

Diversity Inclusion Now

Creating Inclusive
Workplaces in Canada

Conference Summary

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ROGERS
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DIVERSITY
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CANADIAN
WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION

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CANADIENNE
DES FEMMES



Women Entrepreneurship
Knowledge Hub
Portail de connaissances
pour les femmes
en entrepreneuriat

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



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Canada



The Diversity Institute conducts and coordinates multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder research to address the needs of diverse Canadians, the changing nature of skills and competencies, and the policies, processes and tools that advance economic inclusion and success. Our action-oriented, evidence-based approach is advancing knowledge of the complex barriers faced by underrepresented groups, leading practices to effect change, and producing concrete results.

Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute (DI) promotes diversity and inclusion as the key to Canada's economic growth and social development. Founded in 1999, the Diversity Institute leads groundbreaking research on diversity and inclusion in Canada working with a network of more than 100 researchers and 200 partners from around the world. It's work has supported organizations in developing more inclusive corporate strategies, promoted diverse leadership, created pathways for diverse job seekers. It's evidence informed approach is helping build an inclusive innovation ecosystem in Canada. The DI is leading the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and is a partner in the Future Skills Centre.



ryerson.ca/diversity



diversityinstitute@ryerson.ca



[@RyersonDI](https://twitter.com/RyersonDI)



416.979.5000 x7268

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Tools & Techniques for "Moving the Dial"

WILLIAMS, JILL
Julie Fortney

Executive Vice President, Programs and Employment
Public Policy Forum

Deputy Director

Work Environment, Equality
Occupational and Employment
and Industries

Associate, Technology
Innovation at Ontario

Laura McLean

CEO, 100% Women
Network

Dr. Abby Deschênes

Associate and Director
Community
Engagement Research

McGill University

Patricia Zimm

Co-Founder, CEO
Globe Inc.

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Diversity Inclusion Now

Creating Inclusive
Workplaces in Canada

About the Conference

The Diversity Institute was pleased to host the *Diversity Inclusion Now* conference at Ryerson University's Oakham House from November 25-27, 2019, a conference that explored how to drive systemic change, and enable equitable and fully inclusive environments for women and diverse groups in the workplace.

Canada is known for its diversity and shared commitment to advancing equal opportunities for all, including women, racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Despite considerable efforts to advance diversity in workplaces across all sectors of Canada's economy, a gap between intention and action persists. The Diversity Inclusion Now conference convened thought leaders to present best practices on how Canada can create the equitable and inclusive workplace we want, now.

Thanks to the support of Canadian Women's Foundation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub we had an engaging and informative series of workshops which continue to inform our strategy going forward.

Introduction

Day 2: Driving Systems Change for Workplace Inclusion

We discussed challenges and progress in creating inclusive workplaces. Shared practical strategies for implementing corporate action to drive change from industry leaders such as Blackrock Canada, British Columbia Institute of Technology, United Way and academic experts from across Canada. Heard from a distinguished panel about the importance of advocacy for policy change.

Our speakers included Hon. Senator Marilou McPhedran whose lifetime of activism includes helping ensure gender was included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Hon. Jean Augustine, the first Black woman elected to Parliament who championed the motion for the creation of black history month in Canada, Dr. Pamela Palmater, whose relentless evidence-informed activism has helped right historic wrongs against indigenous women, Svend Robinson who sponsored legislation in parliament to include sexual orientation in federal hate crimes legislation.

We learned about the importance of an intersectional lens and the particular challenges for Muslim women, persons with disabilities and transgendered people.

Day 3: Words Into Actions: Building an Inclusive Innovation Ecosystem to Support Diverse Entrepreneurs

We had series of interactive discussions that looked at research driven analysis of the opportunities and challenges within inclusive entrepreneurship including insights from the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub. We heard insights from thought leaders such as Dr. Wendy Cukier, Dr. Suzanne Gagnon and Dr. Sarah Kaplan. Day 3 also featured a Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub Action Planning session.

We learned more about small actions that can drive big changes including specific tools and techniques such as procurement from the Canadian Aboriginal Business Council and Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council and heard from Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam on inclusive entrepreneurship.

Thanks to all who helped make it a success.



Dr. Wendy Cukier

DAY 1

Opening Reception



Summary

Remarks were provided by Paulette Senior, CEO and President of the Canadian Women's Foundation and co-sponsor of the Diversity Inclusion Now conference.

Paulette shared the work of the Canadian Women's Foundation, which focuses on the most critical challenges facing women and girls, and invests in the most effective solutions for long-term change.

She highlighted the importance of research to inform the Canadian Women's Foundation's advocacy work and important collaborations with the Diversity Institute. For example, Canadian Women's Foundation and the Diversity Institute partnered on the Diversity Leads project which examined diversity on boards and showed the importance of having an intersectional lens. More recently Canadian Women's Foundation and the Diversity Institute have partnered on the Women's Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub. Entrepreneurship is a driver of economic and social inclusion and ensuring women and girls have opportunities to fully participate is critically important.

The Opening Reception also featured remarks from Senator Ratna Omidvar, an internationally recognized voice on migration, diversity and inclusion who is a Councillor on the World Refugee Council, Director at the Samara Centre for Democracy and Chair Emerita for the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council.

Senator Omidvar paid tribute to the Diversity Institute's work on advancing diversity for the last twenty years and asked conference participants to think beyond the economic benefits of inclusion to a higher argument of ensuring that society's leaders are reflective of the constituencies and communities they serve.

