MOOC "Disability as a human rights issue: global and national perspectives"

Final Report

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This report follows the initial one presented at the Global Campus Council meeting of September 2016 and includes some updated information and additional reflections on the experience of running the first Global Campus MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) with a view not only to evaluate the activity but also offer some suggestions for the future.

Some basic information
The course ran between 12 September and 24 October 2016. Free enrolment started on the 1st of August and finished on the 14th of October 2016. It was structured in two Modules running for 6 weeks in total, with 4 weekly discussions and 2 Quizzes.

We used the online platform www.canvas.net which provides user-friendly access to and display of materials, together with a number of options for activities, assessment and evaluation. The course is publicly available at https://learn.canvas.net/courses/1155. This includes all video lectures, readings, useful links, course structure, modules and pages but excludes discussions, quizzes and surveys. Access to the full range of learning materials is provided to enrolled participants on a permanent basis, even after the end of the course.

In order to advertise and generate interest, we created a specific section on the EIUC/GC website which displays the video trailer of the course as well as all relevant information on faculty, schedule, content, and free enrolment: https://eiuc.org/education/global-campus-mooc.html.

The following information is based on:
- Evaluation by the Academic Coordinator and Project Officer who ran the course;
- Evaluation by participants who provided feedback through:
  - A welcome survey available throughout the course
  - A User-experience survey also available throughout the course
  - Direct correspondence by email or through Canvas with the course team
- Statistics available on Canvas

Enrolment and class composition
On the starting date of the course, 468 participants had already registered. This number increased by the day as the course went on, so much so that at the end of the course the final number of participants was set at 761. For a first online course, and one that is very specific on a particular human rights issue, enrolment can be deemed satisfactory, especially considering also the wide geographical and professional outreach.

Indeed, according to the Welcome Survey submitted by 235 respondents, the following data on the region of origin, age, source of information, gender, education and motivation paint a positive, varied and rich picture.

Region

1%

13%

5%

51%

5%

16%

9%
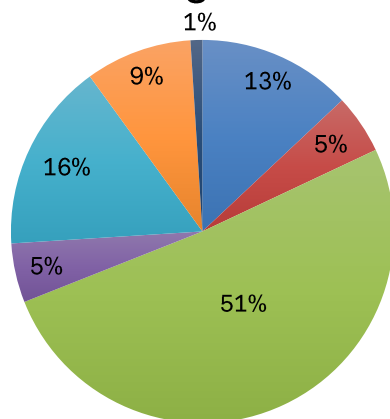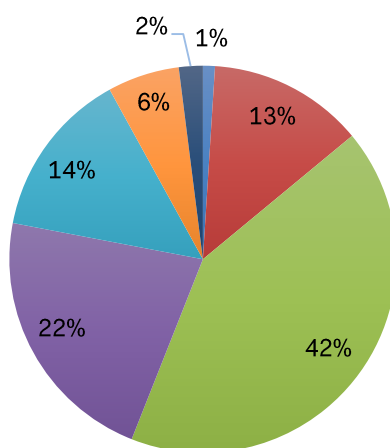
- ■ North America
- ■ Latin America
- ■ Europe
- ■ Middle East/North Africa
- ■ Sub-Saharan Africa
- ■ Asia/Pacific
- ■ No Answer

Age

2% 1%

13%

42%

22%

14%

6%

- ■ 13-18
- ■ 19-24
- ■ 25-34
- ■ 35-44
- ■ 45-54
- ■ 55-64
- ■ 65 or older

Source of info

1%
23%
4%
22%
26%
16%
4%
15%
1%

- Social media
- News story and/or Canvas
- Friend or colleague
- I clicked on an ad
- Web search
- The instructor
- Canvas communication
- Sponsoring institution (newsletter, institution's website/blog, or flyer)

