

Anti-Racism in Deep Adaptation - Jem Bendell and Nonty Sobic in conversation

Nonty Sobic: My name is Nonty Sobic. I am a teacher and a sacred space holder. I'm here today talking to Jem Bendell, the founder and leader of DA, which is Deep Adaptation. And we're here to talk about what's happening with racism and our prejudices and to find ways to connect to each other, create spaces of healing, and listen to each other on this topic. Jem, maybe you can tell us about yourself, who you are, and why do you do what you do?

Jem Bendell: Okay. The first bit's easy. The second bit's quite big. Why do I do what I do? I'll come to that. I'm a professor of sustainability leadership at the University of Cumbria, in the UK. I've been only part time there for a few years now since I got into what we now call Deep Adaptation. For the last year and a half, I've been volunteering to set up the Deep Adaptation Forum, which I've just stepped back from. I'm no longer involved operationally, but we've got a team of four people, over 100 volunteers around the world, and about 15,000 people actively engaged in the platforms online. And there are local groups around the world. It's a really tough topic. Deep Adaptation describes a framework, a way of looking at the future, which is an anticipation of the collapse of modern societies, industrial consumer societies, the one that I live in, that you live in, the societies that have supermarkets, and have cash machines, and all that way of life. And we anticipate a collapse because of the pace of environmental change, particularly climate change, and how it's damaging the basis of society. For example, agriculture. But we don't want to just run away to the hills with weapons. Instead, we want to look at this trouble in a curious, kind, compassionate, creative way. We want to try and reduce harm. If we can slow it down and create a softer crash somehow, then great. But also, if we can't, then we want to learn anyway about why we got into this mess and how do we not make it worse. Because many people are feeling more vulnerable, feeling more distressed, feeling less satisfied about their lives. And that means that they're open to manipulation by people who just want to give them a silly story of safety or a simple story of blame. Rather than thinking, 'What have we done? Why has this happened? And what can we learn? And how can we try and make it better?' So that's why I do what I do. It's to try and respond to this predicament with an open mind and an open heart because I didn't really know how else to respond. Once I reached the conclusion that we can't reform the current modern consumer capitalist system. We've tried for decades. It's not happening. So massive change is coming. disruption is coming. I wanted to find people to talk about it with and that's also what all these 1000s of people in the Deep Adaptation Forum have wanted to do. That's why I do what I do. I realized that many people who have this awareness, then go on a journey similar to mine, which is to ask deep questions about the meaning of life. Because suddenly if you think that normal life is going to collapse, then you're much less bothered with trying to have a career progression and save money for the future and impress your friends, colleagues and family in the old ways that you might have wanted to. Everything can be questioned. Many people think that they want to live in truth and love. And those can seem like trite words. But truth therefore involves listening to multiple perspectives, including those which make you feel a bit bad. And love also means being open to criticism, open to self-critique, open to whatever you discover. Unlearning anything that you might need to unlearn. Which is also why I'm very interested in

this topic that you work on Nonty and why it's really important for the Deep Adaptation community in general, and the forum in particular.

