

Hello everyone, welcome to DSROI webinar 2. We have Janet and Blesel joining us for this webinar. Welcome both of you. Blesel is from Kenya who has done a lot of work around sexuality and disability with the coalition there.

She comes from a queer background and has done some great work with GLBTQI disabled people there. We welcome you Blesel on the webinar and thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to be able to link with all of you.

Welcome Gathony, welcome Blesel, it's a delight to have you here today. Good morning, good evening, good day, I'm not quite sure what time of the day it is with those of you who have joined us, but thank you so much for being here as well. I'm going to start by just asking Gathony, asking Blesel to tell us a little bit more about herself and her background.

I'm a queer social right activist, I have been working on the issues of LGBTIQ persons in Kenya for a long time, but in relation to the social, economic and cultural and political reasons why this particular discourse in Kenya and the particular sexual identities have been controversial. I have worked with Gay Kenya Trust, I have worked with the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya, I've also put myself at a global capacity or level, I work with a team of people called The Roots, where we've been working as global citizens on different issues, the issues of land, issues of women's rights, issues of taxation, unjust taxation, and recently we're working on a hashtag, World vs Bank. But for the purpose of this discussion, I'm going to discuss my work with the LGBTIQ community in Kenya.

That's great Blesel, would you like to tell us about how your involvement with people with disabilities, queer people with disabilities came about? It was an idea born out of a fellowship programme with a good friend of mine and comrade Dan Caleb Omulo, we were together at the Fahamu Pan African Fellowship, we met there and we were discussing about the issues of LGBTIQ people, of course back then we had quite a narrow scope of how our struggles were going to be. So we had the argument of LGBTIQ people and he was also discussing the issues of people living with disability in relation to the social, cultural, economic and political conditions in Kenya, and while we were assessing this during the fellowship programme that was one year, we realised that most of the issues that we were bringing forward, whether in terms of policy, whether in terms of struggle, whether in terms of how people were situated at a state level, we felt that our communities had a lot of intersectionalities of their struggles and that's how we came up with the idea that we had to discuss disabilities and sexualities on a broader understanding. Of course it took a lot of time for him to understand LGBTIQ people given that Kenya is a very religious nation and also he's, you know, he had not come into close linkages and working with LGBTIQ people and also I had a very narrow scope of what entailed people living with disabilities and the disability rights discourse in Kenya.

So from that and in that one year we learnt a lot from each other and as part of the fellowship programme we came up with the idea that disability and sexuality had to be done. So this emerged out of your links with Dan and your growing understanding of disability, his growing understanding of LGBTIQ people. And sexuality.

Yes. So how did the programme actually start? We started, we approached one of the LGBTIQ funders in Kenya, they are known as UHAI and we gave them our idea. So we told

them that we wanted to have the pilot of the project and we called it Breaking the Silence and the reason why we called it this is because after speaking to some few organisations that were both LGBTIQ and working in the disability fraternity we realised that nobody had tried to do this in Kenya and not in the capacity that we wanted to do it.

In the beginning we only focus on LGBTIQ people living with disability and we were hoping to be able to map out a community that we would be able to work with and have conversations with and build dialogue to be able to understand how these communities work. So we failed, not really much but we failed a bit in the sense that we came with an ideology of what we wanted but once we engaged with community that was mostly around low socio-economic areas in Nairobi and our reason to focus on this was because also we wanted to include the socio-economic angle of people who are struggling with disability and people who are also struggling as LGBTIQ people. We went there and learnt a lot more, so we used the human rights discourse but realised that we had to come out, after the first Breaking the Silence project we realised that we had to come up with a bigger concept that was focusing on exploring sexuality of people living with disability as an agency, something that was looking at socio-cultural, political, economic.

Would everybody please mute their microphones? Thank you. That's great. Sorry Blessel, you were saying? After the first Breaking the Silence project we realised that the perception of human sexuality, sensuality expression and manifestation was greatly changed in the recent decades, there was the whole rise of HIV AIDS movement, the rise of feminist and LGBTIQ movement but also realised that the people living with disability were highly marginalised in this group.

