



# Accessibility and Inclusion in Tourism

#GSTC2024SWEDEN



*Andorra - DEC 2009*

# Roni Weiss

Executive Director  
Travel Unity

- New Yorker: Based in Westchester County, NY (north of NYC)
- Father: Four children, ages 11 and under
- Neurodiverse: Diagnosed with ADD as a child
  - Received Associate's w/ Honors at 12, graduated from HS at 15, University of Washington - Seattle at 18 (double degrees in English Lit and Drama)
- Traveler: Have visited 70+ countries, including 6 of 7 continents and every country in Europe



- Founded in 2016
- U.S.-based NGO focused on making the world of travel welcoming to people of all backgrounds and identities.
  - Our Alliance is a global network, with DEI resources for members
- 3 levels of individual DEI certification, 4 levels of organizational DEI certification



# Sustainability



*(image from B Impact Assessment)*



# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The goal of DEI is belonging.

By helping them feel like they belong, we are able to build a foundation for people to become their best selves.

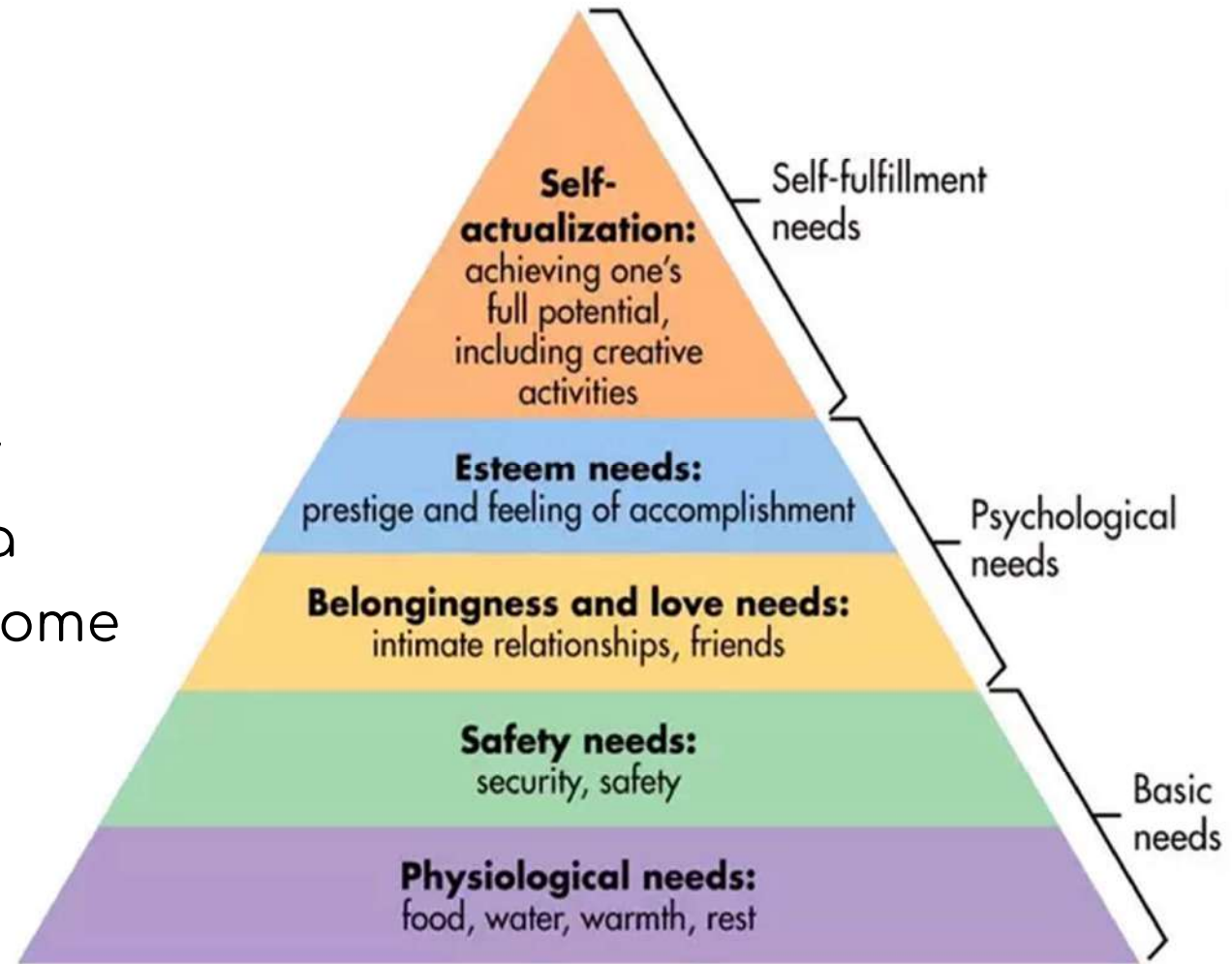


image via [simplepsychology.org](https://simplepsychology.org)



