

## Foresight and Decolonial Humanitarian Tech Ethics

May 7, 2021

- Hi, and good afternoon. Good morning, good evening, everybody, from whichever parts of the world you're joining us in. Thank you so much for joining us today, in our Berkman Klein event, on foresight and decolonial humanitarian tech ethics. It is fantastic to have you join us. And the question I wanted to pose to, to everybody and why we're here today, is really to interrogate. How do we not lock people into future harm, future indebtedness or future inequity. And before we start, I want to acknowledge that I am currently doing this event on the ancestral homelands Lenape homelands, and I recognize the longstanding significance of these lands for Lenape nations past and present, as well as future generations. I want to also acknowledge the worlds that will exist beyond our lifetimes and the people, animals and nature that will thrive in it. I also recognize that the very act and nature of online events and technology access is denied to so many people around the world. And there are many people out there that find themselves on the receiving end of these technologies, that don't get to have a say in how they are designed. So thank you for joining us today. As we try to interrogate, a more just and equitable digital future for us all. My name is Aarathi Krishan. I'm a fellow at the Berkman Klein Center. And my research that I've been working on, has been focused very closely on this topic. I've been in the humanitarian sector for almost 20 years, and I've been working on humanitarian digital governance through my work with the Berkman Klein Center. I've chosen this topic because I've often argued that the humanitarian aid system perpetuates hierarchical patriarchal hegemonic views, of what development and progress look like, ignoring other worldviews, and often the underlying systemic and structural pillars of inequity and bias. And as the humanitarian aid system increasingly intersects with technology systems that are often developed in the context of Western capitalism, and in small pockets of privileged power. I have not been the only one, that has raised concerns on the implications of the collision of these two systems, and importantly, what that means on those that are minoritized in the global South. So how then do we use, Oh do we design digital governance systems, that speak to these complex intertwined issues? And instead of merely looking at digital governance, in terms of control, could we design different approaches to liberate ourselves to liberate our digital futures, so that it is a space of safety of humanity. For those of that we are meant to support, and are these approaches, in which we can design new forms of digital humanism. So today I'm really thrilled to be able to explore two elements of that with our panelists and with all of you here today. And this is around how we integrate both foresight, the consideration of future impacts and future harm, as well as decoloniality, into humanitarian digital governance systems. And I am thrilled to announce, and thrilled to introduce our panelists for today, that will help think through some of these. So, Anasuya, Sabelo Mhlambi and Andrew Zolli, are joining us today, I'm going to invite them to turn their cameras on, so I can do their introductions. So, Anasuya Sengupta, is the Co-Director of 'Whose Knowledge', and organization that works on re-imagining the internet to be for all people. She has led initiatives in India and the USA, across the global South and internationally for over 20 years to amplify marginalized voices, in both virtual and physical worlds. Thank you Anasuya for joining us.

Sabelo Mhlambi is the founder of Bantucracy a public interest organization, that focuses on Ubuntu ethics and technology, is a technology and human rights fellow, at the Carr Center for Human Rights policy and a fellow at the Berkman Klein Center as well. Sabelo's work is at the intersection of human rights, ethics, culture, and technology, and emphasizes global South perspectives and AI policy. Welcome Sabelo. And finally, we're joined by Andrew Zolli, who oversees the sustainable development humanitarian, and human rights Impacts portfolio at Planet Labs, which deploys the largest, constellation of Earth-observing satellites in history. Together planet to satellite image , Planet's satellites image the entire surface of the earth daily. Andrew also chairs, Planet's internal AI and data ethics program, and he serves on the global board of directors of human rights watch. Welcome everybody. Thank you so much for joining us. So we have an hour today, and we have very, you know, deep questions to interrogate, but I might open up really quickly to Anasuya, Andrew and Sabelo just for any opening remarks that you want to make before I dive into the questions. And perhaps Andrew, we might start with you since your mic is unmuted.

- Oh, . Well, before we get started, I just wanna say, I have taken over the course in my entire career enormous value and inspiration from the work of the Berkman Klein Center. And I have to say it is incredibly exciting, that you are leading this from there, that this conversation is happening is, another on a long list of data points were really, you know important conversations are happening. For those of you who are listening, I'll just say one or two quick introduction, and sort of framing for this. I oversee the global humanitarian and human rights, and sustainable development applications of technology which was birthed. You know, if we think about the kind of tacit, conceptually biased frames of development, in which we have created kind of unipolar models, where we have hyper developed, and I put this all in enormous air-quotes. "Technical societies at one end, and then a whole array of communities on the other." A pole that is of course one of the most important things that has to this concept needs to go away. It needs to die, but I come from a place where, from the very edges of that Western elite, highly financed world where we are building technologies, that have extraordinary global potential, and are producing terabytes of data a day about the world. And I think of data as unrefined social power. And, you know, if you're producing large amounts of data you're producing large amounts of tacit social power. And the question then is what are the cultural frames? What are the conceptual frames? What are the respectful relationships? What are the kinds of partnerships and structures, in which the full liberation potential of that data, can be made fully manifest? And it certainly can't be made fully manifest if it's just a bunch of Silicon Valley types at one end making decisions about it. So, we are actively working on, how we think about creating those kinds of governance structures, both the kind of explicit ones and the kind of tacit, new tacit norms around them. We'll have - I'm sure we'll explore this much more in the conversation to come, but the challenges in doing that, in it are not just about distributing assets, but they're also about conceiving of all of the social relationships, power relationships the kind of imbalances that exist and actively working to our best ability to overcome them. We're not perfect in that as anyone else, but I'm very excited to hear, what people have to say about what we're doing, and to reflect on it with you.

