

Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) 2020

The Future of Work: Accessible & Inclusive Employment During COVID-19 & Beyond



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FREE WEBINAR



Featuring Keynote Speaker
Shane Kanady

VP Workforce Development, SourceAmerica
Sr. Fellow, Portulans Institute

Thursday, October 29, 2020
2 to 3 PM. CDT.

MORE INFORMATION: AccessibilityMB.ca

Disability Employment Awareness Month 2020

The Future of Work: Accessible & Inclusive Employment During COVID-19 & Beyond

October 29, 2020 from 2 to 3 p.m. CST.

For more information, please visit: www.accessibilitymb.ca

Speakers:

Erika Vas, Disability Issues Office

Yutta Fricke, Disability Issues Office

Shane Kanady, Keynote presenter

[Webinar Begins]

Erika Vas (00:00): So, hello everyone and welcome to our Disability Employment Awareness Month, or DEAM 2020 Webinar! Today's webinar – The Future of Work: Accessible and Inclusive Employment During COVID-19 and Beyond – is co-hosted by the Disability Issues Office, Manitoba Equity Practitioners, and Manitoba Employment Equity Partners Association, and Manitoba Possible. Our keynote speaker is Shane Kanady of SourceAmerica and the Portulans Institute.

Erika Vas (00:39): Aniin, Boozhoo, Tansi, Watziyé, Ho/Han, Tanshi, Tunngasugitsi! To begin in a good way, we would like to acknowledge that the DEAM 2020 Webinar is located on Treaty 1 Territory, the original lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We encourage you to reflect on the history of the land that you are watching from.

Erika Vas (01:12): So, hi, everyone – hello! My name is Erika Vas, and I am a policy analyst at the Disability Issues Office. Before we begin, if you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the DIO email, dio@gov.mb.ca or call 204-945-7613 or call toll free at 1-800-282-8069 ext. 7613, a member of our team will be on standby to help you as best as they can – although today's webinar is non-interactive we welcome your questions, comments, or feedback, either by using the chat feature, email, or phone call. Please note the accessibility features for this event include captioning and ASL interpretation. We will also feature survey questions at the end of the webinar, and we would like to note that all responses are anonymous. This is a recorded webinar and a video will be available at accessibilitymb.ca in the near future. Thank you for joining us today to celebrate DEAM 2020! I'd now like to welcome, Yutta Fricke!

Yutta Fricke (02:37): Hey, everyone! My name is Yutta Fricke and I am the Executive Director for the Disability Issues Office, and I want to welcome everyone for taking time from their busy lives and being with us in this important webinar during the month of disability employment awareness, which in Manitoba we celebrate to acknowledge the valuable contribution of Manitobans with disabilities to our economy and to our communities. The goal is to build a better and more inclusive Manitoba. It's impossible to talk about the subject of inclusive employment today without thinking about the context of COVID-19. Almost all of us are feeling vulnerable at this time. People who have disabilities, pre-existing health conditions and care-giver responsibilities feel this vulnerability even more. Before we introduce our keynote speaker, I wanted to provide a little bit of context of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, and the Second Standard to be introduced under that act that affects employment. There are two requirements, under

that employment standard and Erika, if you could switch the slide. One of them has to do with making everybody aware of the employment standard and the second, is that if – or rather, the emergency response, and the second is that *if* a person has a – needs some assistance, during an emergency, that that person is able to be a part of the decision making about who is going to help.

Yutta Fricke (04:23): So, when this standard was introduced the first thought was “emergency” of course emergency means fire, it means evacuation and I think typically employers would think about, “We’re on the 10th floor, do we have any wheelchair users? Is there anyone that is blind that needs assistance, and how are we going to get them on the elevator?” Perhaps *some* employers may think a little bit further than that and think, “Well, we don’t have any wheelchairs, and we don’t have anybody who I don’t think has a disability, but what about people that... have a heart condition? What about someone who... has a disability or a condition that we don’t know about?” PTSD, for instance, and when there’s suddenly a lockdown and a bomb threat – how is *that* person going to react?

