



**Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research**  
**Sussex Law School (School of Law, Politics & Sociology)**

# **RIGHTS NEWSLETTER 2019**

*Issue 2- August 2019*

Hello!

2018-19 has been a rather hectic year for the members of the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research (SCHRR) and we have lots of successes to report, ranging from publications and events, obtaining funding to undertake cutting edge research, putting our research into practice by engaging with international organisations and NGOs, teaching awards and a half marathon! Our PhD students continue to excel, with a number of completions, as well as overseas study trips and government briefings. The LLM in International Human Rights Law has gone from strength to strength with students playing a more active role in the life of SCHRR, and, through the Human Rights Law Clinic, undertaking research for a range of clients, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists.

SCHRR Co-Directors Dr Stephanie Berry, Prof Nuno Ferreira and Dr Charlotte Skeet

## ***Excellence in Human Rights Teaching***

Dr Steph Berry was nominated for the national Oxford University Press Law Teacher of the Year 2019 award for her human rights teaching.

At the Sussex Education Awards, Dr Amir Paz-Fuchs and Dr Maria Moscati won a 'Learning Together Award' for Sussex Clinical Legal Education. A number of other members of the human rights teaching team were also shortlisted for awards, including Dr Steph Berry (Sussex Spirit Award), Dr Charlotte Skeet (Sussex Spirit Award) and Dr Will McCready (Better World Award for the Migration Law Clinic).

To find out more, visit the website of the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research:  
[www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/schrr)

# NEWS

## *SCHRR Funding Success*

Dr Maria Federica Moscati has received SLSA funding, with Peter Dunne (University of Bristol), for a project entitled “‘We exist too’: Young Trans Perspectives on Legal Gender Recognition Laws in England and Wales’. The aim of the project is to listen to, document and disseminate the voice of trans young people (13-17 years old) in relation to legal gender recognition laws in England.

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SCHRR Co-Director, Prof Nuno Ferreira was part of a successful Horizon 2020 consortium bid for an interdisciplinary project entitled 'TRAFIG - Transnational Figurations of Displacement: Connectivity and Mobility as Solutions to Protracted Refugee Situations'. The project was launched in January 2019 and will run until 2021 (<https://trafig.eu/>), further information about TRAFIG can be found here: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/broadcast/read/47143>

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In March 2019, Dr Aisling O’Sullivan was awarded the British Academy/Leverhulme Trust Small Research Grant 2019 to fund archival research in the Irish National Archives and University College Dublin Archives on the Ireland v United Kingdom case (1978). Her research analyses the Irish Attorney General Office files that have been hitherto closed to academic researchers, as well as the private papers of former Irish Attorney General Declan Costello SC and former Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Dr Garret Fitzgerald. During her research visit, she also gave a lecture on her research to the Dublin International Law Seminar that have been hitherto closed to academic researchers, University College Dublin Archives on the *Ireland v United Kingdom* case (1978). Her research analyses the Irish Attorney General Office files as well as the private papers of former Irish Attorney General Declan Costello Series at the National University of Ireland HQ. Her research will be published within a co-authored monograph with Prof W.A. Schabas entitled ‘Internment on Trial’ to be published by Cambridge University Press.

## *Engagement with the wider community*

In December 2018, SCHRR Co-Director Dr Steph Berry, with Dr Fabio Petito (School of Global Studies) launched their report '[Interreligious Engagement Strategies: A Policy Tool to Advance FoRB](#)' at the [OSCE Ministerial Council Meeting in Milan](#). The report was completed after a multi-stakeholder consultation process in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The draft report had previously been presented in September at the OSCE's 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw.



Dr Fabio Petito, Director of Freedom of Religion or Belief and Foreign Policy Initiative, University of Sussex, Dr. Kishan Manocha, Senior Advisor on Freedom of Religion and Belief, OSCE/ODIHR and Dr. Stephanie Berry, Senior Lecturer in International Human Rights Law, University of Sussex

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In November 2018, Dr Edward Guntrip submitted a proposal for the establishment of a human rights counterclaim in investment arbitration to the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights. He presented his proposal from the floor at the 2018 United Nations Business and Human Rights Forum held at the United Nations in Geneva.



