

NARRATOR:

The Disability & Philanthropy Forum presents Aida Akim-Escriva, Program Officer for Adolescent Girls Rights at Global Fund for Women.

AIDA AKIM-ESCRIVA:

You don't owe anyone your diagnosis. You don't owe anybody an explanation of yourself. You don't owe that at all. And oftentimes, I feel like we tend to fall into this, especially on the days when we get sick, especially on the days when we get some kind of chronic pain, is really lots of guilt and lots of pressure to really be this person that you aren't. We do get, as somebody who has chronic pains, has flare-ups, it's just something that I really needed to learn to accept is that I don't owe that to anybody.

So if you would like to disclose your disabilities or even just come up, not necessarily being very detailed about it and just say, "I'm a person with disabilities" the way I'm doing right now, it's your choice. And for example, I am a person who's vocal about it, and I think it made a strong cultural change within my organization, but also generally within the philanthropy as people are seeing this conversation, because there is no gender justice without disability inclusion. There is no human rights without disability inclusion.

So disability goes through all of it, racial justice, whatever you can think of. Anything you want, philanthropy, disability will be part of it. And as people who are working in the spaces, we really need to start recognizing that it isn't only something for the other people that we are working with as philanthropists, but also for us inside of this.

NARRATOR:

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