DII Podcast S2E4 - Disability and development

**Isabella Burton-Clark**

Welcome to the UNSW Disability Innovation Institute podcast, where we discuss the work of the Institute and other issues related to disability-inclusive research.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Hello, and welcome to this latest podcast from the UNSW Disability Innovation Institute. I'm Jackie Leach Scully, the Director of the DIIU, and I'd like to begin by Acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which UNSW Kensington campus sits, the Bedegal people of the Eora nation and of the land where I currently am today, the Cammeraygal people. I pay my respects to Elders past and present and all Indigenous people here today, and acknowledge the importance of sharing and exchanging knowledge across our communities. Here at the DIIU, we've been thinking for a while now about how the fields of disability and development intertwine and inform each other. Today we'll hear more about this from the Director of the UNSW Institute for Global Development, Dr George Varughese, and the Director of the Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership, Associate Professor Ruth McCausland. So welcome, George and Ruth. I'd like to ask you, please, first to say a few words to introduce yourself, perhaps starting with George.

**George Varughese**

Thank you, Jackie. It's a pleasure to be on your podcast. And I thank you for the opportunity to speak a little bit about my experiences in international development, and its intersection with disability. My full name is George Varughese, I am the incoming Director for the Institute for Global Development at the University of New South Wales. Previous to this, I worked for two and a half decades in international development, most significantly in Afghanistan and in Nepal. I'm really interested as a political scientist in how we organise collective action around incapability in countries like Afghanistan in Nepal. It's a delight to be with you.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Thanks, George. And now Ruth.

**Ruth McCausland**

Thanks, Jackie. Thanks, George. Great to be with you. I acknowledge that I'm joining from Gadigal country this morning. I'm the Director of the Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership between the University of New South Wales and the Dharriwaa Elders Group in Walgett, which is a partnership that grew from research collaboration about the criminalisation of Indigenous people with disability. In fact, my background is in criminology and evaluation and human rights, my PhD was in that area, and my Master's was in international social development. I've always had a great interest in the, in the nexus between the questions of human rights, community development, and the criminal justice system, and delighted to be speaking more with you about these issues today.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Thanks, Ruth. So we're hoping very much to be able to learn from your different expertises from your different backgrounds and areas of focus. If we're thinking about disability and development, they may not always automatically appear to go together. So one way of addressing this, I think, is what do you feel are the implications of development work failing to take into account disability?

**George Varughese**

Perhaps I could begin to answer that.

**George Varughese**

And we could join in discussion. As I say, I'm just finishing up a term in Afghanistan. And I want to use that example, as a way to consider development and to consider disability. The most prominent feature of the current dispensation in Afghanistan is that it's an Islamic-rule country, Islam-ruled country, not only is it Islam majority, it's called the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. And so the question of how religion intersects with both of these matters is of deep interest to me. And I think it's also important to pay attention to how disability is viewed in certain religions, like Islam and Hinduism, and see if those are helpful points of leverage for us to think about how you assist with development in those societies. And part of that discussion around how religion treats people with disabilities is the question of vulnerability and how religions consider vulnerability. So those are the two points that I would like to further discuss with both of you.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Sure.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Sure. Ruth, do you want to comment on that from your perspective, and then we can get going?

**Ruth McCausland**

Great. Yeah, I think the implications of development activities not really considering disability in any meaningful sense is that we're at great risk, and in fact, we can see examples of this around the globe, the great risk of exacerbating and entrenching exclusion and disadvantage experienced by people with disability. I think we can also miss important opportunities for collective action in communities. And in all of our work that can be oriented towards ensuring that all people have the right to thrive in their communities. And I think some of the points that George is raising could be really interesting to discuss further in that context.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

So George, you were talking about the ways in which religion thinks about vulnerability and therefore its connection with disabilities, but do you see any differences in, say, between Islam and other religions or other places that you've worked, perhaps, in how that works out in practice?

