



# ID, Empowered by Accenture - Roundtable: Equity v Equality

## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

**[00:20 - 01:17] Amanda Leacy:** Hello, and welcome everybody. My name is Amanda Leacy and I have the privilege of leading Inclusion and Diversity here at Accenture. We have a great panel today with us and I'm very excited to introduce Shani Dhanda, social entrepreneur, campaigner and disability specialist; David Olusoga, historian, writer, and broadcaster, hopefully you heard from him earlier; and Anita Tiessen, the CEO of Youth Business International.

Before we kick-off this discussion today, as you know, at Accenture, we recognize that we all come with so many different layers, so many elements of our being. And in order for us to truly embrace inclusion, we need to bring our whole selves. So let me ask you, Shani, to kick us off, what does identity mean to you?

**[01:19 - 01:49] Shani Dhanda:** Hi. So to me, identity means do I see myself as and also what the world sees in yours. So I describe myself as a South Asian woman who experiences disability, but I'm never treated in a way that respects all of my

characteristics or attributes. And I'll actually sometimes having to figure out, why I've been treated in a certain way, is someone judging my ability, my gender, or my ethnicity?

**[01:53 - 01:54] Amanda Leacy:** Anita, what about you?

**[01:56 - 02:16] Anita Tiessen:** Well, the same idea, but in slightly different words, I guess it's intrinsically how you see yourself in the round all the different facets of who you are. But also, then it's how the world is seeing you. And I think that interplay between the two, will determine how much of you bring out of yourself you bring out at any given time and how much you hold back?

**[02:18 - 02:20] Amanda Leacy:** And how would you identify yourself?

**[02:23 - 03:02] Anita Tiessen:** There's probably elements that are kind of constant or changing. So I'm a first generation Canadian, child of post war refugees, come from a particular faith background, all of that kind of makes family and community and solidarity and all of that, hugely

important to me. My profession is also quite important to me in terms of social justice. I've always worked in the field of international human rights and development. And I have to say that when I was younger, I was pretty clear, I was never going to get married or have kids. But both of those have now happened. So I would see that being a wife and a mother is now a pretty important part of my identity as well.

**[03:04 - 03:06] Amanda Leacy:** Fantastic. And David, over to you.

**[03:08 - 03:53] David Olusoga:** To me, I think my view of identity is reflected in the responses of previous two panelists, when asked to describe their identities, it was not simple. It was narrative. It was a story. It was a journey. It was flexible. It was about the interplay between different forms of identity, different signifiers, you might say, and I think it's about what you have invested and it is how other people see you. It's how you see yourself, but how you see yourself is also about what you invest in, what you choose to make important, what you choose to learn about people who claim identities based on things as frail as where you were born. I don't think that works anymore. It's about your investment, your commitment, your knowledge and your emotional attachment to identities.

**[03:54 - 03:56] Amanda Leacy:** And what about your own identity, David?

**[03:57 - 04:57] David Olusoga:** I think it's a perfect example of that, I'm British, but I'm also Nigerian, I'm dual national. I'm from a very working class background at Kansas State in the northeast, but I'm living and operating in the middle of class world. I'm black, but I'm also I'm half white. So I'm mixed race again. It's interdependent, I'm seeing myself as a northerner and my mom's house in the northeast is home on my phone. But I've

lived in the south now more than I've lived in the north. So these are all sort of narratives and there's old debates and discussions and that always constantly moving.

I think one of the great deliberations about thinking about identity is that we self identify, we can claim identities and like Anita, my professional identities are really important. I see myself as a writer, which is a very important identity to me and feels a part of a sort of slight sort of magical group of people who do something I've always admired. So it's flexible, it's negotiating, it's changing and it's about self identification.

**[04:59 - 07:35] Amanda Leacy:** That's very -- it's very interesting. My own identity has changed dramatically over time. And it certainly starts and the foundation is through my Christian faith. But as I've become a wife and a mother, that's become even more important to me, because I realized how little I know without it. I'm an explorer by heart. And I've traveled to 50 different countries, I lived and worked in India and that's where I met my husband. He's Jamaican heritage British born and we eloped to Africa, traveled across Africa and then went to live in China for four years. So my identity now is a mixed race family with two young children. I feel very connected to my very large Jamaican family; my husband is one of nine. And so that has evolved over time, because that certainly wasn't where I started.

