

## MOOC “Children Deprived of Liberty: Learning from the UN Global Study”

### Report



**Angela Melchiorre**

Online Programmes Manager  
Global Campus of Human Rights

**Manuela Pegoraro**

Children's Rights E-learning Expert  
Global Campus of Human Rights

## Executive Summary

The free MOOC “Children Deprived of Liberty: Learning from the UN Global Study” ran between 18 November 2019 and 31 January 2020.

Public information about the course is available at <https://edx.gchumanrights.org/courses/course-v1:global-campus+ungs+2019/about>

Further details are available in the dedicated section of the GC website: <https://gchumanrights.org/education/e-learning/moocs/children-deprived-of-liberty-learning-from-the-un-global-study/about.html>

Some **key statistics** show the high level of engagement and intensity of work:

- Features: 9 weeks; 18 lecturers and experts; 26 videos lectures; 5 weekly discussions; 4 quizzes
- Enrolled participants: 2202
- Age: from 13 to 65+, with a majority (43%) between 24-34 years of age
- Country of origin: from all corners of the world but especially from Europe (32%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (34%)
- Professional profile: diverse, with a large representation of NGO (14%) and education professionals (14%) and a good 23% who defined themselves as students
- Surveys: Welcome=590; User-experience=294
- Views of video lectures: 4587
- Posts in the discussion forum: 1913
- Quizzes: 19% of enrolled participants took all 4 quizzes; 8% passed them all
- Requirements to earn the certificate of participations: pass all quizzes (4), participate in at least 5 discussions
- Issued certificates: 154 (7% of enrolled participants)

### Highlights

- Good multidisciplinary, multifocal, multiregional approach
- Availability of free resources and materials not available elsewhere

### Room for improvement

- Focus more on legal violations, cases and ‘links between the dots’
- More attention to real-politik challenges and impact/implementation on States/Regions

### Recommendations for the future

- Update MOOC with focus on regional implementation/follow-up/case studies
- Evaluate the possibility of training regional trainers
- Develop new courses on similar or related topics
- Consider French version

The information contained in this report is based on:

- Evaluation by the Online Programmes Manager and the Children's Rights E-learning Expert
- Evaluation by participants who provided feedback through:
  - A Welcome Survey available throughout the course
  - A User-experience Survey also available throughout the course
  - Direct correspondence by email with the E-learning Team
- Statistics available on edX and Youtube

## Some basic information

Free enrolment opened on 8 October 2019 and closed on 31 December 2019. The MOOC was originally foreseen to run between 18 November 2019 and 19 January 2020. Due to the large and engaged audience, with a good number of students registering towards the end of December 2019, we decided to extend the course until 31 January 2020 in order to provide all with additional time to properly reach completion. The MOOC was structured in 9 weeks, featuring the participation of 18 lecturers/experts and including assessment through 5 weekly discussions and 4 Quizzes.

The MOOC features in the e-learning section of the GC website (<https://gchumanrights.org/education/e-learning/moocs/children-deprived-of-liberty-learning-from-the-un-global-study/about.html>). For the delivery we used our own personalised Open edX e-learning environment (<https://edx.gchumanrights.org>), the same free online platform that we used in the past. Registered participants can access the full range of learning materials (video lectures, readings, links, discussions, quizzes and surveys) on a permanent basis, even after the end of the course.

In order to advertise and generate interest, we created promotional materials (<https://gchumanrights.org/education/e-learning/moocs/children-deprived-of-liberty-learning-from-the-un-global-study/media-toolkit.html>) and used them to target both ad hoc mailing lists and the existing GC contact databases. Promotion was also carried out through the GC social media, both at the HQ in Venice and at the regional level, as well as during the official worldwide launches of the Global Study, making ample use of the MOOC video teaser (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEBUEkL2XIY&list=PL7BlHg38edbYXC9NJyXY3CFm5Mnr31m&index=3&t=0s>).

