MINUTES

THE 5TH BIENNIAL IJJO CONFERENCE

LONDON 2012
With financial support from the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union
In 2008 the world witnessed yet another “credit crunch” and this time with more widespread and long-lasting consequences than previously imagined. Indeed, four years later, people are still experiencing the effects of the economic crisis in almost all aspects of their lives. Unemployment, impoverishment and social exclusion have been common phenomena, whilst the abyss between wealth and poverty is gaping in its entirety. These factors have contributed to the further marginalization of already socially disadvantaged groups and have additionally pulled in others in the vortex of disparity. As always, the effect on children and young people has been disproportionately great owing to their inherent vulnerability. Meanwhile, often public authorities have not been able to provide a timely response addressing this reality adequately. Consequently, some young people and children have found themselves in contact with the justice system. This environment has contributed to the intensification of different forms of juvenile crime, particularly those associated with urban crime, group and public offending. Furthermore, the risk of ethnic conflicts, street violence and formation of gangs has been particularly present in the media. The 2011 rioting in several bigger UK cities is a recent example of these trends and clearly demonstrated the growing urgency of understanding and exploring the various ways that the economic global crisis affects young people.
In the context of these troubling events, the International Juvenile Justice Observatory organized its Fifth International Conference in November 2012 in London, that gathered more than 400 experts and professionals. The Conference was themed “Criminality or social exclusion? Justice for Children in a Divided World” and had the objective of fostering the exchange of knowledge and good practices on adequate response to young offenders.

Despite recent commendable developments at international, regional and domestic level, the financial crisis has had a negative impact on the juvenile justice system according to UNODC data (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Monitoring the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Crime”, Report, 2011). As a result of considerable financial cuts, this sector has remained underfunded with insufficient number of adequately trained personnel. Stemming from this, the main challenge identified at the Conference was addressing the new forms of criminality with the limited financial resources available, while ensuring that fundamental rights of young offenders are not compromised. The debate focused on cost-effective multi-agency interventions within the juvenile justice, which reduce reoffending and provide a holistic approach.

The economic crisis has shown that in order to respond adequately to new phenomena within the juvenile justice sector, most of all, one needs to be adaptable and determined to make a change. Indeed, these qualities have been the major force
behind our activities since the Fourth IJJO International conference in Rome (2010). The Observatory continued its advocacy, research and training work, while incessantly raising awareness about its cause. It further developed its project on Mental Health of Young Offenders (MHYO) following the results of the Fourth IJJO Conference. Demonstrating its international commitment to the rights of young people in conflict with the law, it became an operating partner of the EUROSOcial I programme for social cohesion in Latin America within the area of public safety, rights and access to justice. Within this programme, the IJJO provides technical assistance to governments of many countries of the Latin American Region (e.g. Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay) to reform and develop policies in the field of crime prevention, administration of justice and social rehabilitation of young offenders. Technical assistance activities have been enhanced by regional cooperation projects and bilateral collaboration agreements. Among our greatest accomplishments was the creation of the European, Asia-Pacific, Juvenile Justice Councils helping us spread juvenile justice standards and children’s rights throughout other continents.

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The IJJO would like to express its sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the creation of a space where new global tendencies in juvenile crime could be discussed, understood, and most importantly, responded to.

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**First day 6th November; Day Topic: ‘Making prevention work: results in juvenile crime prevention** The conference lasted two days and was divided into numerous parts - Opening Ceremony, Plenary sessions, Simultaneous workshop sessions, Conclusions and Closing Ceremony.

Dr. Francisco Legaz, Chairman of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO) and Chair of the Executive Committee of the 5th IJJO International Conference opened the conference. In his welcoming speech he emphasized the necessity of identifying how to address the difficulties caused by the economic crisis and the possible effects on the protection of the rights of children. He also invited the participants to discuss about the need of promoting social and restorative justice policies and measures and to stop the development of juvenile criminal careers as well as the criminalization of youth and youth living in poverty. He was followed by the speech of Prof. Dr. Jaap E. Doek, former President UN Committee on Rights of the child and Mr. John Drew, Chief executive of Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The topic “A world in crisis:
consequences on youth social exclusion and offending” was developed during the first Plenary session with the participation of the special guests: Mrs. Marta Santos Pais, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, (Apologized) and Mrs. Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, (former Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe). In her speech, Mrs. De Boer-Buquicchio contended that children should be seen neither as “scapegoats” nor as “heroes” but instead, should be given the opportunity to enjoy their rights fully. She highlighted some of the worrying conclusions of the Report on Violence against Children in the Administration of Justice, drawn up jointly by the Office of the HCHR, UNODC and Mrs. Marta Santos Pais. Finally, along with the Report’s recommendations she advocated for a child-rights based criminal justice system where violence is prohibited and custody is used as a measure of last resort.

