



Interdisciplinary Research Laboratory  
on the Rights of the Child  
University of Ottawa

# Annual Report 2021-2022



uOttawa

# MESSAGE from the STEERING COMMITTEE

The year 2021-2022 was again marked by the context of the pandemic. Thus, we continued to organize our activities online, as we did the previous year. This did not slow us down in our efforts! In fact, we continued to offer as many activities as before and even more.

Our regular activities include lunchtime lectures and the essay contest. In 2021-2022, our four lunchtime lectures took a critical look at current issues, such as the Laurent Commission report, the bill limiting youth access to sexually explicit material online, and youth leadership in times of Covid. We also highlighted our members' research at these conferences, worked with partners, and invited high caliber speakers, as well as youth. The essay competition continued to expand its reach to more students at universities hosting members of the Canadian Association of Human Rights Institutes.

In support of our members' research, we hosted, for the first time, fairs on ethical issues in research involving children. These members-only fairs provided an opportunity for in-depth discussion of ethical issues and comparison of our research experiences. At the fourth fair, our members were able to interact with representatives from the uOttawa Research Ethics Board.

Finally, this year, instead of an annual conference, and in order to contribute to the improvement of professional practices, we organized a half-day training session on the use of child rights impact assessment (CRIA) under the theme Spotlight on Climate Change. This event was able to bring together experts and participants interested in CRIA and children's environmental rights.

In the end, we were able to vary our activities and reach different stakeholder groups, including researchers, professionals in different fields, politicians and youth. The year 2022-2023 promises to be rich in new projects, some of which will finally be able to take place on site, allowing us to regain the face-to-face contacts that are so important for maintaining links between researchers and stakeholders, and above all to forge new partnerships with key actors in the field of children's rights.



**Mona Paré** | Full Professor | Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section

**Nathalie Bélanger** | Full Professor | Faculty of Education

**Christine Gervais** | Associate Professor | Faculty of Social Sciences

**Andrea Khan** | Doctoral Candidate | Faculty of Social Sciences

**Viviana Fernandez** | Assistant Director | HRREC | uOttawa

## ABOUT the IRLRC

The Laboratory was created following an international conference on the rights of the child in March 2007. The purpose of the IRLRC is to foster interdisciplinary research on issues related to children's rights and well-being. The laboratory promotes a vast range of research initiatives conducted by members. A framework to understand the research conducted at IRLRC recognizes the child's identity when it comes to their rights. The framework emphasizes the different systems that influence children and children's rights studies, including families, schools, neighbourhoods, legal systems, child welfare systems, and societies.

To foster the development of research partnerships and encourage the initiatives of its members, the laboratory has grouped the research axes it favours under four complementary themes:

- The Child and the Law;
- The Child and the Family;
- The Child, the State and Society;
- Reflections on Child-Focused Research Methodologies.



## Our MEMBERS

Our 41 members are academics from the Faculties of Law, Social Sciences, Education, Health Sciences and Medicine from uOttawa and other academic institutions (17), graduate students (13) and actors in the wider community (11).



# EXPANDING our REACH & KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES

During 2021-2022, the Laboratory organized four public webinars. The total number of people participating in these activities was 318. In addition, and in response to members interest, the Laboratory organized four salons for members (November, January, March and May) focussing on the ethical issues on research involving children. The exchanges were very rich and numerous tools and resources were shared. Brief descriptions of these activities can be found below; further details can be found on our website.



28.09.2021

## **The Laurent Report on Youth Protection & the Impact of the Recommendations on Children's Rights**

The IRLRC and the Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section held a webinar on the report of the Special Commission on Children's Rights and Youth Protection established by the Quebec Government in 2019 after the death of a little girl in Granby. Speakers were Jean-Simon Gosselin (Commissioner, Special Commission on Children's Rights and Youth Protection), Lesley Hill (Director of Youth Programs, CISSS, Montérégie-Ouest), Valérie Costanzo (Ph.D. Candidate in Law, uOttawa & member of the IRLRC), Laurence Ricard (Ph.D. Candidate in Law, McGill University).