In October 2018, Dr Steph Berry presented to the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief on the topic of Interreligious Engagement at a closed door meeting in Siena, Italy. During the meeting she also contributed to the drafting of the OSCE Guidelines on Interfaith and Interreligious Dialogue and Partnerships.

Dr Judith Townend has been working with the NGO Corruption Watch and the Open Government Network on a proposal for a commitment to open justice in the next Open Government National Action Plan. She recently shared her reflections on the 'lost voices' in the process of courts reform and digitisation in a [blog post](#) for the Reform think tank.

Prof Nuno Ferreira was [interviewed by NBC](#) in relation to the stereotyping and humiliation of LGBTQ asylum - seekers in Europe in November 2018.

Dr Steph Berry was [interviewed by Voice of Islam](#) in relation to the impact of anti-semitism and Islamophobia in politics on religious freedom on the UK.



# OTHER NEWS



*In September 2019, the Sussex Centre for Human Rights Research joined the Association of Human Rights Institutes (AHRI), an international network of 68 academic institutes.*

## *Staff Profile:*

*Dr Elizabeth Craig*

## *Rights and Local Contexts: Sabbatical Report*

This year I had the luxury, and privilege, of being on sabbatical in the Autumn Term. This enabled me to make progress on my current project focusing on minority rights in the Western Balkans. But this year it was a sabbatical with a difference. I had been training all summer for a half-marathon charity event in Jordan to raise money for Open Doors, a Christian charity providing support to refugees in the region. The run took place in October.

It was such a privilege both to participate in such an event in a country that had always fascinated me, and to meet with refugees.

The team raised over £450,000, but the real highlight for me as someone who teaches human rights was hearing people's stories and seeing the difference that a regular visit or a monthly food package can make in the lives of refugees trying to rebuild their lives in a new place and under very difficult circumstances.

The good news is that I also made good progress with my project. In June of this year I was able to share some of the findings at a special conference of the International Political Science Association on 'Diversity and

Democratic Governance: Legacies of the Past, Present Challenges, and Future Directions' held at the University of Sarajevo.

Sarajevo is a beautiful city, and one of the highlights was a mayor reception and musical performance at the city hall (Vijećnica), which was seriously damaged during the war in the 1990s and only reopened in 2014.



Both trips really inspired me to think more about the importance of local contexts for the realisation and promotion of rights, which I hope to pursue further in both my writing and teaching next year.

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# EVENTS

Members of SCHRR regularly present their research to a variety of academic and non-academic audiences. Here are a couple of highlights from the last year:



Dr Shahrzad Fouladvand (Front row, third from left), delivered a talk on 'Human Trafficking, Power and Knowledge: A Case Study of R v EK (2018)' at the *Power Imbalance: Adult Victims in the Criminal Justice System* event organised by Northumbria Law School. The event sought to examine criminal justice and socio-legal issues connected to existing and potential new safeguards for victims of controlling or exploitative behaviour. Shahrzad's talk was notably attended by Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird.

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In May 2019, Dr Bal Sokhi-Bulley was invited to participate in an event hosted by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research on 'Conditional Conditional Citizenship & Belonging: Britain's "Muslim Question" after the Shamima Begum Ruling' (with Moazzam Begg and Amanda E Rogers). You can read the paper, '[Rights as a Distraction from 'Belonging': A Response to the Shamima Begum Ruling](#)' on Critical Legal Thinking.



Prof Nuno Ferreira, Dr Moira Dustin and Dr Carmelo Danisi organised a panel 'Queering asylum across Europe: The legal and social experiences of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) asylum seekers' at the 2018 International

Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) Conference, Thessaloniki, Greece.



