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Voice-over: A Deeper Look. Exploring what works and what doesn't in development and the changes we can make together to turn ideas into action.

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P. Fine: Hello listeners. Welcome back to *A Deeper Look* Podcast. I'm Patrick Fine, CEO of FHI 360, and today, I'm joined by Carrie Hessler-Radelet, president and CEO of Project Concern International, or PCI, a global development organization working with families and communities to enhance health, end hunger and overcome hardship in 16 countries. Carrie, welcome to the podcast.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

P. Fine: I'm excited to have you here. As our returning listeners know, this year, we're focusing on the darker side of development. So, we're talking about the paradoxes, the unintended consequences of development efforts, the issues that too often we shy away from in the development community. Today, Carrie and I are going to explore the topic of #AidToo, the issues around sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse associated with development work.

Listeners, before we dive into the discussion, I just want to give you some background on Carrie, who brings decades of experience and human development to this conversation. Prior to PCI, Carrie served as the worldwide Director of Peace Corps. Before that, she was the Deputy Director of Peace Corps. She's also had leadership roles at John Snow International, a major health organization, served as a lead consultant on the first five-year global HIV/AIDS strategy for PEPFAR, and she founded the Special Olympics in the Gambia.

I'm also proud to say that Carrie is an FHI 360 alumnus, having served as our Country Director in Indonesia in the 1990s. Carrie started her career in international development in Peace Corps in Samoa, so we have that in common. Carrie and I have known each other for a long time. I have tremendous respect and admiration for you, Carrie, as a leader in our community.

So, I'm so happy to be able to explore this topic of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse within the development

community. Recently, you were the Co-chair with Abby Maxim of Oxfam of a taskforce set up by Interaction, which is an association of organizations that work on international development that looked at sexual harassment and abuse and proposed a set of guidelines and recommendations for organizations working in this area. Can you tell us a little bit about that taskforce?

C. Hessler-Radelet: Sure, absolutely. First of all, Interaction has about almost 200 members, so it's an umbrella organization of international development and humanitarian assistance organizations. And so, when the Me Too movement happened in this issue, especially the expose that happened about a year and a half or two years ago about the sexual misconduct of senior leaders in some of the countries, and a number of organizations were implemented – Oxfam got a lot of publicity.

But, it absolutely was not the only one. And I really do believe it was linked in with the Me Too movement, because that movement took the whole issue of sexual assault out of the shadows and gave people permission to – to raise their voice about the terrible abuse that they had been suffering silently.

Interaction, because it is so tuned into the interests and needs of nonprofits, created a taskforce, a sexual harassment and abuse taskforce which then led to the development of a CEO pledge which has been signed by 128 members of Interaction, which commits the partner organizations to doing a number of things that will enable these member organizations to prevent the sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation of and by NGO workers.

So, it's a commitment that we're going to work within each of our organizations to really make a difference in our part of perpetuating this – this issue, and creating a corporate culture that will allow people to thrive and come forward in a safe environment. Interaction was joined in this effort by our Canadian and European counterparts, so this is something this pledge idea has taken a hold in different countries, and I understand that some private sector organizations, and even the Association of Private Contractors in our business have also created their own pledge. So, it's basically a statement that we will not stand for this kind of behavior.

P. Fine: And the recognition that that kind of, that that behavior – sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse – has been present ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right.

P. Fine: ... in development work, in development organizations, forever.

C. Hessler-Radelet: For time immemorial.

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Let's be honest. This problem is as old as humankind.

P. Fine: And it struck me how quickly the Me Too movement was taken up by the development community.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right.

P. Fine: So, it was really literally just a few weeks between when #MeToo exploded in our societies around the world that you had organizations like our organizations starting to look inward ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right.

P. Fine: ... and say, "Wait a minute, this is an issue in the industry, in the work that we do, in the countries where we work in, and in our own organizations."

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly. And I think the part of that was the permission, so to speak, that was given to speak out. For survivors who have been holding it in silence for so long to be able to speak their truth. And, I know this from a very personal basis because I myself was a sexual assault survivor who kept silent for 30 years.

P. Fine: Can you share that story with our listeners?

C. Hessler-Radelet: I would be happy to share that story. Because that story has become part of who I am and why I care so much about this journey we're on. And it's become a part of my leadership in this area.