But I'm a human rights advocate, I would say, first and foremost, I spend my days doing that work here at Accenture and making sure advocating for others and for change. But also I'm on the board of several charities in my part time and I'm a dressmaker. So when you talk David about being a writer and that's my dressmaker, that's my creative side. But it certainly has evolved over time. And I love the way you

describe the ability to negotiate that and move through time.

Great, well, we're going to talk about equality versus equity. This has been quite a hot topic in the inclusion and diversity space over the last year, particularly since George Floyd's murder. And I'd love to just put up an image here so that it perhaps gives a little bit of clarity about what we're talking about. And you'll see here in the first image, everybody treated the same, but that doesn't lead to the same outcomes for everybody. In the second image, you can see that we have different support for different people, which leads to a better outcome. But the final image is the one that I love, which is where we break down all the barriers, and we design things with everybody in mind. And we ended up with something better for everyone.

So what I love to do now is get into our panel discussion and really ask each and every one of you to talk about how do you see equity and equality playing out both in the world, but also the world of work? And what are your thoughts on this, so Shani, if I could start with you again, please.

**[07:36 - 09:03] Shani Dhanda:** Sure. I have to say I really love this image. I think it does a brilliant job of bringing to life what we mean when we talk about equity and actually how powerful it is to think in an equitable way. So as we know, equality and equity are two terms that are used very interchangeably. And for me, I see equity as -- and I'm sure everybody else here on the panel sees equity as that end goal that we all want to aspire to, it's where we all want to be, it's in the spaces that we want to operate in. However, unless everybody isn't on the same page and they don't understand things like universal design or inclusive principles, or in decision-making processes, if we aren't thinking about how to remove those systemic barriers from the start, then we'll never reach this state of equity and true inclusion.

So, to me, everything that I do and in the way in which I work with organizations and all the barriers that I face in the world myself, because I live in a world that just isn't designed for me. But I know that that could be different and that can be different if people just considered equity from the start, considered removing those systemic barriers and designed for inclusively from the start.

**[09:04 - 09:10] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah, wonderful, I think got some examples of where you've seen that done really well. Shani that we can learn from?

**[09:11 - 10:17] Shani Dhanda:** Yeah, absolutely. So inverting leader at the moment, we have rolled out something called equity sequence where we are upskilling every single one of our employees to think about before they make a decision, before they design a product. Before we create a customer experience, before we change the script that our contact center agents use, it will go through a process called equity sequence where five different questions are put to this process or product to check that it's been created and designed in an equitable way to factor in the whole range of human diversity that exists. Now, it's been challenging, it's not easy because what essentially we're doing is asking people to think and do things in a very different way from they have been traditionally. But I think that challenge and that encouraging that diversity of thought it's only a good thing. And that's what we want to see play out in everyday behaviors.

**[10:18 - 10:40] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah, fantastic. I mean, we've certainly got a lot of research which proves that when we do that, when we bring everybody together, we're more innovative, we get better solutions to problems and as a business, we thrive and grow. That's wonderful.

David, can I come to you next, please?  
What are your thoughts on this topic?

**[10:42 - 14:55] David Olusoga:** Well, I think what's interesting is, this is one of those phenomena that is being presented as if it's a new idea, as if the differences between equality and equity are somehow a result of what people like to call culture wars, or they are a very topical. Well, I did ancient history in University and I first encountered this debate, reading Plato's discussions about Solon, the Athenian statesman. He was very interested in forms of equality. And what Plato wrote about was how those forms of equality could create perverse outcomes.

And because this has been part of Western philosophical thinking, and also philosophical thinking in other parts of the world, because it's such an obvious thing that all societies run into, we have moments of equity throughout our lives and we're so used to them, we don't recognize them, we just carry on with them. They're just part of the background of the way that we operate because we understand in a very deep sense that equality, which we see is what political theorists call a [inaudible] word, it's a word you saying people think that sounds great, like democracy, everyone thinks equality is a fantastic thing.

