

June 5, 2020

Dear SODI Community,

Like all of you, we are horrified by the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police last week Monday. We are outraged that this happened to George Floyd, that this happened to Ahmaud Arbery, Christian Cooper, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, Breonna Taylor and countless other Black people who continue to be targets of police aggression, disproportionate force, violence, and injustice. And we are outraged that the silence and inaction has perpetuated systems that reproduce racism, racial injustice, and racial inequality in all aspects of our society.

We stand with all of you as individuals who are feeling the pain of these injustices, even as we recognize even the pain itself is not equal among all. We stand with all of you as leaders who are supporting your organizations and driving change. We stand with all of you bent on identifying the causes of inequality, injustice, and exclusion and the best ways to eliminate it.

Amid our outrage, there is reason to hope. We are heartened by the immediate outpouring of support from communities across the nation and the world. We are heartened by the bridges so many people are so passionately trying to build in this fraught period. We are heartened by the public servants, community leaders, government officials, and private sector leaders stepping up to provide positive leadership in this time of crisis. And we are heartened by all the hard work we know all of you do to help build the world we want, the world we should have, the world we know we can have.

This is a question of humanity. This is a question of social justice. This is a question of inclusion.

SODI strives to lift up and help uncover evidence-based solutions to address the inequities that impede our communities' potential to thrive. In that spirit, we want to share insights from SODI-affiliated researchers that can help in days to come:

1. [Kathy Phillips's talk](#), from the 2017 SODI Convening. In this talk Kathy describes efforts she undertook at Columbia Business School to demonstrate the value of diversity - and it's not what you think (It's better than what common sense tells us). Here are the major insights from the talk:

- Diverse groups make better decisions than homogenous groups (5:40-11:30)
- Value of diversity: People change their behavior when they are among people who look different from them; they make more effort in their processing of information, which leads to better performance. (11:30-14:48)
- People work harder when they're in diverse groups, but they don't like it because it's uncomfortable. But the discomfort is worth it, because the benefits of better decision making is worth it. (21:00)

This is a powerful talk from a dear friend of SODI who recently passed and is worth the 20 minutes if you have the time to watch in its entirety.

2. SODI research reinforces the importance of leaders explicitly and unambiguously stating their position on diversity. The takeaway is that as you are crafting communications to your communities and teams, the messages will have more power if they come from your leaders. For any of you working with leaders who are hesitant, for fear of saying the wrong thing, you can use this as evidence of the power of their voice.

In future communications, we will share insights from the SODI community on concrete action to companies and individual citizens can take related to criminal justice reform.

We are at a crossroads. Let's cross it together.

-- Neela, Andreas, Jeffrey, Kara, Kyra, Olga