The panel was organised as part of the [SOGICA](#) (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum) research project, funded by the European Research Council and based in the School of Law, Politics and Sociology.



In 2018, Nuno Ferreira gave invited talks at the Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven and the 10th European Feminist Research Conference, Gottingen. In Leuven, Nuno's paper focused on 'Human Rights of the Most Vulnerable: Children, LGBTI and the Right to Asylum in Europe'. In Gottingen, his paper was entitled 'An exercise in detachment: The Strasbourg Court and sexual minority refugees'

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In May, SCHRR celebrated the publication of Dr Katerina Galai's monograph, *[Regulating Private Military Companies: Conflicts of Law, History and Governance](#)* (Routledge 2019). Katerina's monograph is based on her PhD, completed at Sussex Law School and supervised by Tarik Kochi and Richard Vogler. She now works as a researcher for Rand Europe.

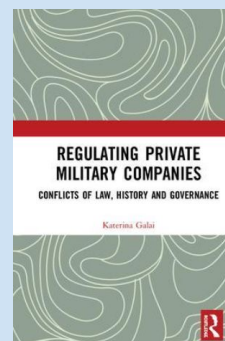
In April 2019, Steph Berry was invited to give an invited public lecture at the Hashemite University, Jordan on 'Realising the Right to Freedom of Religion or Belief of Refugees'.

The lecture was part of the 'Women, Faith and Humanitarian Interventions project' run by the University of Birmingham in collaboration with the University of Jordan, Hashemite University and Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO), that 'focuses on women's spaces and the ways that practical and religious needs can be met for women in situations of humanitarian crisis'.



Whilst in Jordan, Steph also participated in the project workshop on 'Spaces on the Ground' and visited the Zaatari refugee camp.

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# SCHRR EVENTS

In February, Professor Ratna Kapur, Queen Mary University of London and Senior Core Faculty, International Global Law and Policy Institute, Harvard Law School gave a talk to staff and students based on work for her recently published book [\*Gender, Alterity and Human Rights: Freedom in a Fishbowl\*](#) (Edward Elgar 2018). Prof Kapur presented a fascinating critique of mainstream human rights and freedom and interrogated the potential of non-liberal registers of freedom in the futurity of human rights.



In March, SCHRR Co-Director Dr Charlotte Skeet organised and chaired a Sussex Salon event at The Dome, in Brighton, on 'The Gender Pay Gap: Myths and Realities'. The expert panel, tasked with discussing women's rights and UK policy on Equal Pay and Pay Gap, comprised Bev Barstow, Branch Secretary of the Women's Equality Party Brighton and Hove; Geraldine Healy, Professor of Employment Relations at Queen Mary University of London and Founding Director of the Centre for Research and Equality; Dr Joanna de Groot, Senior Lecturer in History at the University of York, former President of UCU and current delegate to the TUC Women's Conference. ***Watch out for a Sussex Salon on the Human Rights Act in Autumn 2019.***

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In November 2018, SCHRR co-hosted (with the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth) a talk by Dr Emma Nottingham, University of Winchester, on 'Critically ill children in the Age of Social Media: How can we protect "General Tagged?"'.

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In October 2018, SCHRR Visiting Research Fellow Prof Silvina Alvarez Medina, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, presented the work she undertook at Sussex, on 'Emerging Human Rights in the Decisions of the ECHR: Private and Family Life'.

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In April, Elham Saudi from [Lawyers for Justice in Libya](#) gave a fascinating talk to staff and students on the role of EU Member States in the so-called 'migration crisis' and how EU policies threaten the human rights of those in Libya. Elham's talk, entitled 'Fortress Europe: Threatening the Human Rights of Migrants', was organised by the SCHRR Doctoral Working Group as part of the 'Rights Research Series'.