So, I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Western Samoa in the early '80s with my husband, Steve, who you know. It was very shortly after I arrived in Samoa that I was assaulted for the first time by my associate Peace Corps director, so my direct supervisor, who was also, by the way, the highest ranking Samoan on the Peace

Corps staff, and I might add, the – the head of the Lutheran Church in Samoa. So, a man with great credibility and high esteem within Samoa.

P. Fine: And status there.

C. Hessler-Radelet: And status, exactly. So, when he assaulted me the first time, I thought – I blamed myself. I was humiliated. I was afraid to speak up because of his high status. I thought that perhaps I had said something or done something that had indicated to him that I might be interested in him, which, of course, was ridiculous.

But, it is very common for people to blame themselves and to examine their own behavior to see what did I do that misled them. I was assaulted a total of three times. All of those times were within the Peace Corps office, and he stalked me, and he targeted me. And it wasn't until the third time that I felt that I had gained the courage to be able to speak out against him. And, when I went to Peace Corps leadership, although they listened kindly and they offered some amount of support and submitted a report to Washington, absolutely nothing happened.

P. Fine: So, there were no consequences to the person who was preying upon you?

C. Hessler-Radelet: He was sent back to Washington for a conversation. The last assault took place just weeks before I was scheduled to depart. I think he thought I would leave country and never say a word. I submitted a report the last week before I left. I was under the impression that he had been removed from his job, but when I came back 30 years later, I discovered that he continued in his job and also he continued preying on women for 15 more years.

P. Fine: It reveals the degree to which we in the development community and organizations like Peace Corps and other development organizations somehow accepted that behavior. Sexual harassment and abuse as – as um, - well, we just accepted it.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Yeah, yeah.

P. Fine: Whether you ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: He's just a man being a man, right?

P. Fine: We may have abhorred it, we may have deplored it, and I think of my own Peace Corps experience in Swaziland, and I recall then that in our training, women were told you're going to be ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: Harassed.

P. Fine: ... harassed.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Yeah.

P. Fine: And that's going to be part of your experience, and so you just need to know how to deal with it, and they were essentially just told, "Look, in this ..." It was seen as a cultural thing. "In this society, in this culture, men will, uh, uh, cat call you, they'll propose love to you, and you just need to deal with it. Here are some strategies for dealing with it." But pretty much accepting it and saying deal with it.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Yeah, I mean it's not different from our own country where, you know, every woman of my age had the professor that made a move on them, or you'd walk by a construction site and there would be cat calls or there would be some guy who would grab you in the bar. It – it's part of our culture, too. I mean we have evolved since then, but yes. And by the way, if you were sexually assaulted, there were no reporting mechanisms. There was no training particularly apart from what you just said.

P. Fine: I think the main strategy that women were advised was to wear a wedding ring if they were single.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right, right.

P. Fine: Because then they could say to a man, "Oh, I'm married."

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right, as if that would make a difference, right.

P. Fine: It didn't make a difference in your case.

C. Hessler-Radelet: It didn't make a difference. He knew very well I was married, and my husband was a volunteer, and I have to tell you – I want to speak a little bit about that.

Because I was so ashamed and so humiliated and embarrassed by this whole set of events, and I was afraid. I was afraid that if I

spoke up against this man that I might have to leave Samoa and the work that I love so much. I was afraid that no one would believe me. I was afraid that people would start asking me about the clothes that I was wearing. I mean all the things that you hear about in the Me Too movement about the victim blaming. So, the only person I told was Steve, my husband, and I swore him to silence because I was afraid.

P. Fine: Yeah, you were afraid you'd be sent home.

C. Hessler-Radelet: But the impact on him was profound, too. Can you imagine a newly married young man whose wife is being assaulted by the highest ranking Samoan, and he is unable to protect me. He was – he felt angry, he felt to some extent I think emasculated that he wasn't able to protect. And he wanted to honor my request for silence, and yet it was It was a very difficult time for him as well. He was as affected as I was in some ways. In a different way, but equally profound and important.

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: So, fast forward to when I became the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. Literally two weeks after I arrived. I had been sworn in as Deputy Director of the Peace Corps because I was Deputy for two years before I became acting Director and then Director. We got a phone call from Brian Ross, the head of 2020, and they were going to do an expose on Peace Corps and volunteer dissatisfaction with the way Peace Corps was addressing the concerns of some of its volunteers. And the catalyst of this was the murder of an incredibly wonderful volunteer named Kate Puzey in Benin who had been brutally murdered after she had been a whistleblower exposing the sexual misconduct of a part-time Peace Corps language instructor.

