

Disability rights during the pandemic

A global report on findings of the COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor



List of Participants





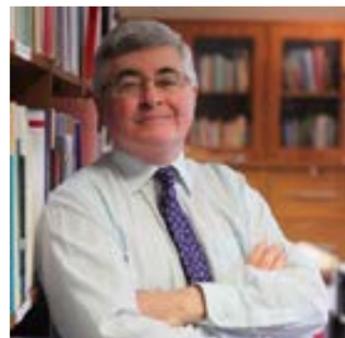
Steven Allen

Co-Executive Director, Validity Foundation

Steven Allen was appointed Co-Executive Director of the Validity Foundation in 2018, alongside Ann Campbell, following five years of prior service including as Campaigns Director. Validity is an international non-governmental organisation which deploys legal strategies to promote, protect and defend the human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with psychosocial disabilities worldwide.

Steven Allen has a background in law, community development and conflict transformation, and has worked extensively with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in Europe, Africa and Asia, having directed numerous human rights monitoring initiatives in recent years. Steven Allen leads Validity's advocacy and research programmes, and regularly represents the organisation before regional and international bodies including the United Nations and at the Council of Europe.

Prior to Validity, Steven Allen worked in the field of children's rights, contributing to a national campaign which resulted in the establishment of the first Children's Commissioner for England. He has also been an independent inspector of a juvenile prison and acted as a befriender to siblings of a child with life-limiting conditions.



Prof. Gerard Quinn

Incoming Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Prof. Gerard Quinn is Professor Emeritus in law at the National University of Ireland (Galway) and has had a varied career in public service. Former Director of Research at the Irish Government's Law Reform Commission and he has served two terms on the Irish Human Rights Commission.

He currently sits on the scientific committee (advisory board) of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EU FRA, Vienna). He directs a Centre on International Disability Law & Policy at the Law School of the National University of Ireland, Galway which is one of the first of its kind in the world with a dedicated masters (LLM) and PhD programme in international disability law. He holds an adjunct chair in the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR), Hyderabad, India, is a former Visiting Fellow at Harvard Law School, is a former Visiting Professor at the University of Haifa, Israel, and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

He received a Presidential Award from Rehabilitation International in 2009 for his work in drafting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In October 2020, Prof. Gerard Quinn was appointed as the new UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, succeeding Catalina Devandas.



Celeste Fernandez

Disability Unit Coordinator, Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia, Argentina

Celeste Fernandez is a lawyer, Professor in Legal Science, Specialist in Civil Procedural Law, Master candidate in Public Policy, and holds a Diploma in International Defense of Human Rights and a Master in Law.

She has worked on several initiatives to strengthen democratic institutions and to promote and defend human rights both from the public sector and civil society, writing articles and participating as a speaker in various conferences on these topics.

She is currently working as the coordinator of the Disability Rights Program at the Civil Association for Equality and Justice (ACIJ), a human rights organization based in Argentina, and as a university professor.



Eric Rosenthal

Executive Director, Disability Rights International

Eric Rosenthal, JD, LL.D (hon.), is Founder and Executive Director of Disability Rights International (DRI). Since establishing DRI in 1993, Rosenthal has trained human rights and disability activists and provided assistance to governments and international development organizations worldwide. Rosenthal has conducted investigations and trained activists in more than 25 countries. DRI reports have brought worldwide attention to the rights of people with disabilities.

Eric Rosenthal has served as a consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the US National Council on Disability (NCD). In 2013, he received the Charles Bronfman Prize, which is awarded annually to a young humanitarian whose work is informed by Jewish values and has global impact that changes lives and inspires others. In 2008, Rosenthal received the Henry A. Betts Award from the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) for "pioneering the field of international human rights advocacy for people with disabilities and bringing unprecedented international awareness to their concerns."

Eric Rosenthal is a board member and former Vice-President of the US International Council on Disability (USICD), and he chaired the USICD Committee working for US ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).



Danlami Basharu

Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Danlami Basharu is currently Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He has also worked as a television producer and radio broadcaster, particularly on disability issues. He is founder/Director of the Anglo-Nigerian Welfare Association for the blind including being former president of the umbrella body of persons with disabilities in Nigeria.

Danlami Basharu has represented Nigeria at several national and international fora, including several Conference of States Parties and the High level meeting on disability in 2013.

He has received several awards at both local and national levels, including a Certificate of Honour as member of the Legion of Eminent Personalities in Africa.



Namugabwe Petwa

Triumph Uganda

I am Namugabwe Petwa from Eastern Uganda; an expert with psychosocial disability working with Triumph Mental Health Support and Recovery Program as the Projects Officer.

I hold a bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance from Makerere University and a certificate in Public Administration and Management.

I am an inclusive adolescents' and youths' mentor with training from Creative Action Institute.

I love and support Christianity with all its values and norms.

Advocating for and standing with/ supporting the marginalized groups is a passion.