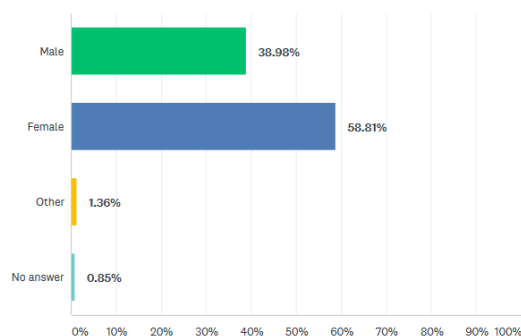
## Enrolment and class composition

We started the course with 1,100 students and closed it with 2,202. The twofold increase between the start and end of the course is certainly due to great promotional efforts making the most of the momentum created by the launch of the Global Study. In the words of one participant: *So nice to have taken time to do a MOOC in the same time of the launch of the Global Study*. Additional evidence of keen interest and impetus is the fact that with such a final number of students this MOOC comes in second place in the list of most successful GC online courses in terms of enrolment.

According to the Welcome Survey submitted by 590 respondents, the following data on gender, age, region of residence and professional profile paint a global and rich picture of our outreach.

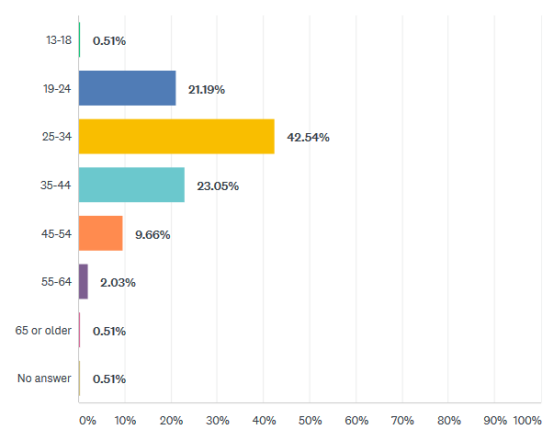
### What is your gender?

Answered: 590 Skipped: 0



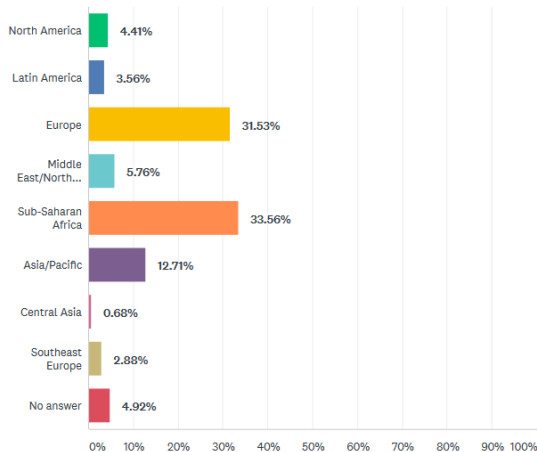
### Age

Answered: 590 Skipped: 0



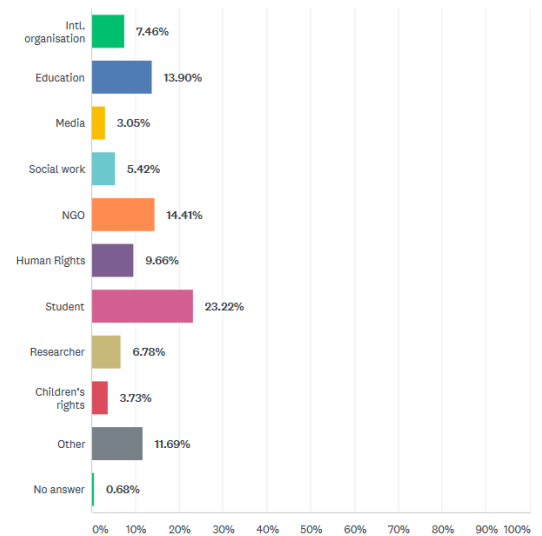
## Where do you live?