- Wonderful. Thank you so much, Andrew. Anasuya I might open up to you, if there's any quick introduction comments you wanna make, and then I'll go to Sabelo.

- Just to say that, I'm very conscious of the fact that, I'm coming into this conversation with my head in my heart in India, and also in other parts of the global South, Whose Knowledge as a feminist collective co-lead with compañeras from Brazil, from Uruguay, from different parts of the world from Ghana. And all of us at this moment, very much on the fragile end of our own emotional beings, but even more so bearing witness to, yes, if it to put it as one might put it, one of the greatest humanitarian crises of our times, that as with many humanitarian crises is, humanly engineered in ways that make it worse. So, I will no doubt bring back very embodied experiences around this as we talk, but it is important, I think, for me to say that, for us at 'Whose Knowledge' I love that Andrew said, you know air quotes around development. My background is in development studies, and throughout my career, one of the things I've done is put, "Scare quotes around development." Recognizing that the vision that we have for the world, is around justice, and justice for us means centering those, who have been marginalized by structures and power of power and privilege throughout history and ongoing. And for us, as you said, Aarathi, they are the minoritized majority of the world. I'll stop there and come back to you as we talk more.

- Thank you, Anasuya, and I also just want to acknowledge that particularly with everything happening in India right now, this is a difficult time, for a lot of our Indian brothers and sisters in diaspora and for yourself. And we're very grateful for the graciousness of your time and wisdom today. Sabelo, thank you so much for joining over to you. If there's any opening comments you want to make before I jump into questions.

- Thank you so much Aarathi. It's such a pleasure to be here with you all, and just to see some familiar faces, and to be with back at my intellectual homework Berkman Klein Center. I also wanted to give a special shout out to Stanford's Digital Civil Society Lab. Where I'm also doing a fellowship at this moment as well, and I'm thankful to the community there as well. I just wanna share some initial thoughts, and of course we can delve into this much, much, much more. When speaking about human rights, I like to think, and to ask myself, "As a human part been answered, you know what makes us human, and what are the social economic and political structures that are necessary to make us feel human, to make us feel protected." And if we look at the world, as it is today, the ongoing systematic injustices racial injustice the neocolonization that Kwame Nkrumah talked about, back in 1966 has European, Oh, maybe I can say Western humanism, being able to recognize the humanity of the non-European right. We're leaving decades after these initial frameworks of human rights, have we seen the benefit? Have we seen the preservation of the dignity of those, especially those who have been minoritized yet they make up the majority of the world.

- Yeah.

- And I think the answer is pretty self-explanatory. This has not quite been the case, and maybe we need to start thinking about, what are extensions or additions to the human rights

frameworks that can guarantee, those things to protect those who have been sold out, those whose humanity is still not being recognized, right? What good are human rights frameworks? If they prevent you from recognizing the humanity of others? I think that demonstrates a fundamental flaw, in how we have come to understand these human rights frameworks. Although there is a place for them, , I'm not saying we just throw away the baby with the bath water, but I think there's a fundamental flaw there. And of course, if we look at history we can see that, you know, Europeans have always gathered together to make doctrines and frameworks that are veiled as human rights, or veiled as progressive, only to push forward their own economic interest. I can go on, but it's even troubling that some of the human rights, organizations in the African continent, have been tied to sort of U.S. expansion, whether, it's their sponsorship with them, dare I say, the CIA or you know, other parties, even the labor unions in the United States, like the AFL-CIO, working with the CIA to destabilize, labor movements across the global South. So it's a really ... I think it's an area that needs to be better explored. And so I'm glad to be here to try to, you know think more about those issues, and to work in sharing sort of an African conception, and broadly speaking, when I say African, because it's such a diverse continent, but to try to bring a different views, that are shaped by the ant-colonial influences of the African continent, the current decolonial scholars, who are talking about these issues. So thank you all. And it was just a pleasure to be with you.