The second thing when we went there, we found out that we could not walk into a space and ask for people who are LGBTIQ, we had to get ourselves entrenched in the community to gain that trust within that community and to be able to work with them from a point of we understand each other's struggles than people who are running a project or a programme. So the coming out was a difficult process until we were having communities of 45 to 50 people who knew some queer people were coming to talk to them about living with disability and being queer to an open group that was discussing sexuality whether it was from a heterosexual point, different gender, non-conforming or different types of gender expressions and also different types of sexual identity expressions. So from there we were able to draft a concept that was more around advocating for change of sexual non-perception so that consent, agency, choice and diversity and equality were valued.

So and then from there we built coalition with Gay Kenya Trust where I also work in and Disability Focus Africa. So those were the two agencies that were working with this particular programme. I think what you've just said to me raises all sorts of issues about building coalition and intersectionality which I think is... Sorry, go on Tony.

I wasn't talking. I think the webinar is a bit... It was echoing what I was saying. They have to mute their microphones, yes.

Last section you were just talking about, about building coalition and doing that in an intersectional way and I think that's something that both of us are really passionate about and that you've clearly put a lot of energy into. Can you talk a little bit more about the

importance of coalitions and what they do? What do they mean in your work? Both as a person working at a global platform, continental platform and also at a nationalistic level I have seen coalitions to be a space that people can network, people can have conversations because one of the things that is lacking in struggles and most of the discourses across the world is people are not talking and listening to each other and I think with coalitions it brings together that idea that people can get together, can discuss issues that are affecting them can start drawing out patterns with where there's commons as common people and then from there they can be able to access resources and other networks and other groups of people who've been doing this for a long time and I think this gives a whole lot of power to the whole human and especially social change network. Social change hasn't come from people locking themselves together with their ideas and their work and all these other things, it has come actually with people getting together bringing ideas together, bringing their diversities together and being able to shape discourses or struggles or different programs and projects to be able to ask or create that alternative society that we want to see and I think in terms of a disability and sexuality discourse in Africa it is something that is very well needed because during that time when we were researching and trying to find people that we could work with and we tried to involve you also Janet we found that it was so difficult to find people who were actually working on disabilities and sexualities at that time so most of the materials that we were generating we had to depend on what CREA had produced and secondly what disability fraternity information they had which was very limited information when it comes to sexuality and then the LGBTIQ ignorance of people living with disability issues so these were three spaces that helped us to be able to coin one of the best programs in Kenya and one that ran for two phases and one that brought a whole lot of learning and unlearning experiences for both us as people who are doing this program and also the communities that we are working with and also has become impactful to you as a comrade that we are working with and other people who engage with us.

Absolutely I think there is so much that coalitions give it was interesting I was just having a conversation with an aid agency recently and they said well why do you want a coalition why don't you just want to do this through an organisation and it was precisely because of those issues you've been bringing up the joint learning that you bring if you were working with other organisations other groups that have already gone for example you know the GLBTQI community has been through years and years of understanding of issues around sexuality issues around HIV and dealing with the issues of misunderstandings about its transmission of just dealing with supporting people through health and illness of challenging people's learning and understanding about sexuality so for the disability community to link with that and to begin to learn some of those lessons and for the GLBTQI community to begin to learn how to take on board disability how to make access as total as they can how to really create a much more open environment for other groups to come in as I think I know that we had a joint meeting in Malawi recently and it offered us all a very very different experience people coming from across Africa and I and another colleague were fortunate enough to be there too and we went away with so many things we'd learnt I mean for example one thing you said and I'd like to bring up this again with you one of the things you said earlier was talking about the socio-economic condition and the challenges that people with disabilities generally but GLBTQI people with disabilities in particular in Kenya face and one of the things that I learnt was that very often to deal with sexuality you have to make sure that people have got some sort of stable base because then they can open up to really think