Yutta Fricke (05:14): So the message to employers is to think broadly. When in March, Manitoba entered into its state of emergency, the context of these two emergency requirements became even broader. Now we’re thinking about “What about a pandemic?” What does that mean for employers? So... what we’re encouraging employers to do, and the same thing if we were to think about an evacuation. Don’t think *only* about the people that you know visibly that have a disability, a message should go out to *all* employees that, you’re concerned about wellbeing, does anybody require an accommodation in order to continue to -to be in the workplace in a healthy and safe way? Furthermore, if someone requires an accommodation, and you know what that might mean nowadays, is what used to be an “exceptional” accommodation – working from home, well not most of us are working from home. If someone is working from home and needs documents from the office and cannot go, is there a trusted person to help them? So, the idea is that not everybody knows that somebody has a disability, if they don’t want to share that, and a trusted person is available for help.

Yutta Fricke (06:33): So, our accessibility standard for employment has a great deal of relevance right now, and since May 1st, 2020, all Manitoba employers are required to, follow these two sections of the standard. The benefits to the employers include that you are demonstrating the high priority you place on the well-being of employees. Moreover, in [inaudible] workplace accommodations, it means that people will start to know what an accommodation is, and – and what it looks like, and it’s not something exceptional, it’s something that most of us would use if we have to pick our kids up from school early, have a dentist appointment, that is an accommodation. So, we want to remove a stigma

of especially you know, people who are - who are shy and think that they are going to be judged by their – their disability, that in fact accommodations is something that good employers just adjust to.

Yutta Fricke (07:35): The rest of the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Employment at this point affects only the Manitoba government, by... next May, public sector organizations, and a year and a half from now, all the – the public and private sector employers in Manitoba. But now is a good time to start, during COVID 19, it means that you start thinking about reasonable accommodations. And “reasonable accommodations” just means removing barriers for the affected individuals so they can enjoy the opportunities and benefits available to everyone. So finally, the tips: ask all employees about their accommodation needs, communicate with clear messaging in plain language, in multiple formats, check-in with employees regularly, everybody needs a good mental health check. Working from home is a good way to accommodate a range of disabilities. Remember this going forward going beyond this pandemic – and finally, continue to follow public health directives.

Yutta Fricke (08:39): The accessibilitymb.ca website has a lot more information available under our own COVID banner, and we’re going to be updating this shortly with more distinct categories and also, social media messaging. We- we hope that you’ll join us in getting the word out to everyone. So, thank you very much, for this very little bit of time to talk about the accessibility legislation, and welcome Shane Kanady – and Erika to introduce him. Thank you!

Erika Vas (09:14): We are very pleased to introduce our esteemed keynote speaker, Shane Kanady. Shane Kanady is the vice-president of workforce development at SourceAmerica. In this position, Kanady focuses on the economic and social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Kanady is an experienced non-profit executive, researcher, author, and policy advisor. He has published multiple reports and articles on the future of work through non-profit organizations and outlets such as *Medium* and the *Journal of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education*. Kanady has appeared on podcasts and webcasts such as, *On the Evidence by Mathematica Policy Research*, *ASX Chat – The Business of Learning* by Training Industry Inc, and *Workology*. A frequent public speaker, Kanady has presented at the United Nations Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Labour Organization’s Global Business and Disability Network.

Erika Vas (10:25): As a policy advisor to House and Senate offices, he has provided input on multiple pieces of legislation including a role in the development and introduction

of the *Capability Act*. Kanady holds a Master of Art with a concentration in Social Entrepreneurship from George Mason University, where he was a 2019 College of Human and Social Sciences' Distinguished Alumnus. He holds a non-profit Executive Management Certificate from Georgetown University, and is expected to complete a Graduate Certificate in Human Rights Practice from the University of Arizona in 2020. Along with serving as a senior fellow for the Portulans Institute, Kanady is also a fellow with the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce and previously held fellowships with George Mason University and the Aspect Institute Future of Work Initiative. Without further ado, I'd like to welcome Shane Kanady!

Shane Kanady (11:27): Thank you, Erika – I appreciate it. I'll share my screen... Okay... so thank you so much for the privilege of joining you today, thank you to everyone that is attending this session, a special thanks to our host organizations, and to Yutta and Erika for your kind introduction and the invitation to be here. So I am going to be tackling a very large – a very esoteric topic, and I'd like to start out by describing it in the way that makes it the most compelling to me, and I hope that it resonates with you as well. As Yutta was saying, certainly we cannot overlook the context by which we are linked to this conversation with so much going on in the world around the COVID-19 pandemic, so we will talk about that through the course of the presentation, but first I thought it would be helpful to set a baseline of, "What is this future of work?" topic.

