



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Global Research Programme on Inequality



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Summary

The Global Research Programme on Inequality (GRIP) is a radically interdisciplinary research programme that views inequality as a fundamental challenge to human well-being and works to foster co-designed processes of knowledge creation to understand and address the multiple dimensions of rising inequalities. GRIP was founded on 15 October 2019 following the signing of an agreement between the [University of Bergen](#) (UiB) and the [International Science Council](#) (ISC), and became operational at the beginning of 2020 as GRIP's Secretariat was established.

Despite the continuation of the challenging circumstances throughout 2021 that constrained and impeded the planned activities and initiatives, GRIP has managed to successfully develop central organizational structures and advance its work; initiated numerous dissemination activities introducing GRIP to new audiences, academic circles and policy makers; carried out and participated in numerous physical and digital events; has further developed its visual profile along with new content on its website and social media profiles; expanded its network and created alliances and strategic partnerships; produced several funding applications working on its resource planning; and developed new research initiatives and forms of collaboration.

This report provides a brief overview of activities carried out during 2021, key events and a status on current developments.

All images: Johnny Miller, Unequal Scenes.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

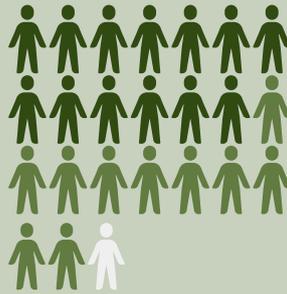
24 AFFILIATED RESEARCHERS

Diversity



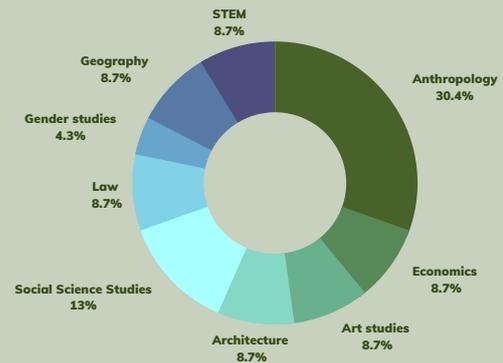
13 different countries

Gender balance



4% Non- Binary 42% Male
54% Female

Interdisciplinarity



RESEARCH

CURRENT PROJECTS

Political Protests
Speculative Urban Futures
Imaging Inequality

COLLABORATIONS

In-Forest
Dis_Local Lab
The New African Urban University

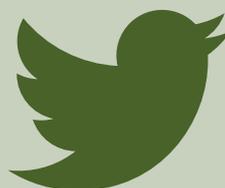
COMMUNICATIONS & DISSEMINATION



8% increase



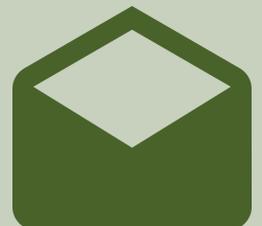
158 new
followers



50%
increase



New podcast
launched



Monthly
newsletters



Organization

The [GRIP Secretariat](#) is composed of an executive director, research coordinator, outreach officer (50% position) and a higher executive officer (50% position). The Secretariat carries primary responsibility for facilitation and implementation of GRIP activities, administration of the programme, development of working plans and communication activities. In 2021 a new communication and outreach officer joined the Secretariat. In addition, GRIP facilitated its first intern and the Secretariat has now established various internship opportunities at GRIP.

GRIP's [Development Team](#) (DT) became operative in the first part of 2021 with Jan Erik Askildsen, Mathieu Denis, Divine Fuh, Jason Hickel, Maddy Power, Elisa Reis, Martina Rieker, Rachel Sieder and Nandini Sundar as the constitutive members. Throughout 2021 DT provided valuable insights and input on GRIP's Development Plan, the general framework for the future work of GRIP and its research agenda. Through virtual meetings and individual conversations, the members of DT, with their extensive background in work with multiple dimensions of inequality, provided advice on the needed directions in the future inequality research. Drawing on these recommendations GRIP developed and finalized Development Plan 2022 – 2027 draft that was presented to the ISC and the UiB at the end of 2021 along with a draft of the GRIP Fellowship Programme.

GRIP's [UiB Programme Committee](#), representing various key departments and research environments at the UiB, has been an important resource for GRIP. Throughout 2021 regular meetings were held with the UiB Programme Committee, consisting of Anne Bang, Kerry Chance, Siri Gloppen, Christine Jacobsen, Lise Rakner and Knut Rio, who provided valuable suggestions and input on various GRIP activities. UiB Programme Committee has supported and facilitated GRIP's collaborations with different academic environments at UiB and contributed to communicating GRIP initiatives to a wider UiB audience.

