Children Living with Their Mothers in Prison: Advocacy and Alternatives

2nd Annual Global Prison Nursery Network Symposium



Biographies of Speakers

Friday, November 1, 2024

Columbia Law School, New York, NY

COLUMBIA JOURNAL OF GENDER & LAW
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Children *of* Incarcerated Caregivers

Opening Remarks | 9:00 - 9:10 am



Barbara Frey

Barbara Frey, J.D., is an international human rights scholar, teacher, and activist. Frey directed the Human Rights Program at the University of Minnesota from 2001-22 and served as Director of Graduate Studies for the Master of Human Rights from 2015-19. Frey's research interests include gun violence and human rights, disappearances and impunity in Mexico, immigration, and human rights advocacy, and she lectures and writes widely on these topics. Frey has worked in non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations as well as academic institutions. She was an alternate member of the U.N. Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (2000-03) and was Special Rapporteur for a Sub-Commission study on firearms and human rights (2001-06). She received two Fulbright-Garcia Robles fellowships (2013 and 2019) for research on human rights in Mexico. From 1985 through 1996, Frey was Executive Director of Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Frey serves on the advisory board of Children of Incarcerated Caregivers.

Keynote Speaker | 9:10 - 9:30 am



Professor Marie Claire Van Hout

Marie Claire Van Hout is a Professor of International Health Policy and Practice and the Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Impact at the South East Technological University in Ireland. She has been research active for over 20 years in the field of law, health inequalities, and human rights of marginalized populations (people in prison, people who use drugs, women affected by gender-based violence, migrants, and refugees). Professor Van Hout consults regularly as an independent evaluation consultant or substantive expert for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Council of Europe Pompidou Group, and the World Health Organization in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The Due Process Void: Centering the Rights of Children and Mothers | 9:30 - 10:45 am



Robin Hansen

Robin Hansen is an Associate Professor at the College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Her primary research interest is on how legal personhood is constructed within legal systems, and particularly how this construction frames accountability. Professor Hansen's examination of legal personhood has led her to to study systemic biases in law. Her current scholarship examines the rights of newborn children not to be separated from their mothers by the state without due process.



Benoit Van Keirsbilck

Benoit Van Keirsbilck is the Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children International (DCI). He is Chief Editor of the Journal of Children's Law (Belgium) and a member of the Advisory board of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. Van Keirsbilck is a member of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Rights of the Child, which organizes academic courses and develops research. He has been elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2021-2024).



Dr. Shona Minson

Dr. Shona Minson is a research fellow at the Centre for Criminology at the University of Oxford and a BBC New Generation Thinker. Having worked as a criminal and family barrister, she has a particular interest in sentencing, the purpose of punishment, and the rights of children impacted by their parents' involvement with criminal justice system. Her work over the past ten years has influenced the development of policy and practice on the sentencing of primary carers in the UK and internationally. Dr. Minson has worked with the judiciary across the UK and in Europe and New Zealand to consider how adult sentencing practice can incorporate the observance of children's rights. Her book 'Maternal Sentencing and the Rights of the Child' was published in December 2019.

She has produced films and briefing papers about the impact of custodial sentences on dependent children and delivers training on the impact of parental imprisonment to criminal justice and legal professionals, including the judiciary in the UK and internationally. Dr. Minson has created programmes for BBC radio and frequently contributes to discussions in the media about the sentencing of women. Her most recent projects included research on the experience of children whose parents were in prison during Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020, and 'Beyond the Barriers,' which explores access to family justice proceedings for women in prison in England and Wales.



Isabella Sánchez Di Egidio

Isabella Sánchez Di Egidio holds a degree in psychology from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City and is currently pursuing a master's in systemic family therapy. She works full-time at Reinserta, an organization dedicated to the rehabilitation and reintegration of vulnerable populations within the prison system in Mexico. Sánchez Di Egidio specifically oversees prison facilities in Mexico City and the State of Mexico, with a focus on incarcerated parents, mothers, and the children born and raised in these environments. In addition to her role at Reinserta, she is a clinical psychologist, providing therapy to young adults and families.



Moderated by

Julie Matonich

Julie Matonich is a trial attorney and co-founder of Children of Incarcerated Caregivers (CIC). Prior to focusing on civil litigation, representing children and pregnant women harmed by inadequate medical care, she worked as a criminal defense attorney for over a decade, representing clients, many of whom were parents of young children, in state and federal courts. Matonich currently serves as CIC's Board President and is the co-director of CIC's Prison Nursery Project, which produces reports and a podcast and hosts a global network of nonprofit organizations to address issues related to children living in prisons with their incarcerated parents throughout the world. She is a co-instructor of the Parental Incarceration and Children's Human Rights seminar at the University of Minnesota and is a member of the Minnesota Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee.