Answered: 590 Skipped: 0



## Professional profile

Answered: 590 Skipped: 0

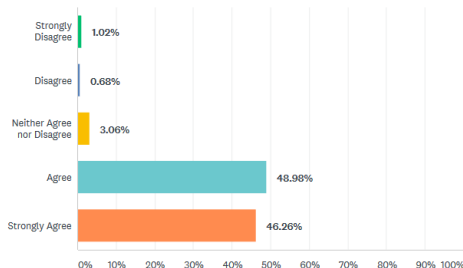


## Course materials and activities

According to the 294 participants who submitted the User-experience Survey, almost 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the combined course materials (videos and readings) and activities (quizzes and discussions) had a positive impact on their learning.

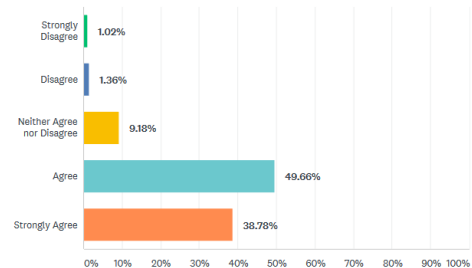
How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The course materials (lectures, videos, documents) have had a positive impact on my learning experience.

Answered: 294 Skipped: 0



How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The course activities (discussions, quizzes) have had a positive impact on my learning experience.

Answered: 294 Skipped: 0



*The videos were very helpful rather than just readings.*

*I loved the report and the course. The topic was so engaging, difficult and inspiring. The language and layout of the report made it easy to read. There were so many interesting ways of approaching interesting research questions and results. The filmed materials were very good and informative and interesting. The best course I have ever taken!*

*Specialised training modules and different aspects of children deprived of liberty, combined with an evidence-based, academic and practice-based perspective was a fit for my growth.*

*The course gave an excellent overview of the subject. It provided all the key official texts that would permit to have complete references on all the aspects of the matter. It presented in a clear and exhaustive manner the different facets of each theme and gave very interesting examples and testimonies in different countries.*

*I was impressed about cases presented in that course, I saved almost all movies and information for further use.*

*I seek to be a child advocate. I am a graduate student writing a Master thesis about the barriers of legal representation of the rights of children in federal detention on the U.S.-Mexico border. This is the first and most detailed resource I have had access to and I am very grateful for it.*

*The course was a real eye opener and i would encourage more people who deal with children on day to day basis to enrol on the course. The discussions and quizzes also stimulate thought hence assisting in gaining more insight into pathways for children deprived of liberty.*

The quotations above prove the overall very high level of satisfaction, with a slightly higher preference for materials rather than activities. Suggestions for improvements include further use of case studies showing realistic challenges and impact at State and Regional level (and videos related to that, especially if linked to testimonies by affected children); increased use of activities such as quizzes; and more focus on legal violations and links among parts.

*It would have been interesting, if possible, to get to know more individual children experiences (such as in the video of the Pakistan teenager sentenced to death penalty), as also to be able to watch the other regional presentations of the study.*

*The quizzes could be increased at the end of the course./Need more questions in each quiz.*

*More videos with examples of cases and discussions about cases, like in the week 6.*

*The course could have been more "realistic" in analysing critically the impact of the prevailing economic development model on all the matters treated. Moreover, a more "real politik" approach to many of the cases analysed during the course would have permitted a more realistic approach on the actual possibilities of overcoming undesirable situations.*

*The overall experience of this course was very fruitful. My only feedback is on the explanation part. We were shown video on brief explanation on the problem on child rights and assigned with reading materials. I guess it would have been better with the further explanation on violation of certain article of certain convention so that it would be easier for us to connect the dots.*

*It would be helpful to provide maps and places to leave feedback for each section.*

### **Course participation**

Throughout the course Angela Melchiorre acted as course moderator at first summarizing comments and suggesting new prompts for further discussion or additional reading materials, and then encouraging participation through weekly emails to all registered participants. This proved useful as a large number of participants remained engaged and contributed to each discussion with real life examples and inspiring suggestions, truly giving a taste of worldwide practical approaches. Many participants provided further comments in this respect. Below is a small selection:

*Thank you for the opportunity. Best was to read to exchanges on the discussion threads and experience how different opinions can be on subjects where I thought there is one common understanding.*

*The interaction with other participants had a positive impact on my learning experience because I could see that different perspectives can be helpful in expanding each other's thoughts and ideas on a topic.*

*I very much appreciate the possibility of being able to participate in this course and I highlight the quality of the material offered, and the exchange with the participants and monitors of the course.*

In the User-experience Survey, interest was expressed for live class discussions (*There is need to share online live class discussions through group conferencing and share with everyone online*). This was in part covered by a Live webinar (see below), but it will be interesting to see if it remains a constant and largely significant request.

