



Disability Under Siege

Delivering a transformational step change in education provision for children with disabilities in conflict-affected states

Newsletter
Spring 2021

Network Research Activities

UK Arts and Humanities Research Council GCRF UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM Disability Under Siege Disability Hub LAU CLS

Mapping the Inclusivity Needs Assessment and Reconstruction Initiatives During Beirut Blast Recovery Response

Dr. Itab Shuayb and Sabine Doueiry



Beirut Blast

On August 4, 2020, a blast in Beirut's port area caused immense damage to the city, killing approximately 200 people, and leaving 6,500 injured and over 300,000 displaced.

The Disability Under Siege Network worked with AHRC to make funds available for the Centre for Lebanese Studies to examine the inclusivity of the emergency response and reconstruction efforts carried out by both governmental and non-governmental agencies in real time. While the study unpacks the rationale for inclusion in the reconstruction

efforts it also examines the ongoing recovery and reconstruction initiatives and identifies the existing challenges and opportunities for an inclusive emergency response. Read the full report here: [Read the full report here](#).

Covid-19: How pandemic responses neglected disabled people's rights

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on disabled people, who make up six out of ten COVID-19 related deaths in the UK, according to the Office of National Statistics. So far no other country has published the same data, making it difficult to assess the global impact, particularly in low and middle-income countries where 80% of the world's disabled population live. Research Fellow for the Disability under Siege project, Vera Kubenz and Professor Dina Kiwan undertook a literature review to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.

The review provides a critical view of the existing evidence from a critical disability studies perspective, and indicates current gaps to inform further research and data-gathering. Read the [full report here](#).





Covid-19 Comparative Case Study OPT, Lebanon, Jordan

In March 2021 the Disability Under Siege Project received additional funding to undertake research to build the research evidence base on the impacts of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities in the social, educational, economic and health sectors to inform the development of strategies for disability inclusive recovery and ‘building back better’ for more disability-inclusive societies.” The research being undertaken by the Islamic University of Gaza, Birzeit

University and the Centre for Lebanese Studies will examine how COVID-19 has affected access to services, including health, education and community services for PwDs.

What is the differential impact of COVID-19 on different and intersecting groups of PwDs by age, gender, legal status (refugees, displaced), types of disability, across the sectors of social, educational, economic, and (physical and mental) health? [Read more here.](#)

Network News

Israel-Gaza Conflict

At the time of writing Israeli attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem are ongoing. Our thoughts are with our colleagues and friends in Gaza who are suffering through another cycle of death and destruction that does nothing to address the root causes of the crisis and drives further human rights abuses, poverty and suffering. Dr Nazmi Al Masri, a Network Partner based in the Islamic University of Gaza, has contributed to an article in [The National](#) and Professor Rita Giacaman has written an [open letter](#) outlining what needs to be known, remembered, and acted upon regarding the crisis.



Funding cuts to Disability Under Siege Network project

In March the Disability Under Siege project team received notification that the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the body that provides funding for the Disability Under Siege Project, was significantly reducing its planned ODA expenditure for FY21/22. We are still in the process of understanding what the impact on the DUS project will be. In the short term we have been asked to put on hold all commissioning processes and halt the design of new activities. This disruption to our planned activities and commissioning is extremely frustrating and undermines the efforts to date to build trust and engagement among Network partners. We have been informed that we will receive news on our future funding status by the end of May. We will inform our partners when we have clarity on the funding situation and engage with them on a redesigning and replanning activities as appropriate. We are deeply sorry for the disruption this has caused to our partners and friends who have provided much valuable input and effort into the research

Appointments and Awards

We are delighted to share with you that Professor Dina Kiwan, Principal Investigator for the Disability Under Siege project, has been appointed as a member of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) for 3 years from 1 May 2021. The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is an independent, non-statutory, public body that advises the UK government on migration issues. The MAC has a UK wide remit and works across government, providing transparent, independent and evidence-based advice.

We are happy to announce that Ruth Gilligan, a Co-Investigator on the Network project has won the 2021 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize with “The Butchers” (Atlantic Books). The annual Prize is awarded for a distinguished work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry, evoking the spirit of a place.



Liwan Youth Space Activities

The Liwan youth space in Jordan, part of Tammey Organisation, a Disability Under Siege Network Partner, prepared and ran an online fully day radio coverage on the occasion (online Rally) of the international Disability day (3 Dec. 2020). The radio programme aimed to present positive and success stories as well as discuss issues of disability with 30+ activists, speakers and guests. The programme was hosted by Batool Muheisen and Dr Omar Abu Haniya as well as Ms Suhair AbdulKader. The rally interviewed, discussed and reflected on several topics regarding disability.

Several speakers and guests were hosted during the rally including Dr Suha Tabbal, Maha Barghouthi, Awatef Abu AlRub (initiative focusing on Dabkeh (folklore dance) with disabilities), Omar Arabiyat, Laila Qusous and many other guests and initiatives.

Listen to the radio broadcasts via the links below;

[Rally Liwan - Session 1](#)

[Rally Liwan - Session 2](#)

[Rally Liwan - Session 3](#)



Network Activities



Project Launch

Over 100 participants from 15 different countries were able to join us on Wednesday 10th February for our online launch as we aimed to set out the aims for the Disability Under Siege Project. The Launch presentation and recordings can be found on the Disability under Siege website.



<https://disabilityundersiege.org/>

Policy Dissemination Event

On Wednesday 31st March the Network hosted a policy and practice dissemination event. The event highlighted findings from the development phase of the project and provided a platform for researchers, activists and artists engaged with disability to present their work. For a full overview of all the presenters and presentations please visit our website.



Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people in the Global South Webinar

On 30th April Disability Under Siege Research Fellow Vera Kubenz hosted a webinar to present the findings from the literature review on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people in the Global South, particularly in Low-and-Middle-Income countries, which was conducted as part of the AHRC-funded GCRF Network+ “Disability Under Siege” project to support a disability-inclusive recovery from COVID-19. Vera Kubenz presented the key findings and themes emerging from the literature and Mohua Paul, Vice Chairperson at the Access Bangladesh Foundation, spoke about first-hand experiences by disabled people in Bangladesh.

Monthly Reading Group

A regular monthly reading group has been running since September 2020 where Disability Under Siege researchers have been to discuss selected readings related to disability and education in the context of the Middle East and conflict. Topics covered have included: the intersections of gender and disability, the biopolitics of disability and issues related to the ‘measurement’ of disability from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

Selected Reading Texts

Disability and development: Is the rights model of disability valid in the Arab region? An evidence-based field survey in Lebanon and Jordan. Kozue Kay Nagata (2008)

Disrupting global disability frameworks: settlercolonialism and the geopolitics of disability in Palestine/Israel. Laura Jordan Jaffee (2016)

Decolonising Eurocentric disability studies: why colonialism matters in the disability and global South debate. Shaun Grech (2015)

Communications and Media

For any further information or details about the Disability Under Siege project please visit our website at www.disabilityundersiege.org or email us directly at disabilityundersiege@contacts.bham.ac.uk



The Disability Under Siege project is funded by:

