

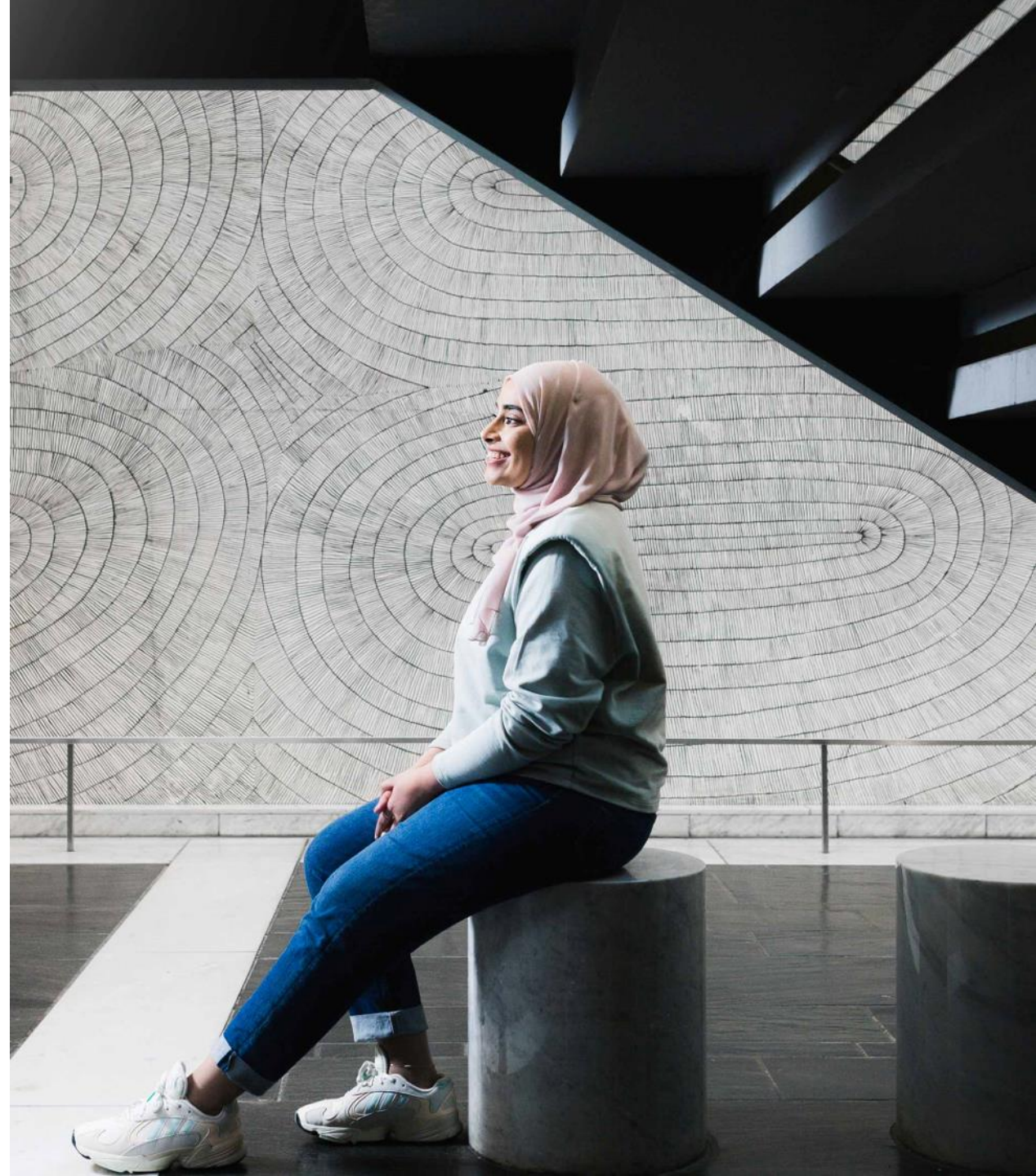
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

PhD candidates at risk

Presentation at the EUA-CDE conference

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University of Oslo and Scholars at Risk

Scholars at risk (SAR) contributions

- Member of SAR since 2001
- Strong focus on academic freedom and institutional autonomy
- Hosted 20 SAR and Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF) scholars on 32 one year stays, mainly financed by the university
- Scholars from Mexico, Eritrea, Syria, Pakistan, Jemen, Iran, Turkey, Burundi, Afghanistan and Myanmar
- Special short term support measure for Ukraine (supported 13 scholars up to now)
- Projects:
 - Academic Refuge Erasmus+,
 - Inspireurope MSCA,
 - Why Academic Freedom Matters (MOOC)



The hosting of researchers at risk

- Candidates nominated by SAR or SRF
- System built up for PhD holders
 - Temporary positions of one or two years
 - Coming to Europe on researcher work permits
 - From Postdocs to Professors
 - Independent academics with experience from research and teaching
 - Fellowship positions not to fill a gap at the host institution
 - A personal project and/or inclusion in a research group
 - An academic mentor
 - Career development activities



Afghanistan after Taliban takeover

- 2021 (+spring 22) High number of applications to SAR (1350 cases) and SRF
- Most academic staff in Afghanistan has only Master or Bachelor degrees
- 80% of SAR applicants do not have PhDs, 70% of open cases do not have a PhD

- Exceptions from the PhD requirement for Afghanistan
- Candidates get employed as researchers at HEIs in Europe
- Should they be encouraged to apply for admission to ordinary PhD programmes?
- Could any of them be relevant for Doctorate by publication

UiO short time support to Ukrainian scholars

- UiO departments can apply for funding for employing scholars from Ukraine
- 20 000 EUR (ca 3 months employment)
- Candidates recruited through academic networks
- Supported scholars
 - 6 with completed PhDs
 - 2 PhD candidates in Ukraine
 - 4 PhD candidates at UiO, delayed
 - 1 junior researcher (Master only)
- We are currently exploring how best to support candidates in PhD training in Ukraine

Challenges for PhD candidates at Risk

Can the candidate complete the PhD and graduate at the home university?

1. Challenges relating to the actual conflict or personal risk situation
2. Can the candidate keep the same supervisor from home by remote supervision + a co-supervisor at the host institution?
3. Project connected to the supervisor's interests (enthusiastic supervisor)
4. Is it possible to defend the thesis and graduate remotely or to travel home for the defense?

Challenges for PhD candidates at Risk (continued)

Implications of changing institution

1. Does the candidate fulfil all admission requirements?
2. Might have to change supervisor
3. Might have to adjust the research question and design
4. Will there be extra requirements for mandatory courses etc?



The candidate will most likely be severely delayed! (one year?)

Scholarship programme of the State of Bremen

Fellowship programme for at-risk scholars,
source of info Franziska Treviranus, University of Bremen

- PhD completion programme (currently under evaluation)
 - Candidates get a fellowship for 12 to 18 months
 - Need to have a host unit and mentor at the University of Bremen
 - Goal: To obtain a PhD from University of Bremen, based on former PhD training and the completion programme
- Experience:
 - «one point that should really be taken into consideration is 'time'.»
 - It takes very much time for a researcher at risk to settle in a new country
 - Even if the candidate is well advanced in the home programme, it takes time to adjust
 - It is rather unrealistic for researchers at risk to complete a PhD with 12-18 months fellowship

Food for thought

- Should the SAR and SRF support programmes be available for PhD candidates? (when there are many more requests from PhD holders than what can be accommodated)
- Will inclusion of PhD candidates mean that fellowship duration must be increased?
- What are the main obstacles for assisting an at-risk PhD candidate at your institution?
- Is Doctorate by publication an alternative for at-risk candidates?