Nonty Sobic: Yeah, thank you. You mentioned a lot of things that I very much relate to. I'm very much involved in the climate crisis, climate change movement. Or you might want to call them environmental movements. And I have been very much active in Europe, in different organizations, such as The Commoners. I've also been living in intentional eco villages in Europe. And being from South Africa, I'm an African, I'm a black woman from Africa, who lives in the philosophy of Ubuntu. And for me, it's very, very concerning also to see what the world has come into. The separation that we have. The illusion, I believe, of separation from each other, from other beings in the Earth, and also from Earth itself. The belief that we are separate from the earth itself. I believe that this is what has brought us where we are today. How do we walk back into the center? I call it the center. How do we go back into that center where we are having the awareness of reconnecting to each other? Where we are having the awareness of really working with the earth and respecting the earth and finding ways, if we can, if we still have time, I don't know, that's debatable. If we have time, or if this is just the end of it. And my experiences in Europe, when I came to Europe, I found that in the environmental movement, mostly, there was a lot of repeating. I call it repeating the patterns. Because most of the people who are involved in environmental movements are white middle-class people who have really good intentions to do something about what's happening in the planet. But I also realized that there was a repeating of certain patterns. A colonial way of thinking, a Eurocentric way of thinking. So their approach was not so much of a 'world view', even though it was being said that we are saving the planet. And yet, it felt like it was not including all the voices from the different parts of the world. And for me, this is of deep concern. And also, as I find myself in most places, being one of the few people of color or being the only person of color. And it concerns me a lot. Not only me, of course, it's a topic that is out there, of how do we make sure these movements include all the voices? I mean, you are a white man. I think you identify as a cis white man. And you are in a leadership position. So what has been your learning process of realizing, 'Hey, wait a minute, something here is not quite inclusive?' If I have to use those words. I don't really like those words. But it's like, where are the other people? I have a young lady who's white from Switzerland. She says, 'When I enter a room, the question I asked myself is, who's not here and why are they not here?'. Every time I enter a space of environmental activism, it's white people. Middle-class white people. Even, for example, in the Eco village movement, an amazing movement that I'm involved in, it's also still in Europe, very white middle-class. And the question is, how do we change that?

Jem Bendell: yeah, lots of important questions there. I'm also aware now of how some people in the environmental movement can get a bit defensive as well when such questions or critiques are raised. Because sometimes they're made in order to criticize and delegitimize the cause, which I think is therefore reason for actually strategically as well why environmentalists should pay great attention to this. Even if this is just for strategic reasons. But I think there are very deep philosophical reasons as well as super practical, personal and emotional reasons why to engage with this. So, where to start? Okay, I'll say this first because I'm on a journey on racism, anti-racism, coloniality, and decolonization. I've been on a bigger, longer journey around sexism, patriarchy, and anti-patriarchy. But to go back about a year to 18 months ago, I think someone said to me, 'Oh, Jem you're just racist like the rest of us'. Um, yeah, okay. I don't think they were trying to be helpful. But my response to that was like,

'What!'. It was seen as an insult, rather than as an invitation to look at how I might have unconscious biases and prejudice in me, like other people do. And rather than looking at that with shame, or any defensiveness, but to instead actually think that those unconscious biases and prejudices in me are barriers to my fuller, more open connection with other people. And they are barriers to me participating in all the things that I say I want to do. I say that I want to create a fairer, kinder world, even if we're crashing. Well, unconscious biases are barriers to me participating in a fairer, kinder world. So I have changed to see it in a way now that recognizes that there are patterns of racism and racial prejudice in our society, and therefore also in particular movements and groups, and therefore working through us. All of us are reproducing various different patterns. And so becoming more aware of that is an opportunity, rather than a pain. Now, in the environmental space, I think it's important to recognize that there are people of color, and in leadership positions in environmental groups and environmental movements. So they are there. But also, it's still exactly as you say, there is a predominance of white middle-class people in Western environmental movements. With Deep Adaptation, it's questionable whether it is an environmental movement. Certainly a lot of the people have come to it through that, but some people haven't. So it is an open question about why it is still quite white. And also questions of economics as well. It's still quite middle-class. Perhaps because of the kinds of people who would have access to my writing. Originally, I published my paper for a very particular audience: People involved in Management Studies and management consulting. As a British white academic. So it could be because of that. But I am really happy that as a result of the consultation process earlier this year, the volunteers themselves identified increasing diversity and inclusion and also looking at the notion of decolonization. Some people also like to talk about co-liberation from prejudice. This has been made a topic to support anyone who wants to engage in it in the forum. And I hope people see it as an opportunity that fits with this idea of trying to be kinder and wiser in the face of collapse. I hope people see it as fitting with the idea of how do we avoid making matters worse as more people feel vulnerable and confused and scared as societies get a bit messed up. That didn't answer your question on my journey as such did it? But there are other reasons why I see it as relevant as well. I mean, if we didn't have racism, then we couldn't have had colonialism. If we didn't have colonialism, then we couldn't have had global capitalism. If we didn't have global capitalism, then we couldn't have had rampant crazy consumerism. And if we didn't have that, then we wouldn't have had the ecological and climate crisis and be within the sixth mass extinction. So it's kind of a no brainer to look at racial oppression and exploitation as part of the healing around the climate crisis.