- Thank you, Sabelo. That the comment that you just made which has been echoed by Andrew and Anasuya, do we recognize the humanity of others, in the technology futures we create. And you know, where I sit, I don't think ... I don't see that we necessarily do it. So we use these terms beneficiaries, as if people are passively waiting for a handout, for whatever harm or ideas of progress, that we want to hand out to them as if we are benevolent, sort of speak. Anasuya, I might wanna start with you, you and I had a conversation a while ago, where we started to sort of edge around, you know decolonizing, decolonization, de-coloniality, et cetera the differences, you do a lot of work, and thinking and as well as in feminist approaches through this but what does decolonizing technology, and particularly if you could speak to maybe decolonizing humanitarian technology, what does that mean and look like to you? What, what ... how do you understand that?

- Thanks, Aarathi. Yeah, I'm trying to to answer a complex question that would take us... that takes us a lifetime to answer, I think, for us at 'Whose Knowledge' and in my embodied experience in the different worlds that I have been in. I think about de-colonization firstly, as really the true and deep recognition, of the fact that there have been historical structures of power and privilege, that have not just governed the resources, that have been extracted from different regions and territories, but I've governed the ways that people think and act. And are seen and perceived as Sabelo said. Colonization has been a process in which, our very humanity has been questioned. And let's be clear. Colonization was essentially a process, from the global North, from Europe at the time, in which race was constructed. And thereby racism began, because it was seen as a rationale, for exploitation and extraction of resources, from the global South, from Africa, from Asia from Latin America, and the Caribbean Islands and the Pacific Islands. It's important to recognize, that structure then leads to capitalism. And then that capital, that leads to a digital capital, which then not just embodies and reflects the same

structural inequities of history, but exacerbates them in some ways, particularly because we imagine digital technologies, to be more emancipatory and liberating. We assume an emancipation and liberation, because they're seen as being global, because they're seen as being quick, because they're seen as having regional influence, that are different from other global infrastructures, which is not true. There is a speed and a reach that is different but the same things were said about the telegraph, or the telephone or the television, that we are saying in the 2000s about the internet. So for us, in terms of decolonization and a feminist decolonized recognition of ourselves, and our lives and our futures, we have to start with a critical understanding of power, who holds it, who doesn't hold it, who is seen, who is not seen, who is deliberately unseen, invisibilized undermined or exploited. And that for us is the ongoing process, of a dynamic uncovering of power and of colonization. And it is dynamic, because our positionalities are not static. I may be a brown woman who is often the only brown woman in a tech conversation at the same time, if I'm in a conversation with Indians, I am so-called "Upper Caste." I am, again, I will put scare quotes around that. I am Savarna and I have caste privilege. And that matters in a context, in which the caste system continues to be, I think the deepest social structure of oppression, that its own inhabitants its own oppressors, have refused to identify and reflect upon. So power is positional, it is dynamic, and unpacking that power and unpacking its historicity, I think is deeply critical to the ways in which to understand feminist decolonised presence, as well as possible futures.

- Thank you, Anasuya. I know I recall so many conversations where we talk about, we often about, you know, equity and inclusion, and we don't talk enough about class, and we don't talk enough particularly about caste and tribes and how that plays out in our positionality of power, the decisions that we make and how it influences how we think about the world. Andrew, I'm gonna come to you to maybe respond to that, because I know this is a topic, can you talk a lot about, how technology infuses capitalist modes of power. So, I just wanna come to you to maybe, yeah, respond to that and then Sabelo as well.

- Well, I think Anasuya use the most important term which is the ... I think the starting point of all of the switches about power, power and position. And I think about, you know, the reified and outdated concept, which we referenced with air quotes and scare quotes, at the beginning of this discussion about, that the premise that you know, we have this developmental framework, and we have ... and I'm going to speak candidly. if imprecisely, so please presume good intent, right? But we position in this unipolar world, a world in which at one end, we have poor, brown, place-based, traditional, and all of the scare quotes, just assume that run down the list, society's at one end, you know, Agro Economical. And at the other end, we have, you know, developed, technical, urban, mobile, white structures at the other end, and then what's, you know So, then what we do is we assume, that there's one dimension that moves, everyone along that there's an intrinsic than burden of responsibility to move people from here to there. If you're standing here, and among the countless reasons why this is absurd, you know, a pile of hot garbage as a concept, not only does it, it does all this othering, from the point of view of the developed end, right? It creates, and reifies power imbalances, often in the name of development, but I have to control you to move you, which is absurd. And often the technologies, that we're talking about are used as the instruments of control, to move people

