. Children have a right to maintain family ties and cultural connections. Through and with their parents they belong to a wider family system. Family groups are experts on themselves and in case of problems, active family group participation is essential for a good outcome. The family group is the best context for problem solution. The State should defend those networks.

Rob van Pagée works for the ‘*Eigen Kracht Centrale*’ a Dutch Restorative Centre. He is a strong proponent of ‘conferencing’ as a way to optimize the control of citizens over their own problems and conflicts. He has extensive hands-on experience in working in youth care. When he discovered how family conferencing (or family circles) worked and what it could achieve he started to promote this method in the Netherlands. He has published multiple books and articles on the subject. (www.eigen-kracht.nl)

Part II: “To hear or not to hear?” – experiences of justice professionals

Panel Keynote Speakers

The keynote speakers are Justice professionals who share their experiences from life-long practice in listening (or not!) to youngsters, analyse what hearing the child really means in the court room context, and what training could improve the quality of their listening and their capacity to hear.

Jean Zermatten has been a Member of the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child since 2005 and Vice-Chair since 2007. He was President and Dean of the juvenile Court of the canton of Valais canton in Switzerland since 1980 to 2005. He founded the International Institute for the Rights of the Child (IDE), also known as the Kurt Bosch Institute, in Sion (Switzerland) of which he is currently the Director. He has lectured at the University of Fribourg (Arts Faculty, Social Work and Law Faculty) and has initiated and launched the Executive Master on Children’s Rights, in collaboration with the University of Fribourg and the Kurt Bosch Institute. He holds a Dr Honoris Causa from Fribourg University (Switzerland). He has been the President of the Swiss society for the criminal law for juveniles as well as the President of the International Association of Magistrates for Youth and Family (IAMYF). Furthermore Jean Zermatten drafted a Project for the 1st unified Law for the criminal Procedure for Minors in Switzerland. He drafted an inter-

Workshop 2 – New DCI communication tools, presented by Anna Volz, Kate Stevenson and Barbara Robinson

In this workshop participants get an inside view of the new DCI Publications and training on how to use them. These new publications include the DCI report ‘Education in chains’ by Barbara Robinson and Julia D’Aloisio. Barbara will present the findings from this research on the right to education of children in detention, as well as advice on how to use the report effectively for advocacy and lobbying purposes. Juvenile Justice coordinator Anna Volz will present DCI’s latest Annual Juvenile Justice report entitled ‘Ending Violence against Children in Justice Systems: Strategies for Civil Society Engagement in the Follow-up to the UN Study’. This report explores the specific role of civil society organisations in following-up the recommendations of the UN Study on Violence against Children, in particular those that seek to end violence against children in justice systems. Kate Stevenson is writing child friendly fact sheets on General Comment no. 10, an indispensable tool when we deal with child participation. Participants of the workshop will be engaged in an exercise to demonstrate the user-friendliness of these fact sheets and can offer their feedback on the project. Furthermore the Advocacy Manual to GC 10 will be presented.

Anna Volz is the Juvenile Justice Programme officer at DCI-International Secretariat in Geneva. There she coordinates a number of activities and project such as the follow-up to GC.10 and reporting on the CRC session. She edits the bi-monthly Juvenile Justice Newsletter. She compiled the Juvenile Justice Advocacy Manual and the report presented in this workshop. She is now compiling the 2009 annual Juvenile Justice report on juvenile pre-trial detention. Anna has worked as a Children and Youth Policy advisor for the Swiss government. She was head of the ‘youth-sector’ at the headquarters of the Terre des hommes Foundation. She holds a degree in Political and Social Sciences, with postgraduate specialization in Human Rights which she supplemented with several trainings and continuing education programmes on Children’s Rights, Child Participation and Juvenile Justice.

Kate Stevenson is American and currently lives in Bern (Switzerland). She used to work as a children’s book writer, editor and journalist in the USA, but, aiming at a career change, she is now the Juvenile Justice Programme Assistant at the International Secretariat of DCI. Besides her work for DCI she is the editor of the chapter website for Room to Read Zurich, an organization which works to build libraries and schools and to fund girl’s scholarships in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Barbara Robinson is a policy researcher, specialising in issues affecting children and young people i.e. education, sexual exploitation and mental health. She recently completed a voluntary consultancy with DCI’s International Secretariat in Geneva where she co-produced a report titled *Education in Chains*, dealing with the right to education of children in detention. Prior to moving to Geneva, Barbara worked as a Policy and Research Officer in London with Barnardo’s, a leading UK children’s NGO.

aid programmes for poor people, focusing on economic and social rights, indigenous land rights, and law reform litigation. He has also held several legal posts with the State of Alaska, including District Attorney, and Assistant Attorney General for juvenile delinquency, and for child abuse-and-neglect cases. He also served as Assistant Attorney of the Federated States of Micronesia, and as the Attorney General of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, during those countries' transitions to independence. Bruce Abramson is a graduate of the UCLA School of Law.