Highlighting Canada's advances with the Employment Equity Act and Bill C-25, Senator Omidvar showcased that Canada has made commendable strides towards being more inclusive but that there was more work to do and that conferences like these, would help lay the groundwork to build a more inclusive Canada.

DAY 2

Driving Systems Change for Workplace Inclusion



Opening Remarks: Why Gender Data and Analysis Matters for the Future of Work

SPEAKER:

Rachel Wernick
*Senior Assistant Deputy Minister
Employment Social Development,
Government of Canada*

Summary

Research in the field of behavioural economics tells us that there is a “default bias” when human beings make decisions—human beings have a tendency to go with the pre-set choice. There are hidden gender defaults as Caroline Criado-Pérez describes in *Invisible Women*, “women live in a world designed for and thought around the default option—man.”

Hidden defaults affect how we assess the future of work in the domains of work, the workplace, and the composition of the workforce. For example, when we think of work, we are predisposed to think of paid work instead of unpaid work, 77% of which is done by women. When we think of the changing workplace and the gig-economy, the default example is the male-dominated Uber and ride-sharing platforms, and not caregiving and domestic work platforms. Finally, in the new tech-centred knowledge-based economy, women are vastly under-represented. How will the lack of representation in these sectors entrench the male-centered design default we have today?

Canada has an aging population as well as an ongoing labour and skills shortage while women remain underemployed. Addressing this is not only an ethical imperative, but also a practical necessity. Tackling gender inequality in the labour market has the potential to add \$150 billion to \$420 billion to the Canadian GDP by 2026. We need to broaden what is considered default, and incorporate Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to include an intersectional lens that assesses how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people experience the labour market and the implications for their participation in our future workforce.

Key Takeaways

- > Society informs individuals so that they have a default choice when they make decisions and that default is conceived around men. Meaning, our designs and analysis usually centre around men.
- > Man as the hidden gender default has led to broken collar bones for women in car accidents (crash test dummies are male-sized) and to voice activated speakers that do not respond to women.

- > The hidden gender default has further implications: it frames how we think about the future of work, the future of the workplace, and the future composition of the workforce. It stands to entrench current gender disparities.
- > When we think about the future of work, we think of paid work to the exclusion of unpaid work, and 77% of the latter is done by women. This keeps women's work hidden.
- > The narrative about automation is also male-centered. It is about the male worker who will be replaced by robots. However, women also work in industries at risk of automation, working in positions like cashiers, administrative assistants, and retail sales clerks.
- > We run a risk of entrenching these gender defaults due to the under-representation of women in tech, the industry that is creating the designs of the future. Women are represented at rates of 18% at Google, 16% at Facebook, and 10% at Twitter.
- > Gender analysis has to be complimented by intersectional analysis. Women who are at the intersection of various marginalized identities have a different experience and are represented at lower levels.
- > Given the challenges in the labour market, the demographic changes, and the skills gap, Canadian society will need to advance gender equality in the workplace, which will contribute an estimated \$150 to \$420 billion to the GDP by 2026.



Driving Systems Change

SPEAKER:

Dr. Wendy Cukier
 Founder and Academic Director,
 Diversity Institute at Ryerson
 University

Summary

The Diversity Institute is committed to action-oriented research that aims to drive systems change. From its position in the Ted Rogers School of Management, the Diversity Institute presents the “business case” for diversity and inclusion: how advancing diversity in leadership, entrepreneurship, and the labour market as a whole will contribute to a society in which all persons are able to participate more equitably in our economy and economic security and prosperity is more widely shared.. The Diversity Institute uses Employment Equity (EE) designated groups as the categories for analysis, but takes an intersectional lens to these groups.

There is a skills gap paradox. On the one hand, in the industry, employers bemoan the lack of skilled labour. They talk about how the Canadian economy needs more computer science graduates and engineers, and how there is a lack of qualified workers. However, there are people with skills in Canadian society who are being underutilized. These people are unemployed and underemployed. What, then, is happening? Why are certain groups being underutilized?

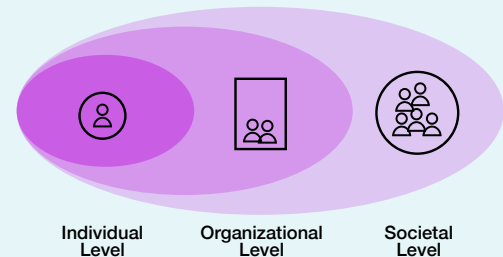
The Diversity Institute uses the Ecological Model of Change to map systems and find the levers that will result in change. The Ecological Model allows researchers to picture and analyze complex problems by examining the structure on three interconnected levels: the societal level, the organizational level, and the individual level. To produce change, one has to be intentional about the strategies and the levers that are targeted.