**George Varughese**

Well, I'm not a scholar on religions. But I would say that one of the most difficult points of negotiation with the current de facto authority in Afghanistan had to do with what the international community around development thought of vulnerability in Afghanistan, versus what they thought about vulnerability in Afghanistan. And that is where I discovered that people with disability were considered the most vulnerable in Islam, at least in my interpretation of their statement, and how we as the, let's say, the UN system and the international community, were viewing those who are hungry, or those who were without education, or those who are cold, as being the most vulnerable. Now, these are obviously very interlinked. But Islam enjoins you to seek out the least among us, the most vulnerable, and help better their circumstances. And it's in that context where the Minister for the Prevention of Vice and Promotion of Virtue, who is the, sort of, in-charge of interpreting Islam in their society, was pointing out, for example, that the evidence we muster to talk about those who might be disabled or those who might be vulnerable, is very important in us beginning to think about exclusion and inclusion. So for example, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan estimates that 22 million Afghans are vulnerable this winter, and that they must be taken care of. By that they mean they must be fed, they must be housed, they must be sheltered, and their health must be taken care of. But if you talk to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, they will come up with a different number. So let's just back of the envelope that, they say that war widows, women with addiction problems, people with addiction problems, those who have lost their, they say, their arms and legs, they don't have a term for disability, at least on the physical side, and they say those without arms and legs. So when you total all of that you come up with about 9 million. And so then you think about, well, if they're saying 9 million, and we as the international community are saying 22 million, there's a big gap there. How do we begin to speak of vulnerability in a way that goes across cultures and understand that some of those cultures are heavily influenced by religions? Which brings me to my last point, that the last frontiers of development now are those frontiers where religion plays a massive part. We've recognised before that cultures do, but so do religions, and so the Pacific, Afghanistan, Nepal, all of these places are places where any of the issues we are interested in around exclusion, around inclusion, around disability, we must look at also how their cultures and religions treat those and use a vocabulary and grammar that allows us to speak across them.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Because I think you're, you're very right in saying we need to look at the whole, sort of, culture and traditions and history of a place, whether it's to do with religion or not in how those societies think about and handle and conceive of disability, almost. I mean, it's an interesting point that the word 'disability', you know, as an umbrella term for a whole range of things is historically quite recent, and also geographically quite specific. Ruth, how does that sort of thinking play out in your work?

**Ruth McCausland**

There are some interesting dimensions to what George was reflecting on in the context of the research collaboration that I mentioned, that involved community controlled organisations partnering with the research team, there was a number of ways in which that research sought to centre the voices and experiences of people with disability. What we understood from from the data was that Indigenous people with disability were extraordinarily, you know, 'vulnerable' is one of those complex terms, but targeted by the criminal justice system, by the agencies working in those systems. Sometimes they were people who had a formal diagnosis of disability, others that wasn't the case. And there was a, there was many reasons why people might not be diagnosed with or identify as disabled. And what we found is that prisons are full of people with disability. And in fact, disability-related behaviours are criminalised on a regular basis; prisons have become the way that we manage people with disability and then they become characterised as having complex support needs that become further failed by systems. I think in the work that I've been involved with there's been a real attempt to learn from the voices and experience, as I said, of people with disability, but increasingly the work that I'm involved with in the community of Walgett with the Elders Group, we're seeking to be led by, partner with and led by those with lived experience. And I think that's particularly critical too in answering some of those questions about actually thinking about development in this context. It has to involve an explicit centering of the of those voices. But actually, the work needs to be in a meaningful way led and framed by people with disability themselves. And in some cases, communities don't, there's many people in communities that don't identify with disability, there's not a kind of concept in their language or cultural context that resonates. Or there may be so much stigma attached with the concept of disability, that it's not a helpful framing. I guess what's really critical is that there is an explicit focus on that work, whatever the language may be used, that resonates with people in that context. And I think that's the work that we're really involved with in the Walgett context but other research I'm involved with related to the criminal justice system.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

In the projects that you've been talking about there, is that largely to do with people with disability in First Nations communities that are also involved with the criminal justice system in that very complicated combination of all three of those. I know that there's a lot of data showing that people with disabilities, you say are over-represented in, in prisons, and other contacts of the criminal justice system, obviously that interacts with Indigeneity, as well, in many cases. Is that, sort of, something that's actually recognised within the criminal justice system as an issue? Or is it still, sort of, under the radar?