about what these things mean in their life Absolutely The issues the groups that you were working with were facing in broader terms you know the things that affected their sexuality on a day-to-day level and the way in which they could actually engage with and also have the freedom to think about it I would like to speak about the community that we worked with so as earlier stated we worked with our work has been mostly focusing on how economics has been used to sideline most minority groups across the world and while focusing on these disabilities and sexualities projects we went to communities that were living in lower socio-economic areas as part of trying to understand how did they understand sexuality from their own point and then how our understanding of what self-determination was and how people express themselves sexually was going to work with these two spaces and when we went there we realised that because people living with disabilities in Africa has been a question that has been put on the side or sidelined for a very long time and this has affected even at a state level as how people live culturally and how people live politically and mostly economically and this has affected their capacity to even be able to live their daily lives, live alone, discuss their sexuality so when we went there they were like every other aspect of our lives affect us in a very marginalised controversial and actually damning existence to a point that we are not able to discuss how we own our thoughts, how we own our own bodies how we own our own sexualities, how we want to express ourselves most of us have known since when we are children that we have these different sexualities but when you came to your cultural angle or your political angle being able to exist as a fully productive member of society economically these issues were affecting them at multiple times constant times, including being denied education being denied dignity of life and all these other things and from that point we were able to say then if you are going to discuss sexuality let's start with it from a point of being and the first three months were difficult but after that we started seeing a process where we were being taught to unlearn our theories of understanding sexuality or putting it away from these languages that we use and them giving us how they express themselves whether it was through sign language whether it was through the way they live whether it was through their daily negotiations because even through this group we had a few people who were sex workers we were able to learn more from the community than we had anticipated So can you give me an example of what would be the flavour what would be the feeling of a meeting when a group of you came together what types of things did you do what sorts of issues did you share In the beginning it was just purely discussions and then we started having different activities that analysed different systems so we had for instance an activity we called the walk of life and it kind of tries to situate a person in society and given different cultural, political and social and economic aspects we were able to ask questions like can you afford two meals a day can you afford a holiday which level of education did you get to and while we were doing that walk of life you start all together at the same line so you would say if you are a man or a woman if you are a man do step forward because society tends to favour men mostly and if you look at how education is given in Africa there are still some parts of communities that would prefer more men going to school than women and these things came out through this process of walk of life and from there we were able to open up about how did somebody feel when people were making steps forward in terms of the level of education they got how many meals they can afford a day if they can afford a holiday and all these things and from there is when people started opening up and including a space in that walk of life we told people if you are queer you stay where you are and if you are not you step forward and that's when we started seeing the first group of people who came out as LGBTIQ people living with disability

so it was different processes especially activities that opened up people to now discussing this whole issue of people living with disability and also LGBTIQ. That sounds really interesting and as the process developed did you go on meeting as a group of people of all sexualities together or did you find that it began to be helpful for the LGBTIQ people to meet separately and have time alone what were the processes because I know one of the things we've talked about is the way that for all people with disabilities they face a real denial of their sexuality it doesn't matter what sexuality that might be but there is just a real blanket assumption that you're asexual or you're perverted or whatever sexuality you might have it's not something that should be acknowledged at any level so how did you handle that in terms of as the project progressed did you find that it worked to keep everybody together or did you start dividing into different groups at particular times? For the purpose of the people who came out which most of the time they would do in secret we requested if they wanted to meet other LGBTIQ persons who were already organising or advocating for sexual rights and as the project continued we would bring people from the queer community to be able to learn from the different communities we were working with but also were able to link the people living with a disability and also LGBTIQ to the queer struggle in Kenya which then they started learning from each other so there were two processes for the purpose of the programme we saw no need to separate people but at side events like when LGBTIQ the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya was discussing the issue of security of LGBTIQ persons we would get this community or the number of people who came out into the spaces that are LGBTIQ organising and from then they started analysing the loopholes or the spaces in which they felt their rights or their inclusion was not there in the LGBTIQ community Right, so I think that's interesting that you made that commitment to go on working with disabled people as a group in terms of sexuality but then there were these other avenues through which you were able to start creating space for LGBTIQ people in the disability community and really to start looking at how specifically their sexual rights were being affected. How did that process work in terms of who came to meet who initially because I think sometimes we can be too quick to say you must come to us and looking at how those engagements worked and who met who on what sort of ground I mean how do you create the safe ground for those meetings? The safe ground for these meetings I will start with what we envisioned and that was to create an understanding or to achieve a society where people living with disability understood, appreciated articulated and actualised themselves as sexual beings and then you have human rights discourse that is LGBTIQ that hasn't really looked at people living with disabilities and the friction mostly was at the point where there was a new community they had to address that was coming with understanding sexuality different gender expressions, how sex has been used in violence and also as to be able to express a person in their own healthy sexual life and the friction came in with where the LGBTIQ rights mainstream organising was not well equipped to deal with people living with disability and then the disability fraternity in itself was not especially when we were working with the whole community there was a community that was open, there was a community that was feeling a bit enclosed was not ready or open yet to have that LGBTIQ discussion yet, they were willing to have discussions about other things that were affecting their everyday life like my capacity not to be able to provide for myself or my family, my capacity not to be able to negotiate my own thoughts as a fully dignified human being there was people living with disabilities in the communities who were still locked up in houses like somebody has been locked in somewhere since they were a child before you even bring them to the table to discuss the issue of sexuality there's a whole lot of aspects of things that are affecting their