So the idea that equality can create perverse outcomes is a very difficult idea. And yet, the solution to equality has perverse outcomes, which is equity and seeking equitable outcomes is, second nature, we just don't notice it. And there's lots of kind of examples you could use. If you're a parent of a child and your child is having difficulty in maths or English, and you go into your school. You don't expect for a second, when you say to your child's teacher, they're going to need some extra help in math to get over this, this period, for the teacher to go but that would be unequal. For me to give your child

additional help. We absolutely understand that at that moment it is according to need, rather than some background, overall blanket concept of equality.

If there's a house on fire in your street and the fire engine comes and pours water on the house that's on fire, you don't rush out into the street and complain and demand that the firemen that the team hose down your house because you understand even though we all pay for the service, that it is at that moment, according to need. And we expect equity to operate in all of multiple aspects of life. And we almost don't notice it.

But there are places where we can see the inequalities and the perverse outcomes of blanket equality that are apparent, but I don't think we see it in this philosophical terms. I think the most palpable example is a simple application of fairness between the genders, which has been the basis of the way we planned our buildings for centuries now, it makes perfect sense. It's absolutely fair and equal, when you're planning a building, you would produce bathrooms and toilets of equal size for the two genders.

But then, think about last time and this is cast your mind back a little while, last time you went to a concert, or the theater or the cinema and all of us know the impact of that seeming equality that the bathrooms for both genders are equal size. When was the last time we saw a queue outside the male toilets, it doesn't happen. It's extremely rare, it's ubiquitous. That's one of the things my partner and female friends complained about, about going out to them to queue for toilets, because equality making those two facilities the same size has created perverse outcomes. So we can see the weaknesses of blanket equality in our society. And we can see if they're pointed out the ways in which we expect equitable behaviors and equitable strategies and we expect them, we just tend

not to think about those two words, we tend not to project this into sort of in a social philosophy. And we also are being I think, deluded into thinking that this is a new idea that's come out of critical studies that is being foisted upon our society, rather than an ancient idea that is there from the very birth of Western philosophy and other forms of philosophy.

**[14:56 - 15:05] Amanda Leacy:** Thank you. Thank you. Anita, what do you think? Listen, and how do you see it playing out with the [Technical Difficulty] what you're doing with the Youth international?

**[15:07 - 17:19] Anita Tiessen:** Yeah, we're still stuck on the image of the queues. We all know that one so well, [Technical Difficulty]. Yeah, so Youth Business International, we're a global network and we focus on supporting underserved or disadvantaged young people to start and grow businesses. So kind of economic inclusion is at the heart of what we do. And really, in the last couple of years, I think particularly propelled by the events of 2020, we're trying to be even more explicit about how do you create more equitable access to the kind of support that a young person from different backgrounds would need to have an equal chance of succeeding in business? And of course, a big part of that is really understanding what are the particular opportunities or barriers that are facing different people, because if I go back to your image, we're not all standing on -- if we're all standing on the same box, we don't all have the same horizon. You know, that could include women and some of the kind of deeply rooted cultural barriers they might face, or really pragmatic things like making sure that programming support is taking childcare into account.

Our members do a huge amount of work to support refugees and migrants, young refugees, migrants to set up businesses.

And again, it's a deep understanding of what are the particular issues facing them that has helped us to really be successful in supporting them into business. Partly, it's really practical things, you're new to a country, you need networks, you need to understand the dynamics of the regulatory environment. But then there's also understanding that as a person who sometimes had a very difficult journey to arrive in your new country, there are a lot of personal like the social issues that need to be supported as well. And really, in business transit to Human Centered Design, or inclusive design and so forth, it is absolutely understanding that people that you work or, in our case, the people that we're working with to support what really are those barriers and challenges that we need to help them to overcome with the belief that are properly supported, understood and enable everybody has an equal chance of success?

**[17:21 - 18:04] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah, so with that we've got some very interesting questions coming in. So I'm just holding my eyes off those there for a minute. So I think that there's good consensus across the group that equity is hugely important to take us to more equal outcomes. And but how does that play out in an organization? And when we have people who will say, what about meritocracy? And I see a question in the chat box about the Equality Act, as well, so what are your thoughts on that and how this plays in with meritocracy? Who wants to start?