Nonty Sabic: I think you actually did give me a very nice explanation of your journey. And thank you for sharing that. And in this journey also talked about how you've been working a lot on patriarchy. That has been your focus in the past. And also you just mentioned that when somebody did bring this to you, for you, it was very uncomfortable. And I see that a lot. And I see a lot of resistance when white people are being told about their racism. Because there is no way if you're white, or if you are a person of color, that you've escaped the message of racism. Either you've internalized superiority, or you've internalized inferiority. It's there. It's in our education systems. It's just there.

Jem Bendell: I think it's almost like people need stories to help them realize that it doesn't mean that you're going to swear at someone because they look different to you. You might even go up to someone and be extra friendly because they look different to you. Or it may not occur to you that your psychologist who you have only ever spoke to on the phone when you meet them, oh, she's black. It's

very subtle. And if we pretend it's not there, then we are upholding patterns of behavior without realizing it, which can be problematic and are reported as being problematic by people. So I think it's that people just don't realize it's there because they assume that racism means being deliberately nasty.

Nonty Sabic: Yeah. It's almost a sense of people, white people, we have to be clear, it's almost like you're saying, 'I'm a good person. Oh, I have friends who are black. My partner is black. My children are half black half white, I cannot possibly be racist. I have a project in Africa.' You always get these different kinds of excuses because people don't realize that it's actually deeply, deeply embedded in us. It's in our cellular level. It's in our psyche. It's in our psychology. It's in everything that we are. It's embedded, as you were saying before. It's in capitalism. It's in colonialism. It's in our way of consumerism. It's in everything. I think it's really important that we always highlight that. That it's not a personal attack. It's not necessarily that you're a bad person. If somebody makes you aware of your racism it's just what it is. It's in the system. And I find that sometimes it's really difficult as a person of color, as a black woman, to bring that message across. And it seems like we need more white people who have awareness of this and who actually talk about it more. I have a saying that says, 'Dear white people who are loving, caring, and unconsciously racist'. Because I have white people in my life. 90% of my life is spent with white people who are really loving people, yet they are unconsciously racist. There's a lot of micro and macro aggressions that they are always delivering every day. Hence, I'm doing this work as well besides holding ceremonies and things. So how do we...?

Jem Bendell: Nonty what's your why? Why are you deciding to put yourself into the fire of unconscious racism of nice people but who are still racist?

Nonty Sabic: Yeah, there's many levels of answering that question. This is where life puts me. This is where I find myself in my life. It seems that in my life's journey I constantly find myself in the space of white people. And on top of that, of course, it's a choice. I can always get away. But this is the thing, whether we are around white people or not, for us as people of color, racism is affecting us all the time. It's something we talk about all the time. It's something we have awareness of all the time. It's something that decides where we are born. And what the survival rates of the children that are born in that area are, which is, segregation. I was born in apartheid South Africa, just to mention that. So I know what it's like really to live in segregated areas, which are designed by the law to separate. So, for me, the story of racism is very strong. Just like it's strong in every person of color. But with white people, it's like you can be at the age you are now without ever having to think, what does it mean being white? Like, really deeply discussing how you affect the world, or how the world affects you as a white person? And what power you hold. It's like there's no awareness of that. And with us there's a very strong awareness of that. I always say to people, it's the way I eat, the way I walk, who I am, my ancestors, how they lived, and how they process their lives, was affected by racism very strongly. A friend asked me, 'Did you always know that you were going to be teaching about racism?' I said, no. I know, I'm a teacher. And I love to teach. And I love to share knowledge. But racism is not something that I aspire to teach about. It's a necessity. And for me, it's this dream of seeing that we remember that we are human race, that we forgot about that, that coming back into the center we are a human race. And bringing that awareness to the white people in a sense that the idea of separation is an illusion. On one level. That's on the spiritual level, but on the everyday physical level your unconscious racism

harms me, and it continues to harm me every day, and it continues to harm people of color. The more you deny it, the more you are continuously harming people who share this planet with you.