Missing Metrics: Challenges and Strategies for Data Collection on Mothers and Children
11:00 - 12:15 pm



Dr. Martha Paynter

Dr. Martha Paynter is Director of Nursing Research with the Contraception and Abortion Research Team (CART)-UBC and Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick, where her clinical teaching and research focus on the intersection of reproductive health and the criminal justice system. She is the Affiliate Scientist for the ROSE Clinic (Reproductive Options and Services), and the founder, director of research, and past chair of Wellness Within: An Organization for Health and Justice, the only organization in Canada dedicated to advancing reproductive justice for people experiencing criminalization. Dr. Paynter is the author of 'Abortion to Abolition: Reproductive Health and Justice in Canada,' which was published in Spring 2022 by Fernwood Publishing. Her second book, 'Lawless: Abortion in Canada Under Complete Decriminalization,' will be released in 2025.



Hamed Farmand

Hamed Farmand, whose mother was in prison for five years when he was six years old, is a founder and president of the Children of Imprisoned Parents International. He learned the basics of psychology at NOVA College and with the mentorship of a professional, he possesses a comprehensive understanding of the entire literature of the psychological effects of parental incarceration on children. Farmand is a board member of the International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP). He received the certification "Child Protection: Children's Rights in Theory and Practice" from Harvard University. He also holds the micro master certification in "Social Work, Practice, Policy, and Research" from the University of Michigan and a "Resilience in Children Exposed to Trauma, Disaster, and War" certificate from the University of Minnesota. Farmand is certified in "Advocating Social Justice and Change," which was designed by the University of Adelaide.



Gretta Goodwin

Gretta Goodwin is a Director in the Government Accountability Office's Homeland Security and Justice team. She has led reviews on the federal response to address the online exploitation of children, law enforcement oversight and use of force, the federal response to the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, law enforcement use of facial recognition technology, the care of pregnant women in DHS and DOJ custody, the Bureau of Prisons' response to COVID-19, DNA evidence backlogs, Pell Grants for incarcerated students, juvenile justice issues for Native American youth, human trafficking, federal criminal restitution, background checks for gun purchases involving domestic violence records, and federal data on sexual violence.



Catalina Rufs

Catalina Rufs works as the Coordinator of the Public Policy area at the Center for Studies on Justice and Society at the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, where she also co-leads the work on the impact of prison and the justice system on the children of persons deprived of liberty. Recently, she became a Board Member of the International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents. Rufs's Master's thesis in Sociology focused on the consequences of incarceration on the lives of children and she has participated in NGOs that denounce rights violations in prisons and advocate for alternatives to imprisonment and has worked in prison settings. She co-founded the Observatory of Data and Statistics on Gender and Intersectionalities in Chile (ODEGI).



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Professor Marie Claire Van Hout

Marie Claire Van Hout is a Professor of International Health Policy and Practice and the Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Impact at the South East Technological University in Ireland. She has been research active for over 20 years in the field of law, health inequalities, and human rights of marginalized populations (people in prison, people who use drugs, women affected by gender-based violence, migrants, and, refugees). Professor Van Hout consults regularly as an independent evaluation consultant or substantive expert for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Council of Europe Pompidou Group, and the World Health Organization in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Parenting in Prison: A Conversation with Impacted Mothers
1:00 - 2:15 pm



Serena Martin

Serena Martin serves as Executive Director of New Hour for Women and Children, an organization dedicated to empowering mothers, women and children impacted by incarceration. New Hour provides programs within Long Island's three jails and provides reentry support to those returning home from incarceration. Martin oversees and leads carceral reform across New York State through advocacy and policy reform efforts. Prior to leading New Hour, she was the Executive Director of Herstory Writers Workshop. Martin served as Associate Director of Policy at the Correctional Association of New York's Women in Prison Project, where she spearheaded legislative initiatives and policy advocacy addressing prison reform. She was the key organizer of a successful effort to create the Adoption and Safe Families Act Expanded Discretion Law, which works to secure parental rights for incarcerated parents as well as the Anti-Shackling Law, which prohibits the shackling of incarcerated mothers during labor.

Martin is a survivor of isolated confinement, received her associate's degree in the College Bound Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and her bachelor's degree from Adelphi University. She serves on Governor Hochul's NYS Domestic Violence Task Force as a regional co-chair, serves on the Suffolk County Welfare to Work task force, co-led the Justice for Women COVID-19 Task Force along with WCJA and serves on the Suffolk County Police Reform and Reinvention Task Force. Martin is a recipient of the 2018 Citizens Against Recidivism Award, the 2022 Houses on the Moon Leyton Award and the 2023 Islip Town NAACP Award. She enjoys preparing her family's favorite Puerto Rican meals.



