

EMILY HARRIS:

Welcome to the Disability & Philanthropy Forum's Learning Series. My name is Emily Harris, I use she/her pronouns and I'm proud to be part of the disability community. I'm Executive Director of the Disability & Philanthropy Forum, and come to you from the unceded land of the council of Three Fires, the Ottawa, Ojibway and Potawatomi nations, now known as Chicago. As part of our commitment to accessibility, our panelists and I will each provide an example of an audio description of ourselves. I'm a white woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a salmon colored and black top with a colorful necklace. Behind me is a white and tan screen. My access needs are met today because we have CART captioning. A few housekeeping items. There are two ways to access our live captions today, either use the CC button at the bottom of your screen or to access the captions in a separate window. See the link to the external caption viewer in the chat.

During the first portion of our program today, we'll be spotlighting our speakers and you will be muted. We'll have several points during our moderated discussion where we pause for Q and A, so please feel free to submit questions at any time and we'll call on you. You can place questions in the chat or come off camera and unmute, and our moderator and speaker will address as many questions as we can. We'll use the chat throughout the session to share links to information and you can use it to post questions at any time. If you'd like to use it right now to put your name, title, and organization in the chat, we'd love to know who we're talking to. If the chat is not accessible to you, feel free to send your questions to communications@disabilityandphilanthropy.org.

Before we start today's conversation, just a short reminder that disability is a natural part of the human experience. One in four adults, 61 million people in the US have disabilities, and our community continues to grow as the population ages, as people contract lung COVID, other chronic illnesses, mental health and other conditions where society creates barriers to full participation. We have a poll question that we'll look at later in the conversation, we'd love to have you answer it now. It's an open-ended question and we're using Mentimeter, which will be pasted in the chat. Why do you think disability is seen as private and personal rather than political and powerful? I'll wait a moment while answers start to flow in. "Social stigma." I'm sure many more of you'll be answering as we go. And for now, I'll continue to talk and we'll take a quick look at it after.

You can also add your questions to the chat if Mentimeter is not accessible. To moderate our panel, I'm delighted to introduce Ana Oliveira, President and CEO of the New York Women's Foundation. Ana is joined on the panel by two leaders working for disability inclusion in philanthropy. You can learn more about the panelists from their bios that are linked in the chat. Now I see that we have some more Mentimeter answers. "So many bad things can come out of sharing." That's true. "Stigma, pity being seen as different or other. It's seen as taboo. It's seen as a private health issue and we don't talk about our health issues. You don't want to be perceived as weak or not being able to do your job efficiently. We've been conditioned to think this way. Keeps people isolated and reinforces myths of individualism." Thank you for these

answers, they are excellent and I think really speak to the topic. And I'm thrilled to turn things over to Ana.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Hello everybody. I am very honored to be able to moderate this conversation today. I am a light-skinned Latina with dark brown hair, short hair. I am wearing a black top and have my ear audio things hanging from my ears in front of my body. The background behind me is a white wall and my home. I am coming to you from New York City, the unceded land of the Lenape. And I'm very excited about the conversation today because disability has been both in my work, at the New York Women's Foundation as well as personally to me. Critical, critical dimension in the journey to justice and liberation, both on an individual and collective sense.

I personally live with a disability that has been going from less visible to more visible, and that is due to scoliosis and all the impact in my mobility as I age. And being able to bring together my role in philanthropy and looking for the most impactful roles for philanthropy, and closest to our for humanity along with my personal journey in that. So thank you for joining us today and I'm going to thank in advance our panelists. I am very pleased to welcome Phuong Pham and Catherine Hyde Townsend, and I'm going to ask you to start with an abbreviated self introduction. As we know your bios are included in the link that can be accessed in the chat. Can each of you please share your name, pronouns, your visual descriptions. And one sentence you would like our audience to know about you? Phuong, let's just start with you.

PHUONG PHAM:

Hello everyone. Thank you so much Ana, it's so great to be in community with you and Catherine and folks in the audience. My name is Phuong Pham, my pronouns are she, hers. I'm an Asian woman with chin length hair and I'm wearing a dark olive green long sleeve shirt. I'm joining you all from Tongva and Gabrieleno land, also known as Long Beach in Southern California. One sentence about myself is, I've moved a lot in the past two decades, 10 times plus. And these days I want to be known as a gardener and that I'm putting down roots.