Gender

1%   1%
33%
65%

- Male
- Female
- Other
- No Answer

Education

1% 3%
9%
8%
4%
56%
12%
7%
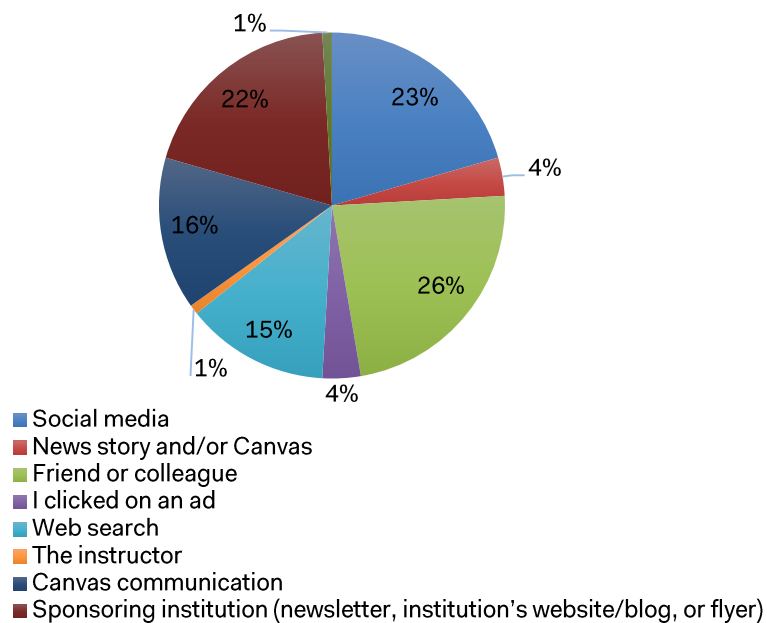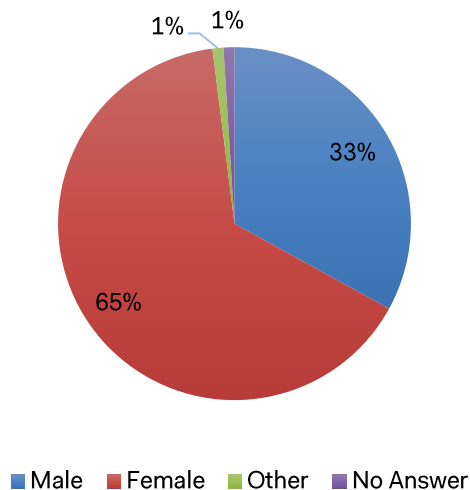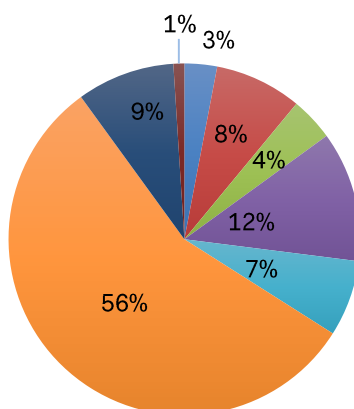
- High School/College Prep School
- Some college, but have not finished a degree
- Completed 2-year college degree
- Completed 4-year college degree
- Some graduate school
- Master's Degree (or equivalent)
- Ph.D., J.D., or M.D. (or equivalent)

Motivation

2% 2%
9% 1%
1% 2%
12%
5%
34%
32%
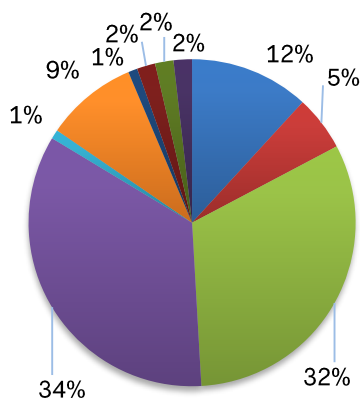
- Job/Career Improvement
- Other
- General knowledge
- Knowledge to be applied in job
- General knowledge/personal experience
- Study and Research
- Personal experience/Knowledge/Career improvement
- Related to job and personal experience
- Knowledge to be applied in job and study

In terms of participants' profiles, in the few cases where this was indicated in the survey, they also reflect a rich and fitting composition:

1 — Care manager

1 — Charity for disabled people

1 — Disability rights activist and disabled person

3 — Disabled person

1 — EU project coordinator

1 — Executive Director of an NGO

3 — Human rights lawyer

5 — Human rights professional

1 — Journalist

1 — Lawyer

1 — Legal adviser

1 — Marketing and Communication professional and disabled person

1 — Master student on psychology

1 — Media and human rights litigator

1 — Neurologist

1 — NGO volunteer

3 — PhD candidate

1 — Professional in disability policy

1 — Professional in human rights NGO

1 — Professional on autism

1 — Professional on age and disability

1 — Professional on rights of disabled people

8 — Professional in social services

1 — Researcher

1 — Researcher on disability

1 — Researcher on disability rights and disabled person

1 — Student

1 — Students' advisor at university

3 — Teacher

2 — Teacher and lawyer

Course content and participation

Course materials were judged helpful, relevant and of very good quality, facilitating regular engagement with the course and progression in understanding and knowledge. Throughout the course a good number of participants (from a minimum of 120 to a maximum of 221) remained steadily engaged and contributed to each discussion.