**Ruth McCausland**

It's interesting, Jackie, it's a bit of a combination of both those things. I think, through a lot of advocacy from community controlled organisations and Indigenous advocates, and other disability advocates, there's been increasing recognition of the specific ways in which people with disability are criminalised. But in the way that those systems operate, there is still an erasure of experience of disability. We see that particularly with young people with disability who may have received a diagnosis of, say, intellectual disability as a young person. That's acknowledged in their interactions with the criminal justice system to a degree, but once they 'graduate,' it's a terrible word, but it is, in fact, in appropriate one, graduate to the adult criminal justice system, what we often see is that disability is erased. So they become just another person in custody who has offended and done the wrong thing and deserves what they're getting. So we see some accommodation or recognition of disability amongst young people, but, that is something particularly in the data set that I've been involved in doing research around, we see systematically happening. So I think there's certainly systemic acknowledgement now in the, in the past decade or so through the work of different researchers, including Professor Eileen Baldry and Professor Leanne Dowse at the University of New South Wales and other researchers. But I think at a systemic level, there's still massive erasure and discrimination against people with disability. And by default a kind of management through the criminal justice system. The research collaboration with the Dharriwaa Elders Group, essentially, at the end of that research study I mentioned, where we partnered with community controlled organisations, a lot of the recommendations that we had actually sat outside of criminal justice agencies. So certainly we were saying better training for police, better education for workers would be useful for magistrates, etc. But all of the research pointed to the systemic drivers of people with disability, in particular, Indigenous people with disability's, contact with the criminal justice system, the education and health system failures that led them to that contact, the default response, particularly in remote communities, where literally the police are the only 'service,' and I use that with a lot of caveats, but the only service that's actually funded 24 hours to respond to issues or crises as they may arise. And so when the Elders Group invited the university and those of us working with them to partner longer term, the idea was to really respond to those recommendations or to think about holistic ways of responding to the systemic issues we'd identified. And that was certainly around particularly for young people with disability. We know from some data that's available that extraordinary numbers of children in the school system in Walgett have been diagnosed with disabilities. That data has not been updated or forthcoming. But we do know from what is available a number of years ago that amongst the children suspended from school, almost all of them had disability. And so, in a way, erasure or lack of access to the data is one way that government agencies have responded to that. But we certainly can kind of see that those systemic drivers of contact with the justice system remain. So our work has been very much thinking about how do you address the underlying issues. And so our focus is on education. It's also on housing. We know that there's a massive issue generally around accessible housing. And we're working with architects at the university, for example, to think about accessible design for housing and remote communities. We're also focused on food and water security, ensuring things like the community garden there, that we're developing irrigation solutions in, that that's also accessible to all members of the community. We're thinking about questions of employment; there was a local cafe that used to employ Aboriginal people with cognitive disability, which was closed down during the COVID lockdown period, partly--

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Of course, yeah.

**Ruth McCausland**

--partly with a kind of response that it wasn't economically viable. So it was the first thing to kind of close down but thinking about employment pathways for those community members with disability for whom that's a pathway that they're keen on. But I think the other issue that we saw during COVID was extraordinary numbers of fines, given in the interest of public health, to Aboriginal people in Walgett, it's a very over-surveilled community by police. And so disproportionately it was Aboriginal people, and again, disproportionately Aboriginal people with mental health disorders and cognitive disability who were targeted by police. And one of the programs we're doing is dealing with those fines by connecting people with culturally-connected activities and on-Country activities where they connect with Elders and culture. So I guess it's thinking about a holistic response to both the drivers of contact with the justice system, but then community-led responses in a way that can address those issues.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Wow, thanks Ruth, you really, I think, brought home to us the complexity and the interlocking and intertwining nature of those problems. And also the you know, the foundations of those problems, if you like, that is so much more, more complicated than pointing to somebody and saying, let's give that person a diagnosis, and once that's done, then then we're kind of home free. George, I imagine that has maybe resonances, or echoes for you in your work, I mean particularly what was striking me in what Ruth was talking about was the lack of data about particular areas, or sometimes lack of access to data, and also sort of silos of knowledge and expertise. There's sometimes in, in a place, like the middle of Sydney, we're used to having access to an almost infinite array of very defined different kinds of services. And Ruth, you're talking about places where the police are almost the only kind of service in quote marks available. So, George, you want to comment on that?