Jem Bendell: I think it'd be helpful if for me, but also anyone who watches this talk, to have an example. Like in your experience in the European environmental movement, or eco village movement, of a micro racism or micro violence or microaggression. Where it's reflective of unconscious racism. Because I think a lot of people like me need to still have our attention brought to what is a biased, prejudiced way of thinking or not thinking or behaving or not behaving.

Nonty Sabic: That's a hard one. It should be easy because there are so many that have happened. It's hard because which one do I pick? It can be a simple thing, as when you have a loving, kind friend who really answers, 'We want to go to Africa to help African people'. I mean those words. Somebody might say, 'What's wrong with that? Of course, I want to go to Africa to help'. There's so many levels to that. Do you have an understanding of why Africa is the way it is in terms of economy, in terms of a culture, or losing their culture, or ecology? Do you have the history? Because the schools in Europe don't teach colonial history. They don't teach the economics of how it has impacted the countries that were colonized and how the economic system functions. So if you say, from the bottom of your heart, that I'm going to go and help Africa. That is racist. That is a microaggression. Because you are assuming that African people cannot help themselves. Of course this is based on what you have seen. You see the poverty, and you are assuming that really Africa is all about poverty. A proposal for something that would be good to say would be, how can we work together? How can I go and work together with Africans and see how I can support them? For example, I have access to the economy because I'm European. I'm in Europe, I have easy access to funding, and how can the Africans themselves come up with ideas of how they want to improve their communities. Because we do have ideas, we do know what we want. We have indigenous knowledge systems that are amazing, that are powerful. This then comes back to the fact that these indigenous knowledge systems could be very helpful to environmental movements. So if the white middle-class, who are involved in the environmental movements, actually also involve indigenous people and people of color more, and bring them to the table, then a lot of knowledge could be shared. The science and indigenous knowledge could actually create a strong bridge to bring up, I don't want to say solutions, but a new way of living, a new way of maybe finding ways to save the planet. I think I'm going far now. Because microaggressions, there's so many of them. But this is just one obvious one. The idea of we as white people are going somewhere, we're going to the East, we're going to Africa, to help Africa, to do a project, because we want to help. There's a lot of presentations from environmental young people at conferences that I go to, and the presentations always say, we're talking about global warming or global crisis. And then it'll get into, if we don't stop now, if we don't change, then we're going to have a certain number of climate refugees. This is what's going to be happening. We're going to lose a certain number of animal species, or we've already lost so much. And I always say this is a trigger, this is such a trigger, because if you are talking about climate crisis and yet you're standing there, you're doing a presentation, and it's only focusing on what's going to be coming in Europe, then you are doing injustice to the places, other places in the world, especially the Global South, that already has a high number of climate refugees. That already have been experiencing disasters. And the reason for that is because of the lifestyle that we are living in the northern countries. You have this glamorous lifestyle of consumerism, which then goes and

affects people who are not living that kind of lifestyle. So I would like to see more presentations that take that responsibility.

Jem Bendell: Yeah, I agree. And I do wonder whether we can move from the discussion of a forthcoming societal collapse, to the recognition of current or, just in the recent past, massive disruption, and indeed breakdown of societies with famine and mass migration. So the question then becomes, can people who anticipate collapse of their own way of life respond in a way which includes solidarity and support? So not just with your old-fashioned view of send a check to Oxfam. But with more solidarity and support with people being affected. Of course if there is an increase in humanitarian aid for people in disaster zones, then good. But at the moment it's not that big in the conversations that I see in the Deep Adaptation Forum, and I hope it will become more. The idea that people are being displaced, people are going hungry, people are dying right now because of disasters made worse by climate change, what can we do to help right now? And to see that as very coherent with the broader response to this predicament. That would be good. I just thought I'd share with you one story from a friend of mine. He's from Uganda. He grew up in Switzerland. And now he's moved to Australia. And he has two sons. And he told me this in order to help me understand the racism in subtle, unconscious micro-violences. He was at a parent-teacher evening. He went to the school and the teacher said, 'We're really happy with your son, he's doing really well'. And my friend said, 'Really? I look at these grades, and I've looked at your average class grades, and I see he's below average. Why is that doing really well?' And the teacher said, 'Oh, yeah. But you know, we think he's doing really well.' So my friend had to say, 'Okay, well, I run my own investment fund. I have a Master's. His mother, my wife, has a PhD and is one of the most senior executives in one of Australia's largest companies. Our son being below average we can't understand. Are you telling everybody who's below average that they're doing really well?' And yes he was the only black child in the class. He was saying that this is systemic and unconscious racism. That there's just lower expectations from that teacher being expressed because of the child's color.