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Thanks Phuong. Hi everybody, my name is Catherine Hyde Townsend. I am a white middle-aged woman with tortoise shell glasses and mid-length brown hair. I'm sitting in my home with a blue background. I am coming to you from my home in South Orange, New Jersey, the unceded land of the Lenape. The one thing that I wanted to share with you all is that besides my own personal disability experience, which is related to physical disability and back pain, chronic pain. I had no formal training at all around disability rights and justice and inclusion, academic or otherwise. And I share this because I think so many of us feel like we don't know enough, and we really hope that this session helps you feel more ready to engage in these conversations.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. I want to begin. We're asking you to share, how is it that your personal history has led you to prioritize a commitment to disability inclusion? That will be for all of you in our group today if you can think about that and put your responses on the chart. But I also want to begin again with you Phuong in answering that question and then ask you Catherine to follow.

PHUONG PHAM:

Sure, thank you for the question. My personal story that I have been on our journey of reflecting on is that I have always lived in multi-generational households. So growing up there was always an elder grandparent living with my family and before high school I experienced caring for grandparents at the end of their lives four times over. It was a painful and beautiful experience, and in my family having a disability is something that we expect and prepare for. Recently I've been realizing that I was born with and have been living with some of the disabilities that my grandparents and parents have, and I didn't know how to identify them exactly for a long time. A lot are invisible and I didn't feel often disabled enough or want to call attention to myself. And I've been afraid to claim another identity, but I've been working through this fear as part of my commitment to disability inclusion. And I'm committed because I want to advocate for my friends and family at the end of the day. Catherine, how about you?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Yeah, so just shy of my 30th birthday, I had been training for a triathlon. I was an avid triathlete and had a very devastating accident where I broke 10 bones. And it literally sort of shocked me into what the realities were like to both be visibly disabled and also experience the medical system and other systems. And really understand what we often call the social model of disability and how it played out in my own life. And it might seem strange to say this, but I felt very lucky because around the same time there was a drafting of the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, and I had been working on global human rights. And it was this very organic opportunity for me to really apply my lived experience to the professional work that I was doing, and to understand the powers and privileges that I had given some of my other identities. And the more that I started to understand the kind of exclusion and some of the issues that some of you put into the Mentimeter, it just seemed wrong. Like the injustice of it really angered me, and the less attention that was paid to it by philanthropy, the more anger and more driven I became to try to change that and really help others understand disability more and open up dialogues of conversation.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. And I want to join you there in my journey as well and understand as I'm listening to you. And I want to again, invite all of us in this group conversation today to think about that and to share your responses on the chat. How much in our work is also paralleled by our personal journeys, the ability for the identification in our own lives, in our own families as you were talking about. And the existence, the presence of disability, not out there somewhere else, but with us, with all of us. And with that also, I'm going to speak for me being able to see how important it is to center that. How important it is to include that so that others can also see themselves

included in the work that we do. And ourselves, our own humanity, embracing ourselves more and embracing each other more, not leaving anyone behind, such an important inclusion topic. So let me continue to ask you and Phuong, I wanted to ask you in particular. How have the lenses of collective care of healing justice influenced the commitment to disability inclusion in your work?

PHUONG PHAM:

Thank you, Ana. As part of SCG's strategic framework implementation, we had this process that was staff driven, of having year-long conversations about very specific words and concepts that we put down on paper to ensure that we walk the walk and talk the talk, and make sure that we explore deeper meanings as part of charting an action course for our future. And one of the words and concept that we collectively dive deeper into in order to weave it into many aspects of our organization is wellbeing. Which seems like a simple thing to say, we know that wellbeing encompasses emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, financial health. And we want to honor our team's individual agency and rights to their own wellbeing as a way to care for each other because there's no one way of being well. This means starting to build a culture where folks are safe to ask for what they need. And it could be as simple as sharing food menus before events and gatherings because we know that some of our team members have health challenges with dietary needs, and they only had to ask once in order for sharing food options in advance of gatherings become a norm.

