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**Karina** Who are spaces for, whom do they exclude, and how are those prohibitions maintained in practice? That can be asked anywhere, at any time, because it's about the local experience. We can't just keep writing people into stories like, oh, they were seniors or they were disabled, and just say, hey, well, but those lives just weren't our priorities.

**Áine** Welcome to Enabling Commons, a place for conversations with activists, experts and scholars at the intersections of disability and climate change. The podcast is produced by the Disability Inclusive Climate Action Research Program based at McGill University. I'm your host, Áine Kelly-Costello. Today, I talk to Karina Cardona, a disabled Canada-based collaborator at the nexus of Disability, Environmental and Climate justice. We talk about disabled perspectives on urban mobility and low-emissions transitions, as well as the short film gripping climate adaptation, which Karina co-directed. We get into the policy detail and talk about the systems which prop up ableism. Let's dive in.

**Áine** I'm talking to Karina Cardona for Enabling Commons. Welcome, Karina. I'm so happy to have you on the show. Could you introduce yourself for us?

**Karina** My name is Karina Cardona, and I work for the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. My role with them is as Donor Relations Manager at this time, but I also collaborate with the Prairie Climate Center on Disability Justice and Climate Change, for work.

**Áine** Fantastic. What, kind of, spurred your passion into climate and environmental justice and health equity in these areas you work in now?

**Karina** I would say I was in my mid-teens when I became well, I was since I was a kid. I mean, we were growing up with a hole in the ozone and like, needing to address litter in the streets. So I was part of that nineties, kids-trying-to-solve-problems-at-a-very-local-level, but looking at these big issues. So, I was always attuned to environmental issues. Going back to El Salvador where I'm from, you can see the environmental impacts a lot more, especially around drying up of rivers and a lot less environmental literacy, and so a lot more issues around landslides where there isn't proper drainage, because plastic has covered culverts and all kinds of climate-related events. And so, by the time I got to be a teen and I was starting to connect like food systems to justice, and I became a vegetarian for a number of years, and read Noam Chomsky’s *Manufacturing Consent* and just became more aware of systemic issues related to industry and capitalism and the way that we live our lives. And for me, what mattered so much is that I just loved being outdoors. I loved being amongst trees, by water, in water, you know, with animals. And so I just had such a love for our environment that I wanted to preserve as much of it as I could. So, as much as I loved arts and I really wanted to pursue an arts career, in my undergrad I ended up doing environmental studies and geography, so issues with sustainability and mostly urban sustainability. And so that was my chance to explore that more deeply, and to learn about all these different intersections, as the environment is understood and as we're dealing with it.

**Áine** Yeah, and thank you for bringing up as well that you're originally from El Salvador and then moving to Canada as a kid, right? That would have been part of like, one transition, and I guess, becoming disabled would have been another one. Is there anything you're comfortable to share about that time in your life?

**Karina** Oh, for sure. So coming here as a kid, we were refugees from a civil war, and we ended up landing in Manitoba because we were told we were going to Montreal, or to Quebec, where the main language really was French. And my dad knew French. But when we arrived in Canada, they said, “You're going to Manitoba”. So we settled here, and I'm really grateful for it. But, you know, having parents that had to go back to school, have to take on different work, it really shaped the way that our family life was, and changed, and in El Salvador, we owned a home, and here, we were renting, and at times we were living in Manitoba housing, which is publicly-subsidized housing. And so, when I had my spinal cord injury, we were living in a two-story house that had concrete stairs, no railing into it, a whole bunch of stairs inside. So, I wasn't going to be able to leave the hospital until we had accessible accommodations for me. And so when I had my spinal cord injury, I couldn't move anything below my neck. But after a few months in hospital, I was able to leave using a wheelchair and needing to wear an ankle-foot orthotic, and so long as I could climb stairs, they were okay with me going home.

And so, I became aware further of, you know, the need to be aware of your environment and how it is that like, my opportunities were mediated by these considerations around affordability, my parents ability to communicate and advocate for me. For example, we tried to get handrails outside of my place so that I could get in safely, and that was rejected—so that wasn't allowed to happen. But they did allow us to put in handrails in the bathroom for safety. So, you know, it's just these kinds of funny ways that policy is administered. I just became aware that what I needed wasn't always going to be met. In particular, getting to my school after my injury, they weren't able to make a lot of the changes that were needed for me to be there, safely and comfortably, as well—and that speaks to that. You know, a lot of public schools weren't built to be accessible, but that's partly how I learned that disabled people are treated differently.