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In September 2018, SCHRR kicked off its 'Rights Research Series' with a book launch for Dr Matthew

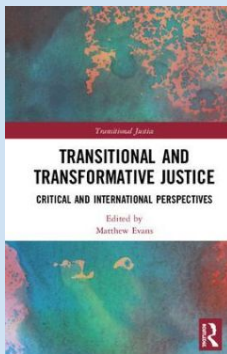
Evan's recently published monograph [\*Transformative justice: remedying human rights violations beyond transition\*](#). (Routledge 2018) with Prof Padraig McAuliffe from the University of Liverpool, as a discussant. A [recent review](#) of Matt's book explains: 'The book positions itself as a bold and successful attempt to provide substance to a concept that has been thrown around in scholarly debates quite too easily, and explores how the principles of transformative justice may actually play out'.

# PUBLICATIONS

## *Books and Edited Collections*



Dustin, Ferreira and Millns, (eds), [\*Gender and Queer Perspectives on Brexit\*](#) (Palgrave Macmillan 2019).



Evans (ed), [\*Transitional and transformative justice: critical and international perspectives\*](#) (Routledge 2019)

Danisi (ed), Special Issue of *GenIUS – Rivista di studi giuridici sull'orientamento sessuale e sull'identità di genere* on '[International protection and SOGI](#)', 2018, No 2.

## *Articles*

Berry, 'Aligning interculturalism with international human rights law: "Living Together" without assimilation' (2018) 18 *Human Rights Law Review* 441-471

Brayson, 'Of bodies and burkinis: institutional Islamophobia, Islamic dress and the colonial condition' (2019) 46 *Journal of Law and Society* 55-82

Danisi, 'Introduzione: Navigating Troubled Waters: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Asylum Claims in a Time of 'Crises' and Reforms' (2018) 2 *GenIUS – Rivista di studi giuridici sull'orientamento sessuale e sull'identità di genere* 6-8

Danisi, 'What "Safe Harbours" are There for People Seeking International Protection on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Grounds? A Human Rights Reading of International Law of the Sea and Refugee Law' (2018) 2 *GenIUS – Rivista di studi giuridici sull'orientamento sessuale e sull'identità di genere* 9-24

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Dustin and Held, 'In or out? A Queer Intersectional Approach to "Particular Social Group" Membership and Credibility in SOGI asylum claims in Germany and the UK' (2018) 2 *GenIUS – Rivista di studi giuridici sull'orientamento sessuale e sull'identita' di genere* 74-87

Ferreira, 'Reforming the Common European Asylum System: Enough Rainbow for Queer Asylum Seekers?' (2018) 2 *GenIUS – Rivista di studi giuridici sull'orientamento sessuale e sull'identita' di genere* 25-42

Fouladvand and Ward, 'Human trafficking, vulnerability and the state' (2019) 83 *The Journal of Criminal Law* 39-54

Guntrip, 'International investment law in an isolationist world: a human rights perspective' (2018) 12 *Human Rights and International Legal Discourse* 138-152

Guntrip, 'Private actors, public goods and responsibility for the right to water in international investment law: an analysis of *Urbaser v. Argentina*' (2018) 1 *Brill Open Law* 37- 60

O'Sullivan and Fazaeli, 'Multilateralism, human rights and the 1970s: insights from Ireland's role in the development of the human rights field' (2018) 29 *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 1-17

Paz-Fuchs and Ben-Shachar, 'Separate but equal reconsidered: religious education and gender separation' (2019) 19 *Human Rights Law Review* 369-386

Skeet, 'Orientalism in the European Court of Human Rights' (2019) 14 *Religion and Human Rights* 31-63

## ***Book Chapters***

Berry, 'Avoiding scrutiny? The margin of appreciation and religious freedom' in Temperman, Gunn and Evans (eds), *The European Court of Human Rights and the Freedom of Religion or Belief: The 25 years since Kokkinakis* (Brill 2019)

Bohoslavsky and Guntrip (2019) 'Unanticipated consequences: the human rights implications of bringing sovereign debt disputes within investment treaty arbitration' in Sachs, Johnson and Coleman (eds) *Yearbook on Investment Law and Policy* 2017 (OUP 2019)

Ferreira, 'A Roma European crisis road-map: A holistic answer to a complex problem', in Magazzini and Piemontese (eds), *Constructing Roma Migrants: European Narratives and Local Governance* (Springer 2019)

Fouladvand, 'Corruption and human trafficking: a holistic approach' in Pasculli and Ryder (eds) *Corruption in the global era: causes, sources and forms of manifestation. The Law of Financial Crime* (Routledge 2019).