And on my team, we have an amazing health healing practitioner who is also our arts and culture curator. Erica has been helping us to learn from and incorporate healing justice in our work. And healing justice is a direct response to generational trauma and systemic oppression, is a framework conceived by Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective. And by using this framework, we commit to transform our system and practice to cultivate healing and wellbeing. Healing justice as a movement that was by queer, trans, people of color, particularly Black and Brown fam centering disabled, poor, working class, rural healers. And if you're interested in learning more, I would recommend for folks to check out Southern Healing Justice Collective. And also there's a really wonderful essay out there called, A Not-So-Brief Personal History of Healing Justice Movement. And this framework is important for me personally and for SCG because it acknowledges that our working world is filled with burnouts and ableism. We're trying to create social change but still operate by practicing certain practices that really hurt us.

We're often rushing around surviving, not stopping or can't even afford to pause to care for ourselves and for one another. And we leave very little room for grief or trauma, spirituality, disability, aging, parenting, sickness. And in practice it really means to shift our mental model from self-care to collective care because we recognize that in our working environment, and our ways of work and work itself affects our individual wellbeing. And we could prioritize our own wellbeing, but there's little we can do without the care of our community and caring for each other. And collective care allows for a space to be mutually accountable and for our live experiences, for our disability to inform systemic change. And there's both an institutional shift and I think interpersonal shift that SCG is working towards. For example, on an institutional

level, we partner with the World Disability Institute to ensure that our policy procedures, benefits, website, our infrastructure in general are inclusive.

And on an interpersonal level we know that many of us face personal challenges and we have to tend to those challenges in flexible ways so that our individual needs that are diverse, that are not the same, that are constantly evolving can be cared for. And all of this is to say we center disability in how we design our daily operations, and being in tune with each other's emerging needs and in determining what it means to be well in our body and our mind. To care for each other, and then we would be much better off than we are right now.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. And that makes me want to ask you Catherine, from your work at the Ford Foundation, what are some lessons, three or so lessons that you have learned. Inspired also by what Phuong is saying about how to incorporate that, so what do you want to share with us?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Thank you, Ana. Yeah, I think that one of the most important things we've learned is the importance of leadership. Of leadership, not only talking about why this is an important priority, but also all of us have a role to play. I think sometimes we say leadership and we think only senior leaders. And what I think has been the most powerful at Ford is the way different people in different roles, whether or not they're the security staff or a program officer, has a role to play in changing the culture and shifting the norms. And I think one of the things that has been most powerful are people self-disclosing. And as hard as that can be, I've seen the ways that when one person self discloses, it provides an opening for others to do so. And it provides a community that already exists, but then we often don't feel. We don't feel that collective support sometimes because we don't talk about it, we might feel more isolated.

And I would just highly stress for you, over the course of my career, I have not always self-identified. And when I began doing so, I had many people say to me that they started identifying because I did, and I remembered being kind of shocked by this. I was like, "Really?" And I think we sometimes underestimate our own power and the ways that vulnerability actually can be very powerful. The second lesson is much more practical I suppose, and very philanthropy related, which is resource it. I often hear people say, "Oh, we're committed to disability, we care about this, we care about that." But I say that budgets are value documents, how does your budget actually demonstrate that commitment? And we do need specific money for disability, and disability is part of all of the social justice and human rights work that we do, and so there's ways that we can do both.

And then I guess the third lesson is really what we're doing today, which is talk about it often and in many different ways. There is so much hesitation to speak about disability and providing opportunities for staff and yourself to meet different disabled people. If you meet one disabled person, you've met one disabled person. It's a very diverse community, there are really different access needs for different people. And it's just an incredible opportunity, I think to better

understand our human condition and really engage in the kind of political analysis that we need as philanthropic institutions to understand the ways that ableism links with other systematic forms of oppression such as racism, patriarchy, et cetera.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you, thank you. It occurs to me as you were both speaking, that as a social justice movement, that the claiming of it, the coming out about it. I identify as a queer person and how important we know in the queer movement it has been to claim that. To own the narrative, to bring it out of some of the comments that we saw in the Mentimeter also, which is the shame of it, right? The stigma of it and to own it, and to make this a visible and proud part of our humanity. So I can also say that I identify with that personally, how the importance of self-disclosing and leading in that way. Particularly in disabilities that are either invisible at the first look or semi visible, or become more visible as we spend more time together or see lives get to know each other more.