**[18:05 - 19:26] Shani Dhanda:** Yeah, I'm happy to go first. Yeah, I just wanted the question about the Equality Act. And, it's important to remember that Equality Act only sets out the very minimum basic, black and white requirements. And I think my question to everybody out -- to everybody listening is that the type of organization that you want to be that type of leader that you want to be that only wants to fly to the very minimum that is

required by law? Do you want to go above and beyond and actually be an attractive organization retain great talent? Do you want it to be an organization of choice that just does the right thing, because it's the right thing to do and wants to help break down those systemic barriers?

And just come to the second point that you made. We can't look at things based on a meritocracy because of the systemic, hidden barriers that many groups face. And if other people don't know that they exist, then it just means that those groups that are so far from getting to opportunities, getting into the workplace, getting the right support that they need in the workplace, for example, it means that that inclusion will never happen. But we love to hear what the other panelists have got to say.

**[19:28 - 19:29] Amanda Leacy:** What about you, David?

**[19:31 - 24:51] David Olusoga:** Well, I think meritocracy comes out of a particular moment. The term is coined by Michael Young, the British Sociologist, who came from an extraordinarily poor background in the northeast. And it was a term that spoke to a moment in the post war era in Britain, where there was quite incredible social mobility. And those incredible social mobility, we now better understand because not because people who lack talent who were from the middle class were becoming working class, but because the middle class was expanding for technocratic reasons, because the technology demanded a change in the way people worked.

And Michael Young in later life had serious problems with the term meritocracy. So I think it has a troubled history. I think when it comes to equity and equality in the way we run our organizations, I think what the challenge is not so much the principle of meritocracy,

but the metrics by which we judge it. And those metrics are frail and they are somewhat myopic and they don't take into account the holistic image and the holistic journey that people have been on part of my work is in the university sector, the university entrance is based on examinations. And those examinations measure a very, very narrow range of abilities. And they measure almost nothing to do with the background reality of the young person taking those examinations.

The example I like to use, as we know that the 7% of the population who go to private schools, particularly the elite amongst the private schools, are going to schools who are brilliant at gaming the system, people who do GCSEs and A levels at Eton will do three different or four different A levels with different exam boards, because there's a whole department there to work out which exam boards are the most likely to people to pass. There is people to advise people and people will be entered for more than one exam. And they'll only do the one that they're most likely to pass. There was huge infrastructure to help those extremely wealthy boys from the most elite families to get those grades to get them into the elite universities. So take a boy, he's got three As, A level from Eton. And then, take a girl who was growing up in Grenfell Tower, who also got 3 As, who is a carer, who is working weekends and evenings in the shop to make money because her family needs her to make money.

And then, save and then ask yourself the question, is the achievement of getting three A's equal between those two candidates, because the way we judge entry into university by not taking into account, the fact that that girl will do hundreds of hours of work in a shop, to take into account that she will look after an ill parent, to take into a fact that her school hasn't got all those advantages, doesn't have those departments looking for which exam board but all of that is invisible. This

is a very warped form of meritocracy because the metrics are willfully blind.

There was a case at the university I know recently of a young man who was applying for research, who had a PhD, who had obviously his first degree in science. And he didn't get the funding because he had bad A levels. He was from one of the poorest parts of Manchester, the trajectory that he had been on, the achievements he had, the obstacles he had overcome, were irrelevant, because the magic and the simple box ticking exercise of the application process didn't take any of that into account, but did take into account his A levels.

I will give you a personal example. And this shows the way that these metrics are skewed, I'm severely dyslexic and I'm terrible at maths. I failed GCSE maths four times. The reason I did it four times is my mother wouldn't let me give up on the fact that I had utter inability to do it.

In this country, to teach history, or to teach any subject at school, you need to have GCSE English and GCSE maths. So I am ineligible to be a history teacher. I'm able to be a public historian. I'm able to teach at university, I'm able to write history books. I'm an advisor. I've been an advisor to the curriculums in schools, but I've been ineligible to be a history teacher, because that strict application of a system which claims to be meritocratic, but is narrow in the metrics used to judge meritocracy creates this sort of box ticking culture. That's the perverse outcomes that you can have.

And from a very selfish point of view, to think about the girl in Grenfell Tower, the boy at Eton, as a country that is in competition economically with other countries, I want the best and the brightest people to be running our organizations because the best and the brightest from other countries are running their

organizations. And it is damaging to us for a country if people who are mediocre are able to overcome to achieve these metrics and claim meritocracy and the incredible talent that is lost.