12.10.2021

## **Children's Rights and Youth Leadership in Times of COVID**

The Laboratory and the Public Law Centre at uOttawa organized a panel discussion on children's rights and youth leadership in times of COVID-19. The discussion was moderated by IRLRC Director Mona Paré and speakers included Senator Rosemary Moode, Professor Christine Gervais (IRLRC's Steering Committee Member), Taylor Behn-Tsakoza (Youth Advocate) and Jana Jandal Alrifai (Climate Justice Organizer).

25.01.2022

## **Entering the World of Children's Rights in the Digital Age**

The Laboratory and the Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section organized a webinar in French on the rights of the child in relation to the digital environment. Speakers included Senator Julie Miville-Dechêne, Caroline Fitzpatrick (Professor of psychopedagogy, Université de Sherbrooke) and Marie-Pier Jolicoeur (Doctoral Student in law, Université Laval and member of the IRLRC).

12.04.2022

## **Parental Perspectives on Upholding Children's Rights**

The Laboratory and the Faculty of Law, Civil Law Section organized a webinar on parental perspectives on upholding children's rights in the context of aggression towards families/caregivers in childhood and adolescence. Speakers included Social Sciences Professors Christine Gervais, (Department of Criminology and IRLRC's Steering Committee Member), Elisa Romano (School of Psychology and member of the IRLRC), as well as Research Assistant and Master's Graduate, Danika DeCarlo-Slobodnik (Department of Criminology).



## TEACHING

The laboratory has delivered a master's level course entitled *Children's Rights: An Interdisciplinary Approach* since 2010. This course enables students of diverse faculties to pursue the study of child rights at the graduate level while allowing them to benefit from the strengths of multidisciplinary perspectives and overcome their challenges. During the 2021 Fall semester, Professor Mona Paré offered the course in French under the code DCL5531. Eleven (11) graduate students from the Faculties of Law and Social Sciences (Criminology, Social Work) participated in this edition. The laboratory has trained eighty-two (82) graduate students who participated in ten editions of the course.

## TRAINING

27.05.2022

### **Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA): Spotlight on Climate Change**

The Laboratory offered a new training program for students and professionals on the Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA). The program focused on the theme Spotlight on Climate Change. The goal of the course was to offer the fundamentals of CRIA and the opportunity to apply this knowledge through realistic case studies and practical exercises. Speakers included Lisa Wolff (Director of Policy and Research at UNICEF Canada), David Estrin (Ianni Fellow & Co-Director TELP Climate Litigation and Policy Clinical Project, Faculty of Law at University of Windsor), as well as Andrea Rodgers and Paul Rink (Our Children's Trust). This first edition benefitted 16 participants and was conducted in English, with the learning materials offered in both English and French.



## RESEARCH ASSISTANT COMPETITION

Two Research Assistants Competitions were organized in Fall 2021 and Winter 2022. As a result, a project proposed by Professors and members Christine Gervais and Elisa Romano titled *Study on Child-to-Parent Violence and Aggression in Adoptive, Kinship and Customary Care Families in Canada* was funded in the amount of \$3,000. The funding was used to support the preparation of a grant application to MITACS which was approved in May 2022.

## ESSAY COMPETITION

Starting in 2020-2021, the Laboratory organizes an annual essay competition that engages participants from institutions hosting [Canadian Association of Human Rights Institutes](#) (CAHRI) members:

St. Thomas University  
McGill University  
University of Manitoba  
Université Laval  
Université du Québec à Montréal  
University of Saskatchewan  
University of British Columbia

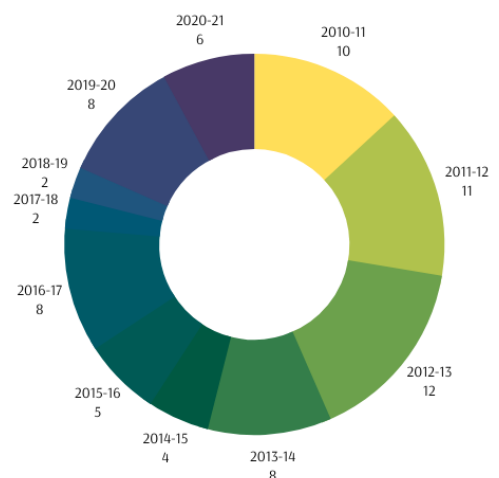
University of Toronto  
Carleton University  
McMaster University  
Concordia University  
York University  
University of Winnipeg  
University of Ottawa

Previous editions since 2010-2011, were only for eligible students at the University of Ottawa. The competition has two categories: Undergraduate & Graduate students. The winning submissions will be published by the *Canadian Journal of Children's Rights*. The 2020-21 winners were:

**Undergraduate Category | CATHY BROUSSARD**, a student enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) specializing in Psychology at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa, for her essay titled *PDEP Program, Parenting Practices and Predictors: Examining Parenting Outcomes and Predictors from the Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) Program*.