Nonty Sabic: And if the child was doing very well it's almost like a surprise. It's almost like, for white people, if you are a black person and you are seen as intelligent, whatever intelligence is, because for me intelligence is not only about academic ways, but it's almost like a surprise. It's almost like, 'Oh, wow, you're so smart! I'm so surprised that you're so smart!' I get that a lot. And I also get a lot of, 'Oh, but you didn't do the Excel sheet very well'. So there's always something. For me, the main thing is not to be defensive, to learn to be uncomfortable for white people. I invite white people to open themselves into the space of being uncomfortable when it comes to the race topic.

Jem Bendell: How is that working for you, inviting people to be uncomfortable? And I say that because I know that some people when they see an invitation to do diversity inclusion, or racial justice training, or decolonization training, there is a bit of an allergic reaction. It's almost like by the very fact this training exists, it's sort of criticizing me. Do you need to make an invitation? Or is that an extra aggression? The idea that you've got to be worried about white people getting annoyed with you when asking people to look at this and be okay with being uncomfortable about it. Or do you try and make invitation? Or is there a role for people like me to try and help make it invitation? What do we do? Recognizing that there can be that negative reaction to this topic amongst some white people.

Nonty Sabic: It shouldn't be me as a person of color that is trying to invite white people into the space of race work. What we as people of color would like white people to know and understand is that racism is traumatizing for us. And every time we enter into a conversation about racism, we are re-traumatizing ourselves. If you have experienced it, then you can even see it in the body language of a person of color. Sometimes it's shaking and people might think, 'Oh, you're being aggressive'. And yes, there is anger behind that for sure. But it's also a trauma. So what we need is a call for more white allies. And what does it mean to be a white ally? It's that you are taking the steps of recognizing your own internalized racism, and you are taking the steps of educating people from your white community about racism and inviting them into these spaces. So therefore, a man like you who is in a leadership position, for me, it's highly important that you take on the responsibility of saying, 'This is my journey, and this is what I'm understanding about racism. And this is how it has impacted the world. And this is how it is impacting some people who live with us on this planet. And these are the things we can do to make it better, and to make it go away'. I'm having double signals. Because there's a part of me that feels like as a black person of color, I shouldn't be like, 'Oh, we need white people'. It has to come from your communities, we need more awareness from the white people. more awareness, more talking, more sharing, more vulnerability. I use the word vulnerability because it is a difficult topic, and you are going to be uncomfortable, and you need to allow yourself to be vulnerable. And also, it's very challenging for a white mind to realize that there is something that has been happening in this planet for about 400 years that they don't know much about. Because of exactly the segregation. It's almost like, if I'm an academic and I'm white, then how can I not have had known that this was really happening? Do you know what I mean? It's a sense of, there's something happening and I don't know anything about it. And a person of color is coming to tell me that there's something that's been happening that I don't know anything about. That must be really hard for the system and the psyche to observe and to understand. And so the invitation for me is to the leadership, and also to just the average white person to start the process of being uncomfortable. And to teach each other and to hold more spaces to talk about this topic. And to teach others how this connects to everything else that you were saying before, to capitalism and to the climate crisis. It's a responsibility.