In addition to the already established academic alliances GRIP has actively been working on developing a wide network of partners and associates across various disciplines and across different regions. In 2021 around 100 researchers and practitioners representing different academic disciplines and fields of expertise participated in GRIP organized events and activities. During the year GRIP significantly expanded its affiliate research network and by the end of the year GRIP had 24 [affiliated researchers](#).

Communication

In 2021 GRIP focused on developing its communication strategy, amplifying the reach of the communication activities, growing the audience numbers on GRIP's social media channels, as well as increasing the number of visitors to GRIP's website. In order to build a coherent communication strategy, a social media plan for GRIP was



developed detailing target groups, benefits, tone and featured topics for various social media channels. GRIP also expanded its social media portfolio by adding a new platform to it with creation of an Instagram profile at the end of 2021. GRIP has thus chosen to be present on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#), each of which are channels that reach out to specific target audience enabling GRIP to disseminate its work in a broader fashion.

The follower numbers of GRIP's social media profiles grew substantially in 2021. At the end of 2021 GRIP had 1,133 followers on Facebook and 1,190 followers on Twitter, which for Twitter is a 50% increase from the year before. Similarly, there was a 55% increase in the views of the video material published on GRIP's YouTube channel. GRIP's Twitter account also received a recognition from the ISC and was mentioned as one of the most interacted with accounts of 2021 by the ISC.

The GRIP website underwent a few remodels in 2021 adjusting it to new content and making it more user-friendly for navigation. In 2021 the website had more than 1,7000 visits from over 150 different countries. Of these, nearly 80% were new visitors to the site, pointing to an engagement of new audiences. Among the top-ten audience countries is a geographical spread from Brazil and the USA to France, Nigeria and India.

As part of the ongoing development of GRIP's visual profile, GRIP renewed its

collaboration with Johnny Miller's [Unequal Scenes](#) project on the usage of new illustrative material for GRIP's dissemination work. GRIP also developed and produced new visual features such as report templates and presentation materials in order to further professionalize GRIP's visual profile.

An important part of GRIP's communication work has been directed at making GRIP visible to both research and policy environments, by participation in various events and through GRIP's dissemination activities such as book and article publications.

Dissemination

In 2021 GRIP kept building on the successful miniseries format which was introduced in 2020. GRIP's miniseries offer a space for academics, practitioners and experts to publish their insights and reflections on given topics, and for GRIP's audience to discover new ideas in a short, open format, which have proved to be a very popular and effective dissemination platform. In 2021 GRIP had two miniseries running – Inequality in the (Post)-Pandemic City and Speculative Urban Futures.

In the ["Inequality in the \(Post\)-Pandemic City"](#) miniseries eight new essays were published, which explored the longue durée implications of the pandemic on urban orders and the various dimensions of inequality. Several of these contributions were published in cooperation with the [International Network for Government Science Advice \(INGSA\)](#) in which [INGSA's](#)



Gauteng, South Africa

[Knowledge Associates](#) were offered an opportunity to present their research to a broader audience. Some notable topics covered by this miniseries were [the exacerbation of inequality in the light of COVID-19 pandemic](#); [the politicization of medical and technological fields and how they relate to inequalities](#); [the unequal effects of the pandemic on the global workforce](#); and [territorial inequality in cities](#).

The miniseries format was also adopted to new projects at GRIP and in December 2021 GRIP launched a miniseries in relation to the [Speculative Urban Futures](#) project that looks into

unequal experiences of time, relations between human and non-human worlds and the emergence of new forms of urban agency. The need to speculate and probe possible urban futures is more urgent than ever, given that inequalities rise and cities grow. [The first publication in the miniseries explores the architectural ruins as base for speculations about urban future.](#)

During 2021 GRIP also introduced a completely new dissemination channel by launching a podcast: "[Unequal Worlds: an inequality research podcast](#)". The podcast aims to highlight a range of topics related to inequality research and consists of interviews with prominent



researchers and engaging discussions on current affairs, as well as recordings from GRIP events. Seven episodes were released in 2021, covering, among others, issues such as [the decolonisation of global health](#); [smart cities and the pandemic](#); [visualisation of inequalities](#) and [vaccine inequality](#). The podcast is available on most podcast platforms and has a steadily growing audience.

Another important communication tool developed and introduced in 2021 was a GRIP newsletter. The newsletter aims to give recipients a quick overview of recent and upcoming GRIP events, various activities, publications, and calls. Building on the CROP networks as well as the newly developed networks of GRIP affiliates and researchers, GRIP newsletter subscribers grew steadily throughout 2021 and were up to approximately 300 by the end of the year.