The girl in Grenfell being the case study, from a very selfish point of view, I think it's actually dangerous for her country to be unable to harvest that talent because of an inflexibility of the way in which we judge merit.

**[24:53 - 25:33] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah. Yeah, I think that's tremendous examples there, David, and I'm really proud actually of the work that the U.K. recruitment team here at Accenture has done working with head start to really contextualize the exam results of students coming through the system. And absolutely, we've been able to tap into tremendous talent that we wouldn't have had historically with a guess point system. Anita, I know, you work closely with refugees, and this is a topic that's very dear to your heart too, anything that you'd add on this concept of meritocracy versus equity?

**[25:36 - 30:22] Anita Tiessen:** Yeah, just building on what the others have said, and maybe kind of from an employer and then a kind of content point of view is, I've worked in the social justice sector for most of my life and there's the work you do, and then you're also an employer. And I think the concept of fairness is so baked into those organizations and anything that smacks of unfairness, is really, really taken to heart. But I think that there's always had to be a balance between work consistency and flexibility in how you apply a whole range of principles and all of that.

And I remember just listening to David speak, there was a very, very, very hot debate in the charity sector, I guess it was about 10 years ago, around internships. I mean, they took place and not just in the charity sector, but it was very common for

charities to have interns working for three months, six months, doing whatever support it was, but a recognition that because these were unpaid and they tended to be the way you got your first step on the ladder into a charity and then jobs opened up that was actually reinforcing a kind of more middle class bias in the sector, rather than opening things up.

And lots of people have changed the way they've done that either not had internships or made sure they were at least paying a living wage or some form of trying to make access to that equitable, I think, recognizing that if you're not looking at the entry point and it goes much further back in terms of the education system, as well, but in terms of what's within your direct control, if you're not thinking more equitably about the entry point than anything that looks like a meritocratic process, as you go through promotions and so forth, has a kind of a faulty starting point.

Yeah, I'm just picking up on, refugees and migrants, I referred to that, in my earlier remarks as well. I think there can be a lot of biases that held for any number of reasons, in countries. But, one of the strong points of evidence, particularly when it comes to young people in employment, or as business owners themselves, is that there's a huge amount of entrepreneurial energy. And in fact, a lot of the characteristics that will lead people to move from one country to the other are characteristics which will lead them to be more innovative, creative, have a growth mindset and in many cases, they set up businesses because they're excluded from the employment market, and either formally excluded or because of perceptions.

So I think understanding -- if you took almost a more meritocratic approach there is looking at the person and what they bring, rather than any preconceptions

about what they are or not able to do, I think you would actually find you're tapping into a much richer vein of energy and then ultimately, in a space, economic achievement.

And again, looking at things from the point of view of -- in this case of refugees and migrants. Sometimes it is very -- there's obviously, a very big legal and policy environment around it. But there's also a different mindset, which is looking at them as people, obviously not a homogenous group, but as people who can actually bring a lot of economic dynamism and how do you enable that rather than inhibited. And in fact, I think it's about 40,000 of the young people that we've supported in our network in the past year have come from refugee or migrant backgrounds. And I think a really interesting point and it speaks to the wider diversity point is very often, because they can see a different set of problems to solve through business or a different set of connections between the countries, they actually open up more opportunities. Then you might have otherwise and there's some great examples of businesses, that had been set up. For example, one of the ones in Sweden, where [inaudible] living in Sweden had come from India had been studying technology and have developed a solution to help people, refugees, migrants, and basically people who didn't speak English or Swedish, to get access to healthcare because they recognize that language was a huge barrier. And this is now a solution that has all sorts of applications to help bridge the barrier, but they could see a problem from a particular point of view and work towards a solution.

So if you're looking more at what is the potential, just the opportunity that people can open up rather than any box ticking exercise, then I think you're -- as any individual company, you're going to have a more dynamic workforce. And that

ultimately leads to a more dynamic and creative society as well.