Teresa Njoroge

Teresa Njoroge founded Clean Start after being falsely accused, maliciously prosecuted, and wrongly imprisoned with her then 3 month old daughter, a sentence she served at Langata Women's Maximum Prison. Her firsthand experience and the plight of women in prison together with their children inspired her to commit her life purpose to supporting millions of women and children leaving prison to successfully reintegrate back to society. Njoroge is the founder and CEO of the first women by women for women social justice enterprise, empowering and transforming imprisoned and formerly imprisoned women in Kenya and Africa. She is the Convener of the Annual Beyond the Bars Conference that brings together key stakeholders within the criminal justice ecosystem, corporates, faith-based organizations, civil society, MSME's and individuals, to chart paths with formerly incarcerated women towards the decriminalization of poverty and supporting successful reintegration. Njoroge is the Founding Patron of the movement; Sisters On the Outside S.O.T.O, which is the Coalition of Formerly Incarcerated Women across Africa.



Sava Dorritie

Sava Dorritie is a former participant in the Prison Nursery Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. Originally a resident of Westchester County, she struggled with substance abuse and incarceration during her teenage and young adult years. In 2022, nine months pregnant with her first child and after maintaining four years of sobriety, she was sentenced to five years in state prison for a drug related offense that occurred in 2018. Dorritie remained in the prison nursery with her daughter for one year and is currently a participant in NYSDOCCS' work release program. She lives in Queens with her daughter and hopes to make a difference in the lives of other mothers and children facing similar circumstances to herself and her daughter.



Moderated by

Roslyn Smith

Roslyn Smith is the Beyond Incarceration Program Manager for V-Day, a nonprofit organization committed to ending violence against women, girls, and the planet. She co-founded the writing group "Right/Write to Heal," catering to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women. Drawing from her personal experience of long-term incarceration, she has become a passionate advocate for criminal justice reform.

Redefining Custody: Models for Mitigating Harm
2:30 - 3:45 pm



Monica Dhawan

Monica Dhawan is the Director of the India Vision Foundation, an NGO dedicated to supporting incarcerated individuals and their children. With 17 years of experience in development sector and as a member of the Punjab Prison Development Board, Dhawan has been instrumental in spearheading innovative reform initiatives within Indian prisons. She played a vital role in expanding reform programs across prisons in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Delhi, such as the Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD) Program, which provides holistic support to children under six years of age living in prison with their mothers. Dhawan's expertise has been showcased at the UNODC's Regional Consultation on Health Rights in Correctional Settings in 2023 and national conferences organized by the Bureau of Police Research & Development.



Alice Quagliato

Graduated in international economics and politics, Alice Quagliato has more than 15 years of experience in the field of development and post-conflict recovery in Brazil, Mozambique, Senegal, Madagascar, India, Kosovo and Burundi. As Terre des Hommes's Head of Mission in Burundi, she represents the organization to the Burundian government and public authorities. Quagliato lobbies within these institutions for advancements in Terre des Hommes's main field of interest: juvenile justice and protection of children in contact with the law. She steers Terre des Hommes's strategy in Burundi and oversees the implementation of all its projects in this country.



María Hereñú

María Hereñú is a Sociology Professor at the University of Buenos Aires, where she holds her degree in Sociology. Since 2020, she has worked as a Researcher on the Criminal Policy and Prison Violence team at the Center for Legal and Social Studies (CELS). She is also a lecturer at the University of Buenos Aires Law School (Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Buenos Aires).



Moderated by

Stuti Shah

Stuti Shah is a doctoral candidate at Columbia Law School. Her research concerns criminal justice, gender justice, and comparative law. While at Columbia Law, she was awarded the LL.M. Pathways Public Interest and Government Fellowship, which gave her the opportunity to work with Reprieve U.S. on policy advocacy regarding capital punishment and with clients on the death row. Shah has offered courses at National Law University, Bangalore, and Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, and has received a Fulbright Award for the year 2024-25 to work with Project 39A in Delhi, India.

Closing Remarks | 3:45 - 4:00 pm



Nancy Loucks

Professor Nancy Loucks OBE is the Chief Executive of Families Outside, a Scottish voluntary organization that works on behalf of families affected by imprisonment. Prior to this, she worked as an Independent Criminologist, receiving her MPhil and PhD from the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge, and in 2012 was appointed as a Visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde's Centre for Law, Crime and Justice. Professor Loucks was awarded an OBE in the Queen's 2016 New Year's Honours List for services to Education and Human Rights.

She co-chaired the Justice & Care Workstream for the Independent Care Review and the Independent Review of the Response to Deaths in Prison in Scotland; chairs the Board of the International Coalition for Children of Incarcerated Parents (INCCIP); is a Board member of Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE; Secretary General from 2015-21); and is a member of the Global Prisoners' Families Research Group at the Centre for Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford.

If you have questions, comments, or want to learn more about Children of Incarcerated Caregivers, contact us at ***info@cicmn.org.***