“A world in crisis: consequences on youth social exclusion and offending”

a. Preventing and Diverting Children and young people from offending

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The topic of the simultaneous workshop session 1 was “Preventing and Diverting Children and Young People from Offending” and the discussion focused on the international practices concerning diversion and alternative measures. In this context, Prof. Carolyn Hamilton (Director of Professional Practice, Research and International, Coram Children’s Legal Centre, UK) introduced a diversion model for juvenile justice in the Central Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States region established by Coram Children’s Legal Centre and implemented in Tajikistan. She also set out a comparison of approaches based on the different socio economic and cultural contexts in which the programmes operate, while considering the differing needs of the children involved. In addition, Ms. Alison Hannah (Executive Director of Penal Reform International, UK) presented initiatives and diversion schemes undertaken by Penal Reform International in the Middle East and North Africa region, developing and promoting a restorative approach to children in conflict with the law. Mr. Chris Graveson (Juvenile Justice Advisor, from New Zealand) emphasized
the importance of good timeframes, plans and monitoring as key factors towards the successful prevention of offending. In the field of prevention, it is also essential to speak about fostering of multidisciplinary perspectives to prevent recidivism. Within the discussion on this theme during workshop session 2, the participants presented various initiatives and explored programmes undertaken to identify and analyze different factors which influence future behavior of minor offenders. Such approaches included: the peer support programme in centers where minor offenders are confined by juvenile justice system (Ms. Ángela Barrios); the program ABARCA (managed by Fundación Diagrama) specifically designed for the holistic intervention for children perpetrators of filio-parental violence and for their families (Mr. Emilio Fernández), as well as the research initiatives undertaken by CEACSCMs (Centre for Study and Analysis on Coexistence and Citizen Security) on theme Contexts of life of children and adolescents in urban environments based on the case study research in Bogota (Natalia Bruges Lomanto). Mr. Jorge Alvarez Chuart, who

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is a representative of the National Youth Service of Chile (SENAME), closed the session by introducing a model and measure of recidivism of adolescents and young offenders. Since the phenomenon of young offenders with mental health issues has been recently given higher attention, this topic was also included in workshop session 3 of the conference. In this context, Mr. Kris Christmann introduced his research on the impact that having a parent in prison has on children, which has been realized within the COPING project - children of prisoners, interventions and mitigations to strengthen mental health. This project specifically tries to identify relevant and effective policy interventions to ameliorate the mental health problems of affected children and raise the awareness of policy makers. Within this working session there were also presented and evaluated initiatives dealing with improvement of early identification and support for children entering the Youth Justice System with or at risk of mental health difficulties in England (Mr. Andy Bell). In addition, Ms. Marianne Moore presented the IJJO’s project, “Mental health for young offenders Project Volume II, Manual for improving professional knowledge, skills and developing advocacy.
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b. Community-based programmes and cost-avoidance strategies: key factor for promoting social inclusion

Nowadays, during the period of subsidence of the economic crisis, issues concerning cost-avoidance strategies within juvenile justice and promotion of social inclusion have grown in importance. In this respect, another important phenomenon, which was addressed by the participants, was social inclusion and crime reduction as community responses to foster integration. Within the workshop, three case studies from three different countries were introduced. Firstly, Dr. Claudia Reyes presented her research regarding female offenders in Chile, who are affected by high social vulnerability and exclusion. She spoke about the manner in which the juvenile prison system responds to the demands to promote their social reinsertion and rehabilitation and emphasized that there is a high need to provide them with educational tools which would later help their successful reinsertion on the job market. Secondly, Dr. Karyna Batista Sposato described the juvenile justice system in Brazil and identified the major challenges and problems that
needed to be addressed. Finally, Prof. Dr. Ton Liefaard’s presentation focused on the position of adolescents in Dutch law and in practice through the prism of international human rights law standards.