lives that this programme to some capacity did not address and to bring this together was the challenge in this process, to be able to bring a mainstream organising to understanding people living with disability as sexual beings and to be able to tell them that you are appreciated and you can articulate and actualise yourself was difficult and then the people living with disability feeling that there was a whole lot of things that needed to be addressed in this programme that was really narrowed to just sexuality Yes, that's interesting I think it is this question of how you are able to address sexuality but it has to be contextual for the groups that you are addressing it with and if you ignore all of these factors that influence their lives so greatly and I know within the coalition we've talked a great deal about both those contextual factors but plus also I think the issue that within so many African countries at the moment some more than others, there has been such an anti-gay anti-queer people drive I think some of it funded by some of the American Pentecostalist movement not exclusively but that has certainly been an influence on it but seeing that happening how has that environment affected the work that you were able to do? Could you repeat the question? I'm sorry The negativity towards GLBTQI people generally that's been emerging in some of the African nations recently that there's been a very specific focus on queer people and anti-homosexual drive as they would express it and that has had has been both funded from outside as well as referencing what's happening locally but that must have had an influence on the work that you were able to do Absolutely and I will speak this within the human rights, there was three aspects of how this work has been affected with this, the whole mainstream LGBTIQ organizing and especially when we met our development partners who say that the project in itself cannot be funded from a disability fraternity struggle, we had to shift it to the LGBTIQ platform, like the organizing that is LGBTIQ that is mainstream.

At that time people and until now, people have shifted the whole discourse towards one, decriminalization and two, security of LGBTIQ persons which then affects greatly how you can speak about the self-determination of a people or to be able to discuss sexuality in its broader understanding away from the main agenda that is being carried out with the LGBTIQ organizations and then within the human rights fraternity itself there's a lot of prejudice in how people want to work, so issues of sexuality especially and especially LGBTIQ people already is met because they reflect the same dockets of society, they're not different people, they have the same limitation that is stereotyping, sexism, patriarchy and mobility and homophobia, they have all these types of challenges within themselves, so when you go to speak about these issues you see a side lining of the grave importance of why this discussion should be happening at this time and at this time in our lives that there needs to be spaces that address sexuality places that address this in relation to people living with disabilities our children are still reading books that tell them to have parents, they both have to be able-bodied and it is wrong, it is something that needs to be addressed as the young generation that is coming up it needs to be addressed with the youth that is confused that is finding out about themselves, their bodies, how they want to express themselves, it is important to how they then become productive members of society and the human rights fraternity seemed not ready to have this conversation so within those two spaces the main agenda of the LGBTIQ movement shifting the human rights fraternity not seeing the importance of this and the development partners wanting the LGBTIQ mainstream organizing to be the people who then carry out this particular program became a frictional point, it has been a big challenge for this program and I can't lie for about one year or so it

hasn't been doing that much work apart from getting members to meet each other like on meetings or anything that is happening within the LGBTIQ framework but not the program in itself being able to run. That's interesting about the challenges that you're facing, so you're also facing quite a sense of there being different silos different places that certain groups ought to be separated off into from the funding agencies that they have got limitations in terms of how they perceive what you're doing. Yes.