# PHD NEWS

## *Viva success!*

A number of our PhD students have successfully passed their vivas in the 2018-19 academic year. Congratulations everyone!



**Zeynep Ardic**, passed her viva for her thesis, 'Searching for Transitional Justice Mechanisms in the Kurdish Question in Turkey: Addressing Violations of Social, Economic and Cultural Rights'. She was supervised by Dr Matthew Evans and Dr Michael Kearney and examined by Prof Pádraig McAuliffe (University of Liverpool) and Dr Stephanie Berry.

**David Davies** successfully defended his PhD 'Regulating Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: a Socio-Legal Analysis'. He was examined by Prof Eugenia Caracciolo Di Torella (University of Leicester) and Dr Danielle Griffiths and was supervised by Prof Sue Millns and Prof Susie Scott.

**Michele Wilkinson** recently graduated after passing her viva on 'The law empowering local authorities in England to remove Travellers from unauthorised encampments: A Critique'. She was supervised by Dr Elizabeth Craig and Prof Sue Millns and examined by Prof Helen Carr (University of Kent) and Prof Donald McGillivray.

Gizem Güney, who was the SCHRR PhD representative in the 2017-18 academic year, completed her PhD on 'The Istanbul convention: A radical feminist instrument'. She was supervised by Dr Elizabeth Craig, Dr Kim Brayson and Prof Sue Millns and examined by Prof Joanne Conaghan (University of Bristol) and Dr Charlotte Skeet.



*PhD students celebrating Gizem Güney's success.*

**Ebru Demir** passed her viva in August 2019. Her thesis, entitled 'Theory and Practice of Gender Transformative Justice: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina' was examined by Prof Catherine O'Rourke and Dr Elizabeth Craig. She was supervised by Prof Sue Millns and Dr Charlotte Skeet.



## *Coffee and PhDing*

SCHRR PhD Researchers held regular informal 'Coffee & PhDing' sessions to discuss their human rights research, organised by the SCHRR doctoral working group. Talks included Benjamin Thorne on 'the "Right to Truth" in post-conflict international legal institutions and its contribution to the "truth-telling" process'; Julia Winstone on 'Reimagining Children's Rights in Restorative Justice: A Socio-Legal Approach'; Aigerim Mussabalinova on 'Inclusion & Sustainability of the System of Children's Care in Kazakhstan'; and, Thomas Ebbs on 'Carceral Feminist Responses to Sex Work' discussing the emergence of legal responses in feminist social movements.

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## *Work in Progress seminars*

Doctoral students regularly contribute to the SCHRR Rights Research Series. This year, Tom Ebbs (SCHRR PhD representative) presented his work, in December, on 'Configuring Governance Feminist Legal Responses to Transactional Sex through the Civil Society Organisation - A Methodology in Progress'.

In April, three current students presented their work at a joint session: Ebru Demir, 'Women, Peace and Security Resolutions under International Law: Looking at the Resolutions with Gender Transformative Justice Approach'; Moheb Mudesser, 'International Legal Frameworks and Accommodation of Minorities in Divided Societies'; and Stanley Mwangi Wanjiru, 'ICL and Representations of the black body: A post colonial perspective'.

## *Doctoral Researcher Advising Icelandic Government about Online Abuse*

Current doctoral researcher, Maria Bjarnadottir has been commissioned by the Icelandic government to draft a report on legislative and policy measures to tackle digital sexual privacy. She presented her research in Iceland last February, where participants included an MPs and the Vice District Prosecutor in Iceland.