# Sample of Challenges of Marginalized Groups while Traveling

- Being closely watched (or, even worse, followed) due to one's skin color
- Having one's marriage/relationship minimized by an accommodation assuming you want two beds instead of one
- Not being able to participate in experiences or access places due to a disability
- Finding appropriate meals that meet one's religious and/or health needs



# OUR PHILOSOPHY

- No one is perfect

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a process for everyone who commits to it (including us).

- Intent is not enough

Real change only comes through active listening, diplomatic empathy, and applied DEI.



# APPLIED DEI IN ORGANIZATIONS

## Forming a DEI Mindset

- Coming from a place of empathy
- Knowing yourself/your brand
- Learning about others
- Gaining a natural filter to look through the prism of DEI

## Following Processes



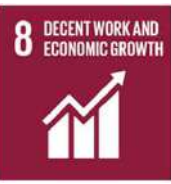

- Avoiding bias in hiring
- Acknowledging and addressing mistakes in marketing/communications
- Maintaining partnerships





# Standards Alignment



UN Sustainable Development Goal	GSTC Destination Criteria	Travel Unity DEI Standards
 <p>1. No Poverty</p>	B1. Measuring the economic contribution of tourism	B1. Stakeholder Engagement B3. Welcoming & Fulfilling Experiences C2. Local Employment & Contractors
 <p>4. Quality Education</p>	B2. Decent work and career opportunities B4. Support for communities C7. Site interpretation	A3. Training, Development & Evaluation C2. Local Employment & Contractors C3. Local Engagement C4. Local Culture
 <p>8. Decent Work &amp; Economic Growth</p>	B1. Measuring the economic contribution of tourism B2. Decent work and career opportunities B3. Supporting local entrepreneurs and fair trade	A2. Hiring & Pipeline A3. Training, Development & Evaluation A4. Employee Support B1. Stakeholder Engagement B3. Welcoming & Fulfilling Experiences C2. Local Employment & Contractors C3. Local Engagement
 <p>10. Reduced Inequalities</p>	B2. Decent work and career opportunities B5. Preventing exploitation and discrimination B8. Access for all	A1. Leadership Commitment A2. Hiring & Pipeline A3. Training, Development & Evaluation B3. Welcoming & Fulfilling Experiences C2. Local Employment & Contractors C3. Local Engagement



# DEI STANDARDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

## Pillar A: Leadership & Workforce

A.1.  
Organizational  
Commitment

A.2.  
Hiring &  
Pipeline

A.3.  
Onboarding,  
Development &  
Evaluation

A.4.  
Belonging

A.4.  
Offboarding

## Pillar B: Community

B.1.  
Civic  
Engagement

B.2.  
Stakeholders &  
Supply Chain

B.3.  
Resident  
Engagement

B.4.  
Workforce  
Development

## Pillar C: Travelers

C.1.  
Welcoming  
Experiences

C.2.  
Communications

C.3.  
Advocacy



# Travel Unity's DEI Standards for Special Events & Sports

## Pillar A Purpose & Logistics

A.1.  
Purpose/  
Mission/Goal of  
Event

A.2.  
Stakeholders

A.3.  
RFPs &  
Vendors

A.4.  
Employees &  
Volunteers

A.5.  
Logistics &  
Compliance

A.6.  
Program  
Planning

## Pillar B Attendeeship

B.1.  
Attracting Attendees

B.2.  
Welcoming & Fulfilling  
Experiences

B.3. Connection-  
Building and Post-  
Event Engagement

## Pillar C Community Impact

C.1.  
Local  
Environment

C.2.  
Local Vendors  
& Businesses

C.3.  
Local  
Residents


C.4.  
Local Culture



# THE SECRET SAUCE

- As an individual
  - Accept that there are people with very different backgrounds and experiences than you
  - Find ways to learn about collective experiences, including history and how it impacts the present
  - Listen to people
- As an organization
  - Be realistic - you can't do everything at once, you can't change everything overnight
  - Aspiration → Action → Accountability
  - Do not silo DEI
  - Institutionalize change



**Roni Weiss**  (He/Him) [Verify now](#)  
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