



BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY ONLINE 2020: REBUILD BETTER

TRANSCRIPTION: HOW CAN COMPANIES ACCELERATE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND INCLUSION OF BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE?

DATE: THURSDAY 16/07

THEME: EQUITY

FORMAT: WEBINAR

SPEAKERS

■ **Dazon Dixon Diallo**, Founder & CEO, *SisterLove*

■ **Romeo Effs**, Board Advisor, Non-Executive Director, and Founder and CEO, *Lumorus*

■ **Antony Karanja**, Information Technology Student, *Zetech University-Kenya*, and member of *The Youth Cafe*

■ **Sandra Kerr**, CBE, Race Equality Director, *Business in the Community*

■ **Landiwe Mahlangu**, Chief Economic Advisor to the *National African Chamber of Commerce and Industry*

■ **Moderator:** Sue Adkins, Founder, *The Collaborative Action Network*

IN THIS SESSION, OUR PANELLISTS DISCUSSED THE THEME OF THE DAY, EQUITY, IN RELATION TO THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) COMMUNITIES AND WIDER FIGHT TO TACKLE RACISM. OUR SPEAKERS TOUCHED ON TOPICS RELATED TO THE PANDEMIC'S DISPROPORTIONATE SHOCK TO MINORITY GROUPS, THE ROLE OF BUSINESSES IN SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE INITIATIVES, AND WHY EQUITY MUST BE AT THE HEART OF BUILDING UP A MORE RESILIENT SOCIETY.

Sue Adkins (00:00:30):

Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. Wherever you are, hello. I'm very well, thank you, and delighted to have this opportunity to be hosting this session, which is a really important session. So thank you very much, Katie, for all your hard work too, and to everybody who's joined the session, and to the panelists, who you are going to hear from shortly.

Sue Adkins (00:00:50):

Absolutely fantastic to have so many of you on this session. And we look forward to your participation. And the session is all about how can business accelerate the opportunities and inclusion of BAME communities within their core business and beyond, a question I'm sure many of you have been grappling with for some time.

Sue Adkins (00:01:09):

And I'm sure we're all experiencing in our different geographies the challenges of COVID-19 and the devastating impacts of that as well as seeing the impact of the debate, discussion, explosion around the George Floyd murder recently.

Sue Adkins (00:01:26):

So the whole agenda of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and their inclusion in our communities, and in our businesses, and to have them fully represented has never been more important. And what we're going to do is have an amazing group of exceptional panelists talking to you this afternoon about their perspectives, sorry. They're from all over the world. They have a range of experience. And I'm sure they're really going to be able to light your fire and set your minds churning around this agenda.

It's such an important agenda today.

Sue Adkins (00:01:58):

So without further ado, I'm wanting to make sure we keep to time and have lots of opportunity for questions, I want to introduce to Sandra Kerr, Sandra Kerr CBE, who is the Equality Director at Business in the Community, and a great friend, and an incredible expert in this space. She has worked on all corners around this agenda.

Sue Adkins (00:02:18):

And it really excites you with some of the things that she's been doing over the several years and the calls to action around this agenda. So Sandra, thank you so much for joining us, and over to you.

Sandra Kerr (00:02:30):

Thank you, Sue, for that kind invitation. And thank you for the opportunity to share what action we've been taking at BITC. So that's Business in the Community. So it's a network of employers who work with the public and private sector, who know that actually business needs to be part of the solution. We cannot just simply rely on the government.

Sandra Kerr (00:02:52):

It was originally the organisation was started by the Prince of Wales over 35 years ago. And our campaign was celebrating its 25th year this year. So first, we had COVID-19. And quickly the data across the UK demonstrated that there was a disproportionate impact of contagion and death on black and minority ethnic people. And we already, we quickly pivoted into action with fact sheets to help employers to think there's potentially going to be an economic downturn. You need to monitor the furlough, the potential. If you're looking at shrinking your workforce, you need to ensure you're monitoring that to ensure not to disproportionately impact in those groups.

Sandra Kerr (00:03:37):

You also need to look at the mental health because there was already an issue. 29% of black women in any one week reported a mental health disorder in 2014. And we'd never had a national

campaign to tackle that, so in the light of the pandemic, what was going on.

Sandra Kerr (00:03:54):

And then we had the killing of George Floyd, which was streamed into every home. Children saw this going on in their screens. So we had not only people being triggered and having to deal with what they're seeing themselves, but also having to parent their children at home.

Sandra Kerr (00:04:10):

So I put out a statement firstly to employers, to say, "Look, you're going to have to get comfortable with your employees wanting to demonstrate an outpouring of grief and stand in solidarity to this." And then I quickly followed with a blog, which the three big things that I set out, really, have resulted in being a map for employers.

Sandra Kerr (00:04:32):

The first one is about leadership and ensuring that you find space for voice at the top table, black voices around the top decision-making tables, particularly be your policymaker or business going to... If you're taking decisions that are going to affect those communities, so really important to find a way to get that voice, absolutely you need to build your talent pipeline. But in the meanwhile, you need to find a way to ensure that you are hearing firsthand so you can get advice in the moment, telling you what action to be taken.

Sandra Kerr (00:05:06):

The second area was around allyship. So people are asking me, "Sandra, is this different?" I think where it is different is white people were standing up with black people in the peaceful protests, saying, "This is enough. We don't want this anymore. We want change." And what we are hearing from our employers is that is going on in the workplace as well, the employee voice, black and white, saying, "What changes are we going to make? Because we don't want to live in a society like this."

Sandra Kerr (00:05:34):

And what I'm saying, what I've said to allies is it's time to speak up and to stand up. To get informed, use the insight that's available.