And they wanted to do a story on 2020. Now I can tell you the last thing you want in your life is an interview on 2020. But we had to stand up. I mean we had to be part of it because part of the frustration of the Pusey family and then later what ended up happening is that a group of Peace Corps volunteers who had been sexually assaulted joined that 2020 program.

Their allegation was that Peace Corps was callous and cold and didn't care. And so, if we had said we're not going to participate in this program, what we are essentially saying is we don't care.

P. Fine: You're validating ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: We're validating those allegations. We had to care, we had to listen, and it was very painful, and it was really hard because I was having to confront my own sexual assault for the first time. And, although it was an incredibly difficult time because it became a really public Me Too moment for Peace Corps.

P. Fine: Before Me Too. Was that before Me Too?

C. Hessler-Radelet: Before. It was, yeah, it was eight years before Me Too.

P. Fine: Yeah.

C. Hessler-Radelet: However, I would say that it was the best thing that ever happened to Peace Corps because it enabled us to examine ourselves and to look at the underlying culture that allowed sexual harassment and assault to persist. Now I want to say one thing, and that is that sexual assaults by Peace Corps staff on Peace Corps volunteers are incredibly unusual, and there are very strict repercussions for that. That was my story, but that is not a very common story. The most common situation is a Peace Corps volunteer being assaulted by a host country national and occasionally by another Peace Corps volunteer.

And I also want to say that despite the fact that I was sexually assaulted, Peace Corps was by far the most transformative experience of my life, and so I had a really happy Peace Corps experience. But this is also part of my journey. But when I, on 2020, heard the testimony of those six women who were very courageously coming forward and laying out for the world what had happened to them, I knew that we had failed them as an agency. I knew that we had not given them the support and care and training that allowed them to reduce their risk. We did not provide survivor-centered trauma and formed care, and we had a ton of work to do to make it right, so to speak, with our volunteers. So, that became the beginning of a journey creating a Peace Corps sexual assault risk reduction and response program that continues to this day.

P. Fine: And have you been able to draw on that experience of helping to equip Peace Corps to deal with sexual harassment and abuse in

transferring those lessons or applying those lessons to the broader development community?

C. Hessler-Radelet: You know, it's funny because my background is in public health and women's reproductive health and HIV in particular, but I never thought I would become someone who spends a lot of her life talking about sexual assault. Because remember, prior to that moment, I had never spoken to anyone publicly about my sexual assault.

But yes, it has been profoundly important as something that I can offer up to the community. So, when the Me Too movement came out a couple years ago, and then especially the #AidToo movement and the expose of Oxfam and others ...

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: ... Interaction actually reached out to me because they knew of the work that had been done by Peace Corps. I mean I'm really proud to say that Peace Corps has in some ways created the gold standard for at least the federal government. We made 30 policy changes. We created an office of victim advocacy. We had an anonymous hotline for reporting. We've trained every single staff person. We had specialized training for first responders and survivor-centered trauma and formed care, and we were guided through all that by a sexual assault advisory council that looked at everything we did. And that council was comprised of our nation's leading experts on this topic.

So, we were able to institute best practice because we were the Peace Corps and we could draw on all of our nation's resources. So – so we brought people in from defense department and from the National Institute of Justice and from the universities and ...

P. Fine: Yeah, so you looked at research, you looked at ...

C. Hessler-Radelet: Absolutely. Exactly, and we were guided by these experts in the development of our program. And, since that became so much of what I did, when I came over to the NGO sector, as President and CEO of Project Concern International, PCI, now, and as an active member of Interaction, when the #AidToo movement started and when Interaction was wanting to convene a meeting around this subject, I raised my hand and said, "Well there's a lot of knowledge in this room already," and Oxfam had already – I have

to say in Oxfam's defense, let's say, that they responded immediately and created an independent commission to review abuses. They followed best practice and have been really investing in creating programs, training their people and especially creating a values-led culture that will not allow abuse to thrive.

P. Fine: So, what are the best practices that may still be emerging or have already been adopted by development organizations?