So I have a question for everyone and after this question in a couple of minutes, we would like to take questions from the rest of the audience. And that is I think about how other systems of oppression, as Catherine just mentioned, contribute and intersect with ableism in philanthropy. What is the nexus, what is that weaving of those systems in our lives and communities? If you can think about that and begin to put both your thoughts and your questions also about that in the chats, that will be terrific. While you are doing that, I'm going to ask Phuong specifically, about the expressions of intersection of ableism and white supremacy. And then Catherine, I have another question for you, and then we'll open to the audience.

PHUONG PHAM:

I see that that's already a comment on intersectionality in the chat from Jamila, so I'm very happy to see that we're on the same wavelength here with the audience. I think for many organizations who have not yet committed to disability justice in meaningful ways, have likely already considered racial justice. And it's important for us to constantly remind ourselves of this intersectionality between systems of oppression. So to your questions, I want to refer to work of Tema Okun in the white supremacy culture paper that has been circulated. That is not new, but it has circulated more in the past few years. And if you haven't already, I just would invite us to examine how elements of white supremacy culture hurt our commitment to disability justice. Ableism and white supremacy are so intertwined, they manifest in forms of professionalism, the sense of false urgency, worship of the written words, this like either or binary thinking.

Either we can see your disability, we cannot. The idea that there's only one way to do things or power hoarding. In our organizations, in philanthropy, it could look like noting disabilities in someone's HR file but not do anything about it. Or prioritizing the comfort of not talking about disabilities, and it could also mean that we are constantly afraid of not being inclusive enough, not being equitable enough and fear of taking actions and make mistakes. And it's really hard to not make mistakes, I would just share a personal story. Before the pandemic, we had our friend Candace Cable, if you're familiar with her, nine time Paralympian overall amazing woman, come

to share how she experiences our conference space and event space. And how they could be more accessible, and we implemented many of her recommendations. But after the pandemic, while planning one of our first in-person conference after three years of virtual conferencing, we were so worried about attendee numbers and drop-offs that we ended up with a conference room that was way too packed that compromised our dedicated lanes for wheelchair users.

And even though we didn't have any attendee with this need at this particular event, it's still something that we acknowledge that we failed to do and that in prioritizing success and what success means in numbers — which is a very common manifestation of white supremacy — we ended up with an inaccessible space that could have been very harmful for our community. And I have seen a lot of programs at the Forum that's already been having conversations with community about intersectionality. And I know that there's a lot that we can go deep into, but the intersection is so apparent and it's shows up in practices that we are either aware or not aware of. And I think it's just really a constant, for me, a constant state of self-reflection and being self-aware to continue to interrogate the intersection.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Catherine, what would you like to add to that, to those expressions that you have encountered in that intersection?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Yeah. I think one of the things that I think about in terms of philanthropy is what we call "Professionalism." And so prioritizing certain kinds of dress, for example. And so for example, women wearing heels, this is one of those places where we see gender norms intersect with ableism. And why do we need to dress in certain ways? And of course some of those things may not be required, but we all know that there are these soft cultural cues about how we should show up, how we might need to dress. And really thinking carefully about why those exist and for whose benefit do they exist is incredibly important. I think that for me, my personal experiences are most around the gender- the ways gender and disability intersect. And I'm thinking about things like parenting, having a family and those kinds of expectations that may or may not be more difficult for those of us with disabilities.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. I would like to see if we have questions from our audience and the other participants at this point.

EMILY HARRIS:

I do see one question in the chat Ana, Kevin Lewin, do you want to come off of mute or should I read your question? Give you a second. "Please read," Kevin says. "How do you deal with over political correctness regarding disability? I'm partially deaf, that is how I identify. But activist friends insist the correct term is hearing impaired. I often get offended when others without hearing issues tell me what my language should be." I can relate to this Kevin, I have hearing

loss as well and I say I have hearing loss. So I've been told that that shows an impairment and I shouldn't use it. So we're on opposite ends of that conversation. Catherine, Phuong, Ana: reactions to that?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

This is Catherine, I'm happy to take this. So I do a lot of trainings at the Ford Foundation and what I often tell people is, if you have a disability, you can call yourself whatever you want to call yourself. It's just like any other identity, we have the power to identify as we choose and to use the language that we choose. When I am sharing language guidance with others, I often emphasize the way language is always changing. That different people prefer different language, and there are some preferences that I think can help people understand things. So for example, outside the US, I would not recommend using disabled person. It's actually really not preferred and people use persons with disabilities. Inside the US, it's very commonly used. And so I think helping people understand what the "why" behind language, is actually the most important thing.