And if you need to read and watch YouTube videos, whatever you need to do, become informed and actually move towards being antiracist. I think where we are now, you can't just say, "I'm not racists." You need to be standing against this. So more on that to come. We've put out some materials.

Sandra Kerr (00:06:01):

And then finally, the third piece that I put it out in the blog was about connection, and that's connection with your employees. So I said to every employer by now should have definitely checked in with their black employees and asked them, "What is going on? How are you feeling?"

Sandra Kerr (00:06:17):

And we have had employers who have had 500, 800, even 10,000 people streamed on calls and conversations with their employees. So I'm encouraging that as a first step to listen, to understand, and then you look at what actions to take. And then also with those listening to community, and your employees connecting with community, so that's around supporting social enterprise, supporting entrepreneurs, supporting black charities that are led by black people, because what happens is those community are the back of the queue for funding, investments, and engagement. So more to come on that.

Sandra Kerr (00:06:54):

So those are the three big buckets of action that we're encouraging employers to move on. And then one of the things we've established and we established it in 2018 was what we called the Race at Work Charter. And it was launched with the prime minister in 2018. And in the last five weeks, we've seen 95 new employers sign the charter. So it just hit the 350-employer milestone. So hopefully more to come on that, but just want to give others a chance to talk. But that's just our opening landscape for you. Thank you.

Sue Adkins (00:07:30):

Thank you so much, Sandra. Thank you. And, I mean, as you say, three clear things to do: leadership, allyship, and connections, and conversation. And there's so many important agendas that interlock across the world.

Wherever you are, wherever you're listening to this call from, there's a lot to learn from. And I know that Sandra and the campaign at Business in the Community have so much to share and has shared so much already with employers in the UK. Please do look at their website to find out more because we're very much a sharing organisation, Business in the Community, to make sure that others can learn and can benefit from it.

Sue Adkins (00:08:02):

And the charter, take a look at the charter and see how you can adapt it and use it in your markets, wherever you are. Thank you, Sandra. We'll come back to you with more questions, if you don't mind.

Sue Adkins (00:08:10):

Antony, do you mind if we turn to you? Antony is an incredible guy. He's still doing his degree. He's Antony Karanja. He's based in Kenya. He works with The Youth Caffl©. He's done incredible work. I mean, in fact, I can't keep up with the amount of things he's doing. So, please, Antony, please join us and share your contributions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Antony Karanja (00:08:32):

So the topic of discussion today was quite an interesting one because the reason, again, how a business should accelerate the opportunities and inclusion of the black, Asian, minority ethnic communities into their core business and beyond.

Antony Karanja (00:08:47):

So a good point to start on was, for me, the death of George Floyd. But now just looking at it from the retrospective view, where we saw about 65 years ago Emmett Till went through the same thing, and it triggered some reaction, which has somehow helped people out to have a certain view, a new view on how what racism looked like.

Antony Karanja (00:09:18):

And now we have, 65 years later we have the same... We have now a video that we can put to... We can peg on what racism looks like. Now, looking at it, I wanted to interlink that with the fact that there are a few reports in the United States that have been released most recently as last year, showing

that by 2032, there are going to be the majority of the working class in the United States are going to be people of colour.

Antony Karanja (00:09:52):

Now, imagine you have in the United States, but yet you have to show this burden which is not naturally a burden and shouldn't be a burden, but it is a burden inflicted to me by other people because people choose to view you from what you look... and judge you from the colour of your skin but not rather from the content of your character or what you can offer with regards to human capital development.

Antony Karanja (00:10:22):

In business, human capital development can never go in line with us looking at the colour. We look at the capacity building of a person. We look at the ability of how one is able to deliver on certain projects, what they can do for the company, their effectiveness on a couple of things. And for you to entrust them with that management, it means that they don't have to go through this ordeal of have [inaudible 00:10:48].

Antony Karanja (00:10:49):

Economic inclusion should be the pedestal upon which this reality is brought to life. And we need to understand that that means we've got to build robust economic infrastructures which will ensure that there is equal access to economic opportunities to everyone regardless of their ethnicity, regardless of where they come from, their [inaudible 00:11:08] positioning.

Antony Karanja (00:11:09):

And now this further boils down to human capital development. We've got to build the capacity of the people who are getting into the job markets, who are currently in the job markets but have a skill set which may necessarily be wiped out within the next 10 years, and just equip them with new skills so that they're able to help us realise now the next state of development.

Antony Karanja (00:11:38):

And most especially, from the African context, if you look at Africa at large, is that we have a unique opportunity right now because most of the countries in the

continent are developing. And we have the ability to leapfrog some of the processes which the First World went through.

Antony Karanja (00:11:56):

So a quick example would be we didn't really have the old computers here. We got into more advanced. We didn't really start at the very beginning point, which means if we are able to overlook things like pollution with regards to just embracing green technology and going directly to systems that work, this will ensure that we have economic systems that work for the people and economic systems that don't necessarily have to go through the process of development.

Antony Karanja (00:12:30):

Again, so we can move from the Second Industrial Revolution to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and realise the true African dream, which is an Africa where everybody has got access to basic human rights and we are able to move the conversation forward from there. And the youth are a very important appendage to the realisation of this dream.

Antony Karanja (00:12:58):

So at The Youth Cafffl®, we have a specific focus on just wanting to helping further develop their capacity. We do capacity building, so we have instances where we are now trying to bring onboard an incubation and acceleration program that is going to ensure that at the end of the day, we are able to help businesses that are being started by young people, young women, even between the age of 18 and 35, and they're able to grow those businesses maybe twofold, threefold, thus creating two or three business opportunities for each business, two or three employment opportunities for people. And now that is going to help people develop.