Key Takeaways

- > To change the situation for EE designated groups, one needs to take an intersectional lens and take a systems perspective to find the levers that will produce change. Diversity and inclusion are not just considerations of human resource departments.
- > The skills gap paradox: the industry talks about the lack of qualified workers and skilled talent, but there are people with these skills who are being underutilized right now. These people are unemployed or underemployed, working, for example, as Uber drivers. We need to take an intersectional lens to this problem. For example, in the corporate sector, white women outnumber racialized women by 17 to 1.
- > Our own research shows that there are jurisdictions that are making advances in driving diversity and inclusion across sectors, which tells us that there is not a lack of qualified candidates but rather a lack of intentional strategies.
- > The Diversity Institute uses the Ecological Model of Change to advance diversity and inclusion through a systems lens. The model maps out the system on three levels: the societal level, the organizational level, and the individual level. It is a powerful model that allows us to see the interconnections between the three levels and find strategic levers to nudge for change. For example, after big firms like KPMG said that they will use a diversity lens for their procurement processes, Bay Street law firms changed their diversity and inclusion practices right away.
- > On the societal level, we can see that the problems are embedded in societal structures, in the image of the entrepreneur, the notions of where women belong and don't belong, and in legislation.
- > On the organizational level, organizations can use the Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT) to refine their internal processes. There are six key areas in the DAT: leadership and governance, HR practices, quality of life and organizational culture, measuring and tracking diversity, integrating diversity across the value chain, and developing the pipeline.
- > On the individual level, issues include individual bystander-ism. Researchers can also research the cases of successful individuals who, despite systematic barriers, managed to achieve great professional success.
- > In order to remain competitive in a global innovation race, Canada must attract the best and the brightest talent from around the world and that will require creating environments that are diverse and inclusive.

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The Ecological Model





Organizational Diversity Strategies

MODERATOR:

Julie Cafley
Executive Vice
President, Programs
and Partnerships,
Public Policy Forum

PANELISTS:

Vinita Jajware
President, Toronto Insurance
Women's Association

Rahima Mamdani
Vice President, People and
Culture, United Way

Eleanor McIntyre
Managing Director,
Chief Operating Officer,
BlackRock Canada

Sadaf Parvaiz
Director, Americas Diversity
and Inclusiveness Office
Ernst & Young

Summary

This was a practical session that focused on organizational diversity strategies. The four panel members have extensive experience promoting diversity and inclusion in their organizations. They shared their experiences and best practices to help others with their organizational diversity practices.

Diversity practices can be focused externally and internally. Companies can advance diversity by using their position to influence companies that they work with and other stakeholders in the industry. Internally, companies have a lot of options to implement diversity practices. For example, in the organization of one of the panelists, every single job position is evaluated using diversity metrics and restrictions to prevent situations where people are hired or not hired because of the nebulous criteria of “a good fit.”

Diversity practices are not limited to hiring considerations; they must be considered at every step of the employee lifecycle. Panelists talked about the importance of buy-in from senior leaders, who can set the tone for organizational culture. A good ecosystem and organizational culture allow individuals committed to diversity and inclusion to be supported in their beliefs. This is in contrast to a culture of “bystanderism.”

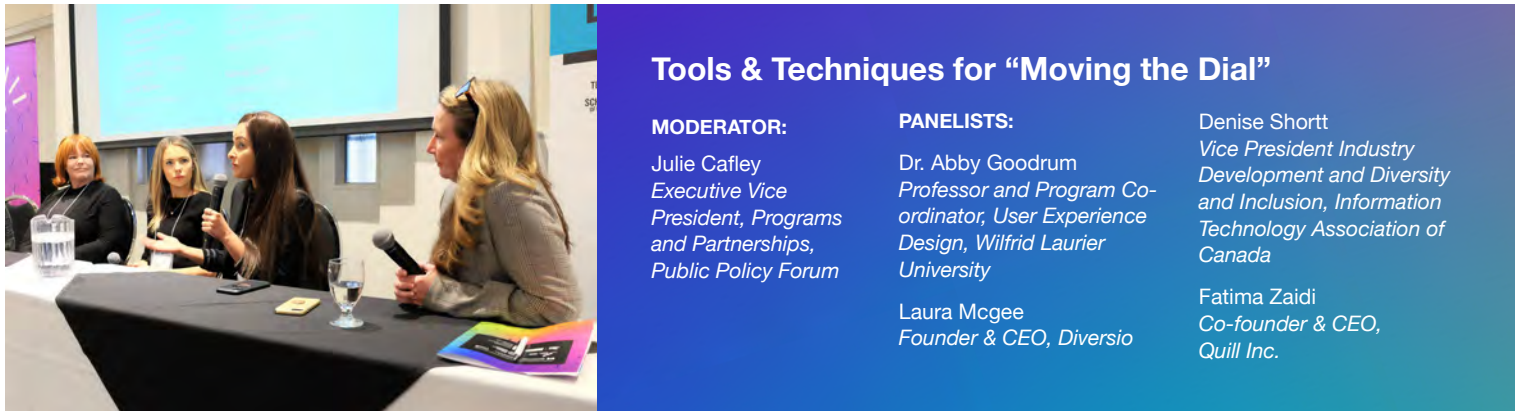
To ensure that diversity and inclusion are advanced in the organization, it is necessary to benchmark performance and measure progress. All panel members have systems of measurement of diversity and inclusion in their organizations and stressed the importance of measurement. There are different ways to incorporate measurement systems. In one panelist's organization, measurements of diversity and inclusion are a corporate goal on equal footing with other performance objectives.

Key Takeaways

- > Diversity practices can be implemented both internally and externally. Internally, companies can insist on diverse hiring practices by constructing a deliberate culture of diversity and inclusion and by creating a team to advance diversity and inclusion within the company. As for the external ecosystem, companies can use their influence to change their industry and other external stakeholders.
- > The tone at the top helps to create a culture of diversity and inclusion. Within the company, there are bystanders and the “frozen middle,” the conservative level of middle managers who are more focused on getting things done. Calling out people can be career suicide. Support by the top gives permission for the rest of the organization to promote diversity and inclusion.
- > Measuring diversity and inclusion is necessary. There are different things that companies can measure to benchmark and advance diversity and inclusion.