**George Varughese**

Thank you. Well, I mean, I was thinking about how, well number one, at least in my practice and experience this whole idea of how do you mainstream, you know, considerations for people with disabilities across development practice and across conversations in practice, right around discussions of project design, measurement, evaluation, and I haven't, frankly, run into anything except box ticking exercises, right? Where you make sure, okay, the project has a ramp for someone who can walk or has problems walking or things like that. But you know, thinking about how the international development machine, the architecture of international development, the framework for it is not oriented towards working on disability issues. And so then if that were the case, and that is the legacy, let us say, then how is it that we can cope pragmatically is what I would be interested in. And so just looking at, what are the typical streams of work, at least that I've been exposed to one has to do with this whole idea of, how do you emerge out of conflict in a peaceful way? How do you arrive at political settlements? And then how do you involve all of society in the reconstruction of, of a place, the rebuilding of a nation? And that's certainly Afghanistan, that's certainly Nepal and a few other places in the world. So the frequent terminology used around this is peace, peace-building, right? Peace settlements, political settlements, and then you wonder where in all of this, that someone who's wounded by war, affected by war, literally, physically, but also then the families around that wounded person, that person with disability, how are they worked with in a peace settlement, in a political settlement? And the, and the typical, sort of, resolution of that dilemma is a reparation. You know, you make a payment, you buy off their disability by making a payment, and that's it. So just like any other individual who, just like any other survivor, I mean, when I worked on trafficking in persons, we call them survivors, right? I mean, the talking about rehabilitation and reintegration. And so, the entire development toolbox around emerging out of conflict and how you reintegrate, and how you rehabilitate those who have been affected by war gets very narrowed down into just those who have lost a limb or two, who can just be paid off, and then they're done. But you know, how do you mainstream that connection to a society that must be healed, right? So when they talk about reconciliation, a lot of it has to do with psychosocial aspects, but a lot of it has to do with direct effect on oneself. But what about what that means for a country or society that needs to rebuild? Another area of development where this could easily be a strategic entry point is prison and prison reform, not only in developed societies, working in prison is a major, sort of, an approach in development practice, in many, many countries. But even there, you don't get the inclusion, let's say, or the mainstreaming of people with disabilities in that prison reform. You talk about prison reform, you're looking at, what are the conditions for the general population? You know, are there libraries or something? And are there some useful activities that they can engage in? But you know, you don't see a donor coming to you saying, I want to work on prisons, because of the evidence that prisons house people who have been wrongly diagnosed perhaps, or, you know, or, or disability is criminalised, therefore, they're in prison, or there literally are people with disabilities in prison, you know, separating those out and mounting the evidence for that within the development machine, you know, that kind of parsing is not there. And then there's a whole question of working on civil services of these countries, you know, you have to rebuild a society after war, there is no one to administer the government. And so when you're talking about administration, the training is all very technical: how do you keep records, you know, how do you take notes, how do you write proposals and how do you bid out and procure, but the treatment of saying, okay, we are recovering from conflict, we're recovering from war, we have to rebuild, you know, how do you mainstream considerations for people who are different, or who have disabilities or thinking about entry points, so you could talk about civil service reform, but then have attention paid to disability. So I'm talking about strategic entry points, where without talking about people with disabilities, you can actually address disability. And that's also true of drugs, you know, you're fighting a whole war on drugs in Afghanistan, you know, but thinking about, well, what does that mean, what is its effects? It sends people into disability, right, because of addiction. But there's a whole bunch of other people who think cultivating poppies is the least, physically taxing, therefore, you know, it's an option for those who don't need to be out in the fields all the time. So, you know, my, I'm just thinking around, what are some of the interesting entry points where we could address an issue that doesn't appear in the evidence so easily when people are framing developmental problems? I mean, it shouldn't be a problem of developed societies, right? It should also be part of the problem framing of societies that are seeking to develop, and how do you raise it in the, in the sort of the imagination in the list of priorities? You know, so what is the evidence you need for it? What are some of the creative ways in which you can enter it through other interventions? And then how can you talk across the architecture of development in a way that it becomes part of the mainstream considerations? And finally, I was just thinking, you know, I'm just thinking of this thing, you know, what are the emergent disabilities of the 21st century, right? And, you know, some of the things that we've been approached on, have to do with anxieties, people who are disabled because of their anxiety around climate, for example, I mean, they're just paralysed by it. You know, just thinking about, well, there are no options, you know, this kind of this. So, so, to me, I mean, anxiety. I mean, you probably all know this, but I was thinking how it intersects with, let's say, climate change and disaster, you know, and how you get disabled by anxiety, or, you know, incapable of addressing your own circumstance, right. I don't know how to frame it in the language of disability. But I think that emergent disability is something that should be very important for us to engage in conversations about.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