When speaking of social inclusion, the improvement of quality of youth mentoring and youth friendly initiatives should be also taken into consideration. As Ms. Chiara Marin pointed out during workshop session 6, the greater involvement of youth work in juvenile justice is particularly beneficial to increasing the young offender’s prospects of reintegration. Dr. Ian Millward had further developed these ideas while his contribution focused on the psychological drivers that can put vulnerable young people at risk of joining a gang. Mr. Finally, Mr. Michael Anthony Brown presented the peer-led MY GANGG project aiming at reducing violence and gang crime while supporting vulnerable young people and thus, preventing offending.

Is it still possible to reform and improve justice systems during a period of economic crisis? Is effective juvenile justice and cost-avoidance an impossible equation?
These questions were also discussed during workshop session 7, by experts such as Ms. Wansley Walters, Prof. Dr. Shay Bilchik, Prof. Dr. Federico Perali and Ms. Elizabeth Clarke. Firstly, Ms. Walter and Prof. Bilchik presented the Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project, implemented in Florida, which is a model that is rooted in strategic decisions supported by data, research-based practices, and measurable outcomes. Prof. Federico Perali further provided an analysis of “cost efficiency and efficacy of Juvenile Justice interventions” in general. Prof. Elizabeth Clarke (Illinois Juvenile Justice Initiative, US) closed the workshop by showing the recent shift from mass incarceration of youths to community based sanctions in the US and in particular with reference to Illinois. She further identified the drives behind these policies and the ensuing fiscal advantages.

Despite the recent developments within the Asia-pacific countries, the juvenile justice in the region still falls short of full compliance with international human and children’s rights standards. For this reason, the IJJO has established the Asia Pacific Council for Juvenile Justice (APCJJ), which already had
its first meeting in June 2012 in Bangkok. The conclusions and recommendations from this meeting were presented within this workshop by Ms. Alice McGrath. Mr. Tawatchai Thaikyo, Deputy Permanent Secretaries for Justice of Ministry of Justice - Thailand described the current situation of the juvenile justice system in Thailand and identified crucial steps to be taken in the future. Later, Dr. Kattiya Ratanadilok (Chief of Research & Development Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection, Thailand) introduced the “Thailand Juvenile Justice Reform Project”, which had been designed to provide individualized treatment and help young offenders reform.

c. Policy Reform and improvements in juvenile justice systems

Another topic of high importance is the victimization of juveniles in relation to their criminality and offending. Of particular concern has been the situation in the USA where youths are often tried as adults and placed in adult prisons, thus, exposing them to possible assault, abuse and even death. Therefore, it is fundamental that nations recognize the need for change and implement adequate reforms (Ms. Elizabeth P. Ryan). In this respect, in Greece, the Central Scientific Council for the Prevention of and Response to Juvenile Victimization and Juvenile Criminality was established in order to make recommendations and organize activities on both national and local level, aiming to prevent and respond to victimization and criminality of juveniles (presented by Dr. Athanasia Antonopoulou). In addition, Dr. Christopher Fox’s
presentation focused on some of the controversial aspects of the “rehabilitation revolution” proposed by the UK government, namely the use of “Payment by Result” (PbR) and the “Social Impact Bonds” (SIBs) as a form of payment. Finally, he concluded by offering a new model of offender-engagement with personalized services by analyzing it from the perspective of theories of criminal justice.

The 10th Workshop of the day aimed at providing a comparative overview of juvenile justice trends in European countries. Firstly, Prof. Dr. Frieder Dünkel highlighted as remarkable the fact that European policies have resisted recent penal populism and instead, have increasingly utilized educational and rehabilitative approaches to juvenile offenders. This was followed by a discussion of the initial findings of the comparative study “Restorative Justice in Penal Matters in Europe” by Mr. Philip Horsfield (representing Mrs. Andrea Păroșanu) who provided an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of restorative
approaches in 36 European countries and identified factors that are conducive or unfavourable to the successful introduction of such approaches in relation to juvenile justice. Finally, Dr. András Csúri delivered the last speech, which focused specifically on restorative justice developments in Central and Eastern Europe, based in particular on the examples of Hungary.