The tone at the top helps to create a culture of diversity and inclusion. Within the company, there are bystanders and the “frozen middle,” the conservative level of middle managers who are more focused on getting things done.

- > Diversity and inclusion initiatives do not require a large budget. One panelist mentioned that her diversity and inclusion team has an annual budget of only \$5,000. They have never exceeded this budget in their ten years of existence.
- > Gen Z and millennials are entering the workforce and bringing with them a whole new set of expectations and values. They do not put up with micro-aggressions and other dynamics that the older generation do not have the language to talk about. They are challenging the “frozen middle” from the bottom.



Summary

This panel featured a stellar lineup of accomplished women entrepreneurs and female professionals working in the tech industry. The panel centered on tools and techniques to move the dial for women. Women are currently under-represented in both entrepreneurship and tech. The average deal size for women entrepreneurs is 5 million compared to 12 million for male entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurship ecosystem is full of biases against woman entrepreneurs. One panelist, a woman entrepreneur, recalled that when she was pitching her business, investors would ask her about the number of children she was planning on having and about her long-term personal goals—this was not a question that male entrepreneurs had to answer. In the tech sector as a whole, women face a bottleneck in the first three or four years. Sexual harassment also makes tech workplaces inhospitable for women.

However, the panelists expressed reason for optimism. One panelist is in the user experience (UX) design industry (which is important for tech as a whole). In UX design, there is an inherent need for diverse teams to design for diverse individuals. Another panelist commented that the tech industry as a whole is at an inflection point. Talent gaps and regulation are leading to the hiring of diverse people. According to the same panelist, the investment environment for start-ups is changing. Pension funds control venture capital, and pension funds are starting to ask venture fund managers to look at diversity and inclusion practices when making investment decisions. In recent years in Ontario, the provincial requirement for workplace harassment strategies has been incorporated into asset agreements. The panelist brought up the story of one Toronto-based company that, due to allegations of sexual harassment, shut down after private equity investors pulled out of a \$20 million series-B investment.

Panelists concluded with strategies that would move the dial to further advance women in entrepreneurship and in the tech sector. Each panelist was involved in different activities and had different opinions for moving the dial, from creating upskilling programs and advocating for people on the spectrum to collecting data on the pipeline and reducing internal biases against women in business.

Key Takeaways

- > Women face disadvantages in tech. The data shows that universities are doing a great job graduating diverse people, but the first three to four years are difficult for women who enter the industry. Workplace harassment and other problems within the organizational culture create an undesirable environment for women in tech.
- > Women are disadvantaged in entrepreneurship: the average venture capital investment is five million for women and 12 million for men.
- > For a lot of organizations, diversity and inclusion practices are merely a checklist. The organizations that are most effective at advancing diversity and inclusion are the organizations that are intentional. Diversity and inclusion practices in organizations also benefit from a senior leader who can advocate for diversity and inclusion.
- > There is reason to be optimistic. Canadian society is at an inflection point. There are skills gaps, there is regulation, and financiers are starting to support organizational diversity and inclusion. Venture capital is controlled by pension funds, who are starting to require diversity and inclusion practices.
- > One game changer is social media. A Toronto-based company was on their way to raising a \$20 million series B, but after an employee revealed her experience with workplace harassment, the company shut down after investors pulled out. The start-up space is taking notice. Some start-ups want to implement diversity and inclusion initiatives earlier on so that they will not be wrecked by a scandal.
- > Another example: due to a sexist comment by a senior leader in an investment fund worth \$20 billion, \$4 billion of funding was pulled out.



Lunch: Trailblazing Legislative Change

PANELISTS:

The Honourable Jean Augustine
*Queen's Privy Council,
Companion of the Order of
Canada*

Senator, The Honourable
Marilou McPhedran
Senate of Canada

Dr. Pamela Palmater
*Chair in Indigenous
Governance, Ryerson
University*

Svend Robinson
*Former Member of
Parliament*

Summary

There are many ways of advancing change. This panel consisted of people who have been advancing change for decades with legislation and from within the government. They talked about their personal journeys to inspire others.

Former Member of Parliament Svend Robinson was aware of social injustice from a young child. When he was seven years old and in the United States, he did not stand up for the anthem because he saw that there was not liberty and justice for all. From the time he was elected, he knew that he wanted to speak his truth. In an act of solidarity, he became the first openly gay MP in 1988 during the AIDS

epidemic, when homophobia was prevalent in Canadian society. Commenting about the level of progress in Canadian society, former MP Svend Robinson emphasized the fundamental role of the Charter of Rights as a document that provided the context for social advances.

The Honourable Jean Augustine was born in 1937 in a social context with strong gender roles. However, with encouragement from her grandmother, she strove to do better, and immigrated to Canada in 1960 under the West Indian Domestic Scheme.

Canada at that time was a very different domain. There was no Charter of Rights and Freedoms, no civilian police oversight, and discussions about racial diversity and multiculturalism were just starting to happen. At that time, Augustine was doing her Master of Education when she began to contribute to and participate in the public discussion of these issues. From there, she worked in public education, and moved up the ranks from school teacher to principal. She tried novel things in this role: she was one of the first principals to open the school up to the community, and the first principal to integrate students with Down Syndrome. When she was elected, the Honourable Jean Augustine became the Minister of Multiculturalism and then she became the Fairness Commissioner, important accomplishments in her personal journey.