**Highlights: Live webinar**



On 25 November 2019 a live webinar with Prof. Manfred Nowak and Dr. Angela Melchiorre was arranged as a Q&A session. Participants were able to submit their questions in advance and to comment during and after the session, which was also recorded and made available on the course platform for those who could not attend the live webcast. Feedback was again very positive, especially in terms of gaining a better understanding of key dilemmas and field practices, thus reinforcing one of the main features of GC activities, that is the link between theory and practice for more effective impact on the ground. The number of views (356 so far) is also very encouraging.

**Assessment**

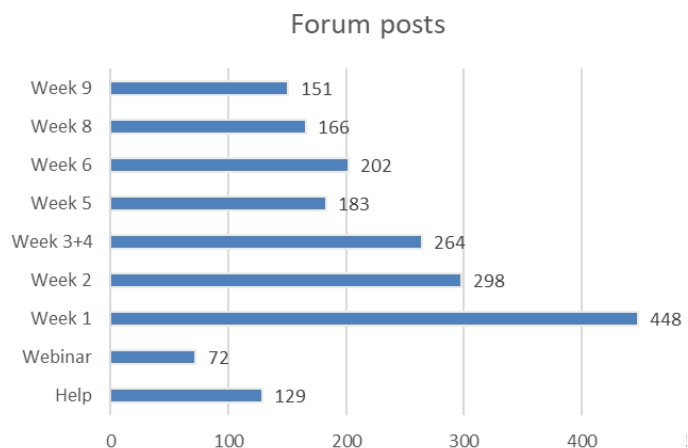
Despite the above mentioned active engagement, it is true that participation declined over time, not only in the discussions but also in the quizzes. Overall, the majority of the students took the course for their own personal knowledge without necessarily asking for the certificate of participation, as indicated by the following data:

- No. of enrolled participants: 2202
- No. of posts in discussion forum: 1913 (including posts created by the instructor)  
A few participants posted multiple times in each discussion, and many participants created new threads beyond the discussion threads created by the instructor.

On the right is a snapshot the number of posts by week.

Notwithstanding the drop in engagement after the first two weeks that is in line with many past MOOCs, the chart shows that participation in discussions was sustained until the end of the MOOC.

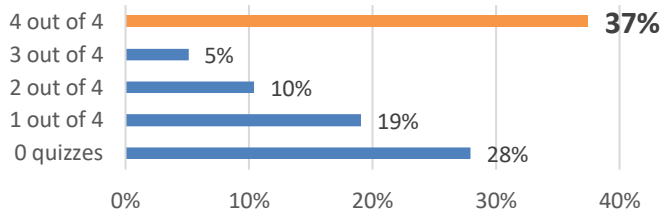
Furthermore, it reflects the number of students eligible for obtaining the certificate.



As far as quizzes are concerned, the following figures demonstrate a high rate of attempts and a lower rate of successful completion:

- No. of participants who submitted 4 out of 4 quizzes: 451 (19% of the enrolled participants)
- No. of participants who passed 4 out of 4 quizzes: 169 (8% of the enrolled participants)

## Quizzes: students' performance



Here on the left is a more detailed snapshot of the participants' performance in the 4 quizzes (percentage of students according to number of quizzes passed for students who took at least 1 quiz).