So for example, for people with disabilities, that person-first language came about because people were being identified solely by their disability, and we all hold multiple identities. So why should our disability necessarily be the first thing that is identified with us? And in fact, in some countries in the world, people are not given a name, they're called their disability. And so really understanding the power of reclaiming the language. So for example, the disability community, some people use the term "crip." It is not to be used by those who are non-disabled, but it's like the reclamation of the word queer and it can be very powerful. If any of you have heard of, and if you haven't seen, please go watch Crip Camp. That's an amazing powerful documentary on Netflix.

EMILY HARRIS:

Phuong, any thoughts on that? Language.

PHUONG PHAM:

I would just add that often I feel in movements and in philanthropy, we over-intellectualize equity. And language means a lot to me, it's something that define what I do, and I do think that using the right language is powerful. But I think there's always this fine line between choosing the right language and over intellectualizing what we say. And Kevin, I hope that you feel affirmed by the audience and by Catherine that yes, you can use whatever you want in referring to your own disabilities and I hope to do the same. In our own style guide, if in terms of training and be able to work toward using language that is more inclusive, the only thing that we included in our style guide is to also avoid condescending euphemism. When we are not open to talk about disability, we often use all of these euphemisms in terms of differently able or challenge. And by shying away from mentioning our disability, we might reinforce the notion as something to be ashamed and to be disposed of. So I honor you and affirm you that you can refer to yourself in whatever ways that feel powerful to you.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Yes, claiming of language of self-determination is so important. And an intrinsic part of our own liberation, all of us in all dimensions of our identities, including disability. So let me ask, any other questions from the audience, otherwise I have a couple more questions for our panelists?

EMILY HARRIS:

No more at this time, Ana.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Okay, thank you. So I wanted to talk a little bit about in philanthropy now, some of the further practical aspects of incorporating or centering, I'm just going to say centering disability justice inside, consciously inside our work in philanthropy. So we have heard there's some foundations and have concerns about the cost of the commitment to disability inclusion. How would you respond to that concern? And let's also talk about the costs of not being disability inclusive, and they may be both financial and beyond financial costs in both of the answers that I'm going to ask. So I wanted to begin with you Phuong, and then ask you Catherine, for your thoughts on that.

PHUONG PHAM:

Ana, I would actually love to hear from you also on this, as a lead of a foundation and as someone with decision making power to budget and resources. But I definitely see this issue as a need to change our culture and reframe what we see as risks and challenges and costly. It is not unique to disability justice, but in all areas of philanthropy work. And without privileges, it's easy to sit around and analyze the cost and risks of changing and committing to disability inclusion. And like you said, what is the cost of not being inclusive? I think the reframe cost of not being inclusive is showing a lack of commitment to equity, of contradicting everything else that we say we want to do. And the real cost is our community's livelihood. In worrying about the cost of disability justice, I think we might be thinking about disability in simple binary when there are so many nuances.

For example, many of us are already thinking about our next elections, and advocacy and civic engagement needed to ensure that our democracy is protected. And there are many legislations and practices that suppress voters, which disproportionately affect by part disabled folks. And the cost of compromising our democracy is immense, and there are so many ways to flip the script and change the way we think about risks and costs. And I would invite folks to name the specifics, so to speak, costs within the organization, what it means to you in terms of, like Catherine said earlier, your budget as your moral document. And is the direct manifestation of our beliefs and our work and our mission and our values. And we should ask whether this cost of disability inclusion, actually center disability and racial equity. Or is it really centering our other fears and do this cost center our privilege and our power instead of those that we actually care about?