The last workshop of the day focused on the sensitive issue of cases where the child is both a victim and offender. Within his presentation, Mr. Steven Tjalsma representing Ms. Corinne Dettmeijer-Vermeulen (apologized) called for protection of children from abuse by employing different means such as prevention of offenses, identification and registration of offenders and victims, provision of assistance to victims and after-care for offenders. There is also strong evidence that in some countries, deprivation of liberty of young offenders engaged in drug-related crimes is used as a social policy to combat drug trafficking. It has been highlighted that this approach is not only an inadequate response, but also a violation of the fundamental doctrine of integral protection (based on Mr. Cristhovão Fonseca Gonçalves’ s research in Brasil). Finally, Prof. Dr. Cyn Yamashiro’s presentation focused on the Indigent Defense Services in Los Angeles, claiming that contract panel attorneys are less active, and that youth represented by contract panel attorneys are convicted of more serious offenses and are subject to more severe dispositions.

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II. “Juvenile Justice without borders” International award ceremony

At the closing of the first day of the conference, the Second Edition of “Juvenile Justice without borders” International award ceremony took place. The award was established by the IJJO with the aim of recognizing the work of experts and institutions who show a steady commitment towards the development of juvenile justice systems focused on the integral promotion of children and young people in conflict with the law. It is granted for outstanding achievements in juvenile justice in the field of research, advocacy and intervention always under the international framework of United Nations standards. By recognizing professionals and institutions linked to juvenile justice, the International Award promotes dissemination of knowledge and policies aimed at improving the situation of children and young people at risk of exclusion. The “Juvenile Justice without borders” International award also contributes to highlight good practices, raise public awareness and inspire solidarity for children and young people in conflict with the law.

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This year’s winners came from eight different countries and were all connected by the common cause of protecting children’s right and improving the situation of young people and children in the field of juvenile justice. The Honorific Award was given to Mr. Georges Loinger, a French Second World War survivor. In their personal capacity and in recognition of their expertise and relentless work, the IJJO awarded Prof. Dr. Jaap E. Doeck, Mr. David Mugawe, Mrs. Wansley Walters and the newly-elected member to the Committee of the Rights of the Child, Mrs. Renate Winter. In addition, Mrs. Serenella Pesarin and Mr. Tawatchai Thaikyo received the prize as representatives of the D.G. for the implementation of judicial provisions of the Department for Juvenile Justice – Ministry of Justice of Italy and the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection Ministry of Justice of Thailand, respectively. Finally, the Youth Offending Services of the Durham County Council (UK) also received the award in recognition of their innovative and child-rights based approach to the treatment and re-socialization of young offenders.

While expressing their gratitude, the awardees emphasized that the “Juvenile Justice without Borders” International Award will further encourage their future efforts to advancing the rights of the child and as expressed by Mr. Tawatchai Thaikyo, it will serve as “a beacon of light” that will inspire others to improve the lives of all young people worldwide.
Second day 7th November; Day Topic: ‘Preventing violence among young people in complex spatial dynamics’

III. Inequality and Youth Violence in group: an urban challenge”

During the second plenary session the topical theme of Inequality and Youth Violence in group as an urban challenge was brought up. The origin and character of the 2011 Riots in several British cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Salford and Liverpool were discussed.

Account was given to other crucial aspects, concerning London Riots, including who was involved, the extent and nature of their participation, and the reasons behind their actions (Prof. Dr. Tim Newburn). Considering the wide-spread and burning issue of gangs worldwide, Prof. Dr. John M. Hagedorn spoke about the nature of violent groups. He proposed hypothesis how to prevent young offending within gangs and emphasized the usefulness of strengthening positive forces within gangs and weakening forces that are violent and engaging in organized crime. Furthermore, Ms. Juliet Lyon presented the Prison Reform Trust and its outcomes from the completion of their five-year programme to reduce child and youth imprisonment. During this period, the Prison Reform Trust contributed to the 40 % decrease in the number of
under-18 year olds held in prison custody in England and Wales. Finally, Prof. Dr. John Pitts (University of Bedfordshire) closed the plenary with his presentation “Re-thinking Youth Justice for a Changing World.”

a. Youth Violence and Urban areas: Expression of violence and innovative programs

The theme mentioned above was further extended during the workshop sessions 12, 13, 14 and 15, concentrating on the impact of exposure to crime and violence on urban youth, gang prevention and desistance interventions, organized crime and youth violence in group and experiences with gangs in Europe. After identifying the inadequacy of the current legislative framework in Belgium for dealing with young offenders, Mr. Bernard De Vos presented the “Solidarcité” project which aims at reintegrating and reforming young offenders through civil participation and community engagement. Through individual trainings, development programmes and community-based initiatives, it is believed that delinquents would have the
opportunity to improve their social and professional status and build up a positive identity, while being helpful to the community at the same time. Secondly, Dr. Maria João Leote de Carvalho, presented her findings which are part of a larger study on the children’s socialization processes in public housing neighborhoods in Portugal. After outlining the study’s design, she examined the children’s perspectives on their neighborhoods with a focus on tension, conflict and disorder. The frequent phenomenon of children becoming both victims and perpetrators of violence was also touched upon, while emphasizing the importance of children’s own perspectives in countering this problem and reforming urban environment. Finally, the presentation of Dr. Tim Bateman gave an overview of the current patterns of custody within England and Wales and offered an analysis of recent developments. His presentation suggested that the features associated with periods of high and, conversely, low incarceration can also help to explain the phenomenon of justice by geography within the jurisdiction.

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During working session 13, Ms. Marion Bennathan, Officer of the British Empire (OBE), considered the lack of attachment, poor educational experience and feeling of low-self esteem as the main characteristics of juvenile gang members. She further explored these themes with reference to nurture groups as an example of an effective early prevention model. Ms. Rosa María Solis Rodríguez’s presentation highlighted the widespread problem of children participating in organized crime groups in the Mexican state of Baja California and the grave social consequences stemming from it. It presented the new strategy developed by the Baja California State Attorney General’s Office to address this problem. The presentation focused on the multi-layered and holistic approach offered by it, which allows for a model of intervention without criminalization emphasizing the importance of early intervention, prevention and attentiveness to the personal needs of juveniles. Dr. Miguel Ángel Caballero Mariscal presented his conclusions from direct intervention with juveniles from two criminal groups in Nicaragua. He outlined the social and cultural characteristics of these bands, exploring their internal values and interrelationships. He concluded with recommendations from his experience as a participant/observant and emphasized the importance of developing systematic models of intervention prioritizing education, adequate personnel training and coordination between judicial, police, and administrative sectors. In working session 14, Dr. Niamh Hourigan presented his three-year ethnographic study in participation of juveniles in organized crime gang in
Limerick (Ireland). He emphasized the critical situation of the Irish child protection system, the loopholes in legislation relating to juvenile criminal justice, and the inadequate response to the problem of “grooming”, while also exploring potential policy measures to counter the current state of affairs. Ms. Jessie Ben-Ami presented the work and findings of the Leap Confronting Conflicts project in the United Kingdom starting with the wide spectrum of gang activity. She then focused on the importance of challenging children to consider the cost and gains of gang membership, emphasizing their right to make an informed choice and giving them the opportunity to explore the dynamics of gang and group offending. In her presentation Ms. Sabrina Brutto emphasized that gangs need to be considered in a wider historical-cultural context in which they internalize social meanings, relationships and behaviors. The need of a broader European comparative analysis was emphasized. Her presentation highlighted loopholes in policy responses relating to the artificial age-definitions and exclusive focus on male gangs. Ms. Laida Quijano further elaborated on the ITACA
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emerging evidence on violence among young people, Ms Firmin’s presentation questioned current conceptualizations of ‘peer-on-peer’ abuse. After identifying the challenges, defining the problem and outlining the current responses, she proposed a new conceptual framework. Finally, she concluded with some implications for future practice: the identification of power imbalances and hierarchies and the impact of social fields and other social agents on young people. Finally, Dr. Juanjo Medina (apologized) had to present key finding and future challenges of the EUROGANG program of research.

b. “Young People, Criminality and Solidarity: The Implications for Change”

During the last plenary session experts such as Mr. Marcelo Brignoni, Ms. Dominique Attias or Mr. Han Kyun Kim developed the topic “Young People, Criminality and Solidarity: The Implications for Change.” One of the main obligations and challenges in today’s world is protecting and ensuring compliance with international standards on children’s rights. Within the juvenile justice field, the rights of children to be legally represented (Ms. Dominique Attias) and have access to justice in general

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(Mr. Marcelo Brignoni) form the core of their fundamental guarantees. Thus, in order to improve child’s access to justice, reforms are indispensable, especially in countries where the juvenile justice system is still young and underdeveloped. In this respect, Mr. Han Kyun Kim gave his presentation on the reform of juvenile justice in Korea, which focuses on the environmental adjustment and character correction of juvenile and provides special measures regarding criminal and protective dispositions.

At the end of the conference, Mr. Cedric Foussard and Prof. Dr. Frieder Dünkel summarized the main outputs and ideas expressed during the two days. Finally, Dr. Francisco Legaz, Prof. Sir Albert Aynsley Green and Mr. John Drew had the honour of closing the conference.

Following the Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory, the European Council for Juvenile Justice (ECJJ) met in London and for the third time on November 7 and 8, 2012, with the support of the Criminal Justice Programme of the European Union, to discuss its
forthcoming initiatives as well as the consequences of the financial, economic, social and political crises on juvenile justice systems throughout Europe.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the discussions held during the International Conference, the IJJO would like to appeal governments, public agencies and relevant stakeholders to take action in the following areas:

- In time of economic instability worldwide, States should pay due attention to the most vulnerable segments of society—children and young people. Since often in such conditions criminality thrives, they should adopt measures which **prevent children from being involved in crime** on the first place and **reduce recidivism** on the second. This would require necessary legislative and policy reforms designed to strengthen the child-welfare system and ensure effective collaboration and cooperation between different public sectors, such as health, education and justice.

- Social and economic developments have contributed to the emergence of **new forms of criminality and juvenile crime**. Where crime has already occurred, it is the responsibility of governments to devise strategies that address these new
criminal trends, with a particular focus on children and young people's rights. They should ensure that such measures are based on reliable data and informed by comparative analysis. To this end, States are advised to encourage research and dissemination of knowledge between public institutions, academics and civil societies, both domestically and internationally.

- Often periods of economic crisis are characterized by financial cuts in public sectors and in relation to juvenile justice, excessive emphasis on punitive measures following populist political rhetoric. Governments should resist such trends and ensure that fundamental rights of children and more specifically young offenders are adequately protected both in law and in practice. This would require their due compliance with core international standards dealing with children’s rights and ensuring child-friendly justice. Finally, it is essential that there are effective mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting violations and making children’s rights enforceable.

- The IJJO is aware that in the context of economic instability, financial cuts in public sectors and in juvenile justice system, specifically, are sometimes unavoidable. However, this should be rather seen as an opportunity to discontinue less effective policies for dealing with young offenders, and focus on measures which provide long-term gains and optimize spending. In this
regard, there is ample evidence showing the usefulness of promoting diversion from the juvenile justice system; alternatives to custody and restorative justice methods, while adopting a multidisciplinary approach. Considering the amount of financial resources associated with incarceration, as well as the inadequacy of this measure for children and young offenders, States should employ custody as a measure of last resort.

- It is also essential to promote family-friendly policies, in particular for single-parent families and women, for example to make it easier for them to return to work after a period of caring for their children, by promoting policies designed to facilitate (re-)entry into the labour market, with a view to enabling them to regain financial independence. In this sense, EU countries should learn from the Scandinavian countries and France, which have the best practices in family policy (with significant public investment, a wide range of measures and services to support families, provision of care services for children, high employment rate of mothers with young children, etc.)

- In times of austerity, governments have to fight against the impact of the recession on youth well-being, implementing balancing measures to prevent families and children from getting poorer. The IJJO particularly cautions against cutbacks in education spending, stressing the link between investment in
education and economic growth, productivity, and reducing social inequality. Essential health and social services have to remain a priority to protect the most vulnerable ones, to reduce social inequalities and counter social exclusion and poverty, with particular reference to child poverty. It is also vital to ensure access to quality education, housing, facilities for young people. Furthermore, special attention should be given to children of indigenous, migrant and refugee families, who are more likely to live in poverty and to face problems, combating discrimination against members of their community of origin.

Nevertheless, in cases where custody is unavoidable, States should ensure that the rights of the young offender to medical and psychological help and to be free of violence receive sufficient protection both in law and in practice by adopting relevant safeguards in detention facilities. The long-term social and economic gains of social and professional inclusion have been widely acknowledged throughout the world. Therefore, within detention facilities governments are advised to make extensive use of personalized and holistic programmes which focus on education, vocational training and health interventions. Such measures have a great potential for young offenders and ensure their successful reinsertion in society, reducing recidivism and thus, crime in general.

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