



## **CUCD EDI Pandemic Stories Report Launch Event** **By Victoria Leonard.**

In February 2023, the CUCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee held a launch event to celebrate the publication of the Pandemic Stories Report by Elena Giusti, Jennifer Ingleheart, Talitha Kearey and Victoria Leonard. This important Report creates an archive of stories from the first phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic to mitigate against the collective amnesia induced by a perceived lack of crisis, or the appearance of new crises. It seeks to highlight the impact of the Pandemic for disadvantaged or marginalised members of our community that is rarely foregrounded. The event, held online and open to everyone, introduced the Report and discussed its implications with expert contributors.

Pandemic Stories sits alongside other surveys and reports that gather data and analyse equality and diversity within the discipline of Classics, broadly conceived. These reports include the Women's Classical Committee's Women in Classics in the UK: Numbers and Issues Report, published in 2015, and the CUCD Equality and Diversity in Classics Report, published in 2020. These three reports were produced with the same broad intention, to reveal inequalities in Classics and to create a solid evidence base for them, making these inequalities harder for institutions and individuals to ignore.

The WCC Report provided a state of the field snapshot of women in Classics, revealing significant problems surrounding discrimination, casualisation, caring responsibilities, work-life balance, mental health issues, and sexual harassment. The CUCD Report focused on discrimination and barriers to progression in Classics, revealing how women, non-binary and BIPOC colleagues were particularly affected. The Pandemic Stories Report had a slightly different objective: it aimed to crystallise the inequalities within a unique crisis situation that would become difficult to return to for those who experienced them, and even harder for those who had not experienced them to understand them. It aims to prevent our 'pandemic stories' – our experiences, memories, and emotions of the first acute phase of the pandemic – being irretrievably lost.

Whilst the onset of Covid-19 affected everyone, the pandemic and its consequences were not felt universally. Existing societal disadvantages and inequalities were considerably exacerbated, and those from lower socio-economic groups, people with disabilities, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people with chronic or long-term health conditions, and people from oppressed or marginalised communities were more adversely affected. The Report was written with the intention that



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capturing experiences and offering recommendations will inform best practice and academic planning as a contingency against future crises and tackling inequalities in UK Higher Education. The Pandemic made inequalities more extreme and in some cases more visible, and if we can choose to take this moment to see these inequalities, we can do more to erase them.

The Pandemic Stories is freely available here:

<https://cucdedi.wordpress.com/2022/11/23/pandemic-stories-report/>.