Events and Activities

One of the highlights among the 2021 events was the SDG Conference Bergen. The Executive Director of GRIP, Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, led the Programme Committee for the conference and set inequality as a central topic of this year's conference.

During the conference GRIP also organised and led session "[A Global Perspective on Inequality in Reformulating SDGs](#)" and hosted [launch of a journal Parangolé](#) along with editor-in-chief Alfredo Brillembourg from

[Urban Think Tank](#) and co-editor Ida Lien from [Urban-A](#). The three-day long conference gathered more than 2,600 participants from over 100 countries.

In order to attend the urgent inequality issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, GRIP in cooperation with [the Pandemic Centre at UiB](#) arranged a [seminar on vaccine inequality](#). Esperanza Diaz Perez (Pandemic Centre, UiB) and Bjørn Enge Bertelsen (GRIP) together with world leading experts and high-profile researchers among them John-Arne Røttingen (MFA, Norway), Gagandeep Kang (CMC Vellore, India), Henriette Aasen (UiB, Norway), Mosoka P. Fallah (Refuge Place International, Liberia) and Erlend Grønningen (MSF) explored vaccine distribution mechanisms, and looked for possibilities to facilitate more equal, fair, and sustainable futures.

The inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic was also a topic for a webinar series that GRIP organised in 2021. A group of policy experts, researchers and practitioners were gathered to address the issues of growing inequalities and social protection mechanisms.

The first session of this series, "[Child Poverty, Inequality, Social Protection, and Inclusion: Policy Options and Constraints before and after COVID](#)", focused on the role for social protection in a post-pandemic world and the urgent need to address policies implemented to alleviate and counteract these effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The second session "[Knowledge, Evidence, and Narratives](#)



[on Child Poverty and Covid-19: Post-pandemic Research Agenda](#)" took stock of the mounting evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on child poverty to consider what do we know, and what we still need to know moving forward.

Through 2021 GRIP actively participated and co-organised various events with [Bergen School of Global Studies](#) (BSGS) in which GRIP is tasked with leading [the inequality pillar](#).

In April GRIP together with BSGS held a webinar "[Film & Reflections – Inequality](#)" following the screening of the film "[Picture a Scientist](#)" attending to gender inequality issues in the academia. In October, GRIP, again in cooperation with BSGS as well as with [Bergen International Film Festival](#), hosted a panel debate after a screening of the movie "White Cube". The event "[The Art World and Inequality](#)" was a highly engaging public conversation with the participation of researchers, artists and representatives from museum world discussing art world's engagements and relations with global structures of inequality.

Among other events that GRIP contributed to and participated at is [the 2021 SANORD conference](#) and its sub-theme "Epistemic challenges, intellectual labour and South-North partnerships". The parallel sessions under this title discussed the calls to re-think global politics and partnerships challenging the long-standing, hegemonic understandings of (academic and other) knowledges and

global academic hierarchies. GRIP's Bjørn Enge Bertelsen chaired a session and GRIP's affiliate Maria Paula Meneses held a keynote entitled "[Food as knowledge, interconnecting the Global South](#)".

GRIP was likewise proud to be contributing to [the European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health](#) in September 2021. Here, GRIP moderated the panel discussion "[Decolonization and Global Health](#)", which explored global challenges in health, migration, and equity. Other significant events in 2021 were connected to GRIP's dissemination activities and launch of several books. In February a launch event for the book "[Tax Justice and Global Inequality: Practical Solutions to Protect Developing Country Revenues](#)" by Krishen Mehta, Esther Shubert and Erika Dayle Siu (ed.) took place focusing on inequalities relating to the global tax structure.

In September the book "[Why Some Development Works: Understanding Success](#)" by Meera Tiwari was launched and the book's promotional event focused on Tiwari's innovative approach towards a multi-layered understanding of poverty proposed by the book.

At the end of the year the book "[Revolutionary Struggles and Girls' Education: At the Frontiers of Gender Norms in North-Ethiopia](#)" by Thera Mjaaland was launched, attending to gender inequality in the education system.



Members of GRIP Secretariat have also contributed with lectures and presentations at various partner institutions, events and workshops providing input and reflections on different dimensions of inequality.

The majority GRIP events in 2021 remained digital given the restrictions of the ongoing pandemic. However, the digitalization of activities also contributed to making the events accessible to wider audiences.

As the physical events were being streamed and recorded, it allowed for broader audiences to access the event both in real time and through their archiving. The recordings of various GRIP events have been made available in [GRIP video archive](#).