From the funding agency to the mainstream LGBTIQ community and then plus the mainstream human rights framework, so it's people who are not ready to have the conversation or people who are too mainstream towards this freeing of LGBTIQ, not even freeing, this pride of LGBTIQ people without looking at how people live their everyday life, especially if you're not social economic, if you're not enabled socio-economically and then the last point of course being that you cannot bring all these three groups together if their gender has shifted from the whole discussion in Africa criminalized or talking about now having anti-homosexual laws and their gender having shifted to all these other small docket of discussions to security of LGBTIQ people and decriminalization. Yes. So if you've got that as a background then to keep the conversation with a broader focus becomes a real challenge, doesn't it? It sounds like a really exciting and challenging and I think probably quite unique program that you've been running here, Bessel.

I'm very excited to hear more about what you've been doing with it. I'm going to open the discussion up now and see what questions those listening might have. So if you've got things that you would like to ask Bessel, like to ask Tony, would you please type them into the chat box and Minoo will then share them with us.

Hi, there is one question here by Stelios. The question is, does Bessel believe that disabled and LGBTIQ people share the same discrimination by the society? I highly believe so and this comes from both experience and also learning and studying communities across spaces. It might seem like it's different but the sharing of LGBTIQ people, especially in the communities that we work with and mostly here, if you look at the disability discourse for instance, the issue of having a child even that is living with disability has been something that has been very controversial in society.

People have been hidden, you are kept somewhere away from society, you will be denied education. At policy level, if you look at issues of people living with disability, even in terms of sexuality, people have seen them as, you know, not sexual beings, not people who can own their thoughts, their bodies and how they express themselves and if you look at the intersectionality of queer people, LGBTIQ people, is that they share the same controversial space in society. With disability, of course, there's a new view to it, there's a way African leaders and African spaces are starting to look at people living with disability and trying to entrench them in society but there's a lot that is left to be desired and especially with these two groups in terms of being able to actualise themselves.

I think that's very interesting because I think people don't focus very much on those individuals' experience of actually being able to express, feel, enjoy, experience grief, all of those things that are just about being a person, being able to say the things that you think safely, being able to share them with other people, those often disappear in those bigger fights and yet you're very much focused on that issue of people being able to, as you say,

actualise themselves and be really clear about who and how they want to be in the world and the limitations that there are on that. Absolutely. We would request all of you who are listening in, please type in your questions.

She has shared so much with us, it takes a minute to get your head around all the things that she's been saying so we've got one more here for you. Thanks Becky for the question. Becky has a question which says bless you, can you expand a little more on the push to move LGBTIQ people with disabilities into the funding for LGBTIQ issues? I'm wondering what the resistance is to be open to funding from this platform? I'm not sure I understand the question but I will try and answer it.

The push to move LGBTIQ people with disabilities into funding for LGBTIQ issues is that sexuality and within development partners, these are partners who then get to decide what thematic area of focus you can have. Most of the people who want to fund will tell you that you need to be working within an LGBTIQ group. In the beginning, given the sensitivity of this topic and given the ignorance within the LGBTIQ mainstream advocacy, we felt that Disability Focus Africa was best suited to have this program, to be able to run it as it understands the special need of its community.

But when we met the development partners they were telling us, because this is a sexuality issue and they believe that the sexuality discourse has been carried along with the HIV-AIDS movement which was mostly there because of the spread of HIV within gay men, then has been carried forward with the feminist movement and was also carried forward with LGBTIQ mainstream organising. So they kept telling us to shift this particular program from Disability Focus Africa and put it into the LGBTIQ funding hemisphere, which we felt was a problem. Did I answer the question? Yes, I think so and I can appreciate that the difficulty there because I think very often for people with disabilities the initial and primary limitations, the very primary blocks that they face are ones of access and so often people who have not worked with disability in a consistent way have not a clue how to organise themselves.