Antony Karanja (00:13:47):

Another key statistic that I should quote is really rad. There was last year a study was done about venture, the venture funds that come into the African continent and most especially the East African region. It was 90% of the total venture capital fund that came out from abroad, went

into white-run startups. So we become a minority in our own country because we don't have that access to funding. And this can easily, easily be swayed off if we just build systems that sort of bridge the gap.

Antony Karanja (00:14:32):

If we have people in the United States who are willing to start funds that are going to directly just come benefit black-owned African businesses, we'll be able to move on to the next thing.

Sue Adkins (00:14:44):

Thank you very much for that, Antony. Next we turn to Landiwe. Landiwe, so good to have you with us from South Africa. We're delighted to have you on the call and delighted and looking forward to your contributions.

Sue Adkins (00:14:55):

And as the chief economic advisor for the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry you obviously touch that. There are so many businesses within South and Southern Africa. Looking forward to hearing from you. So over to you, Landiwe. Thank you.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:15:16):

I'm actually grateful to actually join this conversation. Clearly I now wearing a bit of two hats. But I think I'm talking here as part of the South African United Business Confederation. It is actually quite a fairly new confederation. But it is actually a logical continuation of what I used to do before. I used to be an economic advisor of the National African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the oldest and the largest in the Chamber of Industry, the majority of which are really black businesses.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:15:51):

As you know that really our reanimation has to actually ensure that we give a space and actually market for actually black businesses, which in the majority are actually quite small. In South Africa, where I actually come from, clearly we have a history of institutionalised racism, as you know.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:16:17):

And then clearly initially our African cousins [inaudible 00:16:21] to say we need to do and actually ensure that black businesses are actually become part of the mainstream. They become included. And actually this is something that even within [inaudible 00:16:38] say you're busy, we're still pursuing. One of the things that we have actually learned, and that's why I'm quite pleased to be part of this as such, you may have racism, or you may have discrimination that is actually stereotype.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:16:55):

But even if they remove it, it may be necessary to actually take it out of the subject books. But it's not actually sufficient to actually ensure that you really empower black businesses. And what we're now seeing, we're actually seeing not so much progress. And you still have all this subliminal racism that still seems to be creeping up, even some of it really becoming an extension of the old networks.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:17:21):

But yeah, the Black Lives Matter in a strange way and [inaudible 00:17:27] captures that I think most of us highly expected that you could have such a movement coming up in the midst of this crisis, has actually put this thing to the fore, to say, yes, after... while the Black Lives Matter, the emphasis seems to be much in terms of civil rights.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:17:44):

But blacks also have livelihoods to protect, have livelihoods to actually promote. And I think that is an economic dimension of actually black businesses and black people I think in generally that we... I'm quite keen to share our experience [inaudible 00:18:00].

Sue Adkins (00:18:02):

Thank you, Landiwe. Thank you very much. And I think you have such a particular experience in South Africa, given your history and given the years since the dismantlement of apartheid. I think you've got a really interesting perspective to take on this, which is unique. And yet there are still some similarities and differences. And obviously in South Africa, you've tried

some really interesting models, like the Black Economic Empowerment model-

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:18:29):

Absolutely.

Sue Adkins (00:18:30):

... to try and really bring black business into the system and into the organisation, and so a fantastic place and space for you to learn from and share with others. Absolutely. So we're now going to move to you, Romeo, if you don't mind. And let's hear your comments.

Sue Adkins (00:18:45):

Romeo Effs has had a really colourful background. He's worked in many different sorts of businesses. He's done a huge amount in different places and spaces, from chief exec., to chairman, to heads of charities. He's done many things. And he's now the founder and chief executive for Lumorus. So if we can turn to you, Romeo, and take your comments, we would love to have your contribution. Thank you very much for being with us.

Romeo Effs (00:19:09):

Brilliant. Thank you very much, Sue. And thanks for having me, everyone. Sandra, it's great to see you. Sandra has been one of my biggest flag-wavers throughout my career here in the UK. So good to see you. So I'm CEO and founder of Lumorus. And Lumorus is... Our vision is really to make good governance and phenomenal leadership the hallmark of business and a force for good in the world.

Romeo Effs (00:19:36):

And so we work with large companies around corporate governance, around organisational health, with includes things like inclusion and belonging and also around leadership journeys because we believe that businesses should be used to impact society and make a change in the world.

Romeo Effs (00:20:02):

So I'd like to kind of speak about a couple of things. And I'm pretty sure that going through these discussions, I'll be able to contribute more. But I'm

very passionate about this, about the subject. I've written a book on it, which was released and became a #1 bestseller.

Romeo Effs (00:20:21):

So for me, this is not a job, as I tell my team. And most of them are on the call right now. This is something we are doing because we want to make a dent in the world. And the work we've been doing, a lot of it has been done in the UK.

Romeo Effs (00:20:37):

And I'd just like to share something with everyone, that when I moved to the UK, I didn't know what racism was because I grew up in a society, which is Jamaica, where was taught from a child that I could achieve anything that I wanted.

Romeo Effs (00:20:54):

And everyone around me, the doctor, the prime minister, the Indian chief looked like me. And I remember being in school, and if I told my teacher that I wanted to become anything less than the best, I would get told that I really have no ambition.

Romeo Effs (00:21:12):

And in societies like the UK, for example, I know many people from the ethnic background who were born here and went to school here who from a very young age was told that they could not become barristers, they could not become lawyers, they could not become doctors.

Romeo Effs (00:21:28):

And so that started a whole notion of self-belief that there are limits. And that is evident in terms of the trajectory in terms of opportunities that exist within the UK society. Just if you look in business, the mid to junior level, the pipeline in terms of BAME or ethnic minority, it's pretty fair.