The Honourable Marilou McPhedran learned the costs of advocacy as a teenager, when she challenged her high school teacher for bullying a rural student and was expelled. She became more involved in the political process in 1980. She stumbled on a workshop in the Toronto City Hall on the proposed new Constitution and served as a volunteer legal advisor. This led to her becoming a spokesperson and co-chair of the ad-hoc committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution Conference—this conference and the subsequent lobbying was the largest social mobilization of Canadian women engaging in Constitution building and led to amendments to the draft Charter to strengthen equality rights. She emphasized the importance of strategic engagement on the grassroots level by activists; this was something McPhedran proved through her activities and her academic research on the topic.

Dr. Pamela Palmater was born into a radical Mi'kmaw family with politically active siblings. Her family was actively involved in her cultural education from her early days, as well as teaching her formal academic subjects before they were taught in class. Additionally, they taught her how to participate in politics through information, protests, and resistance. They put her in uncomfortable positions to give her a hard shell as an activist. In her long involvement with political movements, she was always confronted with the question, "Who are you?" She earned credentials and advanced degrees to prove herself, but this question never stopped coming her way. As an Indigenous person, she felt systematically excluded from social justice movements: for example, feminists would talk about reproductive rights while Indigenous women were being sterilized; human rights advocates would cast away the rights of Indigenous peoples as "native rights." Palmater noted that some things had changed in recent years, especially since Idle No More. Canadian allies are increasing, senators are stepping up, universities are reaching out, but the problems are still wedged firmly in the structure. The National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls found Canada to have committed historic and ongoing genocide through its laws, policies, and practices.

Reflecting on their decades-long experience as advocates, the panelists talked about the current state of social justice in Canada. All the panelists noted the fundamental changes that had happened in Canadian society. These changes have led to a much more inclusive Canadian society for diverse



peoples and contemporary Canadians are the beneficiaries of these changes. It is important to acknowledge these fundamental transformations. From this perspective, panelists agreed that the glass is half-full, and we can be optimistic about our progress.

However, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. For Indigenous peoples, progress has been limited. Indigenous people suffer from human trafficking and worsening income disparity and their situation has worsened in recent years due to media-enabled hate speech.

The panelists encouraged all audience members to get involved in the political and legislative process. Those interested in the political process can get involved with organizations, consultative or advocacy groups or form their own. The electoral system and the political process leave out a lot of different voices. Only through engagement can truly democratic and fully representative governance be realized.

Key Takeaways

- > Sharing and speaking about personal journeys can be illuminating and motivating for others on the same path: panelists all discussed their personal journeys while referencing others who worked to pave the way.
- > In the international context, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was a game-changing document. In the Canadian context, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is an important and fundamental text for social activists. It provides a context that underlies movements for social advocacy and social activism.
- > Why is it important to get involved in the political process? Who benefits if we are not involved in these processes? People in power will exclude, whether with or without intent.
- > Grassroots engagement and social activism lead to social advancements. The Constitution is one example: without activism from various communities, key components of Section 15—the equality rights provision—would be missing.
- > Even in progressive movements, many diverse viewpoints are excluded. Social justice movements have excluded Indigenous perspectives for a long time.
- > While Bill S3 had initially been rejected by Senate to end gender violence, it was eventually passed and will impact generations of Indigenous people.
- > There is both a moral and legal obligation to act, including a treaty obligation. Activism is a real form of democratic governance. Democracy should be governance by the people, not the spokespersons.
- > Look for opportunities for consultation to engage with the legislative process. There are various consultative groups. One can find them or make their own consultative groups. There are also a lot of other organizations around the world that advocate for various political issues. The electoral system leaves out a lot of people, and it is important to get involved so that your voice does not get discounted.

Grassroots engagement and social activism lead to social advancements. The Constitution is one example: without activism from various communities, key components of Section 15—the equality rights provision—would be missing.



Intersectionality: “Miles to Go Before We Sleep”

MODERATOR:

Dr. Suzanne Gagnon
Canada Life Chair in
Leadership Education,
Asper Business School,
University of Manitoba

PANELISTS:

Brian DePratto
Senior Economist,
TD Bank

Ruby Latif
Research Associate,
Ryerson University

Kory Wilson
Executive Director
Indigenous
Partnerships and
Initiatives, British
Columbia Institute of
Technology

Summary

Diversity is an ongoing conversation in Canadian society. The group of panelists tried to expand the discussion of diversity and inclusion by focusing on intersectional identities and marginalized identities. These are not always a part of mainstream conversations.

Panelists focused on three groups in particular: Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and Muslim women. While the moral case for workplace inclusion is important, the panelists described the significant economic case for inclusion. The social costs for the exclusion of Indigenous peoples amounts to \$8 billion, and equitable employment outcomes of Indigenous people can lead to multi-billion dollars in benefits for the Canadian economy. As for disabled persons, 35% of persons with disabilities are not engaged in the labour force. Closing the gap for a third of this labour force will lead to 36 billion dollars in additional output, and closing the gap for half of this labour force will lead to 54 billion dollars in additional output. The Canadian demographics is changing, and 1 in 4 working age Canadians are approaching retirement age. As the baby boomer workforce retires, closing the labour gap will not be a matter of choice—it will be a matter of necessity.