C. Hessler-Radelet: You know, it's such a tough issue, and every organization is different. By definition, it needs to be a personalized response, and it starts first with the organizational culture. I believe firmly that the most important thing any of us can do is create an organizational culture that does not make it acceptable to demean people in any way. And this is where sexual assault, harassment and abuse is so much linked in with addressing issues of gender disparity, power imbalances, prejudicial behavior, a place where humor is used as a weapon to abuse people and where abuse masquerades as a joke. So, that's a culture in many places.

People abuse people, and then you say that offends me, and they say, "You can't take a joke?" And so that kind of culture is the kind of culture where sexual harassment, assault and abuse thrives. And so, the very first thing you can do is address the underlying organizational culture, and that is hard. That's really hard because organizations are made up of people with different perspectives and different experiences. So, having honest and open conversations, I think it starts at the top. So, first among senior leadership around what is the kind of organizational culture that we stand for, what are our values, and how can we connect our values to the work that we do on the ground to upholding the dignity and common humanity of our employees and the people we serve?

How can we ensure that we are equally concerned about how we treat each other as we are about how we treat our communities that we serve?

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: And linking that all together in an approach that really sends a message that it is not acceptable to demean human beings in any way, shape, or form.

That's the most important first step, but it's – you know, you can train people, you can have open conversations. I think actually one of the most powerful things we did at Peace Corps is we had open conversations on really hard topics.

P. Fine: Did you find that those conversations were often contentious in the sense that you had a variety of points of view and disagreement about what constituted harassment, what fell within the normal range of human interaction?

C. Hessler-Radelet: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And you had to create an environment where it was okay to disagree. The other thing we found – and Peace Corps, were now implementing it at PCI – is that we really have to identify how you can support the dignity of an individual. So, it's not only talking about sexual assault and harassment. It's also talking about diversity and inclusion, and you're addressing issues of race, and you're talking about all of the different ways in which people ...

P. Fine: Interact with each other.

C. Hessler-Radelet: ... interact with each other in a way that demeans them. Often unintended.

P. Fine: Right. So, for me, I think of what you're describing as creating a workplace environment or an organizational culture that respects everybody.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Absolutely. I mean the – the byword that we're using is we want to create an organizational culture that honors the dignity and common humanity of all people. And, if you create that kind of workplace environment, then sexual abuse and harassment, power imbalances ...

P. Fine: Right, exclusion. -

C. Hessler-Radelet: ... exclusion of all kind, cannot thrive.

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: You're also creating an environment where it is acceptable and even celebrated for people to stand up and raise their voice and say, "Look, I – I think you didn't mean it this way, but what you said really hurt my feelings, and can we talk about it?" I mean

having an environment where it's safe to raise tough issues is critically important. But in order to do that, you've got to actually be willing to have those conversations.

P. Fine: Right.

C. Hessler-Radelet: The 2020 program was perhaps the best thing that ever happened to Peace Corps because it allowed us to begin to have really hard conversations about who we really are and what kind of organization we wanted to be. And how we wanted to support our volunteers and how we wanted to support our staff. And what we can do to prepare both our staff and our volunteers to keep themselves safe, and when bad things happen, how we can respond to them in effective way.

P. Fine: And – and the challenge that – that I see in organizations like – like mine is how do you distinguish between behavior that is disrespectful and that violates that value – because we absolutely subscribe to that cultural value, respect for each other. And having an environment that enables us, empowers us to do our work. You're going to have times when you disagree with – with a colleague, times when if you're a supervisor, you may reprimand a colleague or, you know, give them negative feedback because their performance is poor. How do we distinguish between what I would characterize as being sort of normal human interaction that entails disagreement or may even at times involve some rude behavior from disrespect? I feel employees struggle with defining those lines.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Yeah, I think, you know, I think you bring up a very important point, but I also think part of it is reframing and learning new skills. Reframing the way you have those difficult conversations and developing new skills so you don't default to the rude behavior. I mean I would actually say the rude behavior is actually never acceptable even if you're under stress. It's – it's not an excuse you can use. Now PCI, we created the dignity initiative, and we did this at Peace Corps, too, but it was a little different. It's our way of rolling together sexual harassment, assault and abuse prevention and response. It's also our diversity inclusion initiative.

It's all about how do you create a motivated workforce. But it's very concrete information, guidelines and sets of skills that people can use. So, we started with emotional intelligence, what does it mean, how do we develop emotional intelligence, how do you give

and receive feedback, what are some words you can use, some tools, some pivots when you are having a conversation that seems like it's about to go off the rails? So, these are all skills that can be learned, and there's some really very specific kinds of skills development that you can do that help people develop a new language that isn't rude, isn't inflammatory or demeaning, even if it's accidental. And, to some extent, we have started to speak differently, to use different words, and it's a lot about how we see ourselves and how we use our power.