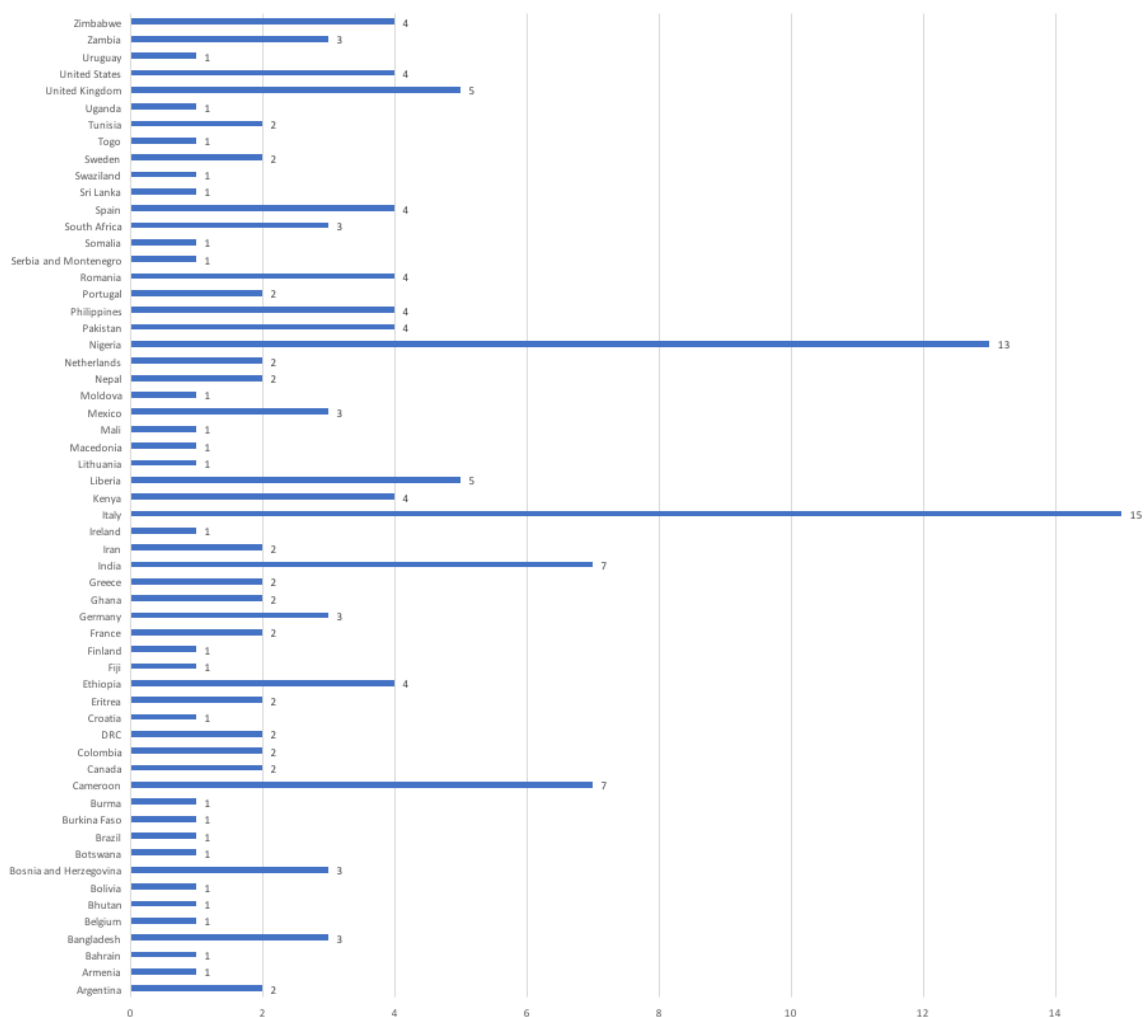
Data show that passing the first quiz is a strong predictor for both taking and passing all quizzes. In the future, it would be important to reflect on how to improve our communication in order to discourage random attempts

at quizzes and encourage more substantive engagement with materials. This recommendation is already being given in different parts of all our MOOCs, but it could be further highlighted in each quiz.

