>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: All right. Good afternoon and welcome to the RespectAbility webinar for April 13th 2021. My name is Philip Kahn-Pauli. I am the Policy and Practices director here at RespectAbility. My pronouns are he him his. And to give you a visual description of what I look like, I am a 30 something white man with brown hair, brown beard, a gray tweed jacket and a blue shirt, as well as glasses. And I am so delighted to be with you today to talk about exploring the world of international exchange. And I'm so excited to be here in conversation with some of the great leaders from Mobility International USA, and really to talk about their advocacy, their work, their efforts around accessibility, their efforts around really enriching opportunities for young professionals with disabilities to really access the world in a very profound way. And before I introduce Monica and Johileny and Susan, I just want to share that -- I myself have been very lucky to benefit from the chance to go study abroad while I was a undergraduate many years ago. But I had some friends who were -- who had disclosed disabilities that encountered some barriers to being able to pursue those international service learning experiences. I have one friend who had has cerebral palsy. He is now a successful surgeon, he is a father, he has a really great career in the medical field. But because he had CP, he encountered some barriers accessing an international pre-med program through our university as an undergrad. And he advocated for himself and made it clear that -- "yes I have CP, but I can otherwise meet all the physical standards of this program and I want this opportunity." And he fought for it and he got it because he stood up for himself. But there were some very very very significant barriers. Now I will also share, this was many years ago, and so I'm hoping that the work of Mobility International has made a difference for other folks like that. And likewise, I've had several friends who are neuro -- on the neurodiversity spectrum, and trying to navigate the opportunities to go abroad and when they've been kind of prejudged and stigmatized as -- you have some deficits based on being on the spectrum. And my friends have had to advocate for themselves to be able to access the same opportunities as anyone else. And so, the work that Mobility International does through their exchange is so important. And so we have the pleasure of having three members of the MI USA team with us today. We've got Susan Sygall, who is the CEO and co-founder of Mobility International. She has a really tremendous resume, a tremendous record in the disability rights field around international development and the work that she has done. She has numerous awards, including being an Ashoka senior fellow, being a Kellogg fellow, having received the prestigious MacArthur fellowship, having received a President's award for her dynamic leadership in international issues. And she has just been incredible, and she's done incredible work over the years. We are also joined by Monica Malhotra, who is the program manager with the -- National Clearinghouse on Disability Exchange. She worked for the University of Texas at Austin for many years. She's previously worked in multicultural refugee coalition. She's done some really interesting things around international student coordination. And we are also joined by Johileny Meran, who is a program coordinator with Mobility International. A distinguished graduate of NYU who has really taken her drive and her passion to really help -- really encourage more people with disabilities, more students to engage and gain a global perspective. And so I am humbled to have all three of you here with us. And so if you could introduce yourselves, briefly give yourselves a visual description and we will get started in our conversation today.

>> Susan Sygall: Okay great. Well if it's okay I'll start off. As mentioned I'm Susan Sygall. My pronouns are she her and hers. I'm hopefully -- a white woman and in the vibrant 60 age and I self-identify as a wheelchair rider. And with that I will pass it over to Monica.

>> Monica Malhotra: Okay thanks Susan. This is Monica Malhotra and my pronouns are she her hers, and I am brown skinned with black short hair and I've got a world map artwork behind me. And thank you Philip for this opportunity, I really enjoyed the anecdotes that you just shared, which are really relevant to what we can share today.

>> Johileny Meran: All right, hi everyone. My name is Johileny and I'm an Afro-Latina. I'm 23 years old, I'm wearing big square glasses and I have a striped shirt on - just white at the top, khaki in the middle. And I have two significant throw pillows in the back, one is white and says "be awesome today" in aqua letters, and the other one is gray with a butterfly in the middle. I am also a wheelchair user and I have cerebral palsy.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Great. Well thank you everyone, and I'm so glad all of you can meet us. And so for our audience members, we will be having time for questions and answers at the end of our -- formal conversation, so just drop those in the Q&A box, drop them in the chat box. But otherwise let's get started. So Susan and team, can you talk about the origins of the National Clearinghouse? How did it come about? What have you accomplished with it, and what -- are some of the resources that you offer?