Short introduction to 'Aflatoun', presented by Bram Stoffele

A short introduction to the work of Aflatoun, an international network of NGO's with its headquarters in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Aflatoun provides children aged 6-14 years old with Social & Financial Education. Today, Aflatoun is reaching over 500,000 children and helping over 200,000 children save. Aflatoun is currently working in 59 countries, 28 of which are implementing the programme in schools and non-formal education centres. Aflatoun provides children with basic life skills, encouraging them to save their resources and start social and financial micro enterprises. Through [Social & Financial Education](#), children are empowered to make a positive change in their lives and in their communities, eventually breaking the cycle of poverty in which many find themselves. Presented by Bram Stoffele, research associate with Aflatoun. (www.aflatoun.org)

Workshop 1- The Use of communication tools to promote child participation in juvenile justice, presented by Virginia Murilo Herrera

A 'hands on' and 'minds on' practical workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to build an effective and usable fact sheet on child participation in juvenile justice. In this workshop the enormous amount of both theoretical knowledge and practical experience that is available among the participants will be used.

Virginia Murillo Herrera and DCI are bound at many levels. Virginia is the president of DCI Costa Rica since 1994. From 2002-2008 she was member of the International Council and from 2005-2008 she was vice president of DCI Americas. Virginia Murillo Herrera is a sociologist by training and she has worked on human rights issues and in particular on children's rights and development for 16 years. She is a founding member of the Costa Rican National Child Rights Coalition and was Chair from 1994-2005. She is a co-founder of the Latin America Regional Secretariat for the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children. Since 2006 she has been director of UNESCO Central America and in 2007 she joined the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN). Furthermore she is a member of the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary forms of Slavery. Virginia Murillo Herrera is the regional coordinator for Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean of the Global March Against Child Labour.

cantonal concordat on the implementation of measures for young offenders, which was accepted in October 2003. He collaborated to the creation of the first Swiss Children's rights network, gathering over 50 Swiss NGO's.

Trained as a social worker, **Benoît Van Keirsbilck** first worked for a youth information centre and then became the Director of the Children Law Service of Brussels, which he has been for over 20 years by now. This service provides legal counselling to children and their families struggling with legal questions. He is thus in direct contact with children, youngsters and families facing difficulties and help them to fight against social exclusion and for the respect of their rights. Mr. Van Keirsbilck was one of the founders, and is currently the President of, the Belgian section of Defence for Children-International. Through the Coordination of NGOs for the Rights of the Child, Mr. Van Keirsbilck has participated in the drafting of an alternative report on the implementation of the Convention in Belgium and in the creation of the interdisciplinary Centre of the Rights of the Child, together with the Catholic University of Louvain. This Centre offers a University degree on children's rights. He is also the Chief Editor of the Belgian edition of the Journal of Children's Law and gives numerous training courses and conferences on Children's Law, both nationally and internationally. Benoît von Keirsbilck will share his experiences of participatory projects in the field of children's rights and juvenile justice. He will demonstrate the benefits participation can bring and elaborate on the need of training the professionals in child participation.

André Dunant started his professional life as a social worker and probation officer at the main Child Welfare Office at Geneva in the early sixties. He became an attorney and from 1965 he was a judge and President of the Juvenile Court in Geneva. He is passionate about the cause of juvenile justice and on the right of the child to be heard. André Dunant has been President of the International Association of Youth and Family Magistrates. He has worked in over 50 countries where he trained professionals and was member of various fact finding missions for the UN and (I)NGO's. He now is a juvenile justice consultant.

Bernard Boëton has been working for the Terre des hommes Foundation in Geneva since 1980. There he created the department 'Rights of the Child' which consists of an international network of associate professionals and a specialised documentation service on children's rights. He is the director of the Juvenile Justice Programme. Under the aegis of this programme, legal aid programmes for children are implemented in 11 countries and justice professionals are trained. The programme lobbies for reform of the juvenile justice system, especially for establishing alternatives for detention. He has worked in over 25 countries and teaches 'the Rights of the Child' to students of the Advanced Education in Vaud (Switzerland). He is a member of the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates, and the International Panel on Juvenile Justice. With DCI, he co-covenes the NGO Group for the CRC's Sub-Group on Juvenile Justice. Besides Juvenile Justice Bernard Boëton is very active in advocacy and lobby to fight sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.