**Áine** Yeah, for sure. And I think your journey through that really shows that mix of navigating different environments while, you know, the needs of your body had fundamentally changed. Right? And the systemic prejudices that come along with inaccessibility and, like, the actual effect that that has on you and your family, and ability to just live your life. I think this ties nicely into the fact that you've done research, I think, around the experiences of disabled people within urban mobility settings. And of course, this is an area which is changing really significantly as a result of low-carbon, low emissions moves, which are important around climate mitigation. But if that kind of stuff is not done in collaboration with the disability community, obviously, it can cause a lot of harm. So I wondered if you wanted to talk a little bit about your research?

**Karina** Sure. So originally, I started doing work with Dr. Gina Sylvester at the Institute of Urban Studies, and her focus was, I mean, her funding was through the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Rural Secretariat and the Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat. She worked with a coalition of 13 organizations that address seniors' transportation needs. And so, those projects were both for urban and for rural transportation for Manitoba—when we say “rural”, we also mean remote. And that means that, like, it might take several different forms of transport to get somebody to a medical appointment in Winnipeg that has the main hospitals where they would need care. It might take days of transport in some cases. So the rural roundtables—those were different. We did eight community consultations on that to understand how seniors can receive care in these urban settings, but that's a different aspect of work. And then the work that I love doing around urban mobility was building a senior-friendly transportation strategy with the city of Winnipeg, and that was helping the different departments communicate with one another about the lived experiences of people that use public transportation, or that need it and can't use it, as it was set up. And so that was around 2008 we were doing that work.

And so there, we were tracing people's journeys to places like how do they access transportation? What were their needs along the way? Could they make the distance? Was there anywhere for them to rest? Was the transportation appropriate? Were drivers taking off too quickly? Were people giving up their seats? Was there shelter at the stops? And so, we learned all kinds of ways that people were making do, and maybe unsafe ways, like when there was no shelter, for example, wearing kind of bizarre rain protection or snow protection for themselves. Walkers are helpful as a place to sit where there aren't benches. You know, training for bus drivers—it makes a difference to be aware of the needs of seniors. And so, and then even just the timing of lights, like are people given enough time to get across the street safely? You know, being able to overlay that with where a lot of accidents were happening. And so, that was one aspect of the work. And then into my graduate work, it was looking at that more critically; so it was looking at urban mobility in the neoliberal city. And that was more of lived experiences for people with a spinal cord injury and how it is that we’re inscribed onto the city as “disabled”?

And so, our journeys are mediated through however policy describes our needs, versus maybe just how we perceive them or feel them ourselves. So, those have taken a few different shapes, but, I mean, my own experiences with that has been a little different. When you talk about climate change, you know, working for environmental organizations, for example, here we have the Manitoba Eco network and the car co-op was getting going through this group of people and, you know, asking them about an accessible vehicle. This is in, let's say, around 2010. They had less than ten cars when they started. They said, “Hey, you know, it's not affordable”. But now we have over 80 cars, and there’s still not a modified vehicle for people with disabilities to use. Protected bike lanes—what have been put in? It's supposed to be for active transportation—e-scooters, like, we'll use them. Sometimes people on a moped will use them. Sometimes people that do use mobility scooters would use them. And the reason that those are put into place as part of climate adaptation is to encourage more active transportation.

And then research shows that if you have a barrier there, if you have a protected bike lane, if you put it in essentially a curb of a sort, then you can reduce fatalities or injuries just to cyclists, like significantly—over 60%, something like that. But, there's these alternatives you can use that you can see in other cities where there's like lumps, like kind of half circles with little spaces between them. So, you know, you could get in and out without having to create a whole barrier. Like let's say you're using wheels and you want to get across or through—like the ramp for transit plus doesn't reach across the whole lane. Transit plus, it's a public system, so you pay the same fare as you would as anybody using another form of public transport, but it's door-to-door service. So now, the city has all these barricades, essentially, around the place where people with disabilities that use transit plus could previously access these spaces, and now, can't access them in the same way.

**Áine** Basically, there's no flat crossings on the street, so the curb goes all the way across the crossing spot, so that now, for people with wheeled transport—including wheelchairs—it's difficult or inaccessible to cross the street. Is that right?