**[30:23 - 31:03] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah. And I'm excited by some of the technology advancements there have the ability to take into account so much information about candidates to look for potential. And in each of the examples that you're talking about, there are people who've shown real grit and resilience and great ability to adapt. And they're exactly the sort of people that we want in organizations. And there's a question that's coming around the difference between Western versus Eastern acceptance of, I guess, the question is aimed at equality versus equity versus meritocracy, perhaps, and any points of view from the panel on that.

**[31:09 - 33:07] Shani Dhanda:** I'm happy to go first. So I think there is a big difference. And being a British, Indian here in the U.K., I am quite often left feeling conflicted with both the eastern and western world because my dad was born in India and he has very, very different views to my mom, who was born here in the U.K. And I think that the -- from my experience, the biggest difference that I found is, things like religion and culture, they really dominate society and cultural thinking in the eastern world. I feel in a different way to the Western world. And obviously, I'm generalizing but especially when we, for example, look at disability. So disability faces an even further sense of stigma in South Asian communities. And if I compare that with the Western world, the Western world is very progressive in origin, it already understands. And many organizations have adopted the social model, which talks about how actually, disability is an experience and you experience it because society is disabling you. Whereas when I'm looking, when I'm kind of contrasting that to the eastern world, or even within my family setting of a Punjabi Sikh family, they will see disability as a very medical issue. It's

something that the individuals fault and the individual has to fix. So I'm generalizing here, but in my experience, I think our cultures have largely played a big hand to that. And I think they're only starting to catch up very, very slowly. But yeah, love to hear the other panelists thoughts.

**[33:11 - 35:50] Anita Tiessen:** And maybe I can jump in. If I go back to the early 90s, I worked for Amnesty International. I think there was a big tension in the concept of universal human rights, which in a codified sense, came around in after the Second World War, and a feeling that it was overly influenced by Western ideas of individual rights versus ideas in other cultures of more communal rights. And I mean there's lots of arguments against that as well. But I think that was one of the constant tension points, which is, as we're rights of individuals versus the rights of a wider communities and so forth. But I guess specifically on the question of meritocracy and does that feel different in different countries?

Again, just from having worked in various global organizations over time, there are obviously different cultural contexts and those play out in a family sense and an economic sense and so forth. And they do have a lot of bearing on these concepts and I guess, hierarchy and social hierarchy, I suppose, is one of the ones that really plays out quite strongly in different countries, as well. There will still be debates about fundamental concepts of fairness, in those different societies. But I think and here, I suppose I'm particularly talking about women. I think some of the challenges that women face will be very deeply, deeply entrenched in attitudes. They're not specifically about meritocracy about gender roles.

And I see that now in terms of attitudes to women and whether it's acceptable in a particular context for them to be launching

out in business. And in fact, quite a number of examples of young women who have decided to buck family expectations and create their own economic independence by doing that, I mean, in my previous organization, which was the umbrella body for the Global Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

So many stories -- from young women in that case, where there was simply no opportunities to develop yourself individually or in a leadership sense outside a fairly limited educational opportunities. And in that case, joining, the guy just because was the space that they could find to do that. So I do think that against a backdrop of wider endorse human rights principles and so forth, there are still some strong kind of cultural -- embedded cultural approaches.

**[35:51 - 37:31] Amanda Leacy:** Yeah, from our own perspective. And I would say that from a business perspective, but also from a social and cultural perspective, every country is so nuanced. So when we talk about Eastern, that the acceptability for both gender equality, and also acceptance of persons with disability in the workplace is so different between Japan and the Philippines. And yet, geographically, they're so close.

And if I compare my time living in China, against my time living in India, in China, we have so much greater support from the government for persons with disability. And corporations are actually charged fines for not hiring persons with disability. But what a lot of corporates do is actually pay people to be on their payroll, but not to work, which is a terrible thing, because we want to include people and give them empowerment -- economic empowerment. Whereas in India, because the Social Security system is more fragile, I've actually seen organizations really step in and we've got tremendous internship programs for persons with disability and

transgender employees, for example. So it's so nuanced. And again, across Europe, every country has got its nuances. There's no Western versus Eastern, it's perhaps how I would answer the question there.

Unfortunately, we've only got five minutes left. And I do want to give each panelist just time to reflect on what are the key takeaways that you would like the audience to be left with in terms of what you would like them to reflect on or maybe more importantly, do differently? Shani, I'm going to start with you again, please.