Shane Kanady (12:41): So, we often start this conversation with the preoccupation around technology, thoughts of robots and artificial intelligence, and machine learning algorithms basically making all our decisions for us and the potential displacement of people from the decision-making process, or from the workforce. And it's true, that technology is a major part of this story, but it is not the whole story. I have found that the disproportionate amount of time that we spend thinking about technology, talking about the technology, debating the role of technology versus people in completing tasks and performing jobs often come as a consequence of the understanding to the social context, of this conversation. Particularly when we're talking about diverse populations, such as persons with disabilities who have a lived experience that is often overlooked, for speculating over the future.

Shane Kanady (13:42): So, I would offer that, when it comes to the future of work, maybe the better question is: why? Why are we so fascinated with this topic? Why are we so fascinated with the future of ... fill-in-the-blank any topic? It represents that combination of conflicting emotions for us as people. There's hope and there's fear, there's ambition, and there's hesitation as we think about the future, and it's at the same time, an aspirational target to shoot for, but a source of endless frustration because that target is

always moving. Overall, whether you believe that the future is now, and some people make the argument that there *is* no future of work, the future is right now and it's accelerating because of current events. Whether you subscribe to that idea, or if you think the "future of work" is a tired expression, that you've heard it so often that it kind of washes over you as inconsequential – we cannot lose sight of the fact that we live in a dynamic world and we need to recognize that the past informs the present and that our actions today shape the future.

Shane Kanady (14:55): And so, whether you call it foresight... forethought... what I'd like to get across is that we should not overlook the importance of considering the future, considering what we're working towards with our efforts. So, with that baseline context of what I believe the future of work is and is not, this is what I think in terms of what I think comprises the landscape when we talk about "the future of work", and the universal trends that are impacting all of us, not just persons with disabilities. Not just in terms of how we engage with work, how we engage with society, how we form relationships with each other, and how all of these different interactions that we have shape us as people and contribute to the culture of our countries, communities, and so forth.

Shane Kanady (15:48): But our concentration today is very much on persons with disabilities and the unique opportunities and challenges that could be presented in this future work context. So, to unpack some of these different trends, some of these different factors that I think are – are at the center and the heart of this conversation: first, we think of crises. And this is not a topic in previous presentations, that I spent that much time on, but now, given the current events, given what's going on in the world around us, we cannot overlook the importance of how crises, human, created crises, natural disasters – how they affect this conversation, and it certainly goes far beyond the topic of work. But this is the context that we're talking about today, employment and what does that represent.

Shane Kanady (16:42): So... studies suggest that ¼ of persons with disabilities in the world, acquired those disabilities, and certainly that is not *just* because of a crisis, a natural disaster, or a man-made disaster, but those are major contributing factors to how people acquire disabilities. Other studies suggest that for every person who is tragically a fatality, during one of these events, three other people acquire long-term disabilities, and I would argue that that might be higher when you think of undiagnosed traumas that contribute to psych-social disabilities, and the long-term experiences that people have that aren't in the acute phase of what they are experiencing.

Shane Kanady (17:34): And so I share that because the point is that the “persons with disabilities” is a growing population, and a very complex, diverse population with intersectional identities and they come to this conversation in a context that must be understood and respected, right, because not everyone has the same experience with this topic. From a social standpoint, so many changes over the past few decades, when it comes to recognizing the social identity, the civil rights, the human rights of persons with disabilities throughout the world, and you see that captured in the creation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – which under the United Nations, creates a new, normative framework for how we view the essential elements of social inclusion of economic inclusion of access to justice of these – these topics that you know, many of us have come to take for granted if we were not a member of the disability community, because by-and-large people have been separated from those rights, throughout their history.

Shane Kanady (18:49): So we have to recognize that there is this – this growth in the understanding and the appreciation for inclusion, and there is also growing pressure on groups like business leaders, the private industry to be more inclusive in their practices, to do more than they have traditionally done when it comes to employing persons with disabilities. And there are many ways that governments go about trying to incentivize that behavior, but... the pressure is very real, and the expectation is very real, and the question is: how do we fulfill that? How do we work together to create a more inclusive workforce – a more inclusive global economy.