**Graduate Level Category | ISABELLE LEFEBVRE**, a Ph.D. candidate in Law at the University of Ottawa, for her work titled *Climate Education and Empowerment as Vectors of the Right to a Healthy Environment?*

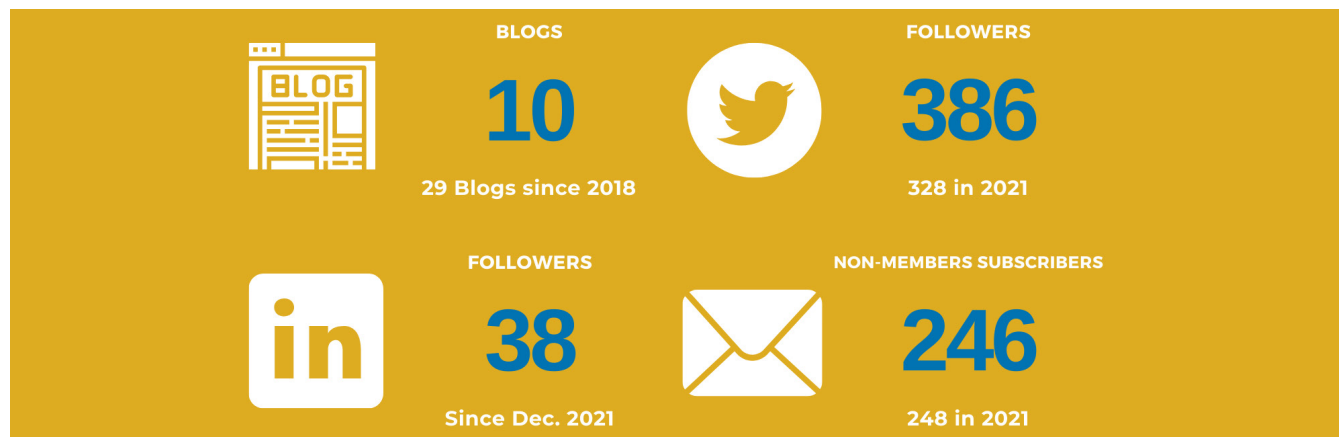
For the 2020-2021 edition, the Laboratory received 6 submissions. The winners will be announced in September 2022. See the graphic on the right highlighting the number of submissions for the Essay Competition since 2010.



## BLOGS

The Laboratory's blog features reflections on emerging trends and issues, research findings and programs written by our members and partners. Posts are published in the language of choice of the authors, French or English. During 2021-2022, ten blogs were published, with a total of twenty-nine (29) blogs since its creation in 2018.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & OUTREACH



## RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

The IRLRC fosters collaborations in the field of children's rights through membership in human rights and child rights institutions and association in research partnerships.

- *Accès des enfants à la justice et vulnérabilité* in cooperation with the Centre Européen d'Études et de Recherches en Droit de la Famille et des Personnes (Université de Bordeaux), the Centre interdisciplinaire des droits de l'enfant (Université catholique de Louvain et DEI-Belgique), the Department of Child Law (Leiden University), the Laboratoire de droit privé et de sciences criminelles (Aix-Marseille Université), the Bureau du défenseur des enfants et de la jeunesse du Nouveau-Brunswick, the AJEFO and the HRREC. Members involved in the partnership: Mona Paré, Émilie De Bellefeuille, Christine Gervais and Elisa Romano.
- *International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP)*, project led by Professor Tara Collins (Toronto Metropolitan University).
- Canadian Association of Human Rights Institutes (CAHRI).
- Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children (CCRC).
- Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC).
- Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights (the IRLRC is represented by Mona Paré on the Advisory Board).

## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH LABORATORY ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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