Romeo Effs (00:22:04):

But if you look at the senior and board level, it's really, really very appalling. And British, if you look across the FTSE 100, the FTSE 350, Fortune 500, especially in this "developing world," you won't find a

lot of people from an ethnic background.

Romeo Effs (00:22:29):

Ethnic diversity on these boards do not reflect modern Britain. And companies are slow to act towards the change. We've had so many reviews, the Parker review, the McGregor-Smith review, the David Lambert review, the Race to the Top research by BITC, and unfortunately the problem still exists.

Romeo Effs (00:22:51):

Just looking at the FTSE 100 here in the UK, in 2017 when the first Parker Review came out, 51% of the companies had no ethnic minority representative on the board. When the new version came out in 2020, it shifted slightly to 37%. If we look at it from a global perspective as well, this is something that I've been saying a lot over the past couple of weeks on similar kind of panel discussions, is that the majority of the world is not white. Majority of the world is ethnic.

Romeo Effs (00:23:32):

If you look at the population of Africa, the population of China, the population of India, Latin America, the majority of the world is really people who are considered ethnic. And so therefore businesses really need to take a serious look at how they operate and how they can capitalise on that. I'll stop there, Sue, for the time being.

Sue Adkins (00:23:56):

Thanks so much, Romeo. And thank you for bringing that up because I think, as you say, there's been report, after report, after report, from the UK and around the world that absolutely demonstrates that despite all the work that has been done over the years, great work, still we haven't accelerated the pace of change. And yet today, we have an amazing opportunity given COVID, given everything else that's happening, we have a perfect storm to make a change.

Sue Adkins (00:24:21):

Before we come on to questions, I'm delighted to see you there. Hey, Dazon. It's great to see you on the call. We've heard from a lot of panelists so far. Now we're looking forward to hearing from you. Dazon is the founder of SisterLove and

has absolutely had a completely different perspective around the world and from all the other panelists so far. So it brings another contribution to this conversation. And, Dazon, thank you so for stepping out of your strategic business review to join us for this panel. We appreciate it. And Dazon's from Georgia. Do share with us your thoughts, Dazon. Thank you.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:25:01):

Well, I am so excited and I am grateful that my entire team forgave me for hopping off our very first part of a four-part strategic planning and strategic visioning session. It's our time of the year to do that. And we have a lot of really, really exciting things going on. And some of it is thanks to a lot of the changes, a lot of the activities, and a lot of the responses to some really devastating things going on in our world and our communities.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:25:28):

So and thank you, Sue, for inviting me. And I'm just disappointed that I haven't been able to hear everyone's remarks and comments. But I'm looking forward to the recording. I am the founder and president of SisterLove Incorporated, which is a 31-year-old nonprofit organisation based in Atlanta and in Johannesburg, where we have been operating for 21 years.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:25:50):

And we are one of those rare organisations that focuses in at the intersections of service delivery and advocacy. So we work around policy. We work around movement building and activism as well as providing direct services. We'll actually be opening up our own primary preventative care facility that's going to be integrated with creative arts and STEM sciences along with chemists and our own unique brand of delivering health care and integrating our culture in our neighborhoods for our communities.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:26:27):

This is an example. And as a matter of fact, if I just start out, and I take my silly very seriously, so I'm not apologising, I'm just explaining that the name of the building that we're moving into, that we're renovating and moving into, the address is

3699. The neighbourhood is Adamsville.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:26:47):

So we're calling it 3699 Adamsville Futures. And so when you acronym that, it'd be 699 AF. That's because we want to be very integrated and very much engaging with our young population because we're developing a space to build leaders at the intersection of public health.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:27:04):

And whatever industry, whatever part of the world that they want to participate in as their careers, that there's still a place that they can contribute, and support, and work within the health, and development, and the betterment of our communities because if not us, then who?

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:27:22):

So I'm excited about the moment that we're in because for the first time, I think, at least in my 30+ years of doing activism, and advocacy, and being a professor and a teacher as well is that there's a voice of the voiceless that has not been heard for so long in every sector, whether it's in the business sector, or the government sector, and even in the NGO sector.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:27:52):

So I start out with reminding folks that whether we're nonprofit or profit companies, we are employers. We generate income and revenue for communities. We develop in communities. We are a part of the business sector. We just do our business differently, and we're organised differently. And it takes a lot to get past that sense of stigma, if you will, in the business world, that there's this separation between the small business world, which is in the United States the largest part of our economy, and that nonprofit organisations are small businesses that play a major role in that.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:28:31):

And so to have a conversation where we're sitting at the table with companies, with corporations, building our relationships, for example, with Big Pharma, with banking industry, with the media and communications industry, with the health industry, as well as with government

has been very important to us.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:28:49):

And there's another area that we look at. Wherever there's not a community engagement structure, then we're in forefront of that, making sure that there is. For example, in the research world, where there's millions, and billions, and billions of dollars, and pounds, and rands, and everything else going into whether it's product development, whether it's the medical devices, or even whether it's looking at market research, that the community is never included in that unless we're looked at as consumers.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:29:17):

And what we actually are is drivers of ideas, innovation. And I can give you a couple of examples of how we can play into that. So for 31 years, we've been doing sexual and reproductive health rights and justice work with a big lens on HIV.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:29:32):

And I've been consistently trying to figure out how do we move structurally beyond... There's three components to this: How do we move structurally beyond the stigmas and the discrimination that still course our veins, our collective social veins around HIV and sexual health?

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:29:52):

But it also is about how do we continue to innovate in a space where people are getting weary of an epidemic that we should've ended by now. And now that we're in COVID, we're sort of like up in arms about how does this replace or how does this supplant the resources or the work that's being done in HIV?