Shane Kanady (19:35): Now from an economic standpoint, one of the things that I'd like to point to is, even to just stepping back and having an understanding of how the cyclical nature of recessions and economic events across the world, impact persons with disabilities. And that's often something that's not brought up in conversation, when we talk about the – the economic consequences of labour market disruptions and long-term unemployment of the general population – there is usually not a looking-back on what we learned from history and what has happened to persons with disabilities in that situation.

Shane Kanady (20:21): So through my research, looking just at the United States, the last four economic crises that we experienced, that I found during the period of recovery following those events, the employment of persons with disabilities, the *employment* percentage, decreased on an average of 9%, and the employment situation of persons without disabilities increased by an average of 2%. So there is this divergence of those trend lines and that contributes to long-term trends that we see the detachment of persons with disabilities from the labour force, and when you look at unemployment as a – an

indicator of economic health within a country, often you are overlooking the people that are not attached to the labour market at all, and they are lost in these conversations.

Shane Kanady (21:15): From a legislative standpoint, you know, seeing, witnessing how laws and regulations are following social sentiment, that's what I talked about the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities as an example, but also within our respective countries we see multiple laws being posed or being passed around persons with disabilities, and what we don't see often is when legislators create policies, economic policies, workforce policies, technology policies, that are intended to benefit the general population. They are often written in such a way that they are inherently exclusionary to persons with disabilities, and that perpetuates some of these issues.

Shane Kanady (22:07): And then from a technological standpoint, and – and some would argue that I'm doing a "future of work" presentation and I put technology last, and I think it's because I – I see so much, so much value and so much importance of understanding these other topics as well in concert with technology, because it really is the convergence of all of these factors that shape the future. But from a technological standpoint, there is - there's so many great examples, and there's so much potential of the good things that can come from advancements in technology, for persons with disabilities and employment, but we also cannot overlook that there are issues with accessibility, and affordability, and connectivity, and proficiency, and usability – if we don't address these things in an intentional way, we could end up widening social gaps between people, with the advancements of technology.

Shane Kanady (23:07): So...what does this all mean? When you take all of that into context – and I understand that is a *lot* to digest, that is a lot of information and – and many of us do not have the luxury of sitting back and thinking of these things and trying to piece them all together and try to understand you know – if I, I match up changes in social sentiment with legislative, directions and what happens when you introduce technology to that. There are people that are trying to survive in their businesses today and trying to create social benefits today, they are addressing human rights issues today. But we have to think long term as well, we have to consider how what we've learned from the past shapes what happens in the future.

Shane Kanady (23:54): So if we recognize how crises, social changes, technological changes, economic and policy changes have impacted persons with disabilities, then we can adjust our behaviours in response to where we see those trends repeating themselves, or you know similar circumstances coming together that have, in the past, indicated to us that there could be a problem here. We have the power to change our

behaviours, and I would submit to you that policy makers, private sector companies, and non-governmental organizations, or non-profit organizations – they are all equally important in that conversation. They all have an important role to play... if we focus on “What does this mean for people?”

Shane Kanady (24:48): And it’s not just acting in self-interest, it’s acting also with the consideration of, you know, if we adopt this technology, and if it has this impact on the labour force generally, well what about persons with disabilities? that may not have had access to that training or that proficiency in that technology, or any of the other factors that contribute into how someone is deemed “successful” in the labour market.

Shane Kanady (25:16): So we need to keep these things in mind. And just by way of example, I have had the opportunity to interact with many offices in our congress through our House of Representatives and through the Senate. And I’ve had conversations where we are not talking about disability policy, we are talking about labour policy, we are talking about technology policy, and just looking through that and finding simple ways to address *how* the labour force is described, how the labour force is depicted in that legislation, which is inherently exclusionary, because we have seen over history, that if persons with disabilities are not expressly included in these bills, that we cannot infer that the benefits are going to – to come to them, just as they would to anybody else. So, it’s not always about creating disability legislation, it’s about ensuring that the legislation that is created is thoughtfully inclusive.

