

**Dr. Francisco Legaz Cervantes**  
**Chairman, International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO)**  
**Welcome speech presenting the awardees of the 'Juvenile Justice Without Borders' International Award on its 7th Edition, 2022**

Dear friends, professionals and colleagues of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory.

As Chairman of the IJJO, I would like to express the great honour that it is for our organisation and for me personally to celebrate the 7th edition of the 'Juvenile Justice Without Borders' International Award.

This award was founded 12 years ago with the aim to recognise and promote among society the excellent professional work and firm commitment of people and institutions around the world that, from different fields, promote the rights of children that come into contact with juvenile justice systems, as well as those that contribute to the advancement of these systems.

These are also the objectives of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory. Our mission and purpose is to work for the rights and full development of children, especially those that come into contact with the law and are at risk of social exclusion. In this sense, our purpose is that the systems, policies, programmes and models of youth justice are more efficient and inclusive and that they guarantee children their rights, like protection, participation, education and the best interests of the child.

The awardees of this edition exemplify the values that the Observatory wishes to promote with this recognition. Their vast and remarkable body of work contributes to the advancement of juvenile justice and the protection of the rights of children around the world. In order to achieve this, they work in areas ranging from the promotion of public policies adapted to children to the specialised training of professionals that work in juvenile justice, or the promotion of entrepreneurship and socio-labour insertion of young people as ways of keeping them away from crime and exclusion. It is also worth noting their commitment to adapting judicial proceedings to the needs of children, as well as investing in prevention and early care to intervene in the causes of youth criminality.

The endeavours of these awardees, and the messages that they've sent through their videos in this edition, once again show the great importance of training and specialisation for all of the professionals that work with children. It's crucial that all of these professionals, in their different disciplines, can understand the circumstances and characteristics of children in vulnerable situations, and consequently can make the right decisions to favour their comprehensive development. Children that come into

contact with the law are in a particularly vulnerable situation that can affect the course of their development, and both justice systems and society as a whole must be aware of the great value of these specialised professionals and of the need for professionals and institutions to continue cooperating for progress in the defence and promotion of children's rights.

In the Observatory, we hope that the recognition of these honourees will not only be a reward for their career, but a source of inspiration for professionals, young people and the international community.

My most heartfelt congratulations to the recipients of the 2022 edition of the award, who I proceed to present:

**Mr. Bragi Guðbrandsson (Iceland), Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and former Director General of the Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection.** Mr. Bragi Guðbrandsson has been awarded for his innovative work that has led to the creation of the Barnahus model, based on establishing child-friendly settings where professionals from different fields can work coordinated on a child's case using a child-sensitive approach, always prioritising the best interests of the child. This model helps justice systems safeguard the rights of children who come into contact with them, avoiding their revictimisation and promoting their participatory rights with the support of trained professionals who know how to communicate with them.

**Dr. César San Juan Guillén (Spain), Professor of Legal and Criminological Psychology at the University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, Researcher at the Basque Institute of Criminology and Director of the International Research Centre on Delinquency, Marginality and Social Relationships.** Dr. San Juan has been awarded for his distinguished career in the academic field, with a body of research which connects psychology, criminology and juvenile justice. The IJJO also highlights his work as director of the International Research Centre on Delinquency, Marginality and Social Relationships, and his coordination of development cooperation projects in various countries of Latin America and Africa.

**Change the Record (Australia).** This coalition has been awarded for its strong advocacy for raising the age of criminal responsibility in Australia to 14, as well as its commitment to investing in prevention, early intervention, and community work to tackle the root causes of criminality and avoid detention of children and recidivism. The IJJO also highlights Change the Record's focus on those in the most vulnerable situation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who are at significantly higher risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

**Mr. Douglas Mwangi (Kenya), Founder and Director of Oasis Mathare.** Mr. Douglas Mwangi has been awarded for being an example of social reintegration and youth entrepreneurship for thousands of young people at risk of exclusion in Kenya, as a community leader and as a promoter of digital technologies for training and employability. The IJJO highlights his work as creator and director of Oasis Mathare, a digital community centre aimed at providing access to education and paid work opportunities for young men and women from the Mathare community (Nairobi).

**The National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents (SIPINNA) of Mexico.** This system has been awarded for its work as a guarantor of children's rights in Mexico, actively working on juvenile justice and other relating issues such as education, participation or equality, and enabling mechanisms which allow children and adolescents to exercise their rights, as well as participate in the decisions that concern them, giving their opinion on what they consider best for them.

**The Gault Center (United States).** This organisation has been awarded for its work to improve the quality of juvenile defence in the United States by facilitating the training and specialisation of justice professionals in order to effectively represent children facing criminal proceedings, regardless of their origin, ethnicity or social status. The IJJO also highlights its advocacy work to ensure that all juvenile justice reforms consider and protect children's rights.

**The Howard League for Penal Reform (United Kingdom).** This organisation has been awarded for its extensive work against the criminalisation of children in England and Wales and towards reducing arrests of children and improving conditions in detention centres. The IJJO highlights its vast trajectory of making proposals for the improvement of the juvenile justice and child protection systems, which has promoted progress in these systems over the years, engaging policymakers, the media, professionals in the field and wider society.

I would like to express once again the great satisfaction that it gives us to be able to recognise and disseminate through this award the essential work carried out by these awardees. We hope that it can serve as an example and motivation for other professionals and organisations in their mission to improve the lives of children in different parts of the world. On behalf of the International Juvenile Justice Observatory and myself, it is a privilege to honour you with this award. Thank you and congratulations.

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