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:30:11):

And then the third part, of course, is that I'm still all about liberation and justice. And so that means making sure that bodily autonomy, my ability to make my choices, and to act it on my own health and wellbeing is important

and is a part of my empowerment.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:30:27):

So when I tell you that I come up with really crazy, and strange, and really funny and warm ideas that look really different in the nonprofit space but make sense, I give you two examples of what we're working on that might give you a sense of how we play. So if I go into a grocery store or chemists, like, we have Walgreens. We have CVS. You all have... I can't remember in the UK, the one with the blue letters, the big health store.

Sue Adkins (00:30:57):

Boots, Walgreens Boots Alliance, but Boots.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:30:59):

Yes, Boots. That's the one. And if I go in there, and you're sitting by, and you're watching the sexual health section, right, I can see one by one, unless people have come in as couples, I can see one by one, I've done my own little secret shopper stuff, I can see one by one that nobody will shop in that section if there's anybody else there.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:31:19):

If somebody is there already, others lurking, waiting for them to leave, if I, because I'm just that person, see somebody there and I walk up just to see what they will do, they will leave. They will wait until I leave and then come back.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:31:32):

People need privacy. People need space even for over-the-counter resources. So what am I creating? What am I designing? We're designing a sexual wellbeing vending booth, similar to the nursing booths that are now in airports, and in malls, and places where women can safely, privately nurse/feed their children. We're creating spaces where you can privately get self-tested for HIV, for pregnancy, for STDs, for HPV in particular.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:32:04):

And then you can also have access to telemedicine so you can get a prescription right on the spot if you need to, that you can have access to condoms, all of those kinds of things. And we want to see them

on college campus. We want to see them in adult entertainment venues. We want to see them in general public places where people frequent and are looking to have these things where they don't have to share their personal business.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:32:25):

So can you imagine what I need to involve in order to build that kind of idea? I need mechanical engineers. I need money. I need corporations that are going to help supply the machines. I am a nonprofit that is looking at the social entrepreneurship of the survival of my organisation, as a tool for the survival of my organisation until we end the epidemic. That's one example.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:32:49):

The other one is that if I am shopping for a pocketbook, next thing you know, through digital marketing, everything I'm on now, whether it's reading Huffington Post, or The New York Times, or surfing some other website, all things pocketbooks are coming at me, or all things about getting your routine subscribed purse sent to you every month or something crazy like that.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:33:13):

But I'm online every day, every day, looking at HIV, sexual health, sexual wellbeing, reproductive health. Nothing comes to me. Nothing pops up for me. So we are also now engaging in building a platform of people-based digital micro-targeting so that we can get the right messages to the right individuals about prevention, about access to health care, about getting involved in the movement. There's so much that can do with being able to digitally target from a social change, civil society perspective, even a public health perspective. The CDC isn't sending me digital messages even now about getting tested for COVID.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:33:55):

So I'm just using these as two examples in the short time that I have with you all to say that there are so many opportunities for us to engage in the dynamics of black folk who have been inventing and creating stuff around this planet, especially in the United States. We have a saying here, where racism and white supremacy are the

only inventions that white people claim.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:34:22):

It's a sense of who we are and where we are in our ability to assert our own solutions to our own problems and be able to do so in a way that continues to grow us but also contributes to our economy and grows in business.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:34:38):

And if I can see in the last thing is that I am Georgia born, Georgia raised. I'm from a small town. I know I live in Atlanta, big city. However, Atlanta's like just a big town in the southern region. But we are one of the blackest cities in the United States. And we're seen as one of the safer havens.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:34:56):

And we have still had people die unarmed at the hands of police. We still have women who are... We just have been still fighting rulings around their access to abortion, and sexual and reproductive health, and contraception. We just had a Supreme Court loss in the last couple of weeks.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:35:16):

And by the way, we even engage in writing amicus briefs, which means we have to have lawyers with us. So the idea that in the funding world where we are dependent on donors, where we know now that we could be two organisations doing exactly the same work, probably even better in our own communities, but that black organisations receive one-fifth of what other organisations receive from the funding world, especially if you have the name black in your title, that our funding opportunities are limited, our abilities to grow our organisations, and our institutions, and be seated at the tables where everyone else has a voice has been limited.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:35:58):

Now is the time where we are building the capacity, building the leadership, and building the representation so that companies see our people as potential board members, so that other nonprofits see our people as board members and leaders in their organisations. As a matter of fact, there's today a meeting on creating a racial

justice index for the NGO sector so that you can measure your own institution for its racial justice quotient, for its equity factors around race, and class, and gender inside the company and inside the organisation.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:36:34):

So there's a lot of opportunity for us to bridge this. There's a lot of room for us to tap into the creativity that has been ignored because we have been undervalued and under-resourced at the same time. And I'm just excited that you all are hosting this kind of conversation because these are much more rare conversations for us on this side. And again, Sue, thank you so much for the invitation. And thank you all for everything that you do.

Sue Adkins (00:36:59):

Thanks very much, Dazon. Thank you very much for joining us. And actually thank you, everybody. We have done really well, and we're sort of... Okay, you've had the contributions. But now I think I'd really like to reach out and invite our audience who have been participating. We've got about 60-something people on this call at the moment. And let's take some questions from the audience. It would be really good to hear what they have to say and see what questions they have to ask. And, Katie, do you have any questions at the moment that are coming up? Because I've got a few here myself from quite a few people.

Katie Hyson (00:37:29):

Yeah, we've got a couple. I'll read them for you right now. Dan asks, "What communication efforts have to be taken to ensure that small businesses and communities are heard and represented?" And then [Neeha 00:37:44] asks, "Does the problem of exclusion happen two ways, one, from the one who is excluded, and the second one from who is getting excluded? How should we be working on both sides of this table?"