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## *Research Visit to Rwanda*

During April and May Doctoral student (Law) Benjamin Thorne undertook a two month institutional visit at the Aegis Trust Rwanda, for which he was awarded an ESRC grant. The Aegis Trust work in the area's genocide prevention and peace education. As a visiting researcher, Benjamin worked with staff from the Genocide Archive and Peace Education unit. Benjamin also spent part of his time developing a research proposal for his newest project, which he presented to staff at the Aegis Trust. The project 'Legal Archives Beyond the Legal Process', which draws upon parts of his doctoral thesis, will focus on the role legal archival material can have in aiding reconciliation and peace processes.

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# LLM NEWS



The LLM International Human Rights Law 2018-19 cohort are currently putting the finishing touches on their dissertations, after a jam-packed year. This year the cohort including students from across the world, including Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Sudan, Turkey and Zimbabwe and, of course, the UK. A lot of our students have experience of working with human rights for NGOs and as lawyers and they are able to draw on this in order to bring their studies to life.

*The 2018-19 LLM International Human Rights Law cohort*

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## *Student Presentations*

LLM International Human Rights Law students not only regularly attend research events, they also present to each other and staff on human rights situations and issues that they are particularly interested in. These off-timetable sessions during the Spring term covered a diverse range of topics, including country specific situations, the human rights implications of faith schools, human rights in childbirth, autism and human rights, the Gender Recognition Act and Trans Rights and freedom of expression and the dark web.

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## *Human Rights Law Clinic*

It was another successful year for the Human Rights Law Clinic. This year students worked in pairs to produce a 6,000 word memorandum for their clients.

We worked with 7 clients (1 is strictly confidential given the high profile nature of the client and their brief) on a wide range of topics:

- Amnesty International: Impact of austerity policies on the right to health in Greece: The role of the EU and international financial institutions
- Global Rights Compliance LLP: How has the right to food in times of armed conflict been interpreted by the Human Rights Bodies?
- Human Rights Watch: Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in the United Kingdom



*The Human Rights Law Clinic students after the final workshop*

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- International Commission of Jurists: Would it be desirable for article 3(4) of the of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography to be transposed into a Business and Human Rights Treaty?
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights: Exploring the boundaries between conflict related sexual and gender based violence and sexual and gender based violence in conflict settings: State responsibility, access to justice, and legal remedies for victims at the intersections of IHL, ICL and IHRL
- Survival International: The right to remain uncontacted: Strategies and sources of law for the protection of uncontacted indigenous peoples.



*Katie Pimena and Celina Luzi Stoutland present their final research for Survival International*

## *Congratulations!*

Congratulations are due to a number of former and current LLM IHRL students.

**Tom Thrower** (LLM International Human Rights Law 2017-18) has recently started a position in the immigration and asylum team at Broudie Jackson Canter LLP.

After successfully completing an internship at A4ID, **India Kearsley** (LLM International Human Rights Law 2017-18) has now taken up an Advocacy Internship at the Consortium for Street Children.

**Ciaran King** (LLM International Human Rights Law 2018-19) has recently accepted a position as a Legal Assistant at the European Council on Refugees and Exiles. He will take up this role in September, after completing his dissertation.

**Louise Plumstead** (LLM International Human Rights Law 2018-19) has begun work as a Paralegal in the Education Law Team at leading human rights law firm, Bindmans LLP (see the Student/Alumni profiles section for more information).

**Alex Smith** (LLM International Human Rights Law 2018-19) will be starting an internship with the Myanmar office of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office later this summer.

# STUDENT ALUMNI PROFILES

**Omar Begg** - Senior Policy Analyst at Muslim Engagement and Development



After completing my LLB in 2014, where I specialised in human rights, I am now working as the Senior Policy Analyst at Muslim Engagement and Development (MEND), a national non-profit which seeks to empower British Muslims to be more actively involved in media and politics.