Jem Bendell: One thing you said, which really I hadn't quite realized before, was how talking about racism and therefore, for example, instances of racism, or hearing yet again stories about, 'Well I'm not racist or it's not so bad'. All of that is traumatizing. I hadn't fully appreciated that before. It really does present a challenge for having racial prejudice, diversity and inclusion discussions as a topic with a mixed race gathering. Because obviously then the stumbles from an unconscious racist pattern will be will be tough for people of color in that context. I can see the challenge there. And also then that it's up to people like me, perhaps? Or white people in general who have reached a point of realizing that we are all subconsciously recovering racists, shall we say, to then find ways of connecting, building bridges and opening doors for more white people to come and look at and engage in that conversation. It's for us to think of that, rather than to expect people of color to work out how to be nice and not upset us on this on this topic. I'm fairly new to this so I don't know the full spectrum of resistances to this. I do know it would be good to make it invitational. And for me, I'm beginning to see that I can. I'm looking forward to your training. And I'm seeing it as another way of removing unconscious barriers inside me. Barriers to connection. And removing unconscious rules on my own behavior. That's what I got from the whole engagement with patriarchy and anti-patriarchy over the last few years. I didn't realize how norms of behavior, expected norms of, for example, how people show up in groups, who speaks the most, and

the nature or the content of their utterances are gendered. And how, left unquestioned, left imbalanced, that means that I'm poorer, everyone's poorer. As you become more aware of this, it's an opportunity to get to have more connection with more people whoever they are.

Nonty Sabic: Yeah. And also you miss out on learning from other cultures. It's not only that racism is bad as it's oppressing people of color. It is also bad for white people because it separates you from us as people of color. It separates you from all this diversity and all this richness. It separates us as human beings, and how rich we can be if we are sharing all this knowledge and all this information together. So white people also miss out on engaging in a deep meaningful level with people of other cultures. Because you already enter a space as a white person, or a white male, as you were talking about patriarchy. So since you already have this deep understanding, we always use the example of sexism. You can always take examples from that and apply them to racism. Because then it will be like, in a room full of men and women, it's the men that will speak more, always having something to say, and the women speak less. So you can also see in a room full of white people and people of color, it's the white people that will speak more, take up space and feel like they are the ones that have the knowledge. And the people of color are silent. So it's always also helpful to have this strong background in feminism work or patriarchy. Then you can always somehow make examples actually from that. And apply it to racism work when people are failing to understand or connect. Because it happens. White people shut down during trainings when you talk about racism. The whole system of white people shuts down because you don't want to hear. That's the reaction. You freeze. And when you freeze your brain doesn't want to receive information. But then if you use something that has already somehow been accepted, then it's easier for people to absorb and be more open to hearing. I also just want to say about the training that's going to be coming up as well, it's just a window. It's like opening a window. Two things I wanted to say. Firstly, white people should be kind to each other. It's not about, 'Oh, look, I've done racism work for the past two years, and you are still racist'. It's not about pointing fingers at the other white people who are still trying to figure that out. I don't believe in that. I believe that we should always have compassion and find ways to really hold the spaces for others. And somebody can argue and say that, 'We don't have time'. Yes, on some level we don't have time. just like we don't have time with the climate crisis. But also, pointing fingers doesn't really help. It creates more walls. And another thing is to know that these trainings are not enough. You can't just say, 'I went to a training. I'm going to another training'. There has to be a willingness to really apply what you're learning in your personal life, in your community, and make notes for yourself. From now on, what are the steps that I'm going to take to be a white ally?

Jem Bendell: I think, for me, part of white allyship is to look at how we respond to the way identity politics is being used to mobilize the right wing and undermine the left wing. And I don't know what we do about that. But we're seeing it not just in terms of racial justice and healing, but also gender justice and healing. Both those two things have been described by the right wing in many countries as an attack on our national culture and pride. And in a way that is weaponized through Facebook ads, and is used to support idiots to gain power. And the argument is that so-called progressive politics and various social movements end up going around in circles arguing about, 'Have we paid enough attention to gender justice, racial justice, economic inclusion and transgender issues, and so on? Are we ableist? And etc, etc, etc?' It does seem that there is this reaction that's being weaponized by the right wing. And if that is the case, then how do we combat that? And how do we reframe? When I say 'we', I'm

talking about white allies. How do white allies reframe their engagement in racial justice and healing in a way that is supportive of and honoring the humanity of all white people, anywhere, of any economic status? That's something that looks like it needs to be worked on. Because otherwise, you've got all these angry white men telling people to vote for them, and because then they're more proud of their country than the opposition. Do you have any thoughts on how we white allies go about that?