>> Susan Sygall: Sure, well this is Susan, I can just jump in real briefly about how it came about and pass the torch to Monica. Basically, MIUSA - we were running lots of our own international exchange programs focusing on disability rights and leadership, which we have we have over 2300 alumni from those programs in over 135 countries. But we also realize that it's really important that any person with any type of disability have the same right and opportunity to be in any of the other exchange programs, whether they're study abroad, volunteer abroad, professional exchanges, peace corps, Fulbright -- and so with that we were able to establish what's now called NCDE - the National Clearinghouse on Disability Exchange - to make sure that happens. And I'm going to pass that on to Monica on how we make that happen.

>> Monica Malhotra: [Laughs] Thanks Susan. Yeah, so as Susan said, the NCDE -- our mission with the clearinghouse is to make sure more people with disabilities have access to all types of international exchange. And I think in the beginning to start this conversation - what is international exchange? People use that word differently or use different terms. So international exchange fully encompasses a broad range of international programs such as studying abroad, volunteering, research, internships, teaching abroad, sports programs, arts programs, dance -- there's numerous -- professional development. So we're not just talking about one type of exchange program. We're talking about all programs. And within the clearinghouse we are working both with Americans with disabilities as well as international students with disabilities. Both sides -- you know, Americans with disabilities do not participate as high as their non-disabled peers in international exchange programs, as well as international participants with disabilities are not coming to the U.S. and don't know about the different disability rights and laws that do protect them too. So we want to educate more people abroad about access to study in the United States. How do we do this in -- our clearinghouse, the very long name National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange -- you can consider it as a clearinghouse of information. So kind of like a resource hub. And so we work really in two approaches. One side is we share information to people with disabilities about exchange: what programs are out there, how to fund it, what type of scholarships -- there's numerous scholarships out there, fully funded scholarships. So we share that information with people with disabilities. Stories of people who've done it. We have a resource library that you can filter search there by country, disability, types of programs. So yeah, people can access information that way. We share a number of stories of people with all types of disabilities who've participated in different types of exchanges. And it's important to read their experiences, you know, and tips and things like that. So we want to make sure that we provide those resources. And we produce webinars, podcasts, publications -- so we're really sharing tips to people with disabilities on having an accessible exchange program, how to advocate for yourself. This could be somebody's first time going abroad, so sharing information and questions and considerations for them to think about whenever they enter a new country. And on the second side, there's organizations that administer international exchange programs. And we work really closely with them on how to plan and administer an inclusive exchange program. And just a side note: I've been with the clearinghouse for about six years. In the very beginning from international exchange programs, we were getting comments of -- kind of the attitude of "do I have to do this?" You know, like "prove it to me." "What is the law?" You know, "do I really have to do this? Do I have to provide accommodations? That's a lot of money." And -- but in the last few years we're really seeing such a shift in international exchange professionals of "tell me how to do it." "We're committed to diversity and inclusion. Just let me know -- you know, show me how to make sure from the recruitment stage that we are reaching more people with disabilities, and then all the way through re-entry that we're really supporting people with disabilities in the full -- the continuum of the cycle of exchange programs." We -- have a -- we provide really in-depth research into questions. So we get questions from people with disabilities of how to plan an exchange program, to exchange professionals. And so we have a network of over 2,300 alumni. We've connected with people with all types of disabilities, so we have a lot of information from their experiences. And so -- and that works with disability organizations globally. So we share some more specific detailed information with people with disabilities on their questions and professionals. Yeah I think -- that encompasses it. [Laughs] I could talk a long time about it.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: I was going to say -- that was a lot, and I think it's really interesting that you -- you're bringing forward that personal experience piece, because disability can be such an individual -- individualized experience that what one person's disabilities needs are can inform someone else, but they're going to be different. So I'm glad you've got that exchange element. So I'm curious: what are some of your -- what are some of the publications that you put out there that really highlight some of the lessons learned from educating the exchange professionals about -- building inclusivity and building accessibility?