## Certificate of participation

At the end of the course, 154 students requested the certificate of participation, corresponding to 7% of enrolled participants. This figure is within our usual standards (6-15%) and also a good result given that the course was significantly longer than usual (9 weeks compared to our average 6-week MOOCs) and one could easily expect a lower completion rate. An additional note is that, when comparing the number of certificates with the number of students who passed all 4 quizzes (169), one can see a small discrepancy, once again indicating that even those most involved sometimes do not ask for the certificate in the end. In any case, all those who earned the certificate will bring the knowledge and skills acquired through the course in their daily activities around the world (58 countries), as indicated by the geographical distribution of the certificates and the feedback on impact analysed below.

## Certificate by Nationality



## **Impact**

Comments received in the User-experience Survey demonstrate that the course was useful beyond mere education and knowledge, influencing professional and personal approaches to the issues under study. It is particularly striking to see the added value of the MOOC in that it has offered knowledge, case studies and data that were not available before, that can be used by many different constituencies and professions, and that can inspire new action in the area of children's rights, especially with groups more at risk of abuses and violations.

*In a lot of ways, I am actually working in the public defenders' office in Mexico, and I am in charge of the defense of priority groups, meaning migrants and kids, this is extremely helpful for my work so I can have more and better arguments before the judges.*

*Me being involved in the prison fellowship and advocacy, it will really help me to help other prisoners to have their freedom back.*

*It reflected on my work and activities as a UNESCO coordinator.*

*For my job this information is very useful, because I work with children living in an alternative care.*

*I work in detention and I regularly follow children deprived of their liberty. This course was an asset for me to improve my skills in the field of children in detention.*

*I learnt about a relevant issue and that will be useful for thinking advocacy strategies, as I work in an NGO based in Argentina and fighting for the rights of institutionalized children.*

*Greater knowledge of the rights of the child from a global perspective. This has assisted me whilst I am undertaking the LLM in Human Rights Law in Scotland and prior to studying for a PhD in law, preferably relating to this topic.*

*As a social marketing researcher focused on children, this course can help me acquire knowledge about one aspect of numerous aspects of children's life reality in the world.*

*I write for an online Italian magazine. I deal with sensitive human rights issues. I needed to better understand the legal framework related to children deprived of liberty in the context of immigration and armed conflict especially. My goal is to write some (journalistic) articles on these issues in a pointed way in order to inform a wide audience about what it really happens in certain contexts around the world. In this respect, the course has helped me a lot.*

*Case studies allow me to reflect on my own community I serve.*

*Being a lawyer I have learnt a lot of jurisprudence from other countries and the course has enhanced me the understanding of statutes from other countries regarding the child rights more especially on how to handle juvenile facing criminal charges and in detention.*

*As we are not offered such a module that relates to this issue on my University course, this has significantly opened my eyes and created a new awareness that I would not have been offered before.*

*I have a degree in criminology, and I hope to have an active role in the fight against crime in the future. Thanks to this course, I have a precise idea about children deprived of their liberty.*



*I work as NPM in my country, and the study and other course material gives me evidential and expert support. I.e., recently we inspected psychiatric institution for children, I will support my arguments in the report with recommendations from the study on health outcomes for minors after their release so that the results of health care they received would not dissipate once people return to the community.*

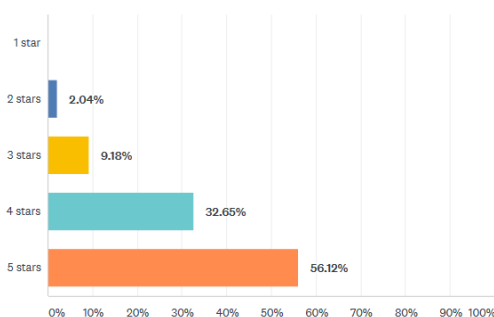
*It gave ideas about different ways in which I can contribute for the welfare of children. It also gave ideas about whom to look for help.*

## Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the difficulties in managing a very large number of participants and inputs, and even though some features need improvement, we can be very satisfied with the overall rating of the course and the general feedback provided by participants, 46% of whom are extremely likely to recommend the course to a friend.