Shane Kanady (26:29): So now I’d like to offer some thoughts on behavioural change, I talked about that, in terms of the different actors that are involved in shaping the future. So inclusive design employment representation, we *hear* about inclusive design, and we *hear* about universal design, it’s growing in terms of the number of people that are paying attention to that topic that are channeling that topic, and that is a great thing. And we cannot just think about it in terms of, you know, the design of a product or a commodity. We have to think about it in terms of the designs of the structures and systems, that we create policy, that we create work opportunities that we understand our educational systems and how they benefit people all of those things are subject to a need for inclusive design. For bringing persons with disabilities and their lived experience into that conversation at the outset, not on the back end, when you’re worried about regulatory compliance.

Shane Kanady (27:40): [Background technical difficulties] Oh! Sorry about that, I’m on an automatic light system. So the case I believe has already been made for why this benefits business – to do inclusive design, to think inclusively and to hire inclusively. The

data is already out there, with regards to the economic benefits for business to do that. So I believe that the hurdle is really a social construct, it's about... people assigning equal value to persons with disabilities as they do to other populations, and that continues to be at the heart of these conversations and – and really something that is holding back progress from my perspective.

Shane Kanady (28:20): So my recommendations are to seek first, *then* include, right? Not retroactively, not at a superficial level, at the *beginning* of any business, social impact, or policy endeavour. As we promote the empowerment, growth, and leadership of people, right, it's not... in this duality of... persons with disabilities are a charitable, you know, a charitable “persona”– depicting people in a charitable way, that you are eliciting this – this response from people, but also not... just going the opposite direction and going “Persons with disabilities are heroes!” and the challenges that they overcome every day. We continue to perpetuate this duality of how the community is depicted, and I think that that... also is a hindrance to progress. It's a recognition that people have a lived experience, people are diverse and complex, and... people have similar goals and fears and aspirations, and it doesn't need to be one extreme or the other.

Shane Kanady (29:32): And also setting the example. So, I assume that everyone that is participating in this webinar today and that is attending this event, you are already predisposed to believe that inclusion is what we should be doing, right, and the importance of that. But are you modeling that through your behavior? Are you modeling that through your organizations, through the work that you do? Are you being inclusive in your leadership? Are you being inclusive in the design of your programs? Umm... are you setting that example that you hope others will follow? Because we can't expect others to adapt their behaviours if we are not modeling that for them, and showing the benefits of students, and so with that, one of the things that I like to talk about is creating a virtuous cycle of prosperity.

Shane Kanady (30:28): And... for an example of that, on the screen I have a slide and there are two images on the slide. On the left is an individual sitting at a computer, performing work, and on the right are two individuals. – two women, sitting at a computer, working together. But they are participating in work and technological work. And so... the example is, user experience testing. And ... we start out by understanding the need – the need to be addressed. And there is exclusion in work and there is exclusion in society, and we need to confront the gaps in accessibility and useability in technology to be a bridge in addressing that exclusion. And... so you know, melding those future work concepts, right, bringing in the technology aspect to the employment aspect, to address the social issues.

Shane Kanady (31:26): So, understanding that need and then setting forth a demonstration of the work, so some of the things that my team is working on, is a demonstration of how do you... show the value of directly employing persons with disabilities to be user-experience testers for technology? To offer their perspective – their lived experience? To how something is designed? To how something is put out to the market and who you could reach through that, and what barriers you can address *if* it's designed with inclusion from the outset. In order to make that happen, right, we – we're working with an organization to make that happen, but we're also at the same time thinking about well, now... we need to bridge between what the industry values, and what people value, and a bridge between that is in credentialing and certifications, it's professionalization, it's a – a bridge to upward mobility in terms of one's earning potential and career aspirations. And it also offers the industry something that they recognize in terms of value, and so, not only are we working on a functional, operational program to do this work, we're also working with an international accrediting body to understand: is there a desire for a fully accessible credential in user experience testing? Which then opens the door to careers and the information and communication technology world.

Shane Kanady (33:05): It is not the destination; it is the door opened. And then all – to make all that happen in practice, right, because it would be great to have this functional demonstration of work, it would be great to have this... training program and accreditation program, but if you can't scale it up... you're really underwhelming the potential of what you are trying to do. And so, working with members of a congress to understand, what is a ... policy intervention that we can offer that we can craft - that would positively incentivize the behaviour of those that we want to participate in this cycle?