>> Monica Malhotra: Yeah, this is Monica. First I -- in the chat box I shared our web resource library. That's a direct link to our resources where people can search from the filters. One of our annual publications that we produce is the "A World Awaits You" journal, the AWAY journal. And this one we do with different themes. So this year we are focusing on experiential programs - how to include people with disabilities in the broad range of experiential programs: from joining the peace corps, forest exchange programs, different arts, professional development programs. And so we're sharing stories, interviewing people with diverse disabilities and diverse backgrounds to share their experiences today of what that was like, you know, from the beginning. What worked, what didn't work. And then also interviewing professionals who administer those types of programs to let them know tips on planning. Experiential programs are different from study abroad programs, right? A high school exchange or a university study abroad program often has the support of a disability office. Experiential programs usually won't have access to those resources. And so it's kind of providing those tips to the professionals of those programs of how to plan for inclusion a lot more intentionally and proactively from the very beginning to best support each student. We've done publications on language learning. People with disabilities can teach abroad, can learn different languages abroad, no matter what your disability is. So making sure there's not like a missing -- "that's the opportunity that I can't access." Maybe I can do this one but not that. So we're trying to showcase the full spectrum of programs that people do access and can access. And then also on the language teaching also to provide tips to professionals to also make sure that they don't enter with preconceived notions of who can and cannot do these programs too.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Gotcha. And I mean -- I was going to say the anecdotes that I shared of some of my friends from back in college it was exactly that -- that -- it's like "you don't look like the kind of person who'd be involved with this kind of thing because you have a disability or because you're on the spectrum." So I'm glad you've got that component to it and that language piece to it. But I definitely want to take a a brief step back and -- I know that -- the world of disability -- both the world itself but also the world of disability is a huge -- constellation, huge network of different organizations and different priorities. And so I'm wondering if you can kind of -- let's take a step back and so for our audience today -- what is mobility international USA, and what are some of your global priorities and work? And what are some of the big ticket items beyond just the exchange that are part and parcel of your brand and your work?

>> Susan Sygall: Sure. Well this is Susan, I can jump in on that. So -- our mission is to advance disability rights and leadership globally, and we do that in a few different ways. So ones we mentioned -- we have the clearinghouse, that whole field of exchange. We've also run our own exchanges. We're also very well known for our programs that empower women with disabilities globally and one of our signature program is called WILD, so "Women's Institute on Leadership and Disability," and that is a three-week very intensive program where we've got hundreds of disabled women, mostly from quote "developing countries." And it's really a way for all of us as women with disabilities to share information, whether it's policy, legislation, health, reproductive rights. We do a lot of empowerment activities like challenge course, river rafting. We meet with international development organizations. And then these women go back and run their own sort of WILD programs and sort of pass the "train the trainer" approach. And we've had literally several hundreds of quote "WILD" women now who are around the world, sort of we say a peaceful army of disabled women who are making changes and they represent over 89 countries. Another part of MIUSA is we work in the field of international development. So right now we are working in Armenia, where they are establishing two new -- for the first time -- independent living centers. We have a big project also working in six countries having to do with preventing violence against disabled women during the pandemic. We've worked in countries in Latin America and Africa, some on focusing on policy and legislation. We've worked in many countries -- assisting legislation in Kenya getting a sign language stronger bill. So basically international development, international exchange, women's leadership and empowerment. And we also right now and for many years have taught a course at the University of Oregon. So basically we are just working -- in as many ways to really ensure that disabled people are included in international development, exchange, women's leadership. We talk a lot about moving from inclusion to infiltration, that we no longer want to wait to be asked to be included or for other organizations to get ready. So we're really trying to build a pipeline of leaders and work as a global family of people with disabilities to infiltrate all these areas so that disabled people can take their rightful place all over the world. So it's a very exciting time. And I don't know if --Monica and Johileny, did I forget anything in there? I think you can see -- both Monica and I, if you ask us a question you're going to get a long answer.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: I was going to say -- forgive me -- actually I want to put Johileny on the spot. Because I know that you had international learning experience that helped inform your work, that brought you to mobility international, and that has helped you launch your career. So if it's all right, I'd like to call on you to talk about that experience, talk about how your semester abroad informed your career choices, and what are some of the skills that you learned by taking that that step of getting out there, putting -- getting that stamp on your passport?