You know, the other thing I would like to say around the whole issue of sexual assault, harassment and abuse is that it's not about sex, it's about power, it's about power imbalances and gender disparities, and it lives in that space. So, some people have said to me, "Why is it so bad in the humanitarian space? Aren't you supposed to be helping others?" And the truth of the matter is of course. We are here to help others, and that's why it's so important that we address this issue head on.

P. Fine: It's so jarring.

C. Hessler-Radelet: And it's so jarring when we encounter it. But because of our work, our work takes us to places where there are severe power imbalances and many gender disparities, and all sorts of examples of inequality. And sometimes we're working in conflict situations where rape, sexual violence is accepted. And you can, I think, become inured to it, and so you have to stop and say – you don't want to become that frog in the boiling water. You have to stop and say, "This is absolutely unacceptable. I don't like the way I'm talking to my coworker. I don't like the way my coworker is talking to me. I don't like that joke.

And, as leaders, we have to set the tone, and we're not perfect. Every single one of us makes mistakes every single day, and it's just sort of self-correcting is important.

P. Fine: And self-awareness I guess is the key to that, or at least seeking to be self-aware.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly. And it can be learned. The second part is having the systems, the reporting systems in place. When or if harassment or assault occurs, you need to have the policies, procedures, et cetera, so that someone can report confidentially. They need to be able to have access to services, you need to be able to access legal services

in case there is, you know, a lawsuit. You need to have all of those human resource policies, practices and procedures that will allow a person to make a confidential report and then get the support that they need, mostly from outside. Mostly, it involves referral to a survivor clinic or something.

P. Fine: Uh-huh.

C. Hessler-Radelet: You know, a place where they can get support.

P. Fine: Uh-huh.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Rape crisis center, or you know, a medical clinic.

P. Fine: To a survivor support center.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly. The third part of it, how can we ensure that our staff around the world ... because many of us work in very decentralized environments, many of whom may be working in humanitarian crises where they're making snap decisions, where there's great imbalance, power imbalances between a refugee who is newly arrived in a community with nothing, and our staff person that's handing out things that will literally save their life. So, that's a very disparate power – stark, very stark power imbalance. You know, how do we prepare our staff to ensure that they're living out our values of doing good in the world? How do we make sure our own staff don't become the people who are abusing and harassing. So, that was ...

P. Fine: Taking advantage of that power imbalance.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly.

P. Fine: So, let me ask you about that. Because much of our conversation up to now has focused on sexual harassment and abuse that is internal to the organization. So, among employees. Another dimension concerns when employees of aid organizations sexually harass or abuse the community members in the communities where they are working and where our organizations are supposed to be adding value.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly.

P. Fine: Value and doing good. I think this is a huge example of the dark side of development.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Exactly.

P. Fine: Because forever, there's been a knowledge that sexual harassment and abuse does occur within the work that we do, and it has been seen as either incidental or an aberration, and it's either ignored or it's been dealt with on a case-by-case basis. So, an individual wrongdoer may be fired from their job, or if they're an expat, sent out of the country. But without any broader repercussions or self-reflection – so I think this is an example of the darker side of development.

Looking at that dimension of abuse of participants, what do you see there?

C. Hessler-Radelet: Well, to some extent, I see the same thing. I mean basically, what you have for example is an aid worker who is demanding sex for food or for cash or for a place to stay. So, it's a power imbalance, it's a person exerting power over another in a coercive way. And so, the way you deal with it is not different from what we talked about earlier. You have to make sure that you have policies and procedures that say very clearly that that is unacceptable. It has to be written into your organizational values statement, and it has to be made clear for every kind of worker from the CEO down to the person who is handing out food rations. You have to have training and you have to help people understand what it means to harass or abuse because like you said, in some places, it's so socially or culturally acceptable that people don't even see it as being wrong, or it's explained away as okay during this turbulent time. And so, you have to be very clear that this is what we mean by sexual harassment and abuse. And if you do this, you will be fired. There have to be consequences, and people have to be held accountable, and it has to go into their performance evaluation. If we fire someone for sexual misconduct, our pledge commits us to giving an honest reference.