Sue Adkins (00:37:59):

Thank you. Thanks very much, Katie. So let's take those questions. And whilst we have you, Dazon, why don't we start with you, Dazon, and then move to Romeo for some response. And then we'll move on from

there. Dazon, any thoughts about that?

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:38:13):

Sure. I want to start out with my best friend actually is teaching a course right now online. She will host it again. So I really encourage everybody to wire into her. Her name is Loretta Ross. She's been a researcher on white supremacy for nearly 30 years. She's teaching a course right now called White Supremacy in the Age of Trump. I'm hoping that that age comes to an end very soon. But either way, the course that she's doing has a lot power.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:38:42):

And a lot of the conversations that we're having is how are we going to make adjustments going forward in terms of the significance of restoration, or restorative justice, or reparations so that there is an equity pathway for us? That's also inclusive in communications.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:39:01):

Last week was announced Joy-Ann Reid has become a prime time news anchor on a cable news channel, MSNBC. She is now the first, I think, black woman and the only black woman, if not the first, who is actually holding a space in communication.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:39:19):

So we actually have to start in terms of the communication efforts, that the communications industry has to start shifting itself. That's the first thing, as an effort to take small businesses and our BAME communities more seriously is that we have to see ourselves more. And if we don't see ourselves, then our stories don't get told properly and we're not represented.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:39:42):

But I think that there's an issue around creating space for white folks, even those wonderful, loving people who don't think that they're racist but are absolutely benefits of privilege and power built by the white supremacists system that we have to have real conversations of what it means to have to leverage your privilege and your power to make room, to make space, to get out of the way, to step aside, and to

be a part of the growth and the change.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:40:10):

I, being very blunt, and frank, and funny, is I talk about how much I really love white people who know how to be white. And I can give you three example in what that looks like. That looks like when the police are coming down and beating on the heads of black people at a protest and leaving the white people safe, and the white woman jumps in between the cop and the black woman who is being accosted by the police officer, that is being more of a comrade than an ally. And so we need more comrades than we do allies at this time.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:40:42):

Another thing is when someone is invited to present or when someone is invited to sit in a board position, to say, "Not this time because you don't have enough people of colour. You don't have enough BAME folks and representation. I'm going to step back, and have that. And I want to offer some really brilliant, amazing people who can help, not just diversify, but bring equity to your development, to bring equity to your space and your environment."

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:41:11):

And so that's how exclusion can happen is that I can choose to exclude myself when I know that I'm sitting in a place of privilege or a place of power. And that's not just for white folks, that's for black folks with privilege. Whether it's economic privilege or whether it's male privilege, it's in all of those spaces.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:41:28):

And so I think thank you again for this opportunity. I know that we have a whole lot more work due. I am grateful to be a part of this conversation and no doubt a part of the work that we have going forward.

Sue Adkins (00:41:39):

Thank you so much, Dazon.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:41:40):

And I'm [crosstalk 00:41:40] live. I'm sorry.

Sue Adkins (00:41:41):

Okay.

Dazon Dixon Diallo (00:41:42):

And I hope that [crosstalk 00:41:43].

Sue Adkins (00:41:42):

I know you had to go. I knew that you had to go, but thank you so much. And then, Romeo... Thank you so much, Dazon. Love you lots. All the best. Thank you. Now, Romeo, I could see you waving your hand. You had a comment to make about those questions.

Romeo Effs (00:41:55):

Yes, because especially the one that spoke about representation, etc. That's so very important. And we deal with that on a number of fronts. But the first thing I'd like to say is that ethnic minorities, and especially black people, and I'm speaking now in terms of black professionals or black people in the society, we do not start the race at the same spot.

Romeo Effs (00:42:20):

And even when we do, there are huge obstacles in our ways that prevents us from progressing and achieving our objectives. And this is a result of systematic and structural institutions and processes that are in place. The government and the lawmakers have to look closely at the ways the laws are set and addressed.

Romeo Effs (00:42:48):

We all have to question the state of affairs of our governments. And this is where, well, all of us come in, but more so white folks come in because they are the ones that are majority in the position of power, whether in business or in government. We all have to question the vision statements and purposes that companies have on their websites, and in their annual reports and hold them to account to delivering these. It's not just a tick box exercise.

Romeo Effs (00:43:21):

When we all ask for change, be it whether we're black, we're Indian, Chinese, Latino, African, whoever, then governments have no choice but to

listen. When people are bombarding their representatives at state and national levels with to make the change, then they, the representatives will table these issues.

Romeo Effs (00:43:49):

When we call our pension companies, our banks, our institutions and tell them that we're going to pull our money if they continue to invest in companies that are just tick-boxing this whole inclusion agenda, then they will take the issue seriously and listen.

Romeo Effs (00:44:07):

And we also have to understand the power that we have as consumers. When we as consumers, when we start using that power and decide that we are not going to purchase goods and services from companies that do not align to our values, our beliefs, and that are not ethical, and are not being a force for good in this world, then we will see the change in these businesses. The change starts with each and every one of us, and each of us have a responsibility to play where that is concerned.

Sue Adkins (00:44:42):

Thank you so much. Thank you, Romeo. Thank you. Now, I think, Sandra, you might have a few comments to make about this, having had several years in trying to drive a leadership change and all that sort of thing over these many years. Any thoughts about that yourself?

Sandra Kerr (00:44:55):

Yeah. So, I mean, a couple of things. So I am using the... And I heard Landiwe talk about black livelihood. So I'm saying black livelihoods matter, the economic inclusion. So two things: One is I think wanting the UK to implement ethnicity pay gap reporting. We know it's not a silver bullet. But what it will ensure is that this conversation's at the top table year on year. So that's really important.