>> Johileny Meran: Right, well thank you for putting me on the spot I guess, but I think -- it's a long-winded answer so I'll try to just get to the points and then I can expand on anything that might be worth expanding on. But I studied abroad in London for a semester while I was an undergrad at my university, and I decided to study abroad through my university's global programs. So basically I went from my campus in New York City to a campus in London And that's really because my university had a global -- we had schools all over the world, or buildings as we say. And so it was my choice to really do it that way for several reasons which I can share later. But that was really my step into getting that experience. And it really it took me some time to build the confidence to make that choice to go abroad. And for me it was very important to sort of know, get information about the physical accessibility of locations I was interested in. It was also very important for the studying that I was going to be doing to work towards my graduation progress, and it was also very important for me for the place that I was going to to be safe for people of color. And so there were a number of considerations, and this really sort of impacted my experience, from all the way to deciding where to go, to what it meant for me being abroad, and what it really meant to come back. And so in short terms I think that my abroad experience really informed -- my decision to look into a career that had to do with my exchange experience. It was really not in my plans -- like, I didn't know that this was a field, I didn't know -- I mean I guess I knew that it was a field because I did study through the field, but I didn't really know that there was work going on specifically to make sure that people with disabilities were being included. So I did have that experience of having to advocate for myself and trying to find the right information. And so I think that's really what attracted me to MIUSA, because I saw it sort of a reflection of the journey I had experienced through trying to take the step to participate in an Exchange experience. So Monica mentioned earlier the work that we do with organizers of programs. One of the reasons I waited until my senior year to study abroad, and one of the reasons that that happened was because I wasn't getting enough information just from the info sessions that I was going to in my school or like -- my disability office often didn't have all the information, and then if I went to the study abroad office they didn't have enough information. So it was really -- I guess work for me as a student to try and bring those two parts together. And so to know that MIUSA is literally doing that work of trying to really bring collaboration between the disability offices on campus and the international exchange offices on campus. So in short terms, that is really what attracted me to to MIUSA. And I don't think that without my experience as a student it would have clicked for me that this was something that was necessary, so I've -- I really appreciated just being able to see it for myself and then learning about MIUSA shortly before my graduation, so yeah.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well thank you so much and I'm so pleased that you got the information you needed. You found out what you -- figured out a path for yourself and now you're leveraging that path to really helping other programs and promoting accessibility and you've made a career out of it. And that to me is one of the big reasons why I wanted to bring all of you together to talk to our audience today, is to really talk about that long-term impact on employment outcomes, of that development of skill, that independence, the self-advocacy that comes with having to go through this type of program. So Johileny, thank you for sharing with all of that. And so now I will say I want to switch back to Susan and Monica. You know, we've talked a lot about -- in the context of college and college study abroad programs, but there are other types of international exchange programs that you advise and you work on. And so what are some of those other programs that aren't just the typical 18 to 21 college undergrad study abroad experiences?

