

Editorial

Editorial: Lessons Not Lost

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Recovery from the pandemic has highlighted many long existing inequities in access and quality of health care. Among familiar lines of wealth and class, much of the world is emerging from what we all hope to be the last days of a pandemic few will be sad to leave. Access to vaccinations and necessary care has spread unevenly across our global communities. At the same time, for many nations in recovery, in spite of considerable challenges, many citizens have found some benefits in unexpected types of access this time has afforded: the near universality of remote work, access to art and cultural events made widely available with accessibility measures and reasonable or free cost. There are some lessons many of us hope will not be lost in the after days.

Among these lessons has been greater questioning. As necessities of these days (that we still haven't agreed on a name for) have invited us to reimagine what work means, what education means, what art performance means, intensified calls for justice have insisted we also re-examine many of our other institutions. What should a just police force look like? This has been a central question that has only intensified during this period.

At the same time, there have been things neglected in our questions. In the United States, among calls for reform, little attention is brought to the lack of attention (and money) given to training those we entrust to serve. According to the Institute for Criminal Justice Training Reform, the average police officer in the United States gets less training than most plumbers, with most states allowing officers to serve before they have basic training.

Among the areas in which officers could receive better training is how to respond appropriately to the needs of people with disabilities. (Some organizations are making concerted efforts to make up for this gap by providing their own training to officers and communities, as the Arc does.) This type of training is especially important because of the neglected intersection of race and disability. What little data we have available suggests that the bulk of people killed in encounters with police in the United States are people with disabilities, perhaps as much as 70%; we do not know for certain. There has never been one single reliable database that keeps track. As President of the Board of the United States International Council on Disabilities Pat Morrissey's blog post in this issue's Notes from the Field section reminds us, data matters and can be a necessary part of the actions we take to ensure that the needs of all people with disabilities are met. And as Liz Weintraub, Senior Advocacy Specialist, AUCD Public Policy Team, regularly reminds us, "all means all."

With this in mind, we hope that among the lessons not lost in this extraordinary time will be the importance of greater data on the impact of police violence on the lives of people with disabilities, and most importantly, the right action to address it. Among these actions, we feel is the clear need for more wide-spread training (like the Arc provides) in identifying,

interacting with, and accommodating people with disabilities. This is of course not a uniquely North American concern. Our Global Perspectives editors and featured article remind us of the importance of cross-border conversations and the ways solidarity can amplify all our voices. These are among lessons we feel worth keeping as we reimagine our best possible futures together.



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