Research and Collaboration

While the exceptional circumstances of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic hindered the research activities also in

2021, GRIP nevertheless managed to establish new collaborations through its various initiatives, launch new research projects, develop research project applications, and continue to build up an extensive network of [affiliated researchers](#) to engage with in the future work of GRIP.

One of the new projects initiated in 2021 was the inter-disciplinary project "[Speculative Urban Futures](#)". The project is concerned with looking into unequal experiences of time, relations between human and non-human worlds and the emergence of new forms of urban agency in relation to migration. Several digital and physical meetings relating to the project were held throughout 2021 and [a two-day workshop](#) with 11 participants from the art world, anthropology, architecture and gender studies was organised. The workshop launched the project's probing into potential urban futures through experimental and interdisciplinary modes of engagement.



The panel of the vaccine inequality seminar - a mixed physical/virtual event



Another project initiated in 2021 is GRIP's "[Imaging Inequality](#)" initiative aimed at exploring various dimensions of inequality by engaging with visual artists to reflect and illustrate different perceptions, representations, and visualizations of inequality in specific contexts. An open call for visual artists to engage with this proposal was published in the second half of 2021.

In addition, GRIP along with partners from [Christian Michelsen Institute \(CMI\)](#) started the "[Political Protests and New Forms of Citizenship](#)" project that focuses on political inequalities and changing forms of citizenship in politically charged and volatile contexts. This new GRIP-CMI project addresses the recent and ongoing protests and revolutionary movements that challenge political inequality through re-negotiating citizenship and explores how re-negotiations of citizenship are central to such critical historical moments; both as a tool of repression, but also as a response of those repressed.

GRIP is also a supporting partner of other research projects initiated and led by GRIP's research affiliates and partner institutions, such as the WUN-funded project "[The New African Urban University](#)" that aims to rethinking both the co-production of urban knowledge and the future of African universities, and DFG-funded project "[In-Forest](#)", which investigates how gender- and geography-related inequalities shape forest research and the knowledge it generates.

Publications

Tasked with following up publications initiated by CROP, GRIP in 2021 finalized all the remaining publications in [the CROP Book Series in International Studies in Poverty Research](#) as well as organized launch events for these final publications.

In total two books were published this year - "[Leaving No Child and No Adolescent Behind. A Global Perspective on Addressing Inclusion through the SDGs](#)" by Sudeshna Chatterjee et al. and "[Why Some Development Works: Understanding Success](#)" by Meera Tiwari, while other earlier publications in the series were granted open access status.

In addition, members of the GRIP Secretariat have published articles and opinion pieces in both national and international newspapers and journals, introducing GRIP to a wider public. GRIP's Executive Director has also been [active in publishing and disseminating research](#) in this period.

Resourcing

In 2021 GRIP continuously worked on developing funding applications in order to expand its resource base. GRIP together with researchers from Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) was successful in securing funding for a new collaborative research project "[Political Protests and New Forms of Citizenship](#)". The project will bring together an interdisciplinary working group on political protests and citizenship and address the ongoing increase in protests



and revolutionary movements that challenge political inequality through re-negotiating citizenship.

Together with colleagues from Aix-Marseille University and 12 other partner institutions across Europe and beyond, GRIP established an inter-disciplinary consortium that throughout 2021 worked on developing a funding application to the Horizon Europe (HE) Research and Innovations Actions call.

Resulting from this work a project "RACEQUAL" was developed, which focuses on investigating institutional and structural racism across different sectors of society and aims to address various forms of racism and discrimination. In order to support the work of the consortium in its application development process, GRIP applied for UiB funding that supports the development of strategic partnerships and was successful in securing it. This allowed GRIP to organize an in-person meeting for the core members of the consortium and to conduct a workshop at the end of 2021 dedicated to the HE application writing.

In addition, GRIP submitted three funding applications for PhD positions. Two of them were submitted to [the Pandemic Centre](#) at UiB with projects "Rethinking Birth Calamity and Reviews Processes Post-COVID: A Participatory Study of Equity in Health Systems Responsiveness in Maternal Care in Ethiopia" and "Barriers to Adherence in Post-discharge Malaria Chemoprevention: the complexity of governance, responsibility, and trust of

community health care in Malawi". These projects were developed in collaboration with colleagues from the Faculty of Medicine at UiB and other external institutions such as UNICEF.