Dr. Angela Melchiorre acted as course moderator especially in the first Module of the course, summarizing comments, suggesting new prompts for further discussion or additional reading materials, and encouraging participation. If at first one could notice more individual and standalone comments, as the course progressed students started responding to each other and interacting without being prompted by the moderator. This created a livelier environment, conducive to more genuine peer-learning and knowledge transfer, in particular about different regional and national ways of dealing with disability from a human rights perspective.

A few participants who regularly attended the course provided us with further comments in this respect, as published on the [course website](#):

I thought the course structure from general to more advanced content worked well, giving all participants a chance to expand their knowledge on the topic in different areas. Although I was familiar with international and European disability policies, I was able to greatly complement my knowledge from the other regional perspectives presented and discussed from ASEAN, OAS and AU on the promotion and implementation of disability rights (Federico Batista Poitier, USA).

The course material was of exceptional, well audited and internationally sourced content; recommended additional reading was contemporary and relevant; and the course moderator led with passion and professionalism (Barbara du Preez-Ulmi, South Africa).

What I would accentuate as especially valuable is the fact that the course provides the participants with interesting literature which encompasses factual information as well as authentic examples of contemporary disability issues (Ljerka Gordic, Serbia).

This being said, it was felt by some that a synchronous session with live interaction with some lecturers would have enriched the learning even further, as testified by the following comments from the User-experience Survey:

Would it be possible for interactions between participants at a specific hour? For example, where the lecturer was telling us to share different ways our countries are working towards the international instruments (Nagadya Veronic, Uganda).

Perhaps include one or two sessions which are more interactive; possibly including a session where participants can ask questions of instructors (Teresa Cannady, USA).

For the future it is deemed important to keep variety and quality at the highest level and to design courses where more direct interaction between experts and participants features at least once in the programme.

Assessment and certificate of participation

While the weekly discussions saw the contribution of a large number of participants, the quizzes fared less favourably, partly because of the nature of the assessment (testing knowledge and understanding) and partly because of the type of questions asked. In particular, the Final Quiz was deemed challenging for questions that were perceived as being subjective ('fill in the blank' type of question) or mnemonic ('match pairs' type of question).