Nonty Sobic: I can't. There's so many levels. It's so complex, I always say, it's so complex. It's like this, and it's like that. For me, it's about what skills you have. Not only skills, but where do you have the most voice? Where do you feel you have the most power where you can influence? And if it's politics, then you need to be in there. And being a white ally and making visible all the ugly ways of how systemic racism functions. If you are a stay at home mum, where in your circles can you be effective? And where in your circles can you be the one that brings that message to your community? It's not for us as people of color to just dish out and say, 'This is what you should be doing: A, B, C, D, E, and F'. No, it's something that you need to figure out. Where can you be influential as a white person? Where do you have the power? And how do you choose to use that power? Especially also when it comes to the injustices that are happening in the world. We can't always be saying, 'This is what you need to be doing'. Because what I might feel, the next person of color might say, 'No, I think, the first place that we should be working on is this'. Everybody has their own opinion. So for me, you need to take it on yourself and say, 'I have influence in this area. And I'm passionate about this area. So I'm going to go in there and do what I can to be a white ally, and actually influence and use my power to change things that area'.

Jem Bendell: Well, hopefully the Deep Adaptation Forum and wider community can be more inclusive and diverse. But also have more white allies in wider society, where people will work out for themselves as you also invite us to. Good. I've benefited from the impetus on this topic coming from the members of the forum itself. It's certainly been a bottom up initiative as a response to the strategy dialogue we had with volunteers and others. They want to look at this. And that's because there's an aspiration for the Deep Adaptation Forum and community to be more than just a club of people who like talking to each other and share common interests. They actually want to be relevant in society. They want to therefore have an influence and therefore, diversity becomes even more important. Thank you.

Nonty Sobic: And also not to just have diversity for the sake of diversity. I have to say that I've been in the diversity and inclusion group of the DA that's just been founded. And we've been working on that. And it's important to make sure that when you form these kinds of spaces, it's not just diversity for the sake of diversity. Like, 'look at us!' Because that also creates even more damage to the people of color that you bring in. So it's actually really saying, 'We are really working, and we are doing the work. And we are looking at ourselves at the personnel level and the group structure. That we are actually implementing the change. And we want to see change. Not only in us as individuals, but in the whole organization'. For me, it's been really a beautiful journey to see that DA has created this space of diversity and inclusion. So far I see progress in the people that I have worked with in the group and I'm really hopeful for the future. I know there's people from different countries, especially in Eastern Europe, who don't very much identify sometimes some of them with colonial and racism work. But I'm hoping that there is a window of openness to see how as white people just in the spectrum of the whole

planet, how they move about and how they influence the world, that this topic is also important for them as well. Something to look at.

Jem Bendell: Yeah. We are an international group. And quite diverse in our holding group. But not very diverse, racially speaking, in the membership at the moment. We'll see how that changes over time. And it's not just that. It's also just how do we become more supportive of other communities, other movements, as well and better understand them to engage with them. I say 'we' because I'll still be involved even though I've now left the core team. I'm not involved in daily operations, but I'm one of the 14 holding group members. And I'll participate as a volunteer. I'll be coming on your course therefore as a volunteer.

Nonty Sobic: Thank you, Jem. I think that's it for now.

Jem Bendell: Okay, cheers.

Nonty Sobic: Thank you for this rich conversation. I hope that we can have another one also and go deeper maybe into other topics as well. Thank you so much.

Jem Bendell: Thank you. It's been helpful. The whole thing's been helpful. Not just the hour we spent together now but also just pondering over the last week since we chatted and having conversations with other people. I had a long chat over lunch today about racism and unconscious racism with a man from Sweden who is married to a Kenyan. It's just really helpful for me and shows to me how I had deprioritized this issue in my own life in the last few years. So thank you for instigating that in me through the DA world.

Nonty Sobic: Thank you for the work you do, and for being you. Take care.

Jem Bendell: Bye bye.