

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/convening-for-change/>

Sharon Prince, CEO and founder of Grace Farms Foundation, describes how she brought together leaders from multiple industries for a working group that could make immediate decisions to reduce forced labor in construction materials. She shares the progress they've made so far, including an industry report, a toolkit, and pilot projects.



Transcript

- From the very get-go, the urgency of this situation, 00:00:08,940 really, it made me think about having the full ecosystem to really come together, right? It's not just one sector that's responsible.. So these, you'll see in blue, it might be a little tiny, it's difficult, well, you can see it, yeah.. These are the pressure points that you do have agency, so whether it be owners and developers, there's an owner's project requirement, you could say, you can't actually, right now, have a fully ethical supply chain without forced labor, but you can determine a subset, and you have, media is important in terms of awareness.. Government agencies and contracts and extractives and manufacturers, obviously, documenting, as a university, being able to initialize research, which I'll tell you about is happening at Stanford right now.. And then the public demand, right? That's a very important part of the equation.. So bringing people around the table and the idea from the get-go is that we need CEOs and industry leaders to be a part of the working group because we want them to be able to make immediate decisions.. And how does that happen? You ask them.. So (laughs) everything that, most everything, it sounds like, oh, you had the right connections, no, I asked those who built Grace Farms, and then I asked them to say, who else do you know? Let's ask them, and we're gonna have gender parity on this in looking at, and also in terms of gender racial parity, trying to include, make sure that's part of our concept of how we wanna create that team, and did so.. And then the next part that's really important too is to have you as university students.. I'm really, this is a gift to be here, because you as university students are able to imagine the future, but like I said, without being tethered..

And we're now, have been engaged with probably 25 universities and I think it's a very important part of being able to, you know, for you to carry the baton.. So our first industry report where we formally launched the movement, 2020, and those working group members, 30 of them were part of that, are part of it, you can see it in the report.. And then people ask, "Okay, just tell me "which one of those materials are made "without forced labor." Well, (chuckles) we're at the beginning of the movement.. We need the transparency, so we did start to say, "Okay, you have to use a toolkit.. "It's not gonna be a certification out there already, "we have to create it.. "We have to start to," we developed a toolkit for the industry to start using, and they are.. And then our creative director, Chelsea Thatcher, who's of the co-authors on the report along with the former ambassador on modern slavery, she said, "Okay, what are we gonna do next?" Again, asking the questions, what's next? Said, "Okay, now we need to have a pilot project." So here they are.. They're in locations on three different continents.. This is in three years' time, three continents, and that means you have to get the whole team, like an owner, the architect,

engineer, construction managers to agree to do this, and so we had three continents, 12 projects.. And one really beautiful project that aligns is Shadow of a Face with Nina Cooke John, which is the Harriet Tubman monument that replaced Christopher Columbus Monument..

See that Shadow of a Face, it's really extraordinary.. And Black Chapel, again, limited materials in London at the beginning, and then we had a full-scale project in New Canaan Library, Turner Construction's on this project, and you'll see how now they have adopted Design for Freedom and are committed, as well as MillerKnoll, a top firm too, and then The Brij in India.. This is now a bigger project, a million square feet.. And it's with one of the key industrialists there, Sunil Munjal in India where there is the highest number of those enslaved conditions, so it's pretty bold to do that too.. And then our team's now starting to get RFPs for new projects.. One of them that we've just announced, we announced five new ones last week at the summit, and at Karsh Institute of Democracy for the University of Virginia is on board.. You can imagine the capacity we're gonna have to accelerate the movement..