I lead a team of researchers and analysts, coordinating our research activities in a range of areas such as racial and religious hatred, the socio-economic challenges facing British Muslims, religious rights, and security and counter-terrorism. To bring about tangible changes for the communities we represent, I regularly meet MPs, Lords, and parliamentary officers, introducing them to our bespoke research around key areas of concern to British Muslim communities. I also disseminate and submit our research to relevant All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) and Select Committees, to shape and steer policy in those areas.

Studying at Sussex equipped me with the confidence and academic grounding to not only establish myself in such a great organisation, which is at the frontline of defending Muslims in an era plagued by Islamophobia, but to contribute to the national debate around the rights of Muslims. By studying human rights at Sussex, I was able to develop my passion for the subject by being exposed to a diverse range of thoughts and people. I was able to deepen and refine my understanding of human rights, and Dr Stephanie Berry, in particular, helped me understand the more intricate nuances of human rights law across the globe with regards to minority communities, and this has proven invaluable in my line of work.

Overall, I would not be where I am today had I not studied human rights at Sussex. I gained an unparalleled and practical insight into human rights – without this, doing my job effectively would be near impossible. As a racial and religious minority in this country, studying at Sussex empowered and equipped me to make the changes I want to see in wider society. For these reasons, I recommend anyone who wants to leave a lasting mark in the world around them study human rights at Sussex.

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## **Louise Plumstead** - Paralegal at Bindmans LLP

My path to a career in human rights law has been a little circuitous and unconventional. I worked for many years in adult social care and then special educational needs settings while completing a degree with the Open University in English. The LLM in International Human Rights Law was a way of combining my work experience with academic study and it has proved to have been a vital stepping-stone to a career in human rights.



I am extremely lucky to now be working in the field of education and disability rights law at Bindmans LLP as a paralegal. To say the learning curve has been steep would be an understatement! My role entails securing legal aid, preparing court bundles for Judicial Review and interviewing clients. I am also required to undertake legal research to assist the associate solicitor in diverse areas of law such as Court of Protection work and Community Care cases. My experience at Sussex was invaluable in preparing me for this role, particularly working with another student on a pro bono research project for Amnesty International as part of the IHRL Clinic. This was an amazing experience not only in terms of the academic skills I learned, but also the broader experience of co-authoring and collaborating on research. Academic study can at times feel detached from the lives of those experiencing human rights abuses but knowing that the research we undertook would be used by Amnesty to challenge these abuses was both humbling and exciting. My increased confidence in my academic abilities has been due both to the fantastic pastoral support I received and also from being fortunate enough to be part of a diverse and welcoming department with a great group of LLM students.

Having only previously studied as a distance-learning mature student I was daunted by the prospect of being part of a cohort that were mainly new graduates, but the course leader was so supportive and helped us to gel as a group. Meeting other students on the LLM from all over the world was amazing, not only to learn from their experiences but also to have made some lifelong friends along the way.



**Matilde Rocca** - Consultant at UNICEF Innocenti

In 2013, I completed my LLB in Law with International Relations at the University of Sussex. It was during my last year of Bachelor studies that I took the module in Human Rights Law. Having always been passionate about human rights, I took this course with high expectations and, I am happy to say, they were met.

After taking this course, I became sure about my career path: I wanted to specialize in human rights and work within this field. Therefore, I completed two internships in the non-governmental sector, the former in Geneva and the latter in London, both concerned with human rights issues. After having gained some professional experience, I decided to complete my LLM (International Human Rights Law specialism) at the London School of Economics (LSE) where I further deepened my understanding of IHRL.

Photo from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/profiles/10075-Matilde-Rocca.html>

My dissertation focused on the phenomenon of immigration in Italy and human rights responsibilities of state parties in this context. I then started collaborating with UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, first as an intern and then as a consultant and I am currently working alongside the child protection team. I can safely say that without the course undertaken during my third year of LLB in human rights, I would not be working for UNICEF today. Overall, I would recommend Sussex as a University where to study human rights for all of those who are interested in this fascinating and incredibly important subject!

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