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Yes. So I'm going to be very on equal terms here in my own accountability and answer that, so thank you Phuong. So I think that I'm going to do first from a very narrow interpretation of the word cost, the word cost as a financial budget item. I think that it's all about the commitment of foundations in the grant making components, dedicating, ensuring that X percent of one's grant making is specifically focused on disability justice and disability leaders and movements and organizations with the buy and for perspective. Buy and for, and I think that that's important because the generational and generational underinvestment and lack of visibility and lack of priority of funding disability organizations and movements. I also think that in the grant making disability needs to be integrated in all the grant making of any of our places that we work at foundations.

So if there's another priority which is in our case in for instance, girls and young women of color or economic justice or healing justice. That it needs to be integrated into the understanding the framework and the funding that occurs in those other areas of priorities. Let me just say that philanthropy creates these areas, these human lives are not segmented in areas. And is our enormous necessity to become closer and closer and more and more aligned with real lives as we do our funding to movements, to organizations, to people. So I would say that, and yes, we need to reprogram or increase our dollars. I think the right thing is to increase the dollars, that then get invested in the priorities around disability justice. Other costs are, I think, in existence to the cost of not prioritizing and speaking about disability inclusion. What do I mean by that?

And that is that the effectiveness, the integrity and the effectiveness. Can our grant making, can our work as philanthropists be effective if we are pretending to be unconscious or denying the existence of disability in our lives, in our communities, throughout all the issues? It can't, it will always hit a wall. And it is to our advantage, it is a real beneficial and it returns our investment for folks that want to talk about a return on investment. Return on investment requires further and further alignment with the true reality of our human lives. And in that regard, there are no costs, there's only gains. So I wanted to say that and now I'm going to ask Catherine to talk about that. And also if you can talk specifically Catherine, because of your work at the Ford Foundation and beyond about the importance of leadership modeling. And leadership being a partner with you in all levels of leadership as you spoke before in the practices of disability inclusion.

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Great. Thanks, Ana. Yeah, I'll just give a few examples so we can get out of the abstract. So first of all, small things very can be very meaningful. So for a time we would do visual descriptions during disability meetings at the Ford Foundation or externally. And then our senior leadership began doing visual descriptions at all the meetings, at our town hall meetings, and ensuring that we had captioning at all of our town hall meetings, not just our external meetings. And these things sometimes take time, but they also can happen very quickly. All of a sudden those kinds of practices can really catch on fire to some extent, so that's one example. I think another example is really, I'm going to use the word rewarding, but rewarding staff leadership.

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So I gave a very quick 101 to our staff who was working at a reception, and it was right before our reception. And in attendance was one of the security guards at the Ford Foundation. And he approached me afterwards and said, "I saw that you had in your hands a slide deck. Could you email that to me? I want to be sure that all of my staff have access to the information you just shared." And I said, "Sure, Charlie. I will send that to you."

I emailed it to him. I then shared that information with the CEO, with Darren Walker, and he then emailed Charlie and said, "Thank you Charlie, for the work that you're doing." And so when we say everyone has a role to play, that's the kind of thing that we mean. I couldn't have known that he was a supervisor of the security guards. I didn't actually know anybody I was speaking to in that particular instance. So that's leadership in both ways, so Charlie was playing his own leadership role and then Darren was reinforcing it. Let me just give one other example, which is agendas. So hopefully we all have meeting agendas, at the Ford Foundation we have a lot of internal meetings, and ensuring that disability is on those agendas. And sometimes that's something that I can make space for, but many times it is not. It is something that others need to make space for, and it's not necessarily me personally. And so again, for example, our town halls regularly have discussions around disability, and it might be the technology team talking about the new fund that they've started at the Borealis philanthropies. Or it might be an update on our own evaluation, but really making space, that shows the priority of the work, not just in budget terms, but in the time that we spend together as a community and as organizations.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. I want to ask you to turn a little bit of this conversation around the issue of communications. And Phuong, I want to ask you, how does the internal and external communications reflect commitments to disability inclusion in an organization?