Shane Kanady (33:46): So if we can offer a tax incentive, to the private industry, to invest in the workforce of persons with disabilities, to achieve these credentials and to achieve this training and this – this professionalization and then recognize the value that they now bring because they now have this lived experienced *and* they have a professional certification or accreditation in the work. To then hire them, to be a member of their team, and then there is economic benefit that is created by those companies because they are reaching new markets through the products and services that they offer. But it doesn't just stop there, because if they are offering more accessible, usable products and services, that benefits all consumers. And that also helps to address barriers to usability, and so this is an example of trying to bring as many of these topics together to create this virtuous cycle of prosperity.

Shane Kanady (34:51): So now, again, continuing on with some of the discussions around recommendations, around some of the thoughts of where we go from here – so the future of work, as we describe it, I believe requires this accelerated need for asking the right questions of the right people, so as the challenge to go, can we all agree to stop acting *on* people and act *with* people instead. Right, promote the leadership of persons with disabilities, bring them into the conversations in a very authentic way, in a very intentional way, and – and appreciate the contributions that they're making.

Shane Kanady (35:31): Can we also take a look at this next area, accessible and usable technologies. Can we stop trying to simulate the perspective or the lived experience from persons with disabilities, through design work? Through technology work? Can we instead hire people with disabilities to do that work. They hold the value, they hold the lived experience that will inform the design of these products and services that will help to address barriers, that will help to address barriers even in crises situations, you know flood warnings and hurricane warnings, and all of the different ways that information is transmitted about emergencies and how you evacuate, and what happens next?

Shane Kanady (36:22): If persons with disabilities were involved in the design of those systems, how much more beneficial could that be for people? How many more tragic outcomes could we avoid, if we do that? Umm... so is there – I guess the question is: is there anything more important than *that* in terms of the future? Recognizing the value that someone brings inherently from their lived experience and then bringing into the workforce and compensating them for that value that they bring. Umm... There are two other thoughts here on the slide, so new ways to show up for work, and I'm going to offer an example of that in the next slide, but just in the general sense – we have *all* been disrupted in how we show up for work, because of the pandemic. And we are all seeking, how do we continue to be connected to each other? To the work that we do? And the meaning that we find from that?

Shane Kanady (37:23): And Yutta was saying that you know there was great opportunities in remote work and reasonable accommodations now have taken on a new meaning than maybe they did before, in this new context, as we go through the pandemic and we come out of the pandemic. But we have to make sure that as we allow those things to happen and as we create situations for people to engage with work remotely, that they are still inclusive, and the culture that we are creating and the interactions that are there, that people are not feeling even more isolated because of that.

Shane Kanady (38:04): And we have to find new ways for people to show up to work, that sometimes, you know, doesn't require physically being there. and then technology in

this future of work context... it's not about replacing people, it's about augmenting human abilities, it's about augmenting inherent talents that we have and the value that we create with technology, and not being just fully displaced from it and being devalued from what we have to offer. So, this example that I would like to highlight, when we talk about how you show up for work without showing up for work physically, or how you use technology to augment human abilities.

Shane Kanady (38:50): up on the screen I have a slide with two photos; on the left-hand side is a photo of some co-creators and executives of a technology company, called Ory Labs in Japan, in Tokyo. As well as two individuals that participated in the work that I am going to describe, as well as a robot. And on the right-hand side, there is that same robot, and it is delivering drinks to customers at a café. And the example is the Dawn Fer Café in Tokyo and it's one of my favourite examples to offer. And just very briefly, it was a pop-up café concept; it was an experiment that was run for two weeks and is now going through crowdfunding to see if they can actually make it at a long-term business opportunity. But what they did was they used robotic wait staff that were controlled remotely from the person's home. A person who experienced some form of paralysis, either through a spinal cord injury or ALS or some other impacted disability, and they controlled the robotic wait staff from their home.

Shane Kanady (40:09): Sometimes with their eyes used to control the technology! Just based on the amount of – of dexterity that they had, and... they spoke through the robot, they interacted with customers through the robot and then they controlled the movements of the robot to fulfill the orders of those customers and they were compensated at the same wage as any other waiter or waitress in Japan. Because they were offering the same value... and what that highlights to me is this exciting idea of record – or of recognizing the importance of inner personal value, in this future work context, because that is one of the things that you know, as you look at the research, as you – as people talk one of the – the skills, the currency of the future is in our personal value exchange.

