**Comenius University / International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference**

**ENCLE - IJCLE 2019 Improving the Future: Using Clinical Legal Education to Educate Lawyers for a Just Society**

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| Title | Ms |
| Lead Presenter First Name | Naomi-Ellen |
| Lead Presenter Last Name | Speechley |
| Organisation of Lead Presenter | University of Manchester |
| Name/s and details of other presenters | Dr Holly Greenwood, Lecturer, University of Swansea |
| Title of Proposal | What happened to Innocence Projects? |
| Summary of Proposal | After outlining the premise, progress and pitfalls of Innocence Projects in the UK, the speakers assess arguments that the projects are a mere teaching tool under the guise of a hands-on casework opportunity, or whether their pedagogical value overrides any false pretences. They discuss whether such projects should be measured by their case results, or in broader terms such as educating the next generation of lawyers. They also dissect the usefulness of such projects to students, tutors, Universities, and the justice system itself, concluding that the worth of these legal clinics is a moving target. |
| Abstract Proposal | Innocence Projects started out as an innovative, promising concept with the capacity to plug the gaps in the UK’s criminal justice system. The projects comprise of student volunteers researching criminal cases where applicants claim that they are innocent. They were intended not only to help exonerate victims of wrongful convictions, but to provide students with first-rate clinical legal education through hands-on casework experience. These projects were imported to the UK following huge successes in the US, where the post-conviction criminal appeals system is severely lacking and groups of students (overseen by a professional caseworker) have exposed and helped exonerate hundreds of wrongful convictions of the innocent. However, in 15 years, these projects have only led to two convictions being overturned.  Measuring the impact of these projects in terms of successful exonerations, critics argue that the lure of allowing students to â€˜work on getting real cases overturned’ is disingenuous, empty rhetoric as these legal education projects have become little more than a teaching tool, used by Universities as a marketing tool to attract students. Naomi-Ellen will argue the case for them to be abandoned in favour of other pro bono or social justice legal clinics. However, if the impact of these projects is measured in terms of intrinsic value of hands-on casework, supporters can point to widespread education of the next generation of lawyers about serious shortcomings in the justice system â€“ arguably needed now more than ever. Holly will answer the critique set out previously, by explaining how these projects bring unique pedagogical value and what is required in order for them to flourish in today’s legal education and for tomorrow’s lawyers.  Naomi-Ellen is currently an ESRC and Presidents' Doctoral Scholarship-funded phd candidate at the University of Manchester. Her thesis falls between law and criminology, looking at how claims of wrongful conviction in historic sexual abuse cases are investigated by the Criminal Cases Review Commission, Innocence Projects, campaigners and lawyers. She worked on, and later co-managed, an Innocence Project at the University of Leeds for five years.  Holly lectures and helps to oversee the Miscarriage of Justice Project at Swansea University. Her phd examined the development and operation of innocence projects in the UK, which are university based projects where students investigate claims of alleged wrongful conviction with the aim of identifying potential grounds for appeal. She was involved with the Cardiff Law School innocence project for seven years. |