**Karina** Yeah. And they're not necessarily consistent in the way that they're designed; it's more like by the by the street and the flow you need. So it's not that you can predictably know and say, “This is what I'll encounter when I get to this place that has those lanes” because it's actually differs. And so in some places, these lanes have for the rapid transit along like what are considered highways within the city. So they're rapid transit lanes that the speed limit is higher—express busses will use them. They take the active transportation, I think “routes” is what they call them. And they actually divert those around like around different kinds of obstacles in the street, and then they throw them onto the sidewalk for a portion. So, all of a sudden, there's bikes just zipping by on a sidewalk where people weren't expecting those before, and then dropping you back off on the street again. So, there's this kind of unpredictable nature to it, too. It's not just that there's only curbs everywhere now. It's also that there's just like, unexpected rapid vehicle movement on sidewalks where people previously didn't expect that to happen. So it's just created a different kind of mobility in the city that people need to get used to—but not everybody can predict where to encounter what. So I think that makes it a little bit hard to do the planning we need to do sometimes, as as people with disabilities, when we make journeys away from home.

**Áine** Totally, Yeah. As a blind person, I know that for our community as well, predictability is everything. And so yeah, for so, so many different disabled, disabled people—but even, to be honest, just any users of those active transport lanes—it would be quite disruptive and unsafe to have that inconsistency there. And, you know, when we talk about climate chaos, usually it's easy to think of extreme weather and the impacts of global warming essentially, but also there's almost like a form of climate chaos, right? Coming out of some of these mitigation measures when there's actually not that consultation and close involvement of disabled people and people with all kinds of different transport needs, throughout all of the planning and implementation of these changes.

**Karina** That's right—when we talk about the lack of consultation or meaningful consultation for persons with disability, it speaking to those kinds of considerations: when something's put in, but we're not really asked properly how we'll use that. And then the departments that are supposed to be looking after our needs aren't necessarily either consulted in the same way or listened to, or however that works behind the scenes. I mean, if there was some sort public awareness campaign, some sort of signage or commercials or something that would let people know what to expect, what's changed, what are the new rules of engagement, what vehicles are allowed or what devices are allowed in these lanes—it is just kind of it is kind of a free for all right now. And so, it creates a next level of conflict around the use of public space, because really, this is for all of us to use. But it's barriered for some people, and not for others. And so we have to think, “Are we further now privileging some people over others’ needs, yet again”? I'm a cyclist, as well as somebody who has a hard time walking. And so, I like the benefit of being able to use wheels in spaces that I might not otherwise have been able to, but I also don't want my opportunities and safe cycling to be prohibiting other people in my community from living their lives. And so, I think it's just remembering that no one person's experience with disability will cover all the bases; there's so much diversity there, and there's so many different kinds of helpful tips that would come along the way if we just asked enough people. So, I'm just working to encourage that, more and more.

**Áine** That's so important. I think sometimes underneath the well-meant and well-directed sentiment around, accessibility for disabled people, making things better for everyone, can be quite generalized and a little oversimplified, right? When actually, it's so, so important to be considering how do a range of different access and safety needs interact with each other and figuring those puzzles out, collectively. Do you have any thoughts on the communicative aspects around? Because, of course, there's physical accessibility and mobility, and those aspects, but then there's a lot of stuff around how do we get information where it needs to go (in accessible formats) and also, the sort of public messaging side of making these disability and climate links.

**Karina** Yes. So, I mean, one of the key forms of engagement that I'm noticing is that community organizing is often happening through social media, and mostly because I think that it's given us more tools for communication around these issues. So, for example, the Uprising Collective is doing, on June 1st, a Zoom call that is open to anyone with disabilities that wants to talk about their own disability and disaster risk and planning. And so seeing that they can organize this through an online forum—and it's getting thousands of shares—to me is super inspiring and awesome, because it's one of those tools we can use. But it's not something that I'm seeing, like people responsible for addressing climate change or like governments necessarily using and leaning into in the same way. I'm not seeing that kind of invitation to participate in consultations in the same way. And so, it's really key to draw on; a lot of people with disabilities live in social isolation as well. We need to use the networks and the knowledge that we have, through the organizations that support us, whether it's non-profits, or like someone related to our disability—for me, it would be Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba—to communicate with us around what does climate change mean for me and the type of disability that I have. What risks do I run? What do I need to be aware of? How do I plan for that? And, right now, the disaster planning is happening here in Manitoba through the Independent Living Resource Center. There's a committee established, but it's really focused on the individual and having a grab-and-go bag, having all your medications ready, having a list of all your supports. But some of these emergencies happen in such a short time that it's really hard to assume people can do that. So, we also have an emergency notification system through the through the province that will buzz every smart phone with a horrible noise. And, you know, if you have a reader, it will read out to you. But I just think it's really important for climate adaptation and planning, for the engagement tools to be accessible. On social media, for example, we have images, but they don't have descriptions; people can't read them if they can't see. So we have to think about these kinds of adaptations in our communication. And then for the people that are holders of information, and for example, lists of people knowing where like, here with public housing, if you're disabled and you don't have air conditioning in your unit, we should probably be able to reach you somehow. You know, like there's these kinds of entry ways for communicating with the populations that need to hear from us, and that need to be connected. And I think we just have to have a better communications strategy for addressing the needs of people with disabilities in climate emergencies, as well as just in climate adaptation overall. And that's an area of work that I have yet to really see develop, but I think would be one of the most beneficial things that we could really invest in.