Questions & Debate – lead by Nigel Cantwell

Nigel Cantwell founded DCI in 1979 because there were no “children’s rights” oriented international NGOs at that time. He moved to Geneva in the early Seventies after he had worked as a probation officer in England, working mainly with juvenile offenders.

He was the coordinator of the NGO Group for the CRC, and of its input into the drafting process, throughout the Eighties. From 1997-2003 Nigel worked at UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, heading the unit on implementation of international standards. He now is a consultant on child protection policies, focusing on juvenile justice, children without parental care, and the protection of children’s rights in inter-country adoption.

Part III: Creating a culture of child participation

‘Case studies Sierra Leone: Cinema On Wheels; Lesotho, presented by Sarah Field

In this presentation the focus is on children as active citizens. They have a right to participate but also a right to protection. These rights are indivisible. Besides some theoretical background to this twin concept, this presentation includes many practical and inspiring examples of how children participate in law reform processes and education on children rights in which protection plays its due part. Examples come from, among others, Sierra Leone with ‘the Cinema on Wheels’ project, Colombia and Lesotho.

Sarah Field has a background in Law (Trinity College, Dublin) and Human Rights. She is presently engaged in research for a doctorate (University College Cork) on ‘realising children’s rights in peacemaking and peace building by enabling their right to be heard’. Within the context of post-conflict, the research aims to develop a theoretical analysis of why children’s participation is important and how it can be realised. Previously, Sarah worked with the International Labour Office (ILO) for four and half years at Headquarters in Geneva, the sub-Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok and the Area Office in Lusaka. She has also worked with national and regional human rights (non-governmental) organisations such as the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

‘The childproof courtroom’- pedagogy of hearing the child’, presented by Marianne Vlaming

Speaking to a judge in court is a worrying experience for most adults, let alone for many children. The environment of the court is artificial, intimidating and stressful. Every child that participates in a legal procedure, must be prepared and instructed for all aspects of their court appearance. Basic knowledge of the child’s abilities is needed and can have important practical implications for participation of children in court procedures. Since children of different ages vary in the production and comprehension of

language, memory ability, cognitive and social skills, and emotional maturity, attention should be paid to the physical, psychological and social context of the child, especially with more vulnerable children (very young children, disabled children etc.). It is of great importance that judges, prosecutors and advocates receive special training in child interview techniques and psychology. The main question is: Are we really prepared to listen to children? Are we willing to study the physical, psychological and social context of the child? Are we willing to give up our frames of reference and step inside their shoes? Do we have the courage to spend more time and energy truly listening to children?

Marianne Vlaming has studied both law and educational Sciences and wrote her master thesis for the latter degree on ‘the best interest of the child in Dutch juvenile justice, combining a legal and pedagogical point of view’. After teaching at the Law Faculty at the VU University in Amsterdam, she now is a professional educator. She develops training on communication skills for lawyers and other professionals. She teaches Bachelor Child Law student on developmental psychology.

Part IV Linking theory and practice: tools & tips for advocacy and lobby on child participation in juvenile justice.

‘Creating a Political Will’, presented by Bruce Abramson

Government officials, the public, opinion-makers (e.g. the media), intergovernmental organizations and NGO’s must know what is happening in the lives of the young people who are caught up in the justice system. To raise their awareness we need to not only reach their minds, but also their hearts. They need to know two things: the bad things that are happening to the youngsters, and the good interventions that are transforming their lives. The best way to learn about this is to hear it from young people themselves. That can be a foundation for creating the political will for reform in the juvenile justice system. Bruce Abramson is passionate about participation of children/youngsters but he also raises awareness of their vulnerability, if misguided. Besides political will, ethical guidelines are necessary for youth participation.

Bruce Abramson is a human rights lawyer practicing across a wide spectrum of issues, and, since 1992, specializing in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. He has attended every review session of the CRC Committee, and actively participated in all of the Days of Discussion, including serving, on behalf of UNAIDS, as rapporteur on the Day of Discussion on Children Living in a World with AIDS. He has authored numerous papers on the CRC, and has worked for the UN High Commission for Refugees on refugee children and adolescents, where he was a contributing author to *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care*, and for UNAIDS, UNICEF, and children’s rights NGOs. He participated in several other human rights forums e.g. the former Commission on Human Rights, the Sub Commission on Human Rights and four of the UN treaty-monitoring bodies. Bruce Abramson has been a trial and appellate lawyer in three legal