Overall, the vast majority of the participants took the course for their own personal knowledge without actively participating in the discussions and quizzes, and therefore without gaining access to the certificate of participation, as indicated by the following data:
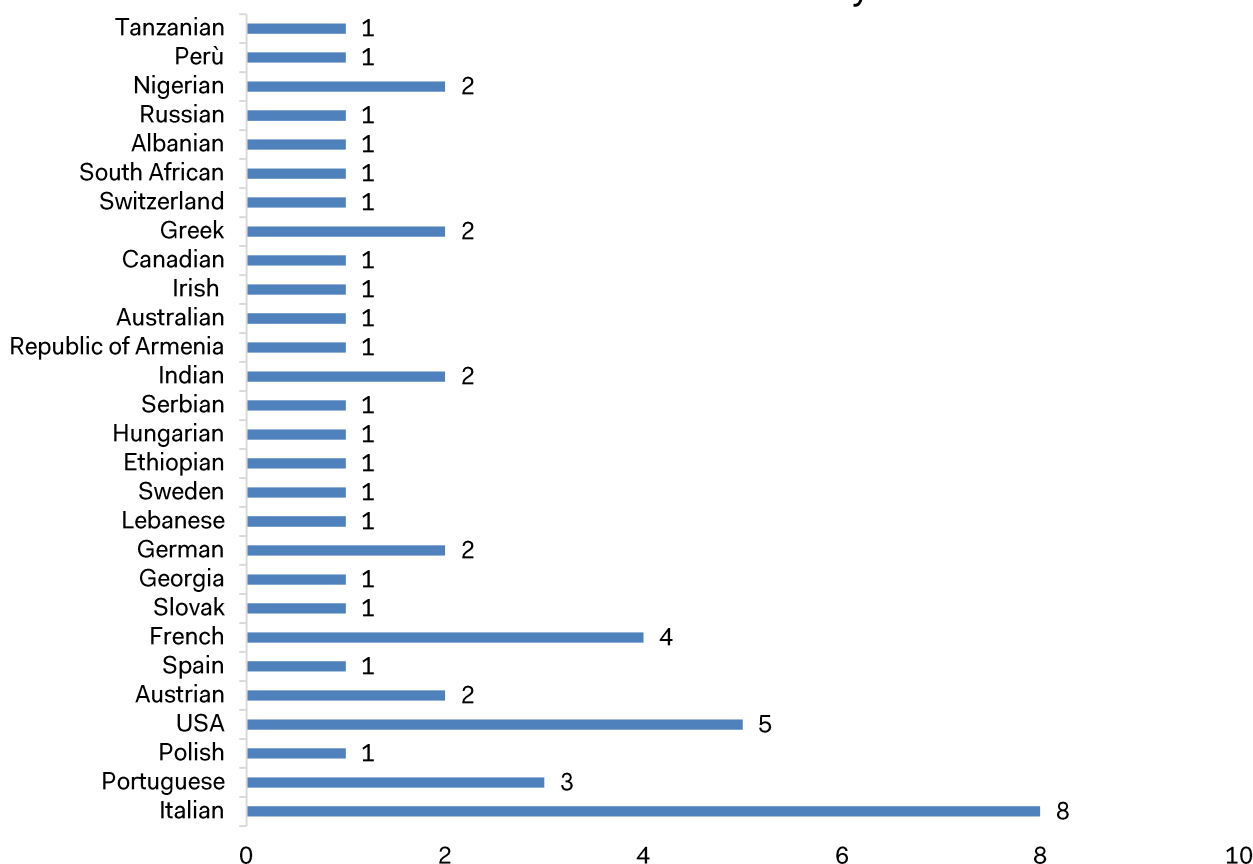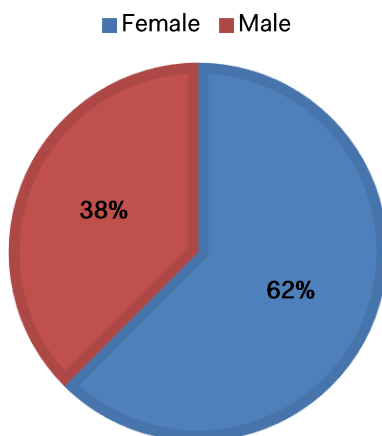Quiz 1=157 participants;
Final Quiz=92 participants;
Certificates=49.

Judging from a review of the quality and quantity of inputs, the participants who earned the certificate corresponded to the most active and constant of all. They also represent a fair sample of participation in terms of nationality and gender.

Final certificate - Nationality

Nationality	Count
Tanzanian	1
Perù	1
Nigerian	2
Russian	1
Albanian	1
South African	1
Switzerland	1
Greek	2
Canadian	1
Irish	1
Australian	1
Republic of Armenia	1
Indian	2
Serbian	1
Hungarian	1
Ethiopian	1
Sweden	1
Lebanese	1
German	2
Georgia	1
Slovak	1
French	4
Spain	1
Austrian	2
USA	5
Polish	1
Portuguese	3
Italian	8

Final certificate – Gender

■ Female ■ Male

38%

62%

The experience with the Quizzes drove further reflection on forms of assessment and in particular on how to ensure that these are neither too easy nor too difficult but rather appropriate and balanced tests that are useful for participants but also fair and of good quality for us, so that the certificate is well-deserved.

For the future it is recommended to avoid of questions that could leave too much to personal, subjective interpretation. Multiple choice quizzes are still deemed to be a good solution as compared to short papers, especially in terms of automatisation of marking (crucial when dealing with such big groups of participants).

General feedback
The feedback below shows that the course was appreciated and useful for the personal and professional development of participants and for a more general impact on the specific human rights area of work.

The course was very informative and I enjoyed taking it. I am an advocate for people with disabilities. I think the UNCRPD is helping many people on a global scale. I was curious about the rights of people who have disabilities in countries around the world. This course answered a lot of my questions. The information was good. It encourages equal rights of all people (Brenda Lee Redsten, USA).

Thanks to all of you for your very professional work and for your kind and human approach: it was really a beautiful experience for me (my first on line course and hopefully not the last one). I had the opportunity to increase my knowledge and awareness about disability international rights and to listen to other people coming from other countries speaking about it (Luca Salvadori, Italy).

I love the given information; I rather to watch videos as I am more a listener than a reader but it helped me to improve reading comprehension (Maria Patricia Hernandez Aguilar, Mexico).

For the future, it is recommended to keep this course as a regular offer of the GC e-learning.

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