**Áine** Yeah. Thank you for sharing all that. I totally agree; I think there's a lot that different countries could learn from each other in the nascent stages of doing these things as well. Because I see little pockets of things happening here and there, but learning and collaborating would be key there. I wanted to move on to a short film that you co-directed called *Cripping Climate Adaptation: Disability Justice and Climate Change*. So, in the film, we hear from a range of people—I think most of them are disabled people—about the imperative to resist the systemic ableism that we so often see in climate policies and responses. I'll put links in the show notes to the film which has captions, and there are versions with and without audio description. Can you tell us how this project came about?

**Karina** Yes. So, I was invited by someone named Laura Cameron, who is working for the Prairie Climate Center as a research associate, to co-direct or to be part of their development of a short film on disability, justice and climate change. Because of my work and my background, they were interested in getting my perspective. They had already done a couple of interviews, but thought they needed disability leadership on this. And so, I had met Laura just a month before, through a student that I had previously mentored on an art mural at their school. And the meeting that we had was around a project—a short film they were doing on hope and eco-anxiety, and an art installation that they were creating on the Frozen River. So our introduction to that was already around climate change. So when we started talking about disability and climate change, quickly realizing how little these threads had been pulled together. For me, it was important to kind of zoom out a little bit and tell a broader story around how it is that disabled people have been excluded from participation in cities, and so that we could kind of understand a little bit better about why there's this need to create more accessibility within cities, as well as in climate adaptation, because there's kind of a continuum; there's these major events that happen that we have to rise to the occasion to address. But most of life happens in everyday life—and even during these events, if we don't have accessible cities, we can't really attend to people's needs. So, when we were starting this project, it was supposed to be a two-minute short film like most of the films are, on the *Climate Atlas*. So the *Climate Atlas* is a project for ClimateWest, and it's a consortium that is an International Institute for Sustainable Development is included in there. They operate around the Sustainable Development Goals. And so the Climate Atlas tells stories from across Canada of climate adaptation and climate challenges. And so they wanted to put this film on there. And we quickly realized with the interviews that there was just going to be too much to get into two minutes. And so eventually, we were we got to 30 minutes, and then we got it back down to 13. And that's with the amazing help of another co-director, Erika MacPherson, who worked with one of the film participants, Kevin, on another project, *The Freedom Tour,* and that's a full length that they made about deinstitutionalization in Canada. And so Kevin Johnson was the president of People First Manitoba, and they collaborated on that. And so, Erika brought not only the wealth of knowledge as a filmmaker, but also as somebody who's worked with the disability community, and to be able to create content that is accessible. It was started in early 2021, and, at that point we weren't allowed in anybody's homes, here in Winnipeg. And so, we worked on an inclusive filmmaking approach, which involved getting equipment to people if they needed it, hopefully trying to get them to use what we had on hand. If they needed help setting up, that was usually done with the help of a care provider. And, we weren't able to use all the interviews because the quality wasn't quite there. As well, some of the people that we interviewed represented communities—more diverse communities that we wanted involved—but they were speaking more to solutions. And so, when we finally got through the interviews, we thought, “Let's start with identifying the problem. Let's use the case study of mobility as it relates to fossil fuels and cities because of just how important that is in addressing climate adaptation”, so that the next step of it could be more around the intersections and equity and bring in more voices around solutions. So, this was the first our first take at creating something that was more substantive than we were finding anywhere else.