Sandra Kerr (00:45:27):

And also now with Black Lives Matter where it's we deem the word black almost [inaudible 00:45:32] able to look at data by the different ethnicity groups enables us to see where there's pay disparities and really

shine the light in clear, transparent colour of the inequities around pay and what needs to be, with an action plan sort of to be done.

Sandra Kerr (00:45:51):

And I think the second thing is one of the things the UK did very successfully in 2012 was to get an Olympic contract. You had to recruit locally. You had to recruit from ethnic minority communities, from gender, disability to get that contract.

Sandra Kerr (00:46:07):

So it can be done. And I think the government, they build better. They're building greener. The current agenda, which is to building to increase, within that supply chain model from government needs to be the implementation of the guidance that they have that you must recruit inclusively, diversely. You must put contracts in the way of small businesses that are owned by black and Asian entrepreneurs and organisations.

Sandra Kerr (00:46:35):

So those are some definite levers up. Policymakers can just already, if the things are in place, it's enforcing it, activating it, and start to ensure that you monitor progress against those positive-

Sue Adkins (00:46:51):

Thank you. Thank you, San. And then And, Landiwe, any comments from you from the South African perspective and your Pan-African perspective?

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:46:58):

I think one thing that we must acknowledge is that, and from my own experience is that small businesses generally, and black businesses in particular, it's not very easy to actually organise them. And I'm saying this because you find that because in the majority of cases, it's and in my own experience is that they are quite busy on running their own businesses basically.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:47:31):

And what you normally would find is that you really need, if you like, much more [inaudible 00:47:41] on the part of... Now I'm talking about generally about the [inaudible 00:47:47] society and the

last ones in particular to actually just ensure that some of the opportunities that would actually ensure that, they get involved in our real opportunities.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:48:04):

And I'm actually quite encouraged with a thing that seems to running through this conversation, I mean, this webinar, that companies ought to actually make it their own peoples, in other words too, embed in the mission statements the issue what we call here, right? And so in South Africa empowerment, in other words, in such. You need to be very clear in terms to in your own business objective, to what extent will you be able to actually empower black businesses?

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:48:40):

Now, this is not rocket science. Every other business has got suppliers. They have got consumers. I mean, they've got patents. What then you actually were saying is that you need to answer in such a way that you deliberately look at actually ensuring that business of colour do benefit.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:49:02):

So one need to shift the obligation to actually ensure that there is representation away from regulate [inaudible 00:49:14]. For instance, I'm talking about government because I think government by definition would always try their best, but to actually ensure, that it becomes a language, and it becomes embedded within the other businesses. So I'm saying is that we need to find ways in which we should actually ensure that establishments in particular do more than just people's statements and commitment.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:49:44):

I like the whole idea is that in this country obviously we've got scorecard. We've got our tick boxes. [inaudible 00:49:49] actually nobody spot out is businesses that are actually scorecard-wise rather than substantial empowerment. Like, people [inaudible 00:50:01] organisations that actually can tick boxes nicely but actually they cannot show where they've actually involved black business in a very meaningful way.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:50:12):

So I think the shift must be to establish black businesses and actually show that they're embedded in their business model to actually involved in a black business.

Sue Adkins (00:50:26):

Yeah. Thank you very much, Landiwe. Thank you. And, Kate, you actually had a good look at both of those questions. But is there just another, one other question you'd like to throw out to the panel and to us?

Katie Hyson (00:50:37):

Yeah, absolutely. So Neha asks, actually completely building on those answers that you guys have just been talking about, "What kind of policies can mean meaningfully attract BME talent but also signal that these companies, organisations, or workplaces that BME applicants would be interested in working for?"

Sue Adkins (00:50:59):

Good question. Oh, Romeo, you're hot off the blocks, there. Do you want to start with that one?

Romeo Effs (00:51:05):

Yeah. That's a lot of things, a lot of things together. But I think that there isn't really one thing that a company can do in terms of attracting ethnic minority. I have a saying that one of the big things is that a lot of companies tend to focus on diversity. And diversity can work. That's just bringing in the ethnic minority talent. But then if you don't have inclusion and belonging, they won't stay.

Romeo Effs (00:51:39):

I heard it described that you've invited me to the party, but you haven't asked me to dance. And so you have to create an environment of inclusion and belonging to attract and retain ethnic minority talent. Some of the things that companies can do are things like, first and foremost, reexamining your purpose, making sure it's fit for purpose.

Romeo Effs (00:52:03):

You have to start the leadership conversation, a total, non-judgmental

best practice and give unconditional support. You also have to begin a journey of learning and solidarity, both for yourself as a leader and for the entire organisation. You have to amplify ethnic minority voices within your business. Let people share their experiences. And also don't treat the multiculturalists, ERGs, as they are called, or networks as stepchildren. Give them the same support that you give the LGBTQ networks and the woman's network.

Romeo Effs (00:52:47):

And then you also have to... I hear Sandra mention this a lot. You have to diagnose and audit. You have to know what's the state of the nation in your organisation so you know how to change it. And we have this tool that we call the cultural diagnostic index that we use in organisations.

Romeo Effs (00:53:06):

And once you've done that, then you have to set those smart actions, doing things like developing high-potential leadership programs, sponsorship because people from an ethnic background were over-mentored and under-sponsored, right? We have to make sure we... And then we also have to look at how do you diversify our brand and the face of our organisation?

Romeo Effs (00:53:29):

Someone spoke about the whole notion of role modelling. People become what they see. And they aspire to that. So you have to look at that. You have to look at what messages your brand saying. Look at your communication collateral both internally and externally.