Coordinating, mobilizing and loving people is my strength. That's how I happen to be a groups coordinator in the community. People feel loved, respected and valued before and around me.



Fernanda Santana

Chair of the Brazilian Association for Action on the Rights of Autistic People

Fernanda Santana is an autistic woman. She is the president of the Brazilian Association for Action in the Rights of Autistic People, a member of Riadis and a facilitator for the IDA-IDDC Bridge CRPD-SDGs training initiative.



Dr Ola Abu Alghaib

UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Dr. Ola Abu Alghaib was appointed Manager of the Technical Secretariat of the UN Partnership of Persons with Disabilities at UNDP in August 2019. Ola Abu Alghaib has over twenty years of experience working on gender and disability in development including in fragile and crisis affected settings in the Arab States, Africa and Asia.

Previous to her appointment in UNDP she has been the Director for Global Influencing and Research at Leonard Cheshire Disability in London, UK. During the last 20 years she has worked with the UN system at global, regional and country level to support disability inclusive policies and programmes. She also served as the Vice Chair of the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) and a board member of the Disability Rights Funds.

Dr. Ola Abu Alghaib was recently featured in the Gender Equality Top 100 list of most influential people in global policy in 2019.

She has a PhD on Social Protection from the University of East Anglia, UK.



Sholih Muhdlor

Advocacy Centre for Women with Disabilities and Children Foundation (SAPDA), Indonesia

My name is Sholih Muhdlor. I am from Indonesia and I am Low vision. I work at SAPDA, a disability organization that focuses on advocating the issues of people with disabilities, especially children and women with disabilities. The work that I do with my organization is capacity building for the disability community, policy advocacy at the district level to the national level.

I myself have expertise in issues of sexual and reproductive health for people with disabilities, Gender disabilities, and social inclusion. Some of the achievements that I have made are building an advocacy movement for sexual and reproductive health rights for persons with disabilities in several districts in Indonesia.



Innocentia Mgijima

Programme Manager, Disability Rights Unit at the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria

Innocentia Mgijima-Konopi holds a Masters in Law degree [LLM] in International and Comparative Disability Law and Policy from the Centre for Disability Law and Policy, National University of Ireland, Galway and an LLB (Hnrs) degree from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

She is currently the Programme Manager for the Disability Rights Unit at the Centre for Human Rights Disability Unit at the University of Pretoria. As project manager, her key responsibilities include managing the planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes undertaken by the Disability Rights Unit. Innocentia teaches the module on Contemporary challenges in the implementation, domestication and formulation of disability rights in Africa in the LLM/Mphil in Disability Rights in Africa.

Her research interest includes the human rights of persons with albinism, inclusive early education and the right of older persons with albinism.



Jamie Bolling

Co-Chair, European Network on Independent Living

Jamie Bolling is the director of the Independent Living Institute (ILI) in Stockholm and the co-chair of ENIL – the European Network on Independent Living. She was a member of the European Fundamental Rights Platform's Advisory Panel from 2010 - 2014. She is the project leader for Disabled Refugees Welcome targeting disabled migrants in Sweden run by ILI.

Jamie Bolling has a Master's degree in Social Anthropology and work experience in accounting, disability research, international development cooperation, hate crime as well as other areas concerning disability issues. She is today the vice President of MyRight working with International Disability Development Cooperation.

Combining her experience in politics as a county councillor and from different appointments at local, regional, national and EU level, with her vast knowledge of the international disability movement Jamie works for progress in Independent Living issues, the self-determination of disabled people, access to equality and full participation of disabled people in our societies.

Jamie Bolling's work in the area of migration began in the 1990s when Sweden carried out projects for integration as well as within doctorate studies (2000 – 2008) on integration of disabled migrants.



Dainius Pūras

Former UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Dainius Puras, a medical doctor with notable expertise on mental health and child health, took up his functions as UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on August 1st, 2014. A human rights advocate, he has been actively involved during the last 30 years in the process of transforming public health policies and services, with special focus on the rights of children, persons with mental disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

He was the founder of the Lithuanian society of families with children who have intellectual disabilities; the first President of the Lithuanian Psychiatric Association; the Dean of Faculty of Medicine of Vilnius University; and the Chairman of the board of two NGOs in Lithuania, the Global Initiative on Psychiatry and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute.

From 2007 to 2011, Dainius Puras served as a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. He has been an independent expert and consultant to numerous Governments, NGOs, and UN agencies and programs in the field of the right to health. He is the author of over 60 scientific publications.



Melanie Kawano-Chiu

Evaluation & Learning Manager, Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund

Melanie Kawano-Chiu is the Evaluation & Learning Manager for the Disability Rights Fund and the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund. Melanie's 20-year career includes the creation of a global monitoring and evaluation consortium; teaching at international and domestic higher education institutions; and designing qualitative and quantitative research and evaluations.