Because what has happened far too often is that perpetrators are passed on from organization to organization, and they continue to do their misconduct. One of the most effective ways to train is to take actual scenarios of actual situations where harassment or abuse took place in an environment that was close to what they can understand.

And talk about it, because often times what you find is that people don't really recognize it as harassment or abuse until confronted with it, like oh, I didn't realize that me making a suggestive comment to that woman refugee is going to make her feel unsafe and threatened by my behavior. You know, a lot of times it's calling it out, and you have to make sure that within your policies and practices and reporting structures that people are celebrated for speaking out. Because silence is what allows it to happen. Silence is what drives it.

P. Fine: Yeah, silence is its friend.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Silence is its friend.

P. Fine: So, what about the responsibility of organizations that are working in say a conflict setting where they're aware that harassment or abuse has taken place, but it's not their direct employees who are involved in it.

For example, you're working in a refugee camp, you're there really at the invitation of the local government authority, and you're faced with the prospect of, on one hand, you could call it out, but then that will almost certainly lead to your being expelled and not allowed to continue working in that location. What is the responsibility that we have to confront a sexual harassment and abuse in that situation?

C. Hessler-Radelet: Right, what our pledge commits us to is speaking out. Not – we have to at times take a stand for what is right regardless of the fact that it may cost us. And, that's part of what the pledge is all about. In making the CEO pledge, and then 128 organizations taking the pledge, and when we take the pledge, by the way, it's not only for our organization, but for all of those subcontractors and sub-partners that we work with, and we commit to doing that training to ensure that that behavior is not perpetuated on the ground by anyone that we have, um, hired or have a relationship with.

But, the pledge is also about ensuring that we're able to draw on the resources of our donor partners. So, if we are funded, let's say, by USAID or ...

P. Fine: UNHCR.

- C. Hessler-Radelet:* Or UNHCR, they likewise have committed to rooting out sexual harassment, assault and exploitation, and so when we witness that, maybe where we want to report it is to an organization that has more power than we do individually. That's the power of the collective. You know, part of really moving the needle is being willing to stand up when it's hard, being willing to even lose business when we have to in order to stand up for principle. And what it means is that you're standing up for your community. It's not only a stance to – to sort of save your own morality. But, it's also a stance in favor of people who have been abused so much.
- P. Fine:* Carrie, you've mentioned a number of times that it's important to create an environment where victims or survivors feel safe to speak out, and you've talked about we need to call these actions out when they occur. But, that puts a lot of responsibility for dealing with a problem on the victim, on the person who is being harassed.
- C. Hessler-Radelet:* Uh-huh.
- P. Fine:* How do you look at that?
- C. Hessler-Radelet:* What we hope to do is empower the survivor, but I would say what a broader concept is is we're trying to create an organizational culture where others will raise their voice in unison with the – with the survivor.
- P. Fine:* And it doesn't have to rely just on the victim, but ...
- C. Hessler-Radelet:* No.
- P. Fine:* Bystanders ...
- C. Hessler-Radelet:* Exactly. One of the most important parts of the training is the bystander intervention training, so this is part of the training we were talking about. So, bystander intervention means that you (a) agree that when you see something, you're going to say something. You're going to speak up. And the second part of it is is that you also agree that you will be intervened upon, that you are going to accept intervention.
- P. Fine:* Right.
- C. Hessler-Radelet:* Another thing I want to say is that we've been talking a lot about sexual assault and abuse as if it were always women who were

abused, and in fact that is not the case at all. Men are also assaulted and harassed and abused, so I just wanted to make sure we made that point. But basically, the intent of all of this is to make it everybody's problem, and the fact that everybody is part of the solution. It doesn't matter who you are, we all have a responsibility to speak out against abuse and exploitation and harassment.

P. Fine:

So, let me ask about solutions. Because I don't have a sense that there's a consensus on what the right response, organizational response is, and there seems to be a spectrum. With those who say no matter what the severity of the instance, the person should be immediately fired, to those who say well, it needs to be calibrated, the punishment needs to match the severity of the offense, so we need to have some way of making a judgment about how severe the offense was.

Should it be zero tolerance that if – if somebody does anything that is considered as crossing a line that they should be immediately terminated, or is there some calibration?