Shane Kanady (41:04): So, they recognize the inner personal value that people could create through technology, through their human ability, and compensated them for that – the same as they would for anyone else, because they were delivering the same benefit. this is one of my favourite examples to offer in this, and I know it is a – kind of far out example in terms of robotics serving you coffee in a cafe, but it's something to – to really think about, and how do you adapt this – the lesson that you learn from this in different ways.

Shane Kanady (41:43): So that brings us to the – the current events and the topics that you know, really brought us here today, you know, as we talk about Disability Employment Awareness Month, but also talking about it in the context of current events with the pandemic. And... we have to recognize that people throughout the world are experiencing these events in different ways, different levels of intensity, and we cannot jump into a conversation to find the silver lining, to find the opportunities, without recognizing the global tragedy of the situation. So, with that, I'd love to talk about the optimistic ways that we can – we can grow as a society through this experience, but first, you know, recognizing with due respect the situation that brings us here.

Shane Kanady (42:35): So, what can we do? And I wrote a blog post about this for the Fortulans Institute and the idea was... you know, what is this inflection point in history? What can this provoke in a positive direction? And... Here are a couple of my thoughts that I'd like to offer to you. And I – and I hope they resonate with you, but the first is in breaking the cycle. So, I shared with you some of the trends that I've shared with you over time, the economic trends employment trends and long-term detachment from the labour force. The various things however, that are unfortunately exerting pressure on persons with disabilities uniquely, but if we recognize those trends, and we recognize that these things have happened before, we can adapt. We can adapt our behaviours. We don't have to accept that those are going to be the outcomes going forward.

Shane Kanady (43:31): And you know, this is a challenge to the business industry, and to policy makers and to NGOs, and to people... right, we don't have to accept that just because it happened *this* way before, that it has to happen this way again. We can do things to take control of those situations within our power – there are obviously things, we can't control everything, but there are things that we can do to shape the outcomes differently.

Shane Kanady (44:02): Refusing to regress – so arguably, a lot of progress made in the past 10 or so years since the Great Recession that we experienced in the United States and the ripple effects around the world, North America – shared experience, a lot of progress during that time, some would say, and the recognition of inclusion of persons with disabilities, the need to do that, the importance of doing that, the benefit of doing that, and progress was being made, there was a momentum leading up to what we're now experiencing. And then we ran into this pandemic situations and the global effects that it's had on society, but also on the economies, and... we can't afford to lose the momentum that we had leading up to this, right, we can't afford to regress as – as people retrench to a survival mode for their businesses, for stimulating their economies or

creating social policies to safeguard people during these events. Those are all incredibly important things.

Shane Kanady (45:20): But they also can't come at the consequence of now... overlooking the importance of including persons with disabilities, and that's one of the things that we need to really focus on and amplify, right. If there's progress that we've made over time, we have to keep pushing in that direction. Recognizing that the similarities overcome perceived differences, this is something that is kind of challenging to – to, to... you know, not everyone will agree with this point, right but the idea being that, right now we are all in some way experiencing social disconnectedness. We're experiencing economic uncertainty. We're experiencing fear of exposure to illness and medical consequences, you know, based on how we interact with other people or where we go.

Shane Kanady (46:17): We're experiencing – some of us are experiencing emotional trauma or psychosocial trauma because of the situation and we don't know what the long-term effects are going to be necessarily. And these are many things that persons with disabilities experience routinely that others might take for granted, that they never experience, or they at least don't recognize that they are vulnerable to these things in the same way. And, can this be a lesson in our shared humanity? That a global event like this – can show us just how similar, we are in terms of the basic fears the basic needs that we have as human beings... and can that help to advance us forward in society.

Shane Kanady (47:09): And then, amplifying the benefits of an inclusive recovery, this again brings us back to the topic of work. If we... find a way to – to rebuild and recover and give back to ...some level of prosperity based on however that's measured – however people assign value to that. If in our efforts to do that, we do not include... Everyone, we do not create benefits that persons with disabilities and other diverse groups are participating in that process or are benefitting from that recovery and... and hopefully everyone in the future, ends up in a more prosperous situation than where we began, for being optimistic.