Romeo Effs (00:53:46):

And then you have to, once you measure and do it, you have to evaluate and you have to iterate because, as my team will tell you, I've always said, this is a journey. It's a Mo Farah. It's not a Usain Bolt. So you have to be prepared to be on the journey with create that culture of inclusion.

Romeo Effs (00:54:07):

So I think in terms of answering that question, there are just a number of things that companies need to do

holistically to make that happen.

Sue Adkins (00:54:16):

Thank you very much, Romeo. And perhaps, Sandra, just shortly, just quick, quick response to that question.

Sandra Kerr (00:54:22):

So just a quick thing, I really want to amplify I think a few things. And it's lovely to see you too, Romeo. We really must catch up. I think a couple of things; one about if you... So people often wonder about what is this privilege? If you have to research what is going on to really try and understand what has happened with George Floyd, what's happening, why people are responding, that's what that is. That's what.

Sandra Kerr (00:54:46):

And the second thing about the inclusion piece and belonging in that, yes, diversity is the data, but the inclusion is how you make people feel when they get there> How do you make them feel? And just a real important bit that I think I said at the beginning that I want to say again, it's the voice, not only to be listened to, but to be heard and action to be taken, so really feeling that your contributions are valued, they're actually listened to. And if they don't get what you're saying, they'll question that more to understand opposed to dismissing that.

Sandra Kerr (00:55:20):

So I think going forward, as tables do open up, I think rooms and opportunities will open up. The bigger challenge is how do you really ensure that your contribution is valued and acted upon and as you contributed to the top table, to different tables?

Sue Adkins (00:55:35):

Sandra, thank you very much. Romeo, thank you. In fact, everybody, thank you so much for all of your contributions to these conversations. And Antony, I'm sorry we didn't get enough conversation going with all of us because actually an hour isn't very long at all. And we're just coming to time.

Sue Adkins (00:55:48):

So I just wanted to thank you all hugely,

that actually we could spend another hour or few hours to talk about this again. So we'll have a talk about how we do that. But meanwhile I think as everybody has said, obviously we're in a big moment. COVID-19 has given us a huge moment. George Floyd's murder has given us another huge moment and the rise of Black Lives Matter.

Sue Adkins (00:56:08):

This is a mega moment and an opportunity for change. And as we know from the STGs, it's all about making sure nobody is left behind. And yet for so long so many people have left behind. And it seems like the world is only just waking up to that.

Sue Adkins (00:56:24):

So it's really important. The moral case here is irrefutable as to why there needs to be change. But actually the financial case, the business case for action is also very clear. The McGregor report, which has been mentioned already, 2017, 2020, made it very, very clear that people were underrepresented. They were under everything: underestimated, underrepresented, under everything. And yet that same report identified I think it was something like, how many, 24 billion pounds worth of value if we get...

Sandra Kerr (00:56:58):

Annually.

Sue Adkins (00:56:59):

...if we get this right.

Landiwe Mahlangu (00:57:00):

Annual.

Sue Adkins (00:57:01):

Sorry, annual, annual value could be generated each year if we get this right. So actually this, the model case, the business case, there is no question. The question is, what are you going to do about it? We've talked about the Parker review there. So that was mentioned also in the conversation, where the Parker review had asked in 2017 for at least one person of colour to be on every board of the FTSE 100 by 2021.

Sue Adkins (00:57:28):

Where are we? How far have we got? And that's just the UK. Obviously there are other frameworks in other markets around the world, but the point is it's all very well doing the talk, but it's the action that we need to see. And we need to build on so much of the good work that's there.

Sue Adkins (00:57:46):

And what Sandra mentioned earlier about the charter, the charter is a magnificent tool. And Sandra, sorry, I'm going to say it, Landiwe, Antony, everybody, take the flipping tool. Look at the charter, and look and see how you can use it, and adapt it, and frame it for your market because it's making really clear that you have to put this into the centre of the way you do business if you want to get the full benefit for your business and for your people in your markets.

Sue Adkins (00:58:14):

So think the big things for us to talk about and for us to carry with us and think about as we go on to the next session of the day, which are all about equity, is that companies, whoever you are, wherever you are in the market on this call, you must be proactive and consistent about what you're doing with the inclusion of BAME populations within your business and within your supply chains.

Sue Adkins (00:58:38):

It's about bringing it in to the core business and not actually just talking about this whilst the media headlights are on you, it's about talking about this and working on this constantly and consistently. And that is so important, and then actually the time is now. The time has always been now. But it's even more now because people are more conscious of so many of these issues because of COVID, because of George Floyd, and the many others who have suffered under this system.

Sue Adkins (00:59:07):

So it's vital that we commit to a new dawn and not to another false dawn. There have been so many times where the peoples have thought the change is coming. Change is coming. Change is going to be now. Please

let it not be another false dawn. Please let it be the change we want to see. And let's look at rather than unconscious bias, really, let's look at conscious inclusion, really conscious inclusions through the business, through the supply chain, through everything.

Sue Adkins (00:59:37):

Actually when all is said and done, as was said by somebody else, when all is said and done, it's essential that more is done than said because typically more is said than done. But today we need to have more done than is said. And the opportunities are there. Thank you everybody on the call, on the panel, and everybody behind the scenes for making this session happen. It's such an important session. It's such an important conversation for all of us to be having wherever we are. And please make sure you do have that conversation, and reach out to us, me, the panel, BusinessFightsPoverty and actually continue this conversation.

Sue Adkins (01:00:16):

Meanwhile, have a good afternoon. Stay tuned because there are many more sessions going on over the next two days on this platform. And thank you, everybody, for spending your time with us. We really appreciate having you. Thank you.