

Confirmation of original funding levels for remainder of Programme

In November the Disability Under Siege Team received news from the AHRC that, following the UK Government's spending review, original funding levels for the remainder of the programme would be reinstated from March 2022. This means that the Network will be able to offer a range of funding calls to support the aims of the programme and build upon the research already undertaken throughout the Network. While the original decision to cut funds during 2021 has caused major disruption to Network plans the research team are preparing to launch funding calls in the first quarter of 2022. More information regarding these calls will be communicated in January 2022 and if you would like to be included on the distribution list to receive notifications of the upcoming opportunities please email disabilityundersiege@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Network News

“All Means All!” Return to school in Lebanon Advocacy Campaign

The Disability Hub, hosted by the Centre for Lebanese Studies, launched the “All Means All!” advocacy campaign in October to highlight the effects of the compounding crises experienced by Lebanon over the last 18 months and articulate the risk of students with disabilities being excluded from the academic year 2021-2022. Having secured an Impact Accelerator Award from the Economic and Social Research Council the campaign engaged local disability activists and researchers to deliver an evidence-based advocacy campaign that promoted more inclusive policies and practices within educational institutions. This included advocating for:

- Providing means of transportation or covering transportation costs for students with disabilities so they can attend face-to-face schooling.
- Covering the costs of books and stationery for people with disabilities as many could not afford its high costs.
- Supporting the provision of internet and IT and assistive devices for students with disabilities so they have equal access to online resources.
- Providing electricity for public schools (during school hours) to ensure that students with disabilities especially students with physical disabilities have access to all school building floors.
- Providing the Covid-19 vaccine for students aged 12 years old and above including students with disabilities.
- Seeking the engagement of persons with disabilities or experts in disability in the co-design of any “return to school” strategies and plans.
- Require the reconstruction of any educational buildings to incorporate inclusive design features.



For more information [please contact Dr Itab Shuayb](#).



Arts & Disability Collaborative Partnership Pilot

In early 2021 the Network undertook a series of workshops that explored existing and potential models for collaborative partnerships between cultural actors and disability-led organisations and activists. Working with the AM Qattan Foundation in the West Bank with support from Co-I Professor Anthony Downey from Birmingham City University the Network is supporting a pilot project to further explore opportunities for collaborative partnerships between the arts and disability sector. The pilot projects will contribute to the Network's stated aim of "revisiting and reframing disability discourse in conflict-affected contexts" and seek to encourage activities such as artist-led workshops; collaborative and participative events; exhibitions and narrative projects; film, video and performance events. The pilots will seek to investigate the extent to which art and culture is a means of developing public understanding of disability in contexts of conflict and crisis and to foster research and evidence-building to highlight priorities around disability inclusion in education. For more information, please [contact Professor Anthony Downey](#).

Safeguarding Workshops July, September 2021

In July and September 2021 members of the Disability Under Siege Network joined with another GCRF Network "[Rights 4 Time](#)" for 2 workshops to discuss and explore issues related to safeguarding while undertaking research with potentially vulnerable and marginalized groups. The aim of the workshops was to build a common understanding of key concepts and the core roles and responsibilities involved in creating robust and ethical safeguarding frameworks for international research. The workshops addressed key questions such as:

- Who is being safeguarded?
- What are we safeguarding from?
- What are the core principles/values that should underpin our safeguarding approaches?
- What are the ways of working and that lead to appropriate safeguarding practices?
- What are the challenges and solutions to developing and advocating for safeguarding policies & processes?

The workshops began a process of dialogue and engagement within the Network to build common expectations and processes for effective safeguarding, promote an equitable distribution of risk and burden among partners and agree on the resources and skills required to undertake effective safeguarding. For more information, [please contact Ted Tuthill](#).



ALL IN

The global recovery from Covid-19 must be disability-inclusive. It is time for the left to work with disabled people, putting us at the heart of their plans, writes Vera Kubenz in The Fabian Society's Autumn 2021 Review. If the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us anything about disability, it is that we are not "all in this together". Disabled people accounted for 60 per cent of Covid-related deaths in the UK up until February 2021, according to the Office of National Statistics. While some of these deaths might have been due to underlying conditions which put older and disabled people at greater risk, analysis by the

ONS suggests that a significant part of this is due to the disproportionate disadvantage faced by disabled people across society. Read the [full report here](#).





UNPRPD Analytical Framework

The project is now entering its final phase, with a nearly completed framework which will be used by the UN Partnership for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to commission comprehensive situational analyses to be carried out in their partner countries, to assess the impact on people with disabilities and make evidence-informed recommendations or a disability-inclusive recovery. In addition to finalising the framework, Research Fellow Vera Kubenz presented findings from the research at the international [Environments by Design](#) and [World Pandemic Research Network](#) conferences, was invited to contribute an article to the Fabian Review on how the Left needs to work with disabled people for an inclusive recovery, and delivered a webinar on COVID-19 and disability justice for the Festival of Social Sciences with over 100 attendees. The team are also working with a network of case study to deliver a half-day policy workshop in late February on participatory and inclusive disability research. Further information can be found on the [Disability under Siege website](#).



Nothing about us without us - What can the COVID-19 pandemic teach us about disability justice?

This online event, hosted by Vera Kubenz, explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people, who have been deprioritised in pandemic planning around the world, facing discrimination in healthcare, exclusion from education and employment, and neglect, abuse, and violence both in care and in the community. Professor Dina Kiwan introduced the panel who discussed how the lived experience of disabled people can inform activism and politics to make the world a fairer and more accessible place for all. The session included an overview of the key issues faced by disabled people during the COVID-19 pandemic and was followed by a panel discussion with four disabled activists from different countries and contexts. Watch the recording of the webinar on our [YouTube Channel](#).

Policy and Practice Review of Accessibility to Higher Education for Students in the occupied Palestinian territories

Higher education institutions in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) seek to be inclusive of students with disabilities. However, there is a limited evidence base on the extent to which universities in oPt are accessible and the extent to which institutional policies support these aims. Led by Dr Nazmi Al Masri, from the Islamic University of Gaza, the Disability Under Siege Network will be supporting a literature and practice review of accessibility to universities in oPt to build the evidence base. Engaging with 4 universities across Gaza and the West Bank the review will seek to map the standards and criteria of inclusive policies and practices to improve accessibility within higher education for students with disabilities. The review will engage university administrators and policy makers and review government education policy and guidance. Results of the review will include an online symposium and journal to communicate and discuss findings and the development of a practical guidance document for higher education to align policies and practices to promote greater accessibility for students with disability into higher education in the occupied Palestinian territories. For more information on the review please [contact Dr Nazmi Al Masri](#).



Congratulations to the 40 hearing-impaired students who graduated from the Islamic University in Gaza on 13th December, a wonderful achievement! Further details about the celebration and work of the [IUG can be accessed here](#).

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