So in a way it's done very ineffectively, it's done as a token and then so many of the people who want to and need to be able to attend just are not able to. So I think to say if you've got an open disability group who will take the issue of sexuality on board and willingly work with it and work with it in coalition with other sexuality groups but who understand as you say what the real needs of that community are in terms of establishing access, establishing a safe space, their day-to-day experience, their very primary one is of the prejudice around visible disabilities and their sexuality is something that is very much a part of them but so often like you say it's been sat on so that there's not a safe space for that to come out. So actually a sexuality environment from my experience I know can feel a very alien one for people with disabilities whereas a disability community doesn't.

Okay, so do you want to continue with that, Minoo? Yes, Becky has a continuing question where she's saying it is an answer to my question but I guess what I was wondering was if it wasn't an opportunity to bring disability rights into the discourse of sexuality in developing work? I think in part it was that but I also think that it is within also our mandate to be able to protect the communities that we work with and sometimes it is also good to be able to tell a development partner that I do understand this but the avenue or the fraternity, the body, the group that is working on this should not be limited with the agency that they work

from. If they have a good concept and they have a good ideology of how they want to carry forward a discourse then they need to be able to tell that difference, to be able to tell people whatever group it is, this is an amazing concept or ideology and I think it should be done by that community and I think that's where we had a friction with the development partners. I think for me this is where the idea of exploring coalitions and trying to find adequate ways of establishing and bringing funding into coalitions is really crucial because you need groups who will then work together in a much more egalitarian and open way to share ideas if they have got that initial commitment to the coalition.

I don't know what your thoughts are Blessal. Has I lost the voice? I'm sorry. I was reading that.

Have you lost my voice? Yes. Okay. I was saying that if this is the difficulty that you're facing is this about or for me that's one of the areas where or why building coalitions across sexuality, disability, race, gender, all of these issues within intersectionality to look at where we build our coalitions and how crucial those are.

I think it is. I think it is very important to see where you're building your coalitions with whom and also where they are and in relation to the different aspects that affect our societies. So like for us for instance the spaces that we build and with Disability Focus Africa was from an understanding that we were dealing with a very sensitive topic, a very a person who understood, a group of people even within the coalition that more understood freedoms of people and self determination of a people than they understood what it is around mainstream organising or what is LGBTIQ rights or what is disability rights.

How are you looking holistically at a people and not just limiting it to something that you understand or something that is particularly mainstream and to work with Disability Focus Africa we felt they would understand the sensitivity of the community to bring in the whole sexuality discourse was to understand it from a feminist perspective, from the whole LGBTIQ organising that has been there and more the radical politics of LGBTIQ organising and also being able to discuss sexuality and how it has been silenced within women, within young adults, within all these other spaces and more so people living with disability. And I also think very often with thinking about how and where you start with these projects is as you said right at the very beginning it's starting from where people are at and funding has to be able to do that as well doesn't it? Yes. Do we have more questions? Okay, there is another from Stelios.

There are two. I'll first go with Stelios' question. It says, does Blesol believe that it must be a cooperation between these two groups in order to change the perspective of society? Isn't it dangerous for disabled people to be recognised as LGBTIQ? I'll answer the first question.

I believe that it needs to be a cooperation between these two groups but also it needs to be able to capture the wider society. I think there is multiplicity of struggles across Africa that is coming out as a necessity to be able to organise together, to look at how we are interlinked as communities across cultures, across political hemispheres, across how we express ourselves socially and how we are marginalised economically. I think with this we can get far much more people and struggles and communities to be able to work with because I think the issue of sexuality is very important.

The issue of freedoms of our own bodies is very important and I think it needs to move away from just these two groups to other people and that's one thing we tried to incorporate in the programme that we were doing. I hope I've answered that. I'm seeing a question from Becky.

Yeah, I'll read that question. Becky has put a question here. She says, both Janet and Blessel, you have mentioned coalitions.

What from your opinion is the most important focus that these coalitions should have? I'm thinking, should we be looking at inter-nation, inter-discipline? Here I'm thinking not just sexuality, disability, feminist, etc, but also NGO, academic, government, etc. Do you want to take that? Sorry Blessel, did you hear that? Janet? Yes. Shall I respond first? Absolutely.