>> Susan Sygall: Right, Monica, do you want to jump in? [Crosstalk] One of the things actually that just -- because I was just on the phone with one of our colleagues, there's a whole program called flex and yes, which is a high school program centered around, I would say predominantly former Soviet countries, predominantly Muslim countries. And they have, for years, brought literally hundreds of people -- non-disabled people, but also now encouraging more people with disabilities to come to the U.S. We're hearing -- so we want to always make sure that more disabled young high school people get to go. It's a year in the United States. But we're hearing now that that program is also going to include people from the U.S., high school age, going abroad. So I'm sure Monica will speak about -- yeah, besides the college age, the high school exchange, and also the career stage the Fulbright stage. So I'm going to pass that over to Monica and thanks for that great question.

>> Monica Malhotra: Okay thanks. This is Monica. And I think I mentioned earlier that -- we're talking about high school age to retirees, you know, there's -- it's never a missed opportunity, I guess you can say. High school programs -- it's for Americans are going to study abroad in a different country in high school, and international students are coming here as early as high school. And I don't think we've mentioned it, but the Clearinghouse has been sponsored by the State department for 25 years. And so there's hundreds of State department-sponsored programs like Fulbright, like the critical language scholarship, and numerous sports, music, dance exchange programs that -- they are doing so much to recruit people with disabilities. And the clearinghouse is one of those priorities and mission to make sure that they're working with us to promote and showcase inclusion, and work with their staff to make sure that they're planning for inclusion from the beginning. You've mentioned the typical kind of high school or study abroad programs in college, and there's many scholarships for students that are focused on language studies, including Gilman, critical language scholarship program which is fully funded. There's Boren scholarship, and that one's Department of Defense I believe, and that's also looking at critical language need. There's Rotary peace fellowship, looking at students who want to study and do their Master's degree in certain countries. CIEE -- so we also work with what is called third party providers, so it's not a university, it's not State department, but it's these independent organizations that work sometimes with universities, but also work independently. And CIEE, for instance, has numerous outside of non-academic exchange programs, and one is teaching abroad. So you can join CIEE's teach English program, and you can get certified to teach English with them. And then they can place you in Spain and France and different countries all over the world to actually teach the language. And they've supported numerous students with disabilities in those programs too. We've mentioned Peace Corps. You know, I know I don't look that old, but before, Peace Corps was always this two-year, four-year commitment, and they've included programs that are three to 12 months. And so we're looking at working more closely with Peace Corps and looking at -- maybe if you're older, you don't want the two-year commitment or you're not -- at any age you're not ready to do the big two-year commitment. So they've got different specialties within the Peace Corps where it's a lot more -- not as rigorous of an application process, but it's a lot smoother to be placed within a shorter immediate need, if it's health, medical -- those type of needs that they're looking for in those shorter programs. Professional development programs - depending on your background, almost anybody with some type of career background, there's something abroad, there's some type of exchange program. As well as for international participants - there's a lot of international visitors that come to the U.S. learning about disability organizations or technology or STEM or whatever it might be. So we're seeing a lot of those collaborations as well.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well that's really wonderful. I do have to -- I want to say I want to give a quick shout out to former RespectAbility [Fellow] Sarah Bram, who I see cropped up in the chat box and mentioning her previous travel experiences to Israel, so shout out to you Sarah. But -- sorry, I just recognized a familiar face -- but also I want to remind our audience members that if you have specific questions for our friends and guests from MIUSA, please drop those in the chat box or in the Q&A box on the bottom of your screen. So otherwise, you're just going to keep hearing me asking questions, because I'm having a lot of fun with this. But I do have to ask the kind of the the thorny question, because it is 2021 and we just got done with 2020. And so I'm curious, how has Mobility International -- how have each of you really adapted to the circumstances in the past year where everybody's been having to study virtually? Not a lot of people are getting on planes to travel due to COVID restrictions, so I'm curious -- both -- how have you reacted to the last year, but more importantly, as we look ahead to the day which may be on the horizon where more people are vaccinated and more international travel can happen. So I'm curious -- can we look backwards at the last year and what do you have in store in the year and the years ahead?

