



Universiteit  
Leiden

**12TH EDITION**

# **SUMMER SCHOOL**

**FRONTIERS OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS '26**

*FROM 29 June – 3 JULY 2026*

*LEIDEN AND THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS*



# Frontiers of Children's Rights Summer School

Leiden University's Summer School on International Children's Rights reaffirms its commitment to exploring how to protect and promote children's rights amidst the complexities of our ever-changing world. This year, we provide a platform for learning, collaboration, and reflection on one of the most critical and transformative areas in children's rights today. For the 12th edition, our focus is on "Advancing Children's Rights Globally: Accountability and Access to Justice."

Through this theme, we examine accountability and how access to justice functions across the many contexts in which children's rights are challenged and defended. Children affected by conflict are exposed to violence, displacement, and the collapse of systems meant to protect them, while those navigating migration routes face uncertainty, exploitation, and significant legal and practical barriers to seeking justice. Educational settings and digital environments, though offering opportunities for learning, participation, and connection, often present challenges related to inclusion, safety, and meaningful remedies when rights are violated. Shrinking civic spaces and shifting political landscapes further constrain children's participation and undermine mechanisms designed to hold duty-bearers to account. Meanwhile, climate change intensifies risks across all these contexts, disproportionately affecting children, particularly those from ethnic minority and Indigenous communities, through increased exposure to natural disasters, food insecurity, displacement, and environmental harm. By exploring these interlinked challenges through a children's rights lens, the programme highlights the urgent need to strengthen accountability frameworks and ensure that children can meaningfully access justice when their rights are threatened or violated.

This year's programme underscores the essential role of effective accountability mechanisms, including legal, administrative, community-based, and international mechanisms, in empowering, protecting, and giving voice to children. Promoting access to justice involves not only ensuring that remedies exist, but also that they are child-centred, inclusive, and capable of addressing both individual harms and broader systemic inequalities. Throughout the week, participants will engage with dynamic discussions, lectures, and case studies that illuminate the complexities of enforcing children's rights and explore how different actors, including governments, courts, businesses, digital platforms, civil society, and international organisations, share responsibility for upholding those rights. Central to these conversations is a commitment to integrating children's perspectives, recognising their agency, and amplifying their voices in justice processes.

Building on Leiden University's esteemed reputation in international children's rights, the programme features distinguished academic and professional experts from around the world. Engaging presentations will explore the challenges and opportunities surrounding accountability and access to justice, offering both conceptual depth and practical insights. The programme includes an excursion to a leading international organisation in The Hague and concludes with a keynote speech reflecting on this year's theme.

With a maximum of 40 participants, our summer school offers a unique opportunity to learn from leading experts in children's rights and international law. The programme fosters networking among participants, including students, researchers, and practitioners from across the globe. Join us for an enriching and interactive learning experience at Leiden University, deepening your understanding of how accountability and access to justice can shape the future of children's rights worldwide. We look forward to welcoming you to our dynamic and engaging programme.



# List of speakers



## Prof. dr. mr. T. Liefwaard

UNICEF Chair in Children's Rights at Leiden University and Head of the Department of Child Law and Health Law, Leiden Law School



## Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton

Programme Director of the Master of Laws Advanced Studies in International Children's Rights - Leiden Law School, and former Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child



## Mr. B. Van Keirsbilck

Director of the Belgian section of Defense for Children – International (DCI) and Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child



## Ms. N.R.S. Dole

Programme Manager UNICEF Chair in Children's Rights



## Dr. N. Espejo-Yaksic Ph.D.

Lecturer in Law & President of the Iberoamerican Network on Child-Centred Justice



## Prof. Dr. Peter Rodrigues

Emeritus Professor of Immigration Law, Leiden Law School



## Dr. Mark Klaassen

Assistant Professor of Immigration Law, Leiden Law School



## Michael Bochenek

Senior counsel to the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch



## Mia Dambach

Co-Founder and Executive Director for Child Identity Protection



## Lucy Opoka

PhD candidate, Leiden Law School



## Dr. mr. K.F.M. Klep

Assistant professor in Child Law and Director of the Graduate School of Legal Studies, Leiden Law School



## Prof. dr. mr. S. van der Hof

Professor of Law and Digital Technologies, Leiden Law School



## Prof. Kirsten Sandberg

Emeritus professor at University of Oslo and Rotating Honorary Chair in Enforcement of Children's Rights for the academic year 2025/2026 at the Department of Child Law and Health Law of Leiden Law School.

# DAY 1

Day led by  
Prof. Dr. Ton Liefaard and Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton

## MORNING SESSION

10:00 - 10:30	<b>Coffee and registration</b>
10:30 - 12:00	<b>Welcome - getting to know each other and Leiden University</b> Prof. Dr. Ton Liefaard and Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton
12:00 - 12:15	<b>Group photo</b> Monique Shaw
12:15 - 13:15	<b>Lunch</b>

## AFTERNOON SESSION

13:15-14:00	<b>Visit to the Leiden Observatory</b>
14:00 - 17:00	<b>Foundations of the The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: emerging trends and developments in international children's rights enforcement</b> Prof. Dr. Ton Liefaard and Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton

## CLOSING SESSION

17:00 - 17:15	<b>Questions, reflections and take-away messages</b>
17:30 - ONWARDS	<b>Welcome Drinks and Canal Boat Tour through Leiden</b>

Day led by

**Prof. Dr. Ton Liefwaard and Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck**

## MORNING SESSION

09:00 - 10:30	<b>Unpacking the theme</b> Prof. Dr. Ton Liefwaard and Ms. Rehana Dole
10:30 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 12:30	<b>Unpacking Draft GC 27</b> Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch

## AFTERNOON SESSION

**Access to Justice in Diverse Contexts: Thematic Perspectives and Practical Application**

13:30 - 15:00	<b>Building a comprehensive access to child-centred justice in challenging scenarios: The Latin-American case</b> Dr. Nicolás Espejo Yaksic
15:00 - 15:30	Break
15:30 - 16:45	<b>Work in groups:</b> Identifying barriers & solutions for effective child-friendly justice systems

## CLOSING SESSION

16:45 - 17:15	<b>Questions, reflections and take-away messages</b>
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# DAY 3 - Children's Rights in Migration

Day led by

**Prof. Dr. Peter Rodrigues and Dr. Mark Klaassen**

## MORNING SESSION

09:00 - 10:30	<b>Migration and Children's Rights</b> Prof. Dr. Peter Rodrigues and Dr. Mark Klaassen
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Break</b>
11:00 - 12:30	<b>Recent developments around migration and children's rights with a focus on access to justice and advocacy</b> Mr. Michael Bochenek
12:30 - 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>

## AFTERNOON SESSION

13:30 - 15:00	<b>Migration and Children's Rights– continued</b> Prof. Dr. Peter Rodrigues and Dr. Mark Klaassen
15:00 - 15:30	<b>Break</b>
15:30 - 17:00	<b>Child's right to identity in migration and conflict</b> Ms. Mia Dambach

## CLOSING SESSION

17:00 - 17:15	<b>Questions, reflections and take-away messages</b>
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Day led by

**Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton**

## MORNING SESSION

10:00 - 11:30	<b>Visit to the ICC</b> <u>Oude Waalsdorperweg 10, 2597 AK Den Haag</u>
12:30 - 13:30	<b>Lunch</b>

## AFTERNOON SESSION

13:30 - 15:30	<b>Gross and Systemic Violations: Accountability and Access to Justice</b> Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton
15:30 - 15:45	<b>Break</b>
15:45 - 17:15	<b>The Role of Peacebuilding Processes as a Path to Accountability and Access to Justice for Children</b> Ms. Lucy Opoka

## CLOSING SESSION

17:15 - 17:30	<b>Questions, reflections and take-away messages</b>
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Day led by

**Prof. Dr. Ton Liefaard and Prof. Dr. Ann Skelton**

## MORNING SESSION

09:15 - 10:30	<b>Role of Independent Children's Rights Institutions in Access to justice and effective remedies for children</b> Dr. Katrien Klep
10:30 - 13:00	<b>Children's Rights in the Digital environment with a focus on access to justice and accountability</b> Prof. Dr. Simone van der Hof
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch

## AFTERNOON SESSION

14:00 - 16:30	<b>Closing lecture- Evolution of accountability and access to justice in children's rights – What comes next?</b> Prof. Kirsten Sandberg  <b>Closing Remarks</b> by Prof. Ann Skelton and Prof. Ton Liefaard
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## CLOSING SESSION

16:30 - 17:00	<b>Presentation of certificates Drinks reception</b>
18:30 - ONWARDS	<b>Farewell dinner</b> <b>Manta Beach - <u>Strand Noord 57b, 2586 ZZ Den Haag</u></b>



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Leiden

# Contact Information

## Day 1, 2 & 3

Old Observatory  
Sterrenwachtlaan 11  
2311 GW Leiden

## Day 4 & 5

Wijnhaven - Campus the Hague  
Turfmarkt 99  
2511 DP The Hague

## Leiden Law Academy

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Registration:



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