Shane Kanady (48:00): But if we don't do that... then we could continue to widen social gaps. We could continue to – to increase the barriers that people have, to inclusive employment, education, participation, and society. And so, if you are a business leader, if you are a policy maker, the work that you're doing, as you think about the recovery effort from this, do not overlook persons with disabilities and the value that they contribute to your workforce – this is a value that they contribute to society as a whole, and... welcome them into this conversation, welcome them into your efforts, so that there is an inclusive

focus on where we go from here. And with that, my – my parting thought is, we all have a shared responsibility to create a future we expect, we all have a role to play in this, and I hope that you are all healthy and continue to be healthy, and that your families are healthy and that you prosper moving forward, but I would hope that you would take that with you, that shared responsibility to create the future. Thank you!

Yutta Fricke (49:22): Thank you, Shane for an excellent presentation, really thought-provoking and lots of information there, so I – I took a few notes to highlight a few COVID takeaways. Four different points: the first would be that the future of work is not a predetermined destination, nor is it a distinct point. COVID-19 is an example of a type of event that disrupts the way we used to do things and creates a new normal. I think we've all heard this "new normal" – so we have to make sure that the new normal includes people with disabilities. So, the second point: we can prepare for the future by understanding trends right now. So long before COVID-19, people with disabilities knew what it was like to feel job insecurity and uncertainty about the future – I think that's the point too, about - that the similarities we all have versus – versus the difference, we are all feeling this insecurity and uncertainty. But we have to pay special attention to people who are already marginalized in our systems right now. Then the third point: ideally technology can enhance and not replace human work. I think that's kind of a reassuring message Shane gave us, but the design has to include everyone, and... within designing there should be people with disabilities at the table. It's kind of a reiterated point, but the fourth and final one: inclusion must always be front and center and not an afterthought. So, during COVID-19, during our economic resiliency planning in response to COVID-19, we have to think about disability right now.

Yutta Fricke (51:18): Likewise, and really important... When we are at the point of economic recovery, our planning must always benefit all people, and not a select few. And I – I like the way Shane gave a challenge to all of us, who I think in many ways *are* leaders because we do tune into a call like this, but it's up to us on our webinar today – participants, to model this inclusion and start by having people with disabilities at that planning table. So I want to thank Shane, I know there's lots of other messages in there, but just to distill a few for – for COVID-19, you gave a lot of thought to this and at one point in preparing for today's session, Shane said that umm... *when* our pandemic ends and there's an opportunity to actually meet in person, it would be wonderful to have Shane come here to Winnipeg and experience our – our beautiful Manitoba. Unfortunately, our own numbers are fairly high right now and – and the temperature's fairly low. We want to reverse those trends [Laughs].

Yutta Fricke (52:26): I also at the closure of this webinar, I want to give a few other thanks. Especially to Heather Hitchcock from Manitoba Possible who I've said before, is like practically one of our staff here -she helps us an awful lot, and my colleague Erika Vas, who together I have this growing expertise in hosting webinars that – that others in the line might want to call upon some time, they've become very good at accessible webinars!

Yutta Fricke (52:53): Also want to thank our friends and colleagues at the MEEPA network and the many organizations that participate in our resource advisory team here at the Disabilities Issues Office, you always give us perspective from outside of government, from community, from. Municipalities, et cetera on how our – our work should better affect you. And I want you to please stay tuned for our future events – we had a really busy Fall, we're in the process of selecting with a group – with an independent selection group actually, Accessibility Awards, and the presentation will take place virtually on December 3rd on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, so more about that event and others! You can find out by subscribing to accessibility news and by visiting our accessibility.mb.ca website. I mentioned that we do have a COVID banner there and not included in our conversation today was the many implications for accessible customer service, that is both safe and accessible to persons with disabilities, and we're going to be providing further updates and social media on how to make sure that – that what I hear anecdotally, is that more and more people are staying home because they are – they are afraid of what they don't know out there.

Yutta Fricke (54:24): So nothing about us without us, and inclusion starts with being out there, so I hope that with accessibility we can enhance safety for everyone. Until our December 3rd event then, like Shane I wish you all to stay well and – and be safe, and to listen to Erika for a few minutes as she explains the poll that we want you to – to join in on, so thank you very much for participating and – and on to Erika!

[End - Running Time MM:SS – 54:55]

For questions, or comments about the webinar, or any of the information presented, please contact:

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