**Áine** Yeah. Very cool. And the Prairie Climate Center—what kind of group is that? Because I think one of the interesting aspects, right, is that this was a collaboration between lia climate organization and disabled people—and I think that's something we need more of.

**Karina** Yeah. So it's based out of the University of Winnipeg, which is my alma mater, and their current director is Danny Blair, who was also a professor of mine many years ago, and he's a climatologist—a renowned climate scientist. There is several research associates at the Climate Center, and they take on a range of topics. And so, one of the areas that they work on is around health and climate change—health and climate adaptation. And so, given the area of work that I do with CAPE (CAPE is the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, and that's my workplace) they've also engaged CAPE on making another video on health and climate change. But they work with indigenous communities, they work with rural communities, they work with northern communities in the Arctic, and they really try to bring together these stories. So, even though we're based in the Prairies and the funding is through Climate West, we really do work to learn more about climate impacts across Canada. Yeah. So there's a number of different kinds of personalities and organizations involved at different scales between the Climate Center, Climate Atlas and ClimateWest.

**Áine** It's really good to see those organizations coming together and the funding and the disabled leadership and all those aspects. I'm curious what you've learned from the project? You started touching on this—around some of the challenges with having more underrepresented communities be part of it, and wanting to separate out solutions. I wondered if you wanted to talk to either of those anymore or other things you've kind of learned?

**Karina** Oh, for sure. I mean, I got to work in a very receptive approach and environment. It was very iterative. We were not sure what we were going to produce as we went along, but we knew that there was a story that was emerging that we wanted to share. So it became a collective story where no one person had the answer, but each of us together could tell a story that that broadened our horizons and perspective to really zoom out at what are the issues—what does disability justice have to do with climate adaptation and climate change? And so, as much as the case study that we put together might not be something that applies all over the world—you know, different circumstances—one of my key questions that I ask, the areas of work that I do are around geographies of exclusion. And so the researcher that started this is David Sibley. And the question that he asks is: “Who are spaces for, whom do they exclude, and how are those prohibitions maintained in practice?” And so, that can be asked anywhere, at any time, because it's about the local experience, and that gives us insight into what is happening locally. So, all of the people that are in the film are disabled, but most of the disabilities are mobility-related. So, for a future project, we would want to have a broader range of disabilities represented, a broader range of genders and ages, and not necessarily people that are all working on policy or academia—which not everybody in the film is, but a lot of them are. So, it would be good to have kind of more lived experience, day-to-day variety. You know, that really brings together the intersections because, you know, poverty has a different role to play in it. For example, in Winnipeg, we have like a very big crisis around people that are unhoused, and especially in winter and during heatwaves, where it's extreme to have people not have proper shelter. And we have a huge history of colonialism and residential schools here. So, you'll find a lot of people that are unhoused are dealing also with trauma and addiction. And so you find higher rates of disability amongst people who are unhoused. There's a higher propensity to become sick as a result of this. And so, being able to kind of untangle some of those risks and look at looking at the social determinants of health, but also looking the political and historical landscape. When we asked around the geographies of exclusion, then we can kind of create that better picture. And I think that that's a better kind of tool and framework to use than just saying, “Here, let's talk about mobility and fossil fuels.” But, I do think that my lesson is really that that question holds true, that kind of inquiry holds true, despite what case study we focus on and what groups we work with. So, I'm working now to develop a conversation guide for the film, to be able to create more blog posts around it, to introduce the participants and just to be able to get the film to more people. We've been meeting with different policymakers that have become aware of the film, and two weeks ago, I presented at the Crime at West Forum here in Winnipeg that I think 100 people attended in person and another 60 online. And so, I got to do a presentation around the film itself, that kind of gave it that bigger framing and know people that were present included people from our federal national adaptation strategy, people working at Environment Canada, people from the city that work on the accessibility plans. And so, now I have some follow up set up with these folks. And so, it's really great to kind of be letting people into the conversation so that their questions help to inform things like the conversation guide, and that also help to inform the the next iteration of the project so that we're responding to people's questions, that we're bringing a stronger focus on equity, and that hopefully it can be a more flexible tool—like an actual tool for solution-building, than what it is at the at the moment; just as a film on YouTube.