Muslim women were analyzed through an intersectional lens. An intersectional lens helps us understand the identity of Muslim women not as a binary. The identity of Muslim women is constructed as a fluid process and as the locus where race, religion, and other identity factors intersect. Through an intersectional lens, Muslim women could be analyzed not as a monolithic and homogeneous group with similar experiences, but as a complex grouping of individuals with different life experiences.

Key Takeaways

- > Diversity has always been a reality in Canada, but for a long time, corporate leaders chose to ignore the reality. However, with demographic changes and other changes in Canadian society, one cannot ignore diversity any longer. If strategies do not include these communities, then there are potentially billions of dollars left on the table. Diverse groups need to be engaged for long-term prosperity.
- > Academics are starting to reject the binary definition of diversity. They are starting to focus on fluidity to better understand how and where race, religion, gender, sexuality, etc. intersect. For example, Muslim women are not a monolithic group, despite attempts to impose homogeneity onto Muslim women. 42% of Muslim women have experienced discrimination in the workplace. In order to better understand these dynamics, organizations need to approach the topic with intersectional identities in mind.
- > One group that requires particular attention are Indigenous people. It is not just a moral imperative, but also an economic one. Greater integration of Indigenous people will contribute several billion dollars to the Canadian economy through employment outcomes.
- > Another group that requires attention is persons with disabilities. 35% of this community is not participating in the workforce. If we close the gap for a third of this labour force, we can add 36 billion to the Canadian economy. If we close the gap for half of this labour force, we can add 54 billion to the Canadian economy.

- > Labour market integration is necessary in Canada because of the changing demographics. The population is aging, and 1 in 4 working age Canadians will be over 65 years old and retire. There will be massive economic problems, and this will bankrupt Canada.
- > Solutions to equity must be inclusive and must be founded on truth, including the true history of residential schools, the truth of hidden identities, and the truth of lost histories. To advance equity in society, we must reflect upon ourselves. We must recognize the unconscious biases we hold and the power and privilege we must give up to advance inclusion.



Data Driven Action: Next Steps

MODERATOR:

Dr. Suzanne Gagnon
*Canada Life Chair in
Leadership Education,
Asper Business School,
University of Manitoba*

PANELISTS:

Dr. Rupa Banerjee
*Associate Professor,
Ryerson University*

Dr. Eddy Ng
*Professor and James
and Elizabeth Freeman
Chair in Management,
Bucknell University*

Dr. Tania Saba
*BMO Chaired
Professor in Diversity
and Governance,
Université de Montréal*

Summary

This panel on data and diversity and inclusion featured three academics that specialize in the use of quantitative data to evaluate diversity and inclusion in the Canadian context. All three academics work closely with quantitative data. They undertook to identify problems and challenges in the collection and use of quantitative data in academic and non-academic research.

Panelists discussed the collection and the use of data in organizations. They commented that while organizations gather vast amounts of data, the data being gathered and analyzed lack explanatory power: they are often simple descriptions. Shallow and incorrect use of data is also a problem for evaluating organizations on diversity and inclusion and workplace culture. When one looks at the list for the best organizations to work for, organizations like Google top the list. This list was described to be more like a popularity contest and a checklist of best practices. Scoring high on these lists does not explain and provide insight into what is happening within the organization.

While academics are better at conducting innovative research using datasets and complex analysis, one of the panelists noted that this research is rarely disseminated into the public discourse without being greatly modified. Academic research is often de-contextualized and incorrectly translated for lay consumption. She called for a more holistic perspective of how academic data is used or is not used.

One cornerstone diversity and inclusion policy in the government is the Employment Equity Act of 1986, which has set up benchmarks to measure the progress of diversity and inclusion for the four designated EE groups. All of the groups except for persons with disabilities have fared well. One of the panelists—an expert on the subject—suggested that it was time to revisit this policy and update it to the needs of the present. Employment Equity is used for evidence-based decision making, but as with all data, EE data is oriented to the past. It is unable to proactively meet the challenges of the future. To anticipate future challenges, the panelist suggested using demographic projections.

While quantitative data is useful for many contexts, panelists recognized that there are situations where quantitative data is fundamentally limited. Measuring the advancement of inclusion and belonging is one subject that is difficult to measure due to its subjective aspects. Camaraderie, feelings of belonging, and other such measurements are hard to pin down with numbers.