PHUONG PHAM:

Apologies. Communications. I think language is fundamental to communications. So internally or externally, it is really about examining the language that we use in every document, every speech, both verbal and nonverbal, including design from your handbook to your website. And I would also add that it isn't really about policing or censoring words per se, it's more about building an awareness and how language is such a part of how ableism manifests. And language isn't really just about semantic as part of our culture, and culture permeates the way we think and act and affects public policies and wealth distribution. And one example, I feel like when we adopt a practice, we have to ask if we're just checking a box or are we actually providing access? And I think example is, I think it has become quite common to provide alternate texts for images on websites and social media.

But if the alternate text simply says, "Logo of SoCal Grantmakers," is that really helpful to someone who are using screen readers? Or we can all learn from the beautiful alternate text that NASA writes about planets and stars and say, "Logo of SoCal Grantmakers with concentric circle and shades of bright orange and yellow, pair with organization name in navy blue text." And I feel like we could go over a specific- SCG has resources, the Forum has a lot of

resources. We're all in a learning journey and we can all pay attention to the accessibility of our languages, and also the accessibility of the container of our languages. Including digital documents, emails, website, print. So yeah, I think without being overly nitty-gritty, I just invite us to really be aware and interrogate and examined words that we use, visual cues that we use and the containers where language and communication exists.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. So we've been talking about this process, this process of disability inclusion and organizational change. Our own personal roles in that, but the roles that everyone has to play as Catherine just gave examples of that. So in a process like that, periodically we need to figure out how we're doing. We need to have a sense and an evaluation of how we are moving along our own inclusion process of disability. So Catherine, this question is for you as you've been involved in the Evaluation of the Ford Foundation on Disability Initiative. What do you want to tell us about that?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Yeah, thanks Ana. So first of all, it's always an opportunity to be able to reflect and go back to see, wait, what did we say we were going to do and then what happened? In our case, we had very publicly stated what we were going to do and shared that. And I would highly recommend doing this, it is not just an accountability piece sort of externally, but it's also an accountability in internally. So that we can say, "Okay, we've made progress on this. We can also reward that progress." So when we started our process, we found that there were some areas where we made just outstanding progress, and I'll just give you an example. The Ford Foundation was fairly new to disability rights and justice grant making, but in the time that we started this work and now, we've become the largest private donor of disability rights and justice grant making both in the United States and globally.

So that was like, wow, that is amazing. And I would just say, I think it reflects how little money is currently being put into these issues. On the other hand, it also gave us a moment to have kind of what I would call more anonymous collection of data. And so we hired an external consultant that had done this for many other institutions and we learned more about, for example, our reasonable accommodations process. Which on paper and policy was extremely strong, but in practice there was a lack of clarity around how to access it, who could access it. And so that kind of feedback was incredibly helpful for us to know, okay, there's more work to do there. We've been talking a lot about identifying, we have found that many staff at the Ford Foundation are not yet comfortable to self-identify. And so what does that mean, what other things do we need to do to continue to shift our culture? But then thirdly, it's really given us a roadmap. So we are in the process of creating a new strategy and we're able to use the evaluation to help us prioritize. Because even a large foundation like the Ford Foundation, there's still limited time and resources.

And so what are the places where we think we can make the most impact, and what have our staff and others told us? So let me just end with this piece, which is also about engaging the

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disability community. And so we are doing participatory focus groups with both members of the disability community in the US, as well as globally. To give us feedback on our draft strategy, and do so before it's fully baked. Not to do so in a tokenizing way, but in a way that can truly inform our next steps forward.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

And co-shape it with you, yes.

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Not the rubber stamp endorsement, which I think is often what we want from communities. And I think it's really time for philanthropy to really start flipping the ways that we think about our priorities and strategies in terms of how communities inform those.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. So I'm going to ask from each of you a very important question. What is your call to action to philanthropy? So let me begin with you, Catherine, and then go to you Phuong.

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

I apologize. Can I have Phuong go first, there's some background noise where I am.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Okay, no problem. Phuong, can you start it?

PHUONG PHAM:

For sure.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you.

PHUONG PHAM:

Actions for philanthropy. Sign the pledge and get your plan of actions. And since we're talking to the Forum members, I think you all have already signed a pledge, I'm assuming. So I think invite your peers and foundations in your network to sign a pledge and get your personal plan of action. Other things, something that just came up that Catherine also mentioned is I think find partners, build relationship with communities of folks with disabilities. At SCG we love working with World Disability Institute and our members who are funding disability inclusion. I think it's important to find those folks in your community wherever you are and build those relationships. And then to borrow from one of SCG's members, Ryan Easterly from the WITH foundations. I think ask yourself very important questions and have those conversations with your leadership,

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with your board, with your grantees of how does your work impact disability communities, whatever it is.