I think that that's fascinating, George, because, you know, we know that the conceptualisation of disability has changed over time, and how different countries and different cultures conceive it, measure it, count it, has changed over time, and also with changes in medical care and social care. You know, it always used to be the case that it was the rich northwest that worried about things like cancer and heart disease, because in other parts of the world, it was just assumed that people didn't survive long enough generally to, to worry about those things and the diseases and conditions of affluence and living to an older age. And now we know that that's, you know, that's not the case anymore, those more chronic illnesses are certainly affecting people globally. And then we have something like a global pandemic, which has an acute phase, but as we are increasingly seeing are long-term, and long, long-term consequences post-COVID, we're only just beginning to understand and explore some of those consequences for a variety of different, different societies. We could talk about it forever. But I want to move to a couple of other points that have been raised tangentially. I think one of the things that the DIIU very much focuses on, as you know, is the idea of research that's inclusive of those people who are being researched who were traditionally looked on as the subjects or the objects, even, of research. To what extent can, is inclusive research in the places that you're talking about, perhaps, in places where people are less used to being included in those research endeavours? To what extent is it possible do you think? Do you want to have a go at that, Ruth?

**Ruth McCausland**

Sure, thanks, Jackie. Look, I think research for Aboriginal communities, and the disability community too, has been something that's been done to, for many years, and researchers who have made careers from being experts in that area. I think there's great possibility in research models that seek to partner with or be led by people in those communities. And I think there's, there's good examples of that. It's certainly something that in our partnership, we've sought from the outset to do well, and we have a research protocol that underpins all of our work in the Yuwaya Ngarra-li partnership and any new research collaborators who engage sign up for that. And that has a very explicit focus, which is in part about the principles of being community-led and culturally connected and rights-based, strengths-focused. It's also about the really practical elements that are operationalised in the way that we work, and to ensure that those principles are enacted. And partly, it's about the timeframes in which research happens. It's about the methodologies that are engaged with. There's certainly appetite, to a point, for communities in leading that research. But also, I think, as researchers, it's, it's really important to be mindful that our usual sorts of outputs in an academic institution, the academic articles or research grants, are not going to be shared interests for communities. But if research can be oriented to meet community priorities, to work in a way that is genuinely not just inclusive but in partnership, and oriented to things like advocacy, that communities are keen for around services or addressing institutional racism or shifting power dynamics, I think if research can, and should, play a role in community priorities, then I think it can make a terrific contribution.

**George Varughese**

One of the dilemmas that I have confronted and been very much part of, in the last, let's say, 15 years or so, is the descent of development practice from a relational sense to, sort of, a transactional sense, right. And being concerned about the robbing of dignity of those who we work with, in almost a deliberate fashion, through the design of our projects and programs, such that the imposition of value for money propositions, the, sort of, the requirements of monitoring and evaluation, the requirements of the proposal process, and eventually the claiming of ownership of results, and all of these rob one party of dignity, right. And I have been concerned about that and been talking a little bit about how can we at the very outset move towards a values-based proposition of doing development? And a values-based proposition of development and get away from a transaction which says, okay, for in exchange for this amount of money, you will deliver within two years, this kind of a result. How do we get away from that and look at guarding dignity, to the extent possible, convey at least that you're sharing someone's vulnerability that you understand it, that you somehow have made the best effort in understanding what their particular vulnerability is? And third is practicing reciprocity. And really thinking about, well, the demands, I make of you, at minimum, you can make the same demands of me and I'm required to reciprocate. And this these three values, of guarding dignity, sharing vulnerability, and practicing reciprocity, to me, begin to get us to a place where we as scholar-practitioners in development could begin to embody something that we seek, right, in a relational way. And I think we have to go back to these basics if we have to reimagine development, because I think that the challenges that remain in this world have to do with that. I mean, they're not necessarily second-order challenges, these are first-order challenges now, that you cannot begin to make a difference. Communities may not determine the outcomes unless you guard their dignity when you're in relation with them, unless you're sharing their vulnerability to the extent possible. And unless you practice reciprocity, and Ruth spoke about that you're developing, you're designing research that is community-relevant, community-centered, community-owned, that's obviously the best possible case. But of course, how do you then dignify those relationships? Next week, we're leading a delegation to the Pacific, to Suva, and we've been working for two years on a Pacific-led research agenda, and a Pacific code of ethics for doing research. And we've been working closely with LaTrobe University on this. And so we are taking a joint delegation to University of the South Pacific and sitting with 30, 40, Pasifika researchers. And we're just listening and holding them up. But they've been engaged in a two-year conversation around this. And we want to bring it to some sort of a point where they're able to say, well, this is what we require of a Pacific-owned agenda of research and a Pacific code of ethics around doing research. So we're super excited about that. Of course, it doesn't get us all the way. But we think that the sooner we researchers that are not in the context embody some of these values, the better off for durability of exchange and benefits we're in for. Thank you.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