Previously, she was the Director of Learning and Evaluation at the Alliance for Peacebuilding, oversaw conflict prevention programs in West Africa, and managed a grantmaking program at the American Red Cross. She has authored publications on evaluation as well as on post-conflict reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Melanie Kawano-Chiu developed curriculum for the first monitoring and evaluation online certificate course for New York University and was an adjunct professor at Azusa Pacific University.



Diana Samarasan

Executive Director, Disability Rights Fund/Disability Rights Advocacy Fund

Diana Samarasan is the Founding Executive Director of the Disability Rights Fund and the Disability Rights Advocacy Fund – which are pooled funds and participatory grantmakers representing collaborations between the global disability community and donors to resource the disability rights movement in Africa, Asia, Pacific and the Caribbean.

Diana Samarasan has over 25 years of experience in disability, international health, and human rights. Previously, Diana directed the Mental Disability Advocacy Center (now called Validity), a legal advocacy organization in Budapest, Hungary, which litigates abuses of rights of persons with disabilities in institutions. She also worked with the American Refugee Committee and ran the Russian & Eastern European programs of Doctors of the World, addressing issues such as access of vulnerable populations to reproductive health services, tuberculosis control, and deinstitutionalization.

A graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, Diana Samarasan has advanced degrees in Public Administration and Psychology. Diana is also a member of the Steering Committee of Opportunity Collaboration.



Catherine Hyde Townsend

Senior Advisor, Disability Inclusion, Ford Foundation

With over twenty years of experience, Catherine Hyde Townsend is a recognized thought leader on disability inclusion and rights. She currently serves as the Senior Advisor for Disability Inclusion at the Ford Foundation and has been a trusted advisor to private donors, NGOs, and UN agencies with a focus on gender, and intersectional identities.

From 2006 until 2017, Catherine Hyde Townsend served as a Senior Program Officer at Wellspring Philanthropic Fund where she partnered closely with activists to develop one of the first grantmaking portfolios focused on advancing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2007, she helped launch the Disability Rights Fund, a participatory collaborative fund, and served as the co-chair of the Board for more than a decade.

She has an intimate understanding of disability-inclusive development approaches, women with disabilities, UN human rights mechanisms, and funding mechanisms to support disability groups. She also currently serves on the Board of Directors of Women Enabled International.



Dominic Haslam

Chair, International Disability and Development Consortium

Dominic Haslam is Chair of the International Disability and Development Consortium since 2018 and has worked worked in international development for twenty years.

Dominic Haslam has been with Sightsavers since 2006. In his position as Director of Programme and Policy Strategy at Sightsavers, Dominic Haslam is responsible for Sightsavers' programme strategy, research and evidence base, policy influencing and campaigns and strategic external partnerships including governmental and multilateral relationships.

In 2019, Dominic Haslam has been awarded an OBE in recognition of his services to people with disabilities.



Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, Commissioner at the Commission for Gender Equality, Medical Doctor and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Expert (South Africa)

Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng has expertise in clinical services, comprehensive sexuality education, training and facilitation, and content production. Amongst others, she has global advocacy experience at the UN Human Rights Council, UN Commission for Population Development and the United States Senate. She is the author of *Dr T: A Guide to Sexual Health and Pleasure*.

She has facilitated Advocacy in Practice training for Global Doctor's Choice and Global Health Strategies. Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng holds a Bachelor of Surgery and Bachelor of Medicine from the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Durban.

On July 3, 2020, Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng was appointed as the fourth Special Rapporteur on the right to health.



Paula Tesoriero

New Zealand Human Rights Commission & Chair of the GANHRI – Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions Working Group on Disabilities

Paula Tesoriero is a former New Zealand paralympics racing cyclist, most notable for her performance at the 2008 Summer Paralympics; her world record-breaking time in the women's 500m time trial secured New Zealand's first gold medal at that games, and she later went on to win bronze in both the individual pursuit, and the women's individual road time trial. She broke the world record earlier in the year and also won two silver medals at the 2006 UCI Track Cycling World Championships.

Paula Tesoriero was appointed the New Zealand Disability Rights Commissioner in June 2017 for a three-year term until July 2020.



Ikponwosa Ero

UN Independent Expert on Albinism

Ikponwosa Ero is a Nigerian lawyer and advocate for people with albinism. Ero started working for an albinism non-governmental organization in 2008 and is the inaugural United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism since 2015. In September 2019, she completed a U.N. mission to South Africa, and in January 2020, she coordinated the formation of the Albinism Global Alliance.

Ikponwosa Ero has over a decade of experience in the research, policy development, and practice of human rights concerning persons with albinism. She has advised organizations and governments around the world on human rights concerning persons with albinism.

As the International Advocacy and Legal Officer for Under the Same Sun -- an international organization with a focus on albinism -- she developed strategic initiatives involving regional and international human rights mechanisms, prepared guiding documents, and oversaw the implementation of recommendations made by the UN and other human rights organizations.

Ikponwosa Ero is also the author of numerous papers and articles, particularly with regards to applicable legal frameworks as well as the development and implementation of special measures to facilitate the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism.