C. Hessler-Radelet:

You know, there has been conversation about this, and particularly in the human resources discussion because, um, Interaction also brought together the human resource directors for a conversation on this topic. So, it wasn't as much what the CEOs talked about as much as it was around the human resources discussion. The way it's handled, I think, is the way it is normally within the human resources – your own human resources policies and procedures, which is why it's really important to make those very clear.

The other thing I would say is that because so often there is interpretation involved where there's a situation where someone says something and it is perceived in a different way than it was intended, you have to be able to have a dialogue about that. There needs to be space to be able to have a conversation. And sometimes, that can happen between the two people who are involved in it. Sometimes it's so painful that it has to be done with intervention from the human resources team.

P. Fine:

Or it just has to be facilitated.

C. Hessler-Radelet:

In some ways, it's equipping our human resources teams to be able to have those tough conversations that get to what was said and then developing a plan to help improve that, you know, ameliorate that issue if it's possible or fire them if they have to. Depending on

the seriousness of it. I – I mean I do think that it has to be calibrated because you – you need to be fair to all people, you need to hear both sides. But, you have to have some very clear policies and procedures that govern it, because otherwise you risk having allegations of unfairness.

I think the hardest thing is when people don't realize they are being abusive, just because they come from a culture where something may be acceptable. But, what is being experienced by the other is very painful and demeaning. What the eye does not see, the heart cannot feel. So, if you don't – if you're not exposed to concepts of dignity and humanity and what constitutes sexual assault or harassment, it's very hard for you then to – to behave in a way that will always uphold peoples' dignity, if that makes sense.

P. Fine: It does, yeah, and I love that, um, that saying.

[Music]

P. Fine: Carrie, I've learned a ton just listening to you share your perspective on this topic. And, I want to invite listeners if you've got comments or questions that you want to share with us, please send them in, wherever you get your podcast.

Now Carrie, this year, I've been asking all of the guests of *A Deeper Look* podcast a couple of questions, and I'd like to pose the same two questions to you. The first one is, "What is something almost no one agrees with you on?"

C. Hessler-Radelet: Well, in my household, I really love boxed Kraft macaroni and cheese, and I love to douse it in ketchup, and everyone else in my family thinks this is really disgusting, and the truth of the matter is it's completely devoid of any nutritional value. But I find it to be the ultimate comfort food.

P. Fine: Oh right. So, comfort food is what almost no one agrees with you on, and I would have to say that I don't agree with you on ketchup-doused macaroni and cheese.

C. Hessler-Radelet: *[Laughs]*

P. Fine: So, I – I understand that one.

The second question that I've been asking my guests is, "what's one lesson you learned during your career in international development that you'd like to share with our listeners?"

C. Hessler-Radelet: I think one of the most important things I've learned over my career is the importance of listening because that is how we learn to do our job better, and that is how we are able to make profound transformative change within our own selves. So, the importance of listening is really one of the lessons that I'm continually working on because I like to talk, and you can't listen if you're talking.

The second thing I really want to say here today is I want to acknowledge that in the listening audience today, there are most likely women and men who have suffered profound injury as a result of sexual violence. And many of them may have spoken out, and others like me may keep it buried deep inside themselves because it's really hard. It's profoundly difficult to come forward with your painful stories of what has happened to you, and it takes an extraordinary level of trust and vulnerability to be able to speak your truth.

But, I know that for me, my healing really began when I was able to tell my story. And so, what I wanted to say to your listeners at the end of this podcast is that it is your decision to disclose or not disclose. The decision to seek help is your decision alone, along with the support of family and friends, if you choose. But I know that my healing began when I had the courage to examine what happened to me, and I want people to know that they are in control of their story and their narrative. I just think it's important to say that, because there is so much that has not been said. And one of the most important consequences of Me Too is for people who have never had the voice to express the painful truth that they've been living with for many years suddenly are freed up to do that.

And so, I just want to say that if you feel that you are ready and it is your decision alone, I have found that there is healing in truth telling.

P. Fine: Thank you, Carrie. that is a very powerful way to end this episode. You said that the most important lesson you've learned is listening, and I have learned a tremendous amount listening to you today. I'm sure our listeners have learned and benefitted from you sharing your own experience and then the perspective that you bring to

how we as development organizations, we as people working in development try to apply those lessons and try to apply those experiences to – to our work so that it is respectful, so that we do affirm the dignity of all people, so that we do embrace practices that create an environment where respect thrives. Thank you.

C. Hessler-Radelet: Oh, what a privilege it has been.

[Music]