**Áine** Yeah, I love that. The focus on the more equity-based intersectional aspects of what are the systemic exclusions disabled people were already facing in terms of houslessness and poverty, and difficulties accessing health care and transport and all the rest. Combining with climate justice is so important and is harder to reach—like harder to, I think, articulate as well. So yeah, it's great to hear that that will be a phase moving forward and that you will also be trying to pick up on like, what are the ideas that disabled people had been sharing around solutions-focused and also, bringing all of this stuff out of the disability silos that it's easy to get stuck in. You know, having those other partners on the film and then being able to do the presentations to a wider audience. I also just wanted to pick up on a term that you used in the film and I think elsewhere in your work around “fossil-fueled ableism”. I really love this. I wonder, can you explain what it means to you?

**Karina** Yeah. So that's a term that I would give credit to Dr. Jeff Masuda at the Center for Environmental Health Equity. He was my graduate thesis advisor and, I mean, he was very passionate about this work. Really, when we started doing it, it was looking more at the experiences of youth in the city. But, we moved away from just this one small group and really, we're looking at the ableist city and he's talking around. In our discussions, he was like, “Well, what's the role of fossil fuels in there? Are you finding this in your interviews at all? Is this a fossil-fueled ableism?” So really, where we traced that back to—and we describe this in the film—is that there’s a real departure in the expectations of what people's bodies are for, when the Industrial Revolution came around. And so moving from, let's say, more agrarian or primary industries where people were living a different kind of life, where life was guided now by machines and enabled by fossil fuels, where really it's like our bodies started becoming used as labor for profit, and we had to be able to engage and interact with the machines and the technology that was being developed in order to have a livelihood. And so, if you couldn't work in that way, now you were excluded from society in a different way than you had been in the past. And here in Canada, things that arose were institutions to house disabled people and keep people away from others because we were just assumed to not be able to participate—we were deemed “incurable”. And then, you know, in the States, they set up the ugly laws in Chicago in the late 1880s. So in disability literature, you call it the “purification of space”; where there's ideas—mostly eugenicist kinds of ideas—that there's certain bodies that are better than others. And this started coming about really, because all of a sudden we had this idea that our bodies weren't enough. Like before we needed wheels and horses, and that was as good as it got. Now, suddenly, we had devices and machines that did even more than any one person or horse could do, right. It amped up the ante about how little our bodies could actually accomplish. So, there's was just a different focus on what was expected of bodies and on the way that disabled people were thought of as framed. And it became more negative than it had been in the past. Like there's just different negative kinds of connotations, because along with that comes like a moralization of health; this idea that if you aren't taking care of yourself in a certain way, then you're not doing a good enough job—you're an irresponsible citizen. And so there's lots of ways that disability got framed in negative terms and disabled people became excluded. And we can trace a lot of that back to that change in the Industrial Revolution. One of the other terms we talk about in the film—and I love this one a lot around disability studies and geographies of disability—is the “design apartheid”. And that's because as manufacturing advanced, and all of a sudden we could create standardized “everything”—standardized doorways, standardized chair widths and heights, standardized clothing, you know, when things were no longer custom and they were coming off of these mass production belts, these had to be built around ideas of how people's bodies are. And for the most part, this was designed for like a 5”9, slender, male. Most of this wasn't designed for the variety of bodies we see, and not even for women in traditional roles; to be able to operate within the home or the city or whatever that would be most advantageous to their own families. And so this is where the city is very gendered, it's not neutral, you know, so design really shaped also how we could and couldn't participate in cities. If we had thought “Maybe we want everybody to be a part of it”, we would have built things differently. But we didn't; we built it for a specific type of person. And so, the design apartheid kind of pairs well with understanding how the environment was shaped. And then fossil-fueled ableism talks that imperative of like, what fossil fuels did to shape the way that we think of disability and disabled people.

**Áine** I think one of the things I'm reflecting on is how fossil-fueled ableism has been so deeply embedded, as well as this kind of apartheid or segregation in terms of design, that even as we are moving towards low-carbon measures and whatnot, as we were talking about before, there's still so much potential for ableism within the new structures, right. And this really speaks to the need for transitions to be just and equitable, rather than an assumption that it's kind of like, “Okay, well, we're moving off of fossil fuels now, so we'll be good”, or that that will be the end of the problems that fossil fuels created. But like, no, right—like they're so much more embedded.