Key Takeaways

- > The management consultant and academic Peter Drucker said “you can’t manage what you can’t measure.” Einstein said “not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted, counts.” Quantitative data is not the answer to everything. Research projects must be constructed properly for meaningful quantitative data.
- > Data is key for understanding needs, deficiencies, and what should be done. While academics do innovative research and complex analysis, much of that research is not translated at all into the public discourse. If it is translated, it is turned into a sound bite that is not representative of the finding. This is an important topic for research: how is academic data used or not being used?
- > Before setting targets, we have to think about what we are trying to accomplish. If we are trying to advance inclusion and belonging, that is a different metric. Subjective data like camaraderie and feelings of belonging are much more important than objective numbers, but they are difficult to quantify. There is a lot of self-reporting and systematic bias within these measures. We need a mix of quantitative and qualitative data for good research, but qualitative findings are valued less and seem to be publicized less.
- > Organizations collect a lot of data but the data being gathered and analyzed by organizations often does not say much. Data from inside organizations are used in a descriptive or binary way and it does not explain phenomenon. It lacks explanatory power.
- > On the best-employers-to-work-for list, Google is at 100 points and SAP is at 99.5 points. How meaningful are these measurements? This is just the result of a checklist. What actually happens is a different story. Rankings can be very misleading and there is little correlation between these rankings and organizational culture. This is nothing more than a popularity game; however, these companies end up determining the standards of evaluation.
- > There are quite a lot of problems with enforcing quotas. An experimental study, for example, has shown that forced and coercive quotas lead to backlash and bad spillover effects, like lack of confidence for beneficiaries. Additionally, quotas may not create a cultural change.
- > The Employment Equity Act of 1986 allows for evidence-based public policy setting. The four designated groups have done remarkably well, with the exception of persons with disabilities. However, we need to review this legislation: EE was originally supposed to be reviewed every 5 years. EE only provides us with a rear-view mirror through historical data, but we need to look into the future by starting projects through demographic projections.
- > There is often a problem with the organizational and employment data we collect. Full-time employees are measured, but employees in precarious employment are not. We are only considering those who have a full-time job in the first place.

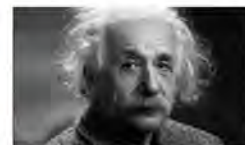
“What gets measured gets done.”

— Peter Drucker



“Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts.”

— Albert Einstein



Quantitative data is not the answer to everything. Research projects must be constructed properly for meaningful quantitative data.

#DIN2019

Networks to Support Diverse Entrepreneurs

Réseaux pour soutenir des
entrepreneurs diversifiés

DAY 3

Words Into Actions: Building an Inclusive Innovation Ecosystem to Support Diverse Entrepreneurs



Opening Remarks

SPEAKER:

Dr. Suzanne Gagnon
*Canada Life Chair in
Leadership Education,
Asper Business School,
University of Manitoba*

Summary

The Canadian government is investing \$2 billion into the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) to double the number of women entrepreneurs in Canada by 2025. This is projected to add \$150 billion to the Canadian economy. The Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) aims to be the platform to bring women's organizations and mainstream players together to build a community. The community will share action-oriented research and best practices on the WEKH platform to other members of the community, so that research and support systems centered around women entrepreneurship are interconnected and coordinated, not fragmented.

WEKH is led by Ryerson University with nine regional hubs across Canada. Regional hubs include the University of Manitoba, Mount Royal University, Université de Montréal, Carleton University, Dalhousie University, PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise, OCAD University, Simon Fraser University, and Yukon College. Together, WEKH will synthesize existing knowledge, map the innovation ecosystem, examine best practices, document women entrepreneurs, and benchmark and celebrate women entrepreneur success.

WEKH takes a systems approach to change. Using the Ecological Model of Change, WEKH and its partners are able to map out the inclusive innovation ecosystem. This consists of the individual level, the organizational level, and the societal level. It will be used to address systemic barriers to women entrepreneurs. An example of a systemic barrier is stereotypes that affect women's decisions to pursue entrepreneurship and limit their opportunities once they make the decision to be an entrepreneur.

WEKH's support for women entrepreneurs is not limited to knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. WEKH will create an incubation pipeline that will support women entrepreneurs from the earliest stages of their entrepreneurial journey, from ideation and early incubation.

Key Takeaways

- > The Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) is a federal government initiative with the aim of doubling the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025. This is projected to contribute \$150 billion to the Canadian economy. WES is funded with a \$2 billion investment.
- > In the field of women entrepreneurship, knowledge and support systems are not coordinated. Practitioners and advocates are often not aware of what others in the ecosystem are doing. The Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) is a platform that will bring together various women's organizations, entrepreneurs, and academics from all across Canada.

- > The project is led by Ryerson University, and there are nine additional regional hubs across Canada that will collect data and provide new connections for WEKH. They will also contribute funding and double the duration of the project from the initial three years to six years.
- > The regional hubs are the following organizations: University of Manitoba, Asper School of Business; Mount Royal University, Bissett School of Business; Universite de Montreal, BMO Chair for Diversity and Governance; Carlton University; Dalhousie University, Norman Newman Centre for Entrepreneurship; PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise; OCAD University; Simon Fraser University, Venture Labs and Beedie School of Business; and Yukon College.
- > WEKH participants gather and share knowledge, map the innovation ecosystem, examine what works to drive inclusion, celebrate the successes of women entrepreneurs, and develop frameworks to assess progress.
- > Unlike previous approaches to research on women entrepreneurship, WEKH research will use the Ecological Model of Change. This is a systems approach that conceptualizes the entrepreneurship ecosystem from three different levels: the individual level, the organizational level, and the societal level. It allows us to conceive of and analyze the interconnections between the three levels.
- > For its next steps, WEKH will continue consulting with key stakeholders, it will continue to collect and share research, it will identify leading practices, and share these practices to all of the actors in the ecosystem.



Summary

Toronto is a city of income disparity. Immigrants, young people, and racialized people have not seen their income levels go up since the 1980s. Racialized immigrants make, on average, 69 cents to the white Canadian male dollar. While jobs are created, they are precarious, gig-economy jobs. Toronto has become the working poor capital of Canada.