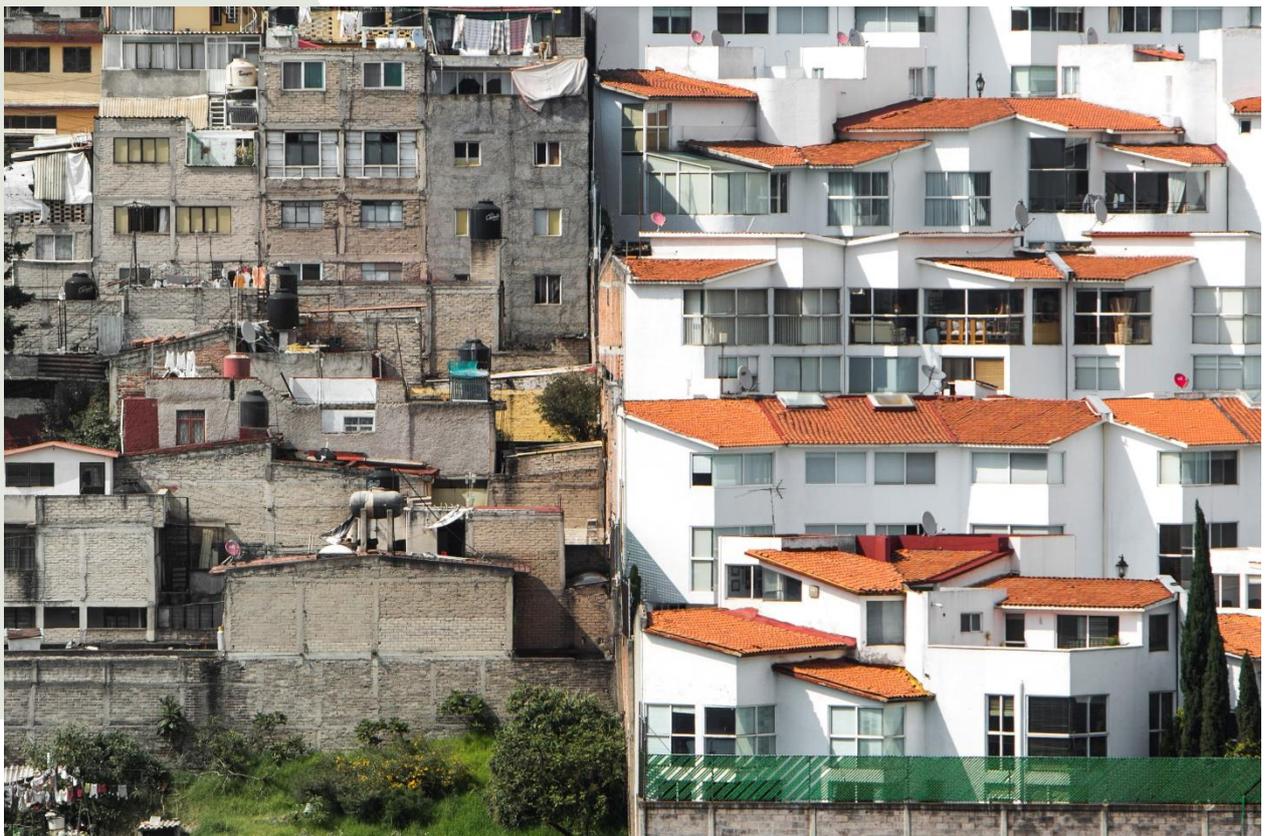
The third PhD position application was submitted to the [UiB Global Challenges](#) call with "Caring Imaginaries" project that was developed together with the Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design and the Centre for Women's and Gender Research at UiB. While funding for PhD positions was not granted, these applications have laid an important groundwork for GRIP's inter-disciplinary work and future cooperations.

Strategic Work

Throughout 2021 GRIP has been continuously working on expanding its network through research collaborations, participation at various events, and dissemination activities such as podcast interviews and miniseries publications. In addition, GRIP representatives have had numerous meetings with various stakeholders such as representatives of [the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation](#), [the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), [World Bank](#), [Oslo Governance Centre](#), [UNICEF](#), [Urban-Think Tank](#) as well as many universities and research centres in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. GRIP has also extended its cooperation with various ISC bodies such as [INGSA](#) and formalized collaboration with such partners as [Dis_local](#).



GRIP has also worked on policy impact and contributed with input on various strategic policy documents. Within the ISC' work GRIP made recommendations to the [ISC strategy in the intergovernmental system](#) as well as the [ISC Science and Technology Major Group Position paper for the 2021 HLPE](#). In addition GRIP has also provided recommendations for such initiatives as the [UNESCO chair for open science](#) and the [Norwegian Research Council's](#) portfolio development plans.



Mexico City



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