**[37:32 - 38:38] Shani Dhanda:** I do. The thing that I'd like to leave everybody is, is just the thought that every decision that we make, can either raise or lower barriers to participation in society, wherever you are in the world, whether you're in the east or the west, wherever, whatever role you're in, whether it is in the workplace or not. That's how important the decisions that we make are and who they can impact and how they impact people's lives. And I also think that there might be some people that think, I don't need to get involved in this discussion. It doesn't affect me, therefore, I don't have a role to play in it. But I think it's our collective responsibility to remove these barriers, because it's in our own self interest, to be allies to other people, because ultimately, our own struggles are tied to everybody else's. So I really want people to understand that everybody has a responsibility here and a role to play in making sure that we are creating a more fairer and just world for everybody.

**[38:40 - 38:42] Amanda Leacy:** Great, David, what are your final thoughts?

**[38:44 - 40:07] David Olusoga:** I would pick up on things that I said earlier this morning for people who attended that session is that we're living through a remarkable time. The discussions that have been had about racial inequality, the ideas that have been seeded ideas like allyship,

the structural nature of racism, the concept of being actively anti-racist, those ideas have helped people over the past 12 months examine their internal practices, the cultures, even just the traditions, within organizations and 1000s of organizations across the country and across the world. And that process of examination of trying to understand that we can create accidentally or unintentionally, unwittingly systems that damage the life chances of our fellow citizens, those lessons are -- they can be applied beyond race. It's critically important that we deal with race, but those same lessons are the lessons we need to learn to address all of these forms of inequality and lack of opportunity, lack of life chances. So we've taken this very difficult step that was brought about by an event that nobody predicted with an energy nobody foresaw. And I think we need to in some ways, recognize that this has armed us with concepts and ideas and energy that we can use elsewhere, we can use more universally and that's quite exciting.

**[40:09 - 40:13] Amanda Leacy:** Wonderful, anything you would like people to do differently as a takeaway?

**[40:14 - 41:10] David Olusoga:** I think it's to invite people to speak. The thing which struck me about, obviously, I talk mainly about race and racial inequality, is people - in groups of coworkers have asked their Black and Asian colleagues about their experiences of racism, they've asked people to discuss the ways in which the structures within their organizations or their sectors have affected them. And those conversations, I mean, I've had reported them being really profound and painful but necessary. This has been the engine room of this, is our ability to talk openly, not get defensive, but to talk openly. And to understand that these structures that we have created contain these barriers and these blockages that it is in all of our interests as Shani said, to address, it's a

conversation open frank conversation is, I think, the engine room of change.

**[41:11 - 41:12] Amanda Leacy:** Wonderful. Anita?

**[41:14 - 42:15] Anita Tiessen:** Well, again, building on everybody else is, I think 2020 really has been, kind of a seismic change and all sorts of fronts and that energy to come out of COVID, to come out of Black Life Matters to come out of out with a stronger commitment and focus on inclusiveness on diversity on sustainability all of that. I think, is -- it's a moment to actually seize and shape that rather than let it fizzle out if I can put it that way. And I do think that when you're talking with yourself individually and with whichever organization you work, I do think that the key is having those conversations and they can be quite uncomfortable sometimes. And sometimes you need open ones and sometimes you might need more private and kind of safe space conversations. But I think it and I've seen it in my own organization, I've only got 20 staff [inaudible] -- that actually people have felt emboldened. And it's not always been an easy conversation. But it's actually making us think and do things differently and I think that's all for the good.

**[42:16 - 43:08] Amanda Leacy:** Fantastic. Well, I want to thank the panelists for this great discussion. Huge, huge thanks for me personally. I've really, really enjoyed it. I want to just summarize the takeaways there. And so, Shani sort of saying, we all have a role to play in our responsibility here. David talking about the importance of open and frank conversations and all of us joining in with that not being defensive coming to learn from each other. We all have something to bring here. And Anita, I think what you were saying is, let's seize the moment. 2020 was a terrible year from so many different aspects, but it has given us an impetus and energy and momentum

that we can build on. So let's seize that moment together for change. So thanks for joining us. Thanks so much the panelists and enjoy the rest of the day.

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