**Karina** Yeah, yeah, exactly. They're kind of in the public imagination or the psyche of what we think to be norms. And, so, we're very stuck on these norms and we have a very hard time letting go of those assumptions. I guess our systems are wired in a way that we navigate what we know, and it's sometimes hard to think of what the alternative could even be. Like, for now, with people with like the proliferation of mobile phones, for example, and smartphones, and seeing new generations that have never grown up with those, but being part of the generation where that was introduced, it's amazing to see how it's almost impossible for this group of folks to imagine a life before smartphones. But I can totally remember it and it was fine, you know? And so, once that kind of something is set in motion, it's really hard to rein it in. So, like you said, even as we transition to different forms of energy, a lot of that will still be ingrained. Like, even if we're using electric cars, that doesn't really change our perception that everyone should have their own car that they can drive around. Switching people away from that idea of individualism is still a bigger task than just a new source of fuel.

**Áine** Or it doesn’t automatically mean that the charging stations will be accessible, or that sound standards have been introduced in some countries, but not here in New Zealand or… [Karina: ooh…] Yeah.

**Karina** See, and that's the importance about talking with each other, communicating because it is very important to understand—and this is where policy is such a big deal—it’s interesting to see the different kind of local contexts, and how those are being shaped by different considerations. And to me, that creates a very rich landscape to inform something that might not be working somewhere else, but it might be a heed, like a caution for us somewhere else, right? Like, we might be able to take those lessons and prevent something, as well as lessons for addressing something else. So, I think this is like a very rich conversation to be having. And it's really important timing, with kind of the push to net zero, and the kind of investments that are happening, and the the changes that are being made right now.

**Áine** Totally. And just to finish off, is there aspects of thinking about these transitions or thinking about the work you've done that sort of, keep you going, that give you hope, that make you able to envision what a more just and equitable future could look like from a climate perspective and the disability perspective?

**Karina** Yeah, there's a lot: I mean, for me, I try not to think of anything as all at once, all has to be different. Like, it's really nice to do that for visioning, just imagining what that future could look like. That's a really great activity, I think, as a hopeful aspect, but in pragmatic terms, I really like to break things down into—like any habit change you would do, you would break it into very small pieces and see what you can take on. As much as we need radical change with the kinds of changes we need; to infrastructure, to social attitudes, to policy—there's no way to do it, but incrementally. And what I love about that, is that just like the film where it's a whole bunch of small contributions make the whole, I think that this is where different people in different roles with responsibilities attached to climate adaptation—each one of us has a role to play. And because I've worked in so many different aspects of this, I can see people in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) helping us to overlay the kinds of data that we need to understand risk for people during evacuations. I can see governments that we right now, don't love having our disability monitored, and yet, they have all this biodata that might actually be helpful for us in planning on adaptation. You know, how can we use what we have to the best of our abilities to start working on identifying those priorities and looking for what more information do we need. Working for CAPE, I hear stories of physicians on the frontlines of these wildfires, smoke inhalation, the heat domes, and they are the people that are receiving people in distress during these scenarios. And so being able to collect more of those stories—to develop indicators and understand who's most at risk, when, you know, here in British Columbia, for example, something like 80% of the people who died in the heat dome event in British Columbia were seniors and most of them were found to not have had proper ventilation or access to open windows. We're talking hundreds, like almost 500 people. So, I'm thinking again of policy and COVID, and what happened with care homes and care settings. Institutions, yet again, when you're institutionalized, you're disempowered. And so families actually had to advocate, “Can we please get these windows open? Can we please have proper cooling for these folks?” And so it's not just being a senior, it's not just being disabled; their life or death is being mediated through helpers, through policy and through through the actual systems that they have within the building, like for cooling, for example. And so, I just don't want to see any more of these events and these deaths and these tolls taken without us taking lessons from them and applying them in very clear and real ways. And to me that gives me hope, because as much as these people have, we've lost something immense. We can't just keep writing people into stories like, “Oh, they were seniors” or “They were disabled” and just say, “Hey, well, those lives just weren't our priority”. That, to me, is something we have to be really proactive around as people with disabilities, to be very aware of how media is portraying disabled suffering and the suffering of seniors during these events. Whenever there's an opportunity to learn, that gives me hope. And I do think we're learning, and I don't think that there is—in the general public or with our leadership—intense maliciousness to keep fossil fuels from dominating our lives and to keep us from net zero. I don't think that's the case. But I do think we have systems that are really hard to dismantle—that we have to adapt, and that's where I find myself a little more stressed. But I really focus on what I can do and on building community so I don't feel overwhelmed as well.

**Áine** Karina, thank you so much for your time and insights. I really appreciate it.

**Karina** Thank you so much.

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