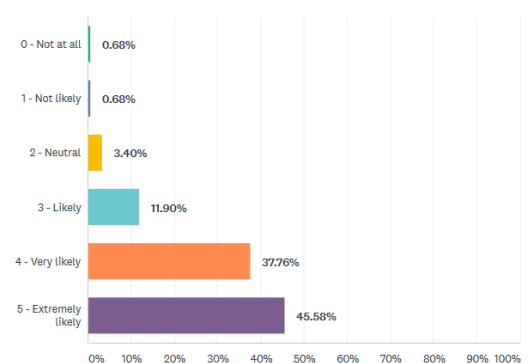
Please give this course an overall rating on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest rating

Answered: 294 Skipped: 0



How likely are you to recommend this course to a friend?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 0



*This course has been eye-opening, very informative and helpful. I appreciate it a lot! (Arbana Pasholli Psychologist, Macedonia – sent by email)*

*It gives me great pleasure to participate in these tests of the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty. I also had great pride in participating in this global study by organizing the regional consultation for the countries of North Africa, the Gulf and the Middle East that was organized in Tunisia. I hope that the results of this study will benefit the children who are deprived of their liberty all over the world. Thank you very much for the certification. (Saida Mbarek, Tunisia – sent by email)*

*I appreciate the opportunity and the experience I got from the course and the discussions with other participants from different countries. (Rukia Mohammed, Ghana – sent by email)*

*Thanks so much. I learnt a lot. I look forward to other courses. (Numfor Perpetua Be Fonki, Cameroon – sent by email)*

*I came to know about many things that previously I was unaware of. This course is surely one of the best that I ever studied.*

*It has opened my eyes and now I have a concrete foundation on the topic. I believe that from now onwards my perception on this subject will be different!!*

*In the field of law and judiciary, as a psychologist I have not had those kind of information so I am very satisfied with the information I have got in the law area.*

*I have not heard of children been locked up with caregiver but this course opened my eyes to some important laws that has not been yet implemented in my country.*

*I assure you that this course is very important for providers of services for children deprived of their liberty. In terms of the administration of juvenile justice in my country the DRC, providers do not know how to benefit from training like this. Could you soon train us as regional trainers to continue this work in our respective countries?*

*The course is very insightful and should be read by most if not all involved in implementation of international law.*

*I am genuinely happy that I had the chance to complete this course. It offered me the opportunity to study more in-depth about human rights, and especially the children's rights to freedom, participation, etc. I would like to express my gratitude in regards to the given possibility, and to encourage you to continue developing such great research projects as the UN Global Study on Deprived Children of Liberty, and more importantly to inform them in interactive ways such as this MOOC course. You have all my admiration!*

### Recommendations

The comments above testify to participant satisfaction and bode well for possible new editions in the future, both regional and global. In fact, considering both feedback (such as *I think the course should have more focus on how the study impacted member states*) and the current effort of implementation of the Global Study's recommendations at regional level, the e-learning team is preparing a proposal for a follow-up MOOC to be submitted to the Right Livelihood Foundation. This updated version of the MOOC would deal more specifically with regional implementation of the Study's recommendations, plans of action, further initiatives by different stakeholders/actors (NGOs, States, NPM, IOs...). It could also be an occasion to evaluate whether to launch trainings for trainers, especially at the regional level.

Another recommendation deriving from comments and results of this MOOC is to offer future online courses on similar or related topics. Below are the top 10 priorities suggested by participants:

1. rights
2. children
3. human rights
4. women
5. women rights
6. protection
7. gender
8. disability
9. migrants
10. education



Figure 1. Cloud view of recommended topics

Two of these topics (“Rights/Human Rights” and “Children”) are either already included in our plans for 2020/2021 (Promotion and Protection of Human Rights) or in a project proposal that will be submitted to the RLF for funding in April 2020 (MOOC on Child participation and the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment; an updated MOOC on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty; a MOOC on Children's rights and technologies). Others (gender, disability, migrants) are already covered by our ongoing Audit-only MOOCs.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that a couple of participants recommended to run the MOOC in French (*Add French language/I suggest that we can also organize lessons in French*). This type of request is becoming more frequent lately, for other MOOCs as well. Therefore, it is important to consider it for the future.