That's a wonderful segue into the final thoughts that I was having, which was about how specifically our Institute, the Disability Innovation Institute, can best engage with people, scholars and practitioners, who are working in development to, you know, to foster the right kind, if you like, of inclusive research, disability-inclusive research and activities, and George you've already outlined or listed three core values that need to be held as we do that. Ruth, do you have some thoughts on that? How can we best go about this?

**Ruth McCausland**

Great question, Jackie. And I think it's terrific, that you're asking it too, I think so often in academia, we end up in our silos, don't we, in terms of academic expertise, we're very critical of others, government, working in that way. And certainly in development, we see it constantly, where people come in with their own agendas and paradigms to work. I think there's extraordinary value in DIIU, sitting as it does, not in one specific faculty or discipline, disciplinary tradition in thinking about working with other scholars in aligned areas in a multidisciplinary sense. I think there's great value in the collaboration, and the conversations that can come from that in terms of scholarship, but also in terms of social impact and potential. And I think it would be terrific to continue to work between the IGD and Yuwaya Ngarra-li and DIIU and the potential for that kind of collaboration, but also finding other scholars across the university and in related sectors who are really interested in grappling with exactly some of these questions. And I think conversations like this are a really good place to start and different kinds of, of expertise that's not the usual points of collaboration, I think can be really valuable.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Thank you. And I think one thing that we at the DIIU do try to emphasise, it's not just our keenness to work in an interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary way across those silos, but also to value different kinds of knowledge. Not always the traditional academic kind of knowledge, although, of course, we do value that, but others that may, other forms and knowledge and information coming from unexpected directions and in unexpected formats sometimes.

**George Varughese**

Yes, the burden on us is considerably larger than we think that's placed on us, as let's say, researchers, teachers and university staff. I think reaching across not only sectors but reaching across agents, let's say, in development, such as the multilateral bilateral system of development, such as industry, and universities, and government of course. I mean, these are, to me, some of the agents of development that frequently get pigeonholed into either the government gives the money, and the industry delivers the solution. And then the university, kind of, is the technical, sort of, repository of expertise. And it's clear to me in my practice, you know, the development machine doesn't have any of these three, but it buys the services right, or takes the money from the government. You know, we have to come up with a different form of collective action if we're going to achieve results in areas like disability and as you know, our relationship and our conversations with the United Nations, which you are now part of, or you have been Jackie, in terms of, you know, the Asia Pacific office talking about how they feel so frustrated that they are unable to move forward the agenda on people with disabilities. And, you know, thinking about, what is the burden on our university, to join up knowledge and practice, insights from practice? What is the burden on us to take it beyond our community, whether it's just Sydney and the university, whether it's, you know, to other parts of the world? I mean, I think there's that burden that we have yet to explore. I'm certainly willing to partner, at the Institute for Global Development, to think about ways in which new forms of collective action, if you like, cooperation, can be brought to bear on those who hold knowledge, who are incentivised to do more research, to come up with knowledge products, but to share them then more widely than they have, or in ways that have not been thought of so far. And obviously, the information age makes it much easier, especially in countries that are less capable than those that were privileged to live in.

**Jackie Leach Scully**

Thank you, to our guests, Ruth and George, for a really fascinating conversation, which, as I said, could go on for many hours longer, but we hope at some point in the future, we'll be able to pick it up again in another of our podcasts from the DIIU. Thank you.

**Ruth McCausland**

Thanks, Jackie.

**George Varughese**

Thank you.

**Isabella Burton-Clark**

Thank you for listening to the UNSW Disability Innovation Institute podcast. The podcast is hosted by the Institute's Director, Professor Jackie Leach Scully, and produced by me, Isabella Burton-Clark. We would like to thank our guests for their time and insight. You can find out more about the Institute and subscribe to our newsletter at disabilityinnovation.unsw.edu.au. You can also find further information about the topics discussed in the podcast on our website and in the show notes.