purportedly across some spectrum, without recognizing the enormous plurality of landing points, destinations, and way points along the way, and that all of these societies, including the ones over here live in a period, of a place of greater dynamic disequilibrium healthy disequilibrium, but also, you know with the rights to self-determination. And so one of among the many problems here, I'll just put out as a problem for the people, who live over here on the developed side, which is that, you know, if you live within two kilometers of a Walmart and you have two cars and a big house, and you've checked all the boxes, apparently history is done with you. There's like no imaginary for where these people need to go. And of course, none of this is sustainable. So that the whole system, the whole edifice is needs change. So one of the things that there are a few points, where we ... I think we need to go in there that represent potential places, where we can illuminate the soft underbelly, and eviscerate these ideas. So one of them is that, we have to fundamentally attack the idea, that these technologies are neutral. They're presumed neutrality is an instrument, that hides the agenda that defines them. I strongly disbelieve the idea that there are, that any technology is neutral technologies, are products of the agendas. They create affordances around, who can use them who can access them. What's made easy, and what's not made easy. All of those represent crystallized ethical principles and power relationships, and we need to kind of go at them. Then I think there's a process. And I say this from someone who lives over here and is trying to think about how to take, some of the very powerful tools and rethink, how we all use them access them, invent them, redesign them, rethink them. So one of the principles that I think is really critical. One of the places where we start, is with this sense of subsidiarity, this is an old Catholic social teaching idea to put the tools as close to the context of use as it, and no further away. Right? So to stop this idea that the implicit idea of distribution of these tools, we need to put the manufacturer of them in the right places. I think a second one, and this is one where we've really focused. Our work is around the creation of digital public goods. That is to say the creation of of tools that can belong to wide publics. And we spend a lot of our time building them but then also repositioning who owns them so that they don't come from a Silicon Valley firm, but they live in structures that have better governance, more inclusive governance. And I don't mean inclusive in the Western regime, I mean, inclusive of all of the publics, that might have interest in them. So we've ... for instance, taken, we have a huge program where we're monitoring all of this deforestation around the tropics, and but it's not data that comes from us, or it's passed through institutions, that have different governance regimes. And so then think a third part is to really attack carefully and aggressively attend to the ecosystems of participation, the architectures of participation, and design them in a different way. And then fundamentally, the other thing we have to do is, we have to build new networks of trust, that all of the othering and this idea of some continuity in these networks of distribution, they hide the fact that, we're not actually talking to each other all that often, often these organizations that wanna do good in the world in a humanitarian context, they land the UFO in the front yard, and they walk out and say, "We have the answer, right?" And then as soon as they've decided that the context is done, they walk back into the UFO and they fly off, and those systems become extractive. So, we have to build some networks of, weave networks of mutuality and solidarity and trust. And that is a collective exercise. Anyway, I'll stop there, but those are things we're thinking about, and how we crystallize those into ethical, principles that actually drive our work,

and inform our work in a significant way. That's that we're kind of in the, the gritty work I'm doing doing that right now.

- Thank you so much, Andrew. And I think, you know, there's ... we are driven by the philosophies and ideologies, of justice equity and liberation. And one of the things I'm gritty and in the grittiness is how do we convert that, the philosophy and ideology and the good intent, into what actually translates and will shift systems? What are the policy interventions? What, how do we actually shift different forms of governance systems? So I wanna come back to this, what the point that you said, which was inclusive governance, which I think is interesting, because in many parts in the communities, I come from, governance is understood very differently. And the weight put into community, is a lot more than weight put into control. And I wanna just shift to Sabelo here, because I'd love to hear Sabelo's, I guess reflections on what Anasuya and Andrew were saying but also I'd love to hear Sabelo. You've done a lot of work in bringing in different types of thinking ideology and philosophies, particularly around the Ubuntu approach, in terms of how we think about ethics, and whose ethics and for what purpose and why? And particularly in the human rights context. And so I would love to, yeah. To hand over to you to hear some of your thoughts, and reflections here.

- Thank you so much. I wanted to sort of, kind of carry on from Andrew's reflections, in particular the concept about the developed world, seeing itself in the sort of final state of development or even achievement such that they don't need, sort of other human rights frameworks, to extend their thinking, to extend how they recognize other humans. I think with the quote by the South African poet, who was also a teacher at UCLA, Mazisi Kunene. He writes and he says that, "Technological development, does not necessarily make us more ethical, or morally inclined, or neutral in how we approach the world. The institutions that we have here in the developed world they still exclude racialized communities." It sort of makes you wonder what is developed about all of this, right? You know, is science, is technology the mark of human achievement. And so, I think the danger with that word, the developed world is that it leads to this paternalism in the global South. Let's go show them how to be humans, because they've never had human rights systems in their parts of the world. When in fact, we know that some of the earliest fragments of human rights, were developed in the African continent, and in other parts of the world as well. So, it's this idea that I think is so troubling with West Western exceptionalism, that we can sort of parent others from the manifest destiny before that, I mean, the history has just always, always, always been part of that paternalism. Now, the problem that I encountered a few years ago when I began to ... when I left the tech industry to sort of think more about why are we even building the tools we're building, what problems are we solving? Who's benefiting from building those problems, from solving the solutions and who's framing the problems in the first place that has to be solved? And so this of course took me to the Berkman Klein Center. And while I was, I began to wonder, you know, we're talking about ethics and AI, but it almost seemed as if we all assume that, we're talking about Western ethical systems, Western philosophy as the foundation. And I just saw sort of like a type of discrepancy there in that some of the ideas which were developed, by these early European U.S. philosophers, were the ones use to justify slavery, justify colonialism, justify imperialism. And so now we're going to turn to those ideas, to try to liberate us, from the effects of those

philosophies in the very first place, right? Can we not find other systems that are designed around the aims we're aiming for? Can we find other ethical systems that are designed around, a sort of more encompassing definition of what it means to be a human being? And so this led me to eventually to the Ubuntu framework, and I admit I was biased, because I grew up with the Ubuntu framework, like I'm from the Benguni people, where Ubuntu means to be human and say, it's a philosophy that I was always familiar with. So I began to sort of then explore, well, what would a more wide end approach to, to personhood actually mean for the development, of better principles and better practices, around protecting people when it comes to technology. And I think the difference is quite vast, one of the major critiques that I've always had with some of the ethical frameworks we use for technology, or just even the conversations around human rights, in the Western concept, it's all a surprise to me that they failed to talk about reparations, but to talk about restoration restorative justice, how do you just overlook the past and then say, "Well now let's do better." When you have the means to address the past. So to fail, to have restorations or reparations, in these major frameworks. To me, it's like, they're dead on arrival. You cannot say we'll do better without admitting guilt, or trying to fix what happened, and trying to address what happened. And we find that when we go to other parts of the world, restoration is at the center of the ethical systems, restoring others, reparations, even when you're not your oppressor, to still give reparations and restoration to others like what we've seen, famous in the case of South Africa, although it's still an ongoing process, but to give the restoration to your own oppressor as well. And so I think that disables, Or, actually undermines sort of, you know, some of the solutions that, that we can propose to try to address, the negative effects of technology, or even the systems around creating technology. So my small contribution, or sort of the efforts that I've been trying to make, is to then work with others, to try to suggest that perhaps we can find better ways, to ensure this protection that we're talking about. If we're able to sort of explore, what do the other conceptions of human rights of being human what do they contain that we can use, especially here in the so-called developed world, which has not developed its own ethical maturity. So, what can we do even in these parts of the world, to then better protect those who we've racialized within the United States, within Europe, and those who we still exclude even within the ... within the global South. And I think once we do that, then we can start to have sort of this, more systematic change, but not just only within the tech companies, the tech culture, the venture funding, but even perhaps we can start to have even more societal change that is designed on truly acknowledging and truly accepting the dignity, the human dignity of others.

- Sabelo, . My mind is racing, and I think, you know, often, yeah, you're right, because we don't talk about reparations, and in the humanitarian system, particularly over the last year, there has been so much conversation, around the decolonizing of the humanitarian system, the reform of the humanitarian system. But my argument, you know, the thing that I've always worked through or try to understand or unpack is, we still assume the centrality of our role, in whatever reimagination we mean. And none of that, none of our efforts certainly think about, how do we do any kind of reparations, any kind of giving back, because giving back assumes that there is control, we must let go of I'm very conscious of time. This is, you know, we can all go for much, much longer. We wanna give some time to our audience, and there's some Q



questions already in the panels, but I wanna come back around ... questions around, you know, blending in. I wanna talk about harm, harm and harm absorption. And I wanna talk about what are the incentives for different types of governance. So, this is my translation of, okay, this is what we're thinking about, but from an institutional perspective, how do we do this? Anasuya I wanna come to you here, because, you know, certainly in our world, in the humanitarian development space, I can definitely say we don't necessarily do, an analysis around the systems of harm, and current harm that might result out of any interventions, we design, let alone technology interventions. And we might say it from a policy perspective or a first philosophical perspective, but when it then comes down to who is deploying that technology and designing that technology, there's a gap. So I want to ask you sort of, and I'm opening this up to Andrew and Sabelo as well. What types of harms, and by here I want to focus on future harms, must be designed out of this, because often we are firefighting the problem in front of us today. We're designing too, you know, sort the issue we see today, and not necessarily thinking about, what could happen from this? And then the second part of this question, which I want to open up to both Andrew and Sabelo is, how do we incentivize organizations and actually Andrew, because of your work in designing an ethics system internally for Planet I'd be curious to hear your point of view, how do we incentivize institutions, to absorb more of that harm, rather than to kind of not think about anything, that goes beyond the institutional normal legal impunity, and, you know, part of the world? Well, let's not worry about what's gonna happen to the end-user here. And that's generally what happens. So how do we incentivize a greater absorption of the responsibility of harm, towards institutions rather than sort of pushing it off, to communities and end-users and minoritized folks, but to start with, what are the current and future harms, that must be designed out of the systems. Anasuya, I'd love to hear your thoughts on that.

- Thanks, Aarathi. I just wanted to start by acknowledging what Sabelo said, and in the spirit of self and collective reflection, I would just like all of our 144 participants. How wonderful is that to reflect on the fact, or reflect on the question, when you hear the word 'Ubuntu' do you think of a free and open source software, or do you think of a South African philosophy of humanity? Just even that, I think will give us pause and reflection for some of the critical questions, you're asking us today, Aarathi. In terms of epistemic, in terms of who we center and who we de-center. And so when you ask the question around harms, I have to start in a different place, to answer that question, because one of the things that happens to us, when we are in spaces of crisis, as well as in spaces of technology, there are a couple of things. One is that, as Andrew mentioned earlier, there's an assumption of neutrality. There's an assumption of neutrality from the humanitarian, sector and there's an assumption of neutrality around tech. There are similarities to how problematic, that notion of neutrality is in both those cases. But the real problem I think, is in starting with them as potential solutions, to a problem we have not articulated. So if we start by saying, what is the vision of the world that we seek? What is the just equitable decolonized, feminist future and futures that we seek? And then reverse engineer to say, how do we get there? The responses to that might be very different, than if I start from what are the harms, and the reason for that would be, I think that in ... from that perspective, I think there are two or three things I would say, the first is that, if we were to start by seeking just equitable feminist decolonized future for the world that is based around wellbeing, and based around not just the centering of humanity, but the centering of the earth.

So a biocentric model, because that too is I think a deep, deep issue, of the humanitarian sector that has not been questioned yet or challenged adequately, then it be required, the de-centering, the stepping back of the very roles and responsibilities, that people in the humanitarian sector, have taken upon themselves. This is frightening, right? It is deeply frightening. It undermines all the systems and processes, that have been built. And the question then to ask, is whether in the humanitarian sector, whether in the tech sector, are we building systems to justify our own existence, and our own time in them to justify our own living from them rather than seeking the outcome, that we want for the wealth that we want. The second piece around that is, with the de-centering, what can you do to think about other forms of accountability and responsibility? Exactly, as Sabelo said, which are also deeply discomforting, but are transformational like reparation. So for instance, again, to take the example of history, feminist economists recently did this analysis, that in the 250 years of Britain's colonization of India, \$45 trillion moved from India to Britain, which meant, that Britain didn't develop India, which is the classic, classic trope, India developed Britain, right. And Wakanda is not a good possible Afro future, it is indeed a possible Afro past, right? Based on the histories of structural colonization and capitalism. So, what happens when you de-center yourself, when you think about your own reasons for being in existence and what you do and what happens when you rethink, and redesign those reasons for being as being focused on reparation and justice, rather than on existing for the sake of existence. Right. And I'll stop there.

- The Wakanda analogy and comment is incredibly powerful Anasuya, because you were right and that's amazing. Okay, I did wanna ask about how I might ... I might, but if Andrew, I could just ask you to keep your response super quick and then I'll go to Sabelo as well about how do we incentivize organizations, and how are you thinking about this, as you're designing this ethics program, you know for a technology company in Silicon Valley, working on humanitarian issues.

- Yeah.

- Yeah.

- Okay, I'm gonna speak quickly and try to cram, first of all, what you've discovered, what we hope all 140 of us, 140 something of us have discovered, is that we need like four hours for this discussion. This is like the tributaries that open from this, Anasuya and Sabelo have opened, they're just amazing. I just wanna say one thing about them, And then I'm gonna pivot to the answer, that you answered the question you asked. You know, we're building technologies, that are built by people who have been steeped in a bunch of tasks that assumptions, that are the foundational structures of the West that involve the relationship between the individual, and the whole, the centrality of consumption, to the creation of one's being the consumption of symbolic, and physical material, a relationship between humanity and the natural world, that is largely extractive, a focus on the interrelationship between beings that is largely focused on transactions, and a social order that is predicated on dominance. So, the technologies that we're talking about here, come from people who have enormous blind spots, around the relationship of the individual, to the role of the consumption of all things, the relationship

between humanity and the natural world, and how things happen, how, how ... which is largely through this idea of transactions as opposed to relationships. And so in an environment like that, where those all those relationships are provisional, you must have dominance in order to have longevity because transactions are short, and dominance is the arcs of dominance are long. Okay, so many of the technologies that we create, we bring to communities in some spirit of help, and you know, this is that list of psychological, phenomena and the kind of tacit biases as well, how you get people who have built dating apps, dating applications for their pets, and would like to repurpose them for humanitarian applications, it's because they see, well, I built this thing and it does transactions well. So now I'm gonna take it over here and do transactions well because that's what the world is made of. So, you asked this question about, how do you reverse the story, we have ... I want to say to you that, one of the great challenges here, we have an incredibly robust, really, really deep and genuinely. We are genuinely struggling with all of these ethical dilemmas in my organization. And because we feel the dilemmas, we are actually pretty quiet about the work itself, but some of it for practice reasons and some of it, because we don't wanna do virtue signaling. And because we don't want to draw attention to the inevitable mistakes that, we'll say one thing, and then we'll end up with something that's hard to explain, and all of that sort of swirling around. So, we don't genuinely talk about this enough, so I'm happy to share a little bit of it. Really, this is among the first times, I've ever really talked about this work, but it's a huge part of my daily work. So we route our ethical system. And I wanna just reflect on what Anasuya, you said a moment ago, in what we think of as the foundational principle of planetary ethics, which is a universal obligation that we recognize. We think it's universal, to protect the capacity for life to flourish on the earth, now and for future generations, that principle from that principle, we derive a series of actions, and a series of subsidiary principles. And then we build processes to support the application of those principles, to practical decisions, like, should we give these tools which are very powerful, to already powerful people? So, one thing, for instance, there's a lot of fetishization in the technology community about making things open. But if you make them blindly open, in a society, for instance, in which you have, you have a dominant group with lots of social power, and you often have a much larger group of people, with relatively limited social power, and you just throw open the Gates. What you do is you take the already positionally advantage and you dramatically accelerate the value, that they can extract from these assets. And you might marginally improve the other group, but you've increased the net inequality between them. So, like we think about these issues of say disproportionate empowerment, and the protect and the reduction of harm. And then the last thing I just want to say, 'cause it was in your question Aarathi, is about the reduction of harm. The two things to say are that, on the one hand we want to avoid the obvious ways in which these very powerful tools and technologies, might be used to create harm, by ensuring that they are both A, we keep them out of actors where we are worried about the use case or about the position of that actor. B, where we ensure that there's an ecosystem so that, journalists and human rights organizations, and all the all the rest of the other actors, that might act as a countervailing force also have access to them and have the capacity to use them. And a third thing is, to have some humility about our ability to assess, the capability for harm, which is to say, that we don't know both all the harms that might be created. And also sometimes our assumptions about harm, might lead us to reinforce decisions, where we are using our position, as a small group of Silicon Valley types to make decisions

about other people, and about what they might or might not do, which itself reifies those power imbalances. So we have to be really careful about deciding, what we decide and what we don't. And then the last thing I'll say is that, is that these issues are not just ones of policy, but they're ones of product, because you have to engineer these affordances, into the actual technologies themselves. So that among other things, you can actually make decisions about them. Many of these technologies that we put into the humanitarian sector, don't have the structures of governance built into them, that would allow you to make thoughtful, and nuanced decisions about them. They're just sort of like, "Well, now it's up to you." We've shipped it. And it's someone else's problem to make decisions. I'll stop there, but it's very hard to talk about global ethics, and all of the principles and in a couple of minutes. So-

- It definitely is. And I really appreciate your comment around the humility to even assess the impacts of harm. And I guess that's where, you know, in the research that, or what we're looking at is around, Yeah, you can't do that as just one group of homogenous people. And that's where it would notions of de-coloniality. Even in that, thinking around that might help. I'm gonna open up to questions from our audiences, and we're gonna go five minutes over. So, we'll finish at 12: 05, Eastern time just to make sure we do some justice. Sabelo, we've got a question for you. Sabelo, highlights the human issue, just the panel consider the issues being discussed as bound with an inherent speciesism. I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that correctly, and interesting emerging technology that challenges, this is human augmentation, whereby the taxonomical example, eg genetic composition, social and phenomenological, may well blur human non-human distinction. How does this change the current anthropocentric starting point on a technological ethic? I think I understand that question, but Sabelo do you want me to repeat it?

- I think I understand it too, and I apologize in advance, when I miss some of the details there, but it seems like to sort of add, that maybe we have this inherent biological tendency is to create hierarchy, which then leads to oppressive systems. If that's the case, I'm not going to argue against that. I would just saying that, it's why we develop ethical systems to try to help us to better understand, maybe the natural stance as far, you know, might is right to use our power naturally. But we have to overcome that, and find the best system of organization, then that issue is that, We all have a fair chance at life. And we all have enough adequate protections, to live a meaningful and valuable life.

- Thank you, Sabelo. Andrew and Anasuya did either of you wanna take that as well.

- Anasuya? I'll add that the principle that I just described, which is to have solidarity with the community of life. It's not the first principle of planetary ethics. It's not to ensure the flourishing of human life, it's to ensure the flourishing of the capacity of the planet to endure and to support the flourishing of all life. And the absence of the distinction there, the anthropogenic distinction is deeply intentional. We use these tools as much to, on issues of protecting the larger community of life as we do within the human community, within the human family.

- Great.

- So one thing I can add, sorry Aarathi, the one thing I'll add, which might bring this home literally, is that in many of the indigenous communities that I work with, there is no word for nature in their languages.

- Yeah.

- Because there is no separation of the human from what we in the Western world or what the Western world understands, as nature because of the significant interconnectedness. And that interconnectedness, in his sense is actually at the root. I think of many of the ways that we can reimagine, and redesign our current lives as well as our future lives.

- Thank you. Next question. I think I'm gonna post this to Anasuya, but you know, straightly Sabelo and Andrew, if you have ideas here too. The speakers mentioned examples of platforms or technologies that are managing better power privilege, and that go beyond Western centric approaches. I mean, I want to say whose knowledge is definitely, one of those platforms, but Anasuya. Any other examples that you can think of as well, and maybe a little bit about what 'Whose Knowledge' does as well? That'd be great.

- Sure. 'Whose Knowledge' is a global multi-lingual campaign. I started questioning the term global. So let me just say translocal, with a global connective tissue, campaign that looks to center, the knowledges of marginalized communities online. And as I said before, we call ourselves the minoritized majority, to remind the world that we are the majority of the world whether that is as women, whether that is as black and brown folks whether that is as indigenous and queer folks, whether that is as all of us from the global South. I think the key elements and design principles, of platforms that are trying to be decolonized in our own selves. So, I will admit that, even as someone who embodies multiple systems of knowledge, I have to watch my own colonized mind, because it is such, such a slippery slope, it is so internalized, but some of the key elements are these. One is that the design and leadership, of the communities that we serve, and the communities we come from, are centered in the way that we think about how that platform or space digital space functions, and who it functions for. So, we are not designing it for a funder. We are not designing it for a global South global North viewer. We are thinking about our communities. That is where multilinguality for instance is critical even though it's still such a difficult thing, for us to achieve. So, that's an example of it. The other two things that I will say that I think is, is part of this as a design principle, but as part of the humanitarian design principle, one of the things we try and avoid is the recency problem, because there's so much of the digital that is recent, right? Digital content is so much more easily about the recent. We can forget history. And that is part of what Silicon Valley does. It decontextualizes it de historicizes, right? And so do our governments of oppression, all systems of oppression, de historicize and decontextualized. And so for us, we try and push against our own tendencies for recency and look to archive history of different kinds, and with different communities. The other thing is to push against the danger of proximity. And that too is a really key crisis, of the humanitarian sector and of the technological sector. We care for those who are closest to us.

- Hmm.

- Those who are furthest from us, we couldn't give a damn about, even if we pretend we do.

- Hmm.

- So, Twitter can ban President Trump, because the optics of banning President Trump in the States is significant, but will take down posts of knowing the Modi in India. What Facebook will hide Resign Modi campaigns, essentially over the last two weeks. Facebook took down posts on Instagram and on Facebook, including the hashtag Resign Modi. It's possibly the first time that Facebook has actually taken down calls for the resignation of a democratically, elected leader, anywhere in the world. But Facebook doesn't care about Modi, right? Because they don't care about India other than, it is the largest market for Facebook. The optics of it are too far away to care for Silicon Valley, unlike the optics of the American public. So part of our really important push is to challenge recency and proximity, and the most important thing that we can do, and that we try and do is to center the imaginations, of our communities because it safety and security is a low bar. And it's terrifying that we still have to struggle, for that low bar. I want an internet of joy for my peoples. How, and when do I get that? How, and when do I get a world of joy for my people.

- Hmm.

- If those who are privileged are allowed to have joy, why should not we.

- I'm pausing because-

- Yeah.

- I think joy is how do we design for joy? How do we design for spaces that we all flourish? And if once some communities can design for joy, why is that? Why do we just design for people to survive in other spaces? And I know, with all of you, we've had very lots of conversations, about this there's lots of questions that we can't get to. I'm so sorry to be amazing attendees. I see this as a start of a conversation for all of us, the work that I'm doing with Berkman, isn't, I don't believe and I don't want this, this approach this framework to ever be static. It has to be emergent, because the complexities we are facing out . So, these conversations though, I'm informed so much and learn so much, from Sabelo, Anasuya and Andrew, you're all dear, dear friends. And I learned so much from you, informs my thinking and all our, all our collective thinking here today we are five minutes over. So I am going to close us, but I want to close this with Anasuya's point. Let us design for joy, how, and as opposed to just thinking about equity, injustice, you know let's think about how can enjoy be more ease, be accessible to everybody not just to survive. Any last thoughts or comments from Sabelo, Anasuya, Andrew before, before we say goodbye.

- Just a word of thanks to all three of you as ever, all these interactions have been amazing. You've just been amazing teachers for the last hour. So thank you very much.

- Thank you all for involve me in this conversation, and it's great to be in community with you all, in to the audience as well.

- And everybody thank you so much, for joining us for taking one hour out of your Fridays, to be with us today. This is the start of many, many more conversations. This isn't just about, you know, we often throw the words of diverse decolonization, to mean diversity and inclusion. It's not, it's the centering it's, de-centering the foresight. Isn't a, no that cannot just be a Northern hegemonic process de-coloniality has to be infused through that, governance doesn't sit by itself. All of this influences how we think, the complexities of our time require emergence. It requires radical hope and radical joy. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, I am in gratitude, I am in so much of your graceful teachings today, thank you for joining us, everybody, and please stay in touch and get in contact with all of us. If you want to learn more and be part of this journey. Thank you.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.