>> Susan Sygall: Sure. Well I can -- I'll jump in and then pass the torch. So this is Susan speaking. So obviously, we -- what is it, March of a year -- almost a year ago, we're all working remotely, and I'm calling in from Eugene Oregon. Monica is in Texas and Johileny's in New York. So our staff -- which is -- was predominantly in Oregon, we are all over. We have switched or pivoted, as they say, to doing all our technical assistance virtually. So we are conducting trainings in different languages using international sign interpreters, ASL interpreters. So we're doing virtual trainings, I say, everywhere from Bahrain to Armenia to Kenya. And obviously Monica can talk about how we've also hosted some huge conferences, so I'll let Monica talk about that. And also, we are now sort of patiently waiting to see when -- right now everything is virtual. I don't think we have a date when it'll be in person, but because we know at least in the exchange world it takes at least a year to process an application to apply, we're really encouraging people to get started, even though we don't have travel plans. Monica do you want to sort of fill in the other details?

>> Monica Malhotra: Yeah this is Monica. Obviously over this past year, all international travel stopped. And so during this year we learned a lot. You know, it was a difficult year but I can't help but come away with optimism of this year. There was so many organizations that reached out to us to learn how to make their virtual exchange programs accessible, you know, and so we learned a lot through Zoom, through this platform that we're all using every single day, numerous times a day. But we've learned so much with the interpreters, with captioning, with different considerations to make this platform a lot more accessible to people with disabilities. For exchange programs, when that shift happened so quickly, they were just quick to -- "okay, now we're virtual." But they didn't really think about accessibility. And so now slowly looking back at sustaining virtual exchange as an ongoing program and an option, now they're like "okay, lessons learned. We missed it -- we missed it in the very beginning. Teach us -- how we can integrate more accessibility into these virtual exchange programs." So we're seeing this pretty big topic throughout this year of shifting to virtual exchange programs. We've -- I think through that opportunity of including more people with disabilities in these virtual platforms, we've reached more potential students interested in exchange programs. Or maybe they didn't -- everybody's doing the Zoom, everybody's doing these virtual meetings. And now -- more organizations have reached out to more people with disabilities to educate them about exchange programs. So hopefully this will not be what it is for years to come, but after this is finished, then the next step is an in-person exchange program. And now they've connected maybe culturally with other students, and learn more about what exchange opportunities exist, and know maybe how to advocate for their needs once it becomes in person. So I really can't help to think that this was beneficial to -- educate more people with disabilities about exchange programs, as well as to educate professionals to continue virtual exchange programs, and make sure that you're looking at accessibility from the very beginning, and in in-person. Right now this is in your face, so that's the immediate, but then also implement this into your in-person practices as well. And so -- a lot of exchange programs have said "yeah, we all -- we're going to continue with virtual exchange programs even through in person." And so really looking at this accessibility piece.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Wonderful, thank you. So I have two quick questions from the chat box which I will take the liberty of answering, and then I want to -- then I've got two questions I want to ask my panelists. So first first and foremost, from Amy Newest and Andrea Badiaco, they're both asking if there will be a replay of this presentation or if we're going to be hosting this again. I will tell you that you can find -- you will find a video recording of today's webinar either on RespectAbility's YouTube channel, on our website under our past events tab, and we are also streaming this live on Facebook, so you will be able to access, go back and record -- go back and visit revisit the recording at that point. We will also be posting, once Eric gets the transcript cleaned up, afterwards we'll also be posting a full transcript, so you can go back and search if there's a specific topic that you want to learn more about. So that is how we're gonna try and make sure that this is accessible and continues to give great value to the folks involved. So -- those answer those two questions. And then I also want to talk about -- I know you all have hosted some really great webinars about promoting diversity in your international exchange program, so I'm curious if all of you can kind of share that. Because -- people need to see -- I mean people -- there's so many preconceptions about -- who should or should not participate in -- these types of programs. And so I'm curious, can you talk about not only the advancing accessibility, but advancing opportunities for more diverse students to participate in these types of programs? And what have you done or what are some of the events you hosted around that specific issue?

