

## **Abstract**

Globally, social workers are in a unique position to protect children in conflict with the law. They advocate for child rights and facilitate the application of juvenile justice standards through collaboration and interaction with other key juvenile justice professionals, including police, judges, prosecutors, and attorneys.

This research adopts a right-based approach to explore the role of social workers in promoting child rights and facilitating access to justice for children in conflict with the law in Iran. It discusses different juvenile justice models and further analyzes the Iranian juvenile justice system, highlighting areas of alignment and divergence between domestic practices and global standards. The study also sheds light on the role of social workers within this system, particularly their involvement in implementation of diversion and restorative justice programmes.

In addition, this research investigates the structural, and legal barriers that limit effective social work intervention in Iran. Issues such as discrepancies between national legislation and international human rights law, political restriction on right-based discourse, limited capacity of social workers for application of juvenile justice standards and promoting a restorative justice approach instead of punitive approach to justice and limited inter-agency cooperation, are identified as key obstacles. These challenges hinder the ability of social workers to fully implement child-centered and restorative approaches in juvenile justice.

Finally, the study provides recommendations aimed at strengthening the capacity and impact of social workers in Iran's juvenile justice system. These include legal and policy reform to bring national legislation in line with international standards, capacity-building of all professionals, in particular social workers on child rights and juvenile justice standards, strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination among relevant stakeholders in addressing juvenile delinquency and fostering monitoring and evaluation mechanism in juvenile justice system.

**Keywords:** social work, child rights, juvenile justice, diversion, restorative justice, alternative measures, rehabilitation and reintegration.