Indigenous people are a particularly disadvantaged group in Toronto: 63 percent of Indigenous people are unemployed in comparison to Toronto's overall seven percent, and 87 percent live below the poverty line. A third of Indigenous people are in precarious housing or homeless. How can we create a more inclusive Toronto?

Councillor Wong-Tam's answer is investments in Indigenous entrepreneurship and investments in Indigenous start-ups. The Indigenous population numbers at 35,000 to 47,000 people. Investing in Indigenous people will give them opportunities to succeed where they can. Councillor Wong-Tam's project will take the form of the world's largest business incubator for Indigenous people: the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. This centre will be located at Dundas East and Jarvis Street at the centre of the planned Indigenous Business District to meet Indigenous people where they are and reflect their vision. There is already a lot of entrepreneurial activity happening in precarious communities, and the Centre will aim to translate makeshift entrepreneurship into a more valuable language for consumers. This model might be replicable in other parts of the city and other parts of the world.

Key Takeaways

- > Groups like immigrants, young people, and racialized people have seen stagnant wages from the 1980s. Toronto is becoming increasingly polarized around income disparity and divided around age, race, and immigrant status. While jobs are being created, they are precarious, gig-economy jobs. Racialized immigrants make 69 cents to the white male dollar.
- > Women need safe spaces free from workplace harassment and discrimination: 25 percent report sexual harassment. If Toronto wants to become a global and influential city, it will need to create a better working environment for women.
- > Toronto is one of the most diverse and multicultural places in the world and claims to celebrate diversity. However, it is under-utilizing its diverse populations.
- > Indigenous peoples are faring particularly badly: 63 percent of Indigenous peoples are unemployed in comparison to the seven percent average in Toronto, 87 percent of Indigenous people live below the poverty line, and a third are precariously housed or homeless. There are roughly 35,000 to 47,000 Indigenous people in Toronto (this is three times higher than what StatsCan reports) and not investing in this group will lead to lost returns.
- > An effective and valuable mechanism to work toward Truth and Reconciliation for Indigenous communities is to make investments in Indigenous entrepreneurship and investments in start-ups with Indigenous founders. While poverty reduction and reinforcing the social safety net is important, we need to make sure that Indigenous people have equitable opportunities to succeed.
- > In precarious communities, there is resilience and there is a lot of makeshift entrepreneurship (like catering, sewing, etc.). However, for these activities to produce more economic activity, they need to be repackaged for the market.
- > Counsellor Tam's newest project is the world's largest business incubator for Indigenous people: the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. It will be a huge incubation space in Dundas East that will serve Indigenous people in their community and give them better access to the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Counsellor Tam hopes to document it, learn from it, and potentially export the model to other places in Toronto and other places in the world.

63 percent of Indigenous peoples are unemployed in comparison to the seven percent average in Toronto, 87 percent of Indigenous people live below the poverty line, and a third are precariously housed or homeless.

Indigenous people in Toronto are far more likely to be homeless, unemployed and hungry

- 63 per cent were unemployed compared to the 7 per cent average in Ontario.
- 87 per cent live below the before-tax low-income cut-off, where a family generally spends 70 per cent or more of its income on food, shelter and clothing.
- More than a third were precariously housed or experiencing homelessness at the time of the survey, with more than half having moved at least once in the past year

- Dr. Janet Smylie of St. Michael's Hospital
Canadian Institutes of Health Research



Definitions & Data: Measuring Impact

MODERATOR:

Dr. Suzanne Gagnon
Canada Life Chair in
Leadership Education,
Asper Business School,
University of Manitoba

PANELISTS:

Dr. Wendy Cukier
Founder and
Academic Director,
Diversity Institute,
Ryerson University

Ashley Walker
Vice President,
Operations,
The Evidence
Network

Summary

The goal of the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) is to bring knowledge and practice together and contribute to the Canadian government's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES), which will double the number of women entrepreneurs and add \$150 billion to the economy by 2025. Data and data analysis are required to measure and assess the progress of women entrepreneurship, but fundamentally, it is important to analyze and determine the working definitions first.

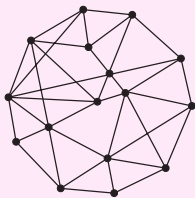
How do we define entrepreneurship? If we take the traditional definition and define the women entrepreneur as the owner of an SME with at least one employee, then there are 205,440 women entrepreneurs, and women entrepreneurs make up 16 percent of all Canadian entrepreneurs. If we count self-employed individuals as entrepreneurs, then there are 1,050,000 women entrepreneurs, and women entrepreneurs make up 37.4 percent of the total Canadian population of entrepreneurs. This is an important point of distinction, because in many Aboriginal and low-income communities,

entrepreneurship has a makeshift, informal character.

Many women entrepreneurs in these communities are self-employed, have no other employees and are not incorporated. By changing what we recognize as entrepreneurship, we can increase the number of women entrepreneurs by a multiple of five.

Entrepreneurship is a concept that centers around men. Women entrepreneurs are constantly compared with these established meanings. Because of the dominance of men in entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship is mostly associated with technology and for-profit ventures. However, the definition of an entrepreneur should be expanded to describe someone who is fundamentally attempting new combinations and innovative approaches. This latter definition includes artists and social entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurship has the potential to alter the established concept of entrepreneurship and contribute new meanings. While the success of an entrepreneur is focused on income and growth, women entrepreneurs are asking different questions about the ultimate purpose of their entrepreneurial ventures. One provocative iteration has taken the form of SheEO, which is a non-profