



Training and development needs of the legal workforce: A lever for promoting child rights and services for at-risk children

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Children, as perpetrators of crimes, need rehabilitation, and babies and infants incarcerated with their mothers face severe challenges to their human development potential. The plight of children in the criminal justice system is a challenge to all of us to better serve those who are most at risk. Recent research in early childhood development (ECD) shows the clear effects of responsive caregiving to children in whatever circumstances they find themselves in.

However, whilst ECD is the most critical stage of human development that affects life chances, this stage of life continues to receive the least resources. As the volume of children entering the justice system rises, regardless of the intent of the law or system processes, there is a very real risk of propagating injustices as well as limiting the human development potential of these children. To confront this situation, the Aga Khan University – building on its expertise and capacity to undertake research to inform evidence-based approaches – is positioned to undertake training of the legal workforce to support children’s development in their care and for whom they have oversight.

This paper proposes workforce training and approaches and the potential outcomes for children’s holistic development to the extent possible in the current circumstances.