Do you allocate funds in your budget for disability accessibility needs? Do you have disability inclusion representation within your staff and board? Are you a language and design accessible? Do you incorporate disability justice from work in your work? And I feel like to have those questions with everyone involved, with different level of the organizations are extremely important to identify exactly what you should do. And then personally, a big part of my work is narrative change. And there, as we started out this webinar with there is so much we have to change on how disability is perceived, how intersectionality between disability is perceived with other systems of oppression. And one ways of investing in narrative change for disability inclusion is to invest in artists and cultural barriers who are disabled and who are talking about disabilities, and who are educating and advocating for disability inclusion in our culture. One small plug is a poet that we work with, Kay Ulandy Barrett. There are songs, there are poems, there are TV shows. Catherine mentioned Crip Camp, which is amazing. And I hope that you'll find ways to read, to watch, to listen to. In many ways, to also continue our own personal education along with the institutional and sector level that we're working towards.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Thank you. Catherine, is this a better moment to hear your actions?

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

Yes. Thank you.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Recommendations for philanthropy.

CATHERINE HYDE TOWNSEND:

I'm going to make this really short. Do something, even just one thing, and it doesn't have to be the hardest thing. I think sometimes we hear about all of these changes, convincing leadership, moving budget, and we think about doing them all at the same time. Invite a disability leader in to talk about climate change, to talk about lung COVID. Invite people into your spaces and invite senior leaders to those conversations. We found this to just be really powerful, just the other day, we had the leader of the Black Disabled Lives Matter movement from Brazil come into the Ford Foundation. And I invited as many people as I could to hear this incredible leader speak. Those are some of the- I think they're pretty easy ways to really start engaging and learning. And they're also exciting, it was just kind of thrilling to hear the ways that this woman's work was intersecting with our work around anti-Black racism, centering gender and disability all at once.

ANA OLIVEIRA:

Excellent. I'm going to add too, and that is whenever possible, when you're hiring people, hire people that own and identify and are part of disability movements as well. And as seconding what Catherine and Phuong are saying, do something, bring people in, have people at the tables, at all tables, right? Invite people to join your board, who are disability activists. And don't invite only one, begin with somebody that is a trailblazer if nobody's identifying that way. But promise and walk the commitment of enlarging the presence, normalizing the presence, being part of all the people that is in our foundations. I'm going to turn it over to Emily and see if we have a last question from the audience or a couple of questions.

EMILY HARRIS:

Not seeing any questions. It's not too late to raise your hand quickly. And while we're waiting for you to do that, I want to put in a plug for our podcast, most recent episode is talking about employment. And the one before that is a disability 101 discussion, and our first episode we now have three, is about disability and grant making. So lots of new resources and new ways to access those. And I don't think you tutored your own horn enough, the New York Women's Foundation has just done a really interesting landscape analysis of women and girls and disability in New York and what the needs are. I think that's an incredible model for if you fund in a particular area, you're not sure how disability fits. That's a great piece to look at to try to figure that out. Okay, well, I guess we will wrap up. You guys were just so great, nobody has questions, they all are putting in the chat how much they've learned.

So my closing is just to remind you of an addition to the podcast, upcoming events. Very excited that on July 13th we will have a Disability Inclusion Staff Training modeled by our new Learning Services Director, Sarah Napoli. And then in September and October two topical webinars diving into key issues. Following the session, you'll receive a short survey. Please help us learn from your experiences by taking a few minutes to fill it out, and a link is available in the chat. And I want to just extend my own and everybody in the Forum's extreme gratitude to Catherine, Phuong and Ana for your leadership, your willingness to put yourselves out there and self-disclose all you were doing to advance disability. Not only in your organizations, but in the whole sector. And to really be standing up for disability inclusion rights and justice in our communities as a whole. Thank you all, we look forward to seeing you in July and please fill out our survey.

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Thank you so much. That does conclude today's webinar. Thank you for your participation and have a great day.