>> Monica Malhotra: This is Monica. In the chat box -- we had a virtual joining hands symposium last summer. We're gonna have another one this coming summer, but you can access a lot of the recordings from that link that I shared. But Johileny, do you want to share about our recent amplifying voices of black disabled people abroad, a webinar that you were also a panelist on, and the diversity panels that were included at joining hands too?

>> Johileny Meran: Yeah, of course. So recently our panel was to amplify black and disabled people participating in international exchange opportunities. And really it was just a panel of three exchange alumni that shared really what it's like to be a person -- a black person and a disabled person -- really participating in abroad programs. So we touched on what it's like in terms of preparing and choosing a place. We also talked about tips for professionals on how to be more inclusive for black and disabled students to be interested and feel informed about their experience. And we also touched on our own experiences, sort of sharing what it was like to be abroad in different locations. As I mentioned, I was in London. Two of our other panelists have traveled to different places: Latin America, Amsterdam, and so we just touched on those important things about just having multiple identities, because if -- people in the disability community just in general are usually part of other communities, so we felt that it was important to touch on how that impacts going abroad. So just to share, I guess, a little bit about my own experience and what I shared in the webinar, I talked about sort of identity and how it impacts your process to exchange. So some of the things that I really thought about when I was interested in going abroad was financial aid, whether the place I was going to would be physically accessible for me, and what I could do. And also whether it was safe for people of color. So those were generally the three main things that I thought about as I was going through my process. So for example, I chose to go through my University's programs, because I knew that my financial aid package would transfer, so that my tuition and expenses would be covered in the same way that they were in New York. And so I chose London because after the research that I had done and that my university supported me with, I felt that it was a place that I could learn to navigate with my level of disability, and what I thought I could do alone, because I traveled -- I studied abroad alone. So it was important to me that I wouldn't just be going from my dorm to the academic center. I wanted to be able to explore, and I did get the chance to do that. In fact I went to about eight countries while I was in London. And then safety for people with disabilities and for people of color. I felt that London was a place that I was going to be okay, and that I was going to be able to even explore more of the culture on disability and on the black community in London as well. So there are things in terms of identity that you do need to consider, and it's important to sort of think about what those things are and what they're -- why they're important to you, and sort of use that as a lens to really make a choice. And choices vary, we've said here a lot, but it really -- it depends on you. I would suggest to always start with your interests and not whether a place is going to be accessible or not, because you can sort of figure that out through the process. But really just focus on what you're interested in, what the goal of your exchange is intended to be, and what you really want to gain from the experience. So yeah, I hope that's helpful. But yeah we also have one of the AWAY journals that is coming up, focusing on different stories from people with diverse identities who have been on different international exchange experiences. And we sort of did a preview session of what those stories might be in our Joining Hands -- I can't remember the session, but it was really good to be able to hear from other people who had other considerations, in terms of identity, about their exchange experience.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Thank you very much and I really appreciate you sharing that. And then -- I think that everybody who is here today should take the time to listen to that webinar, and really reflect on the experiences that you share, and I really appreciate you bringing that forward and really putting all the hard work in on -- getting those messages out there and really trying to promote greater diversity and intersectionality in the exchange programs that you advise. And I hope you can reach more and more students with that message that they can do it too, and if they can see you do it, then it means that they will be able to do it as well. So we are we are slowly running out of time and I don't see any audience questions, but I did want to ask two final questions to our panelists today. And so I would say first is -- what -- can you give me a -- kind of a parting idea, a parting thought of what you want to -- what our audience take away from, and I would also say is -- what has been your favorite country to visit? So a takeaway message, and what has been your favorite country to visit? And so -- let's go with -- let's start with Susan, Monica and then Johileny to close us out.

>> Susan Sygall: Okay great. Well this is Susan. Well, first of all thank you again for this amazing opportunity. I would think my big message is we need more people with disabilities to think about and hopefully contact us. This is all free information, free resources. We need -- if we want to change the world, or we say create a world as it should be, we need more people with disabilities to be in leadership positions in the exchange world, in the international development world, in the women's rights world. And in order to do that, we need to have the same opportunities and the same expertise as the non-disabled people. So it's really -- going on an exchange is really that catalyst to really building global leadership. So that's one thing. And then if that is not your path, we're hoping that disabled people, just like non-disabled people, will take advantage of these opportunities, because they can lead to employment, and just because you have a right to do it like anybody else. So that's my passionate message. I hope people will contact the clearinghouse. And I can't give you a favorite country. I, like my colleagues, I've traveled all over the world. And you know, I always say it's not so much the countries I remember, it's the people that I meet. So with that I will pass it over to Monica.

>> Monica Malhotra: Thanks Susan, this is Monica. I think kind of a lasting message -- you know, I was talking earlier about our audience within the clearinghouse, and one big -- audience is the disability organizations. So Philip, thank you for this invitation for RespectAbility, and that's what we really want to see a push towards. So if it's disability organizations including international exchange as an opportunity in your newsletters and your publications and webinars -- just sharing that this exists and people with disabilities are definitely taking part in their rightful place in all types of international exchange programs, showcasing our stories. Take our stories -- you know, we've got over 500 resources. Share them through social media. Just show that it's also a priority for you and your network whatever way it is. And you know, connect with the clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is a free resource to everybody, so, you know, share what the clearinghouse does, so then we can continue to support and empower more people with disabilities to participate in exchange programs. Like Susan, yeah it's a difficult question, but I think one place stands out. I did my Master's degree in England at the university of Exeter. And during our program we went for two weeks to Syria. That was back in 2004. But, you know, speaking about the people -- the kindest, warmest people, and such history in the country, to visit so many ruins and just learn so much about the culture and the people. So that's probably a very lasting memory of a country, and I know that will probably be more difficult to visit in the future. But yeah, I think that was it.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Thank you.

>> Johileny Meran: Okay, well, hard acts to follow. But I think that for me, as someone who've participated in exchange, I think that it really impacts your personal life and professional life. So I think that it's important to note that you're gonna gain a global perspective, and whatever work you choose to do, that's going to be a benefit. It's a skill that you sort of come back with, whether you are aware of it or not. And to I guess reflect both on Susan and Monica's comments, I think that whether you want to or not, if you participate in an exchange experience, you're really opening the path for others to do it as well - other people with disabilities, other people from underrepresented backgrounds. And it's something that -- it's going to be a result of what you choose to do. And it can be scary, yes, but it's totally worth it in the end. So that would be my little piece of advice. And in terms of favorite country, I think that's a hard question. I think I still have a lot to explore, so I don't feel like I've seen enough, although I've seen a lot. But one of my motivations for studying abroad was really -- I'm an immigrant from Dominican Republic, [Audio Issues] and that sort of informed my decision to want to go to my native land of Dominican Republic to learn from my roots. So that's the best answer I can offer.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well that is a great answer and I really appreciate it. And I appreciate every single one of you who is with us today, and you know, I like those -- I'm gonna take those two -- I'm gonna count on those two takeaway messages that it could be scary but it's worth it, and that -- by getting more people with disabilities traveling abroad and participating in these programs, together we can be a catalyst for global leadership and change. So with that wonderful message, go check out their website, go check out their resources. MIUSA.org is the website, and if you wanna go back and re-watch this webinar it'll be on our website. And go out there, share these resources and go change the world. And with that we will conclude today's webinar. Thank you very much everyone.