My experience isn't broad Becky, so I don't want to make claims for things that I don't have. But I think one of the things about coalitions in my experience, or my use of them, the way I perceive them working, is for groups who are working around human rights very directly. In whatever sense you want to understand that, whatever issues they might be fighting for at a local level.

I think that's where the coalitions come in. I think academics, if they are committed to those same issues, I mean I'm an academic myself and I use that knowledge and those resources I hope very powerfully in the work that I do. NGOs, many of us come from an NGO background, those are the things that are supported, are organising together the organisations that we sit within.

So I think that these types of issues, I think I get more wary when I begin to think about bringing government bodies into the coalitions. I think you're talking about a different level and understanding of coalitions at that point. So I think it moves on to a different sphere.

I don't know whether you want to say something more to that. My idea of this particular coalition was to, and I hope I answer you Becky, is to have people across board knowing that this was an issue that wasn't really being addressed from where we are and then having people, individuals working at different levels, whether it's at the government level or academics or all these other things, just being able to bring out a discourse. More to me, this coalition should be able to adapt itself in understanding of being able to create individuals across Africa who are movement to this particular discourse and people who are recognized and respected in the different spaces that they work in but do understand that this is a necessity.

So I think that was what I understood even when this meeting was taking place in Malawi. In whatever place that it did, and I'm sorry I did not, I wasn't able to attend, but that was my idea of what this coalition should be able to do. To just bring these people and their resources and their knowledge and their different institutions and their different capacities to be able to just carry out something that was bringing out more, for instance, written, more documentation, more written resources where people can pick up knowing that this is written from this continent and written by people in this continent who have worked and seen these systems work, whatever we come up with as an alternative.

So, yeah, that's all I have to say. Thank you, Blessie. Shrinidhi has a question or possibly it's more a comment.

Shrinidhi, you can add more if you want to say more. She is wondering if the finding shared meaning between the two people, the two communities that you're talking about is difficult. She is wondering if it's difficult to find this shared meaning.

It is. I even wrote there that I actually agree. But even from the space that this ideology was made because we're in a pan-African fellowship program with this comrade.

It was more from an understanding how do people work out theory and practice and how in our different spaces that we organize from whether it's mainstream or movement building, do we understand that all oppression is connected? And I think there is a lot of that feeling or that sense of shared meaning that is working across boards, across nations, across continents, across people. I'm hearing more and more about global movements. And I think if we do understand all oppression is connected, sometimes there is a way that people find a way of working together.

I think there are many, many more avenues that this conversation takes us down and many more questions. I've got all sorts of things floating around in my head now that I'd like to talk with you about. But I think that I'd like to pull it to a close now.

I know that we've been very grateful to you for coming and joining us this evening. I'd like to thank you for all of your intelligence, for your understanding, for your commitment, for your experience that you have so openly shared with us on this issue. And it's been a real honor to be able to hear your experiences today.

So I'd like to thank you very deeply. Thank you to Minoo and Jasmine. It's been great and it's run so smoothly.

So I join my hands to you. Thank you for that. And to all of those of you who've joined us here, it's been lovely to have you to watch your listening faces.

And please know that if you have more questions that occur to you after this, do send them in to us and we will share them as best as we should be happy to respond to any other issues that come up. We'll try and continue this conversation because I think there's a lot of important issues that have been raised out of this webinar. So thank you again to all of you and most particularly to Blesol.

Thanks Janet. I just also wanted to add that we will be making the transcription of this webinar available in the next few days. So that would also be put on the online platform and there would be a space to interact more in terms of more questions and discussions around this particular webinar.

I would like to say thank you all and it was beautiful to be able to share this experience and I hope that we keep sharing more. I will answer online to the rest of you since I think we have all emails together. Definitely.

There are some questions Blesol in terms of more details about your work and if there is a website we can check. So I think we will get some of that information from you in the next few days and share it with the participants if that is ok. Absolutely.

And thank you too. Thank you. Thank you everybody.

Thank you.