

Dr. Roisin Hennessy  
Marie Curie Co-Fund Postdoctoral CONEX Fellow

[rhenness@der-pu.uc3m.es](mailto:rhenness@der-pu.uc3m.es)

[roisin.hennessy@gmail.com](mailto:roisin.hennessy@gmail.com)

Mobile Ireland: +353852781821; Mobile Spain: +34681950593



## SUMMARY

Committed and experienced Doctor of Law (McGill University) and, currently, Marie Curie Co-Fund Postdoctoral Fellow (University Carlos III), with significant senior management experience in the public policy arena. I have expertise and professional experience in the fields of human rights law, equality law, international labour law, feminist and critical legal theory, and law and sustainable development. With a unique and diverse public policy and academic career pathway, I combine a strong academic record with significant professional experience in public policy formulation. This provides me with unique insights into the opportunities to strengthen impact-oriented research that links academia with the policy formulation processes of Governments and Regional/International organisations. My research interests and publication record are in the fields of national and international human rights law, national and international labour law, the normative and legal foundations of social protection and social welfare systems, the interface of the law with structural injustice and inequality, legal barriers and enablers to climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, feminist and critical legal theory and philosophy, and interdisciplinary approaches to legal research and teaching.

## EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

### (1) Marie Curie Co-Fund Postdoctoral CONEX Fellow

1/9/2021 - present

Department of International Law, Ecclesiastical Law and Philosophy of Law, Universidad de Carlos III, Madrid.

**Supervisor/Research Group:** Prof. José María Sauca Cano, Prof. Titular Philosophy of Law and Director of the [Research Group on Law and Justice](#)

**Research Project:** *Vulnerable Subjects of Law and Sustainable Development – Understanding the Normative, Legal and Policy Dimensions of Social Protection Systems for Vulnerable Groups (VuSubLD)* within the Research Group on Law and Justice.

### (2) Doctor of Civil Law

1/10/2010-2/11/2016

Faculty of Law, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada (recipient of O'Brien Fellowship in Human Rights)

**Supervisor:** Prof. Colleen Sheppard, Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism

**Examination Board:** Prof. Adelle Blackett (McGill), Prof. Evan Fox-Decent (McGill), Prof. René Provost (McGill) and external assessor Prof. Judy Fudge (McMaster)

**Thesis:** [\*Economic Exploitation and Child Labour – Towards a Structural Approach to International Labour Law and Human Rights\*](#)

**ABSTRACT:** *The elimination of child labour in all its forms is an identified political priority for the international community. This has endured historically and has moved up the agenda since the 1990s, including through its inclusion most recently in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. However, international legal and policy approaches to date have only provided a limited challenge to some of the enduring structural processes that underpin the problem. These include the growing and highly dispersed informal economy, poverty and structural inequality for children and their families, the role and burden of gendered care and social reproduction work, and deprivations in the right to education. This thesis problematizes the limitations of the conceptual framing of childhood economic exploitation under international labour law and international human rights law. Analyzing what it terms the 'prohibition and penalty' approach that has dominated the labour law model of intervention, this thesis argues that this approach fails to effectively challenge a number of these structural processes, in particular the prevalence of child labour in the informal economy. Raising further critical questions in relation to the distinct international human rights law model, this thesis argues that while promising a more holistic approach to children's rights, the human rights law framework relegates the relevance and implications of social reproduction and care to the private sphere of the family, and provides limited protection for crucial socio-economic rights for families.*

*The second part of the thesis examines the ways in which international organisations are beginning to address two critical dimensions – the informal economy and supportive social protection mechanisms that address poverty and structural inequality for families. Emerging policy developments in these fields are reviewed and juxtaposed, including specific case studies from the International Labour Organisations' Decent Work Country Strategies, World Bank Policies and activities by the Indian Self Employed Women's Association, the largest union of informal economy women workers in India. Noting some positive trends, this thesis argues that interventions need to fully grapple with the relevance and implications of social reproduction and care labour as an enduring and less visible element that underpins child labour; both in designing interventions in the informal economy, and in designing social protection schemes. Drawing on feminist relational theory, this thesis argues that the problem of child labour illuminates the distinct 'situatedness' of children as legal subjects and subjects of development processes. To fully challenge child labour we need to conceptualize the child within the range of personal and institutional relationships that determine children's socio-economic rights over time, and to centralize rather than marginalise the significance of care and interdependence for children as legal subjects. This thesis contributes towards understandings of new and emerging legal and policy approaches in this specific field, and to an enhanced understanding of the distinctive position of the child as a subject of law and development, that is alive to the core significance of varied personal and institutional relationships for the advancement of children's human rights.*

**(3) European Masters in Human Rights and Democratisation  
(1 H awarded)**

1/9/02-30/6/03

European Inter-University Institute, Venice, Italy and Institute for Human Rights, Åbo Akademi University, Finland

**Thesis: *The Transnational Scope and Application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*** – supervision of Prof. Martin Scheinin and Prof. Markku Suksi.

**(4) Master of Laws (1H awarded)**

1/9/00-30/8/01

National University of Ireland, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland.

**Thesis: *The Prohibition against Gender Discrimination and the Protection of the Rights of Minority Groups*** - supervision of Prof. Siobhán Mullally

**(5) Bachelor of Law (2H1 awarded)**

1/9/97-30/6/00

National University of Ireland, University College Cork, Ireland

**PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PAPERS****Peer-Reviewed Publications:**

Róisín Hennessy, *“Defining States’ International Legal Obligations to Co-operate for the Achievement of Human Development: One Aspect of Operationalising a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development”*, Human Rights in Development Yearbook 2002, edited by Prof. Martin Scheinin and Prof. Markku Suksi (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: Leiden, Boston, 2002).

**Forthcoming Peer-Review Publications:**

Róisín Hennessy, *“The Role of Social Protection Interventions in Combatting Child Labour – Building the Case for a Human Rights-Based Model of Intervention”*, for submission to the Journal of Human Rights Practice, Oxford University Press, for peer-review 2022.

**Abstract:** Social protection systems have emerged as critical components of strategies to combat child labour. This article examines evolving discourses relating to the design and scope of social protection systems adopted by the World Bank (WB) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) as they relate to children. The article argues that while a shared consensus has emerged around the extension of “universal social protection” by the WB and ILO, the scope, role and legal status of social protection remains contested and is currently evolving. The article explores the ILO’s model of social protection which is clearly grounded in a “human rights-based approach” that endorses universal social protection across the lifecycle. This is contrasted with the evolving approach of the WB which has traditionally focussed on smoothing economic risks and “growth oriented market-centred” supports. The article argues these models reflect evolving understandings of the role of the market, family and State in allocating the burdens and risks of economic responsibility and social reproduction within families, which have implications for the design of social protection for children. In the second part, the article examines evidence from studies undertaken on the effectiveness of social protection interventions, illustrating the largely positive and, in some instances, negative results that flow from diverse interventions. Existing evidence suggests that social protection systems explicitly linked to the provision of socio-economic rights, and that consider the role of care responsibilities for households (a “human rights-based model”), give rise to the most effective results. In contrast, interventions that focus solely on increasing income levels for households (a “growth oriented market-centred model”) can give rise to negative or ambivalent impacts for child labour. The article concludes with recommendations for policy makers arguing for the design of social protection interventions that align with a human rights-based model.

Róisín Hennessy, *“Connecting the Gendered Informal Economy with Child Labour – Towards Advancing a Relational understanding of the Child as a Subject of Development Processes”*, under preparation.

Policy Advices to Government on behalf of Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission as Senior Policy Officer at [www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie):

*Policy Statement on Extending Access to Civil Marriage under the Irish Constitution*, 2 December 2015 (primary author).

*Observations on the Education (Admissions to Schools) Bill 2015*, 16 November 2015 (primary author).

*Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council under Universal Periodic Review*, 12 November 2015 (primary author).

[Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women](#), 4 October 2015 (primary author).

[Observations on the General Scheme of the International Protection Bill 2015](#), 30 June 2015 (co-author).

[Report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), 6 April 2015 (project manager).

[Submission on Ireland's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights](#), 13 March 2015 (co-author).

[Report to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#), 26 October 2014 (co-author).

[Observations on the Policing \(Amendment No. 3\) Bill 2014](#), 19 October 2014 (primary author).

[Observations on the Criminal Justice \(Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System\) Bill 2010](#), 26 May 2010 (co-author).

#### Conference Paper:

McGill Graduate Law Student Conference Paper, “*Legal Empowerment or Co-optation? - Towards a more Complex Understanding of the Role of Legal Empowerment as a Development Strategy in the Global South*”, May 2011.

#### ACADEMIC TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ROLES

##### (1) Doctoral Teaching Fellow, Faculty of Law, McGill University, 2013

***International Human Rights Law***: co-instructor involved in syllabus design and development, class instruction, student engagement and student evaluation. Classes were delivered through an immersive, student-centered, participatory teaching style.

##### (2) Sessional Lecturer, Faculty of Law, McGill University, 2011

***Human Rights Clinical Legal Education Seminar***: syllabus design, full instruction and evaluation of the first clinical legal education seminar on human rights for undergraduate students taught at McGill Law Faculty. The course was delivered through student centered participative pedagogy and has now become a permanent element of the syllabus of the Centre.

##### (3) Teaching Assistant, McGill University, Faculty of Law, 2011

**International Migration Law** – teaching assistant with responsibilities for the design and development of the course materials; instruction of some of the seminars; evaluation of course work and student engagement.

(4) Graduate Member of Board of the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, Faculty of Law, McGill University  
Sept 2011- July 2013

(5) Member of Clinical Legal Education Working Group, Faculty of Law, McGill University  
Sept 2011-July 2013

(6) Professional Development in the field of Teaching

- **Fall 2010 Participant in Learning to Teach Day** – attended interactive one-day workshop on course design, lesson planning and teaching skills.
- **Fall Semester 2010 Legal Education Seminar, McGill Faculty of Law** – Course addressing learning theories, teaching styles, goals of legal education and culminating in the design of a full course.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS AND HONOURS AWARDED

**Marie Curie Co-Fund Post-Doctoral Fellowship** through the CONEX Plus Marie Curie Programme at University Carlos III, Madrid, 2021-2025.

**O'Brien Fellowship** with the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada from 2010-2013.

**Doctoral Teaching Fellowship** with Institute for Comparative Law, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada for 2013.

**Postgraduate Scholarship** awarded by the Law Faculty of the University College Cork, National University of Ireland to pursue a Masters of Law degree, 2002.

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

(1) **Senior Policy Analyst** 26/6/2019-present  
*Civil Justice Policy, Strategic Policy Division, Department of Justice and Equality, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2, Ireland.*

*Key Functions and Responsibilities:*

- To lead on project managing a range of major strategic policy projects, formulating policy analysis and draft options papers, briefing of Government Ministers, the Department's management board etc.;
- To manage and engage in evaluation and strategic policy formulation projects using evidence-based research and data;
- To identify, stress test and approve strategic policy requirements in consultation with stakeholders;
- To identify areas of research and to manage outsourced research from academics, researchers and consultants;
- To prepare large policy outputs on strategic policy themes, drawing on desk-based research, engagement with relevant stakeholders and international evidence;
- To represent the Department and manage relationships with key civil servants, Government Departments, statutory agencies, NGOs, the EU Commission in the context of EU negotiations and public stakeholders.

## **(2) Senior Legislative Analyst**

**1/7/2017-25/6/2019**

*Civil Law Reform Division, Department of Justice and Equality, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2.*

Key functions and responsibilities:

- To advance legislative and policy analysis projects in specific areas of civil law;
- To draft policy briefings, analytical reports and options papers;
- To prepare draft legislation, to request advises from the Office of Attorney General, to instruct Office of Parliamentary Counsel, and to manage the process of bringing Bills through the Houses of the Parliament.
- To represent the Department and manage relationships with key civil servants, Government Departments, statutory agencies, NGOs, the EU Commission in the context of EU negotiations and public stakeholders;
- To represent Department at EU Commission Directive negotiations in areas of competence.

## **(3) Project Lead for Decision Support Service**

**1/7/2016-30/6/2017**

*Mental Health Commission, St. Martins House, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4, Ireland*

Key functions and responsibilities:

- To project manage the preliminary establishment of the Decision Support Service to support decision-making by and for adults with capacity challenges;
- To scope the cost of establishing the new service, to prepare requests for budgetary allocation for the purposes of the Government estimates process, and to cost the various elements of the establishment of the service;
- To provide observations, policy briefs and analysis to the MHC Board;
- To scope out the operational requirements of a new regulatory framework and to process map various elements of the law and policy in the area;

- To represent the Decision Support Service with a range of healthcare and other stakeholders to develop Codes of Practice and guidance for health, social care, legal, financial and other professionals engaging with people with diminished capacity or capacity challenges.

**(4) Senior Policy Officer**

1/10/2014 – 30/6/ 2016

*Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 16-22 Green St., Dublin 7 [www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)  
(Ireland's A status national human rights institution with merged Equality Functions)*

Key functions and responsibilities:

- To project manage multiple policy and advisory projects on human rights and equality law using qualitative and quantitative research;
- To manage up to 5 policy and advocacy officers and to liaise with the other teams of the Commission to undertake cross-functional work;
- To forecast, report on and manage the annual allocated budget of Policy and Review Division;
- To advise the Commission Board on the content of Commission submissions, strategic priorities and upcoming projects;
- To represent the Commission and to manage relationships at the domestic, regional and international levels at the UN, EU, Council of Europe including in Brussels, Geneva, Strasbourg etc.;
- To manage in-depth research and legal analysis projects from external contractors/academia;
- To quality assure submissions and outputs from the policy and review team;
- To liaise with media and communications staff for dissemination of work.

**CAREER BREAK GRANTED (Oct. 2010 - Sept. 2014) BY IHRC TO UNDERTAKE DOCTORAL DEGREE AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY**

**(5) Senior Policy and Research Officer**

1/1/2008 –30/9/2010

*Irish Human Rights Commission, 16-22 Green St., Dublin 7 [www.ihrec.ie](http://www.ihrec.ie)  
(Ireland's A status national human rights institution)*

Key functions and responsibilities:

- As described under (4) Senior Policy Officer above.

**(6) Research and Policy Officer**

1/8/2003 –1/1/2007

*Irish Human Rights Commission, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Jervis House, Jervis St., Dublin 1.*

Key functions and responsibilities:

- To undertake multiple legislative reviews, research and policy projects on the protection of human rights in Ireland across a broad range of areas;
- To strategically identify priority and emerging issues that the IHRC should comment on;
- To represent the IHRC at the domestic, regional and international levels as described above and to develop institutional relations with a wide range of diverse actors.

**(7) Legal Officer**

1/4/2002 – 31/8/2002

*Office of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, 6/7 Hanover St., Dublin, Ireland*

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT
---

**Ethiopia, Rule of Law Capacity Building Projects**

**Nov 2008 & Oct 2009**

**Description** – lead role in the design and delivery of the human rights module of three separate rule of law capacity building training sessions funded by Irish Aid targeting members of the judiciary, prosecutors and lawyers, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organisations in Ethiopia.

**NGO, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, Asociación Hogar Nuevos Horizontes**

**Jan-Sept 2007**

**Voluntary Legal Intern, Legal Advice Office** –NGO working for the legal empowerment of women and children at risk of gender based violence in Guatemala.

LANGUAGES
-----------

**English** – mother tongue

**Spanish** – intermediate level

**French** – intermediate level

**Irish** – basic level

REFEREES
----------

- a. **Professor Colleen Sheppard**, Professor of Law, McGill Law Faculty, [colleen.sheppard@mcgill.ca](mailto:colleen.sheppard@mcgill.ca), Tel: 001 – 5143985098, 3644 Peel Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. (Doctoral Thesis Supervisor).
- b. **Professor Adelle Blackett**, Professor of Law and Canada Chair in Transnational Labour Law and Development, McGill Law Faculty, [adelle.blackett@mcgill.ca](mailto:adelle.blackett@mcgill.ca), Tel: 001-5143985096, Chancellor Day Hall, Room 31, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1W9 (Doctoral examiner).
- c. **Professor Siobhan Mullally**, Professor of Human Rights Law, Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland, and currently UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Email [SIOBHAN.MULLALLY@nuigalway.ie](mailto:SIOBHAN.MULLALLY@nuigalway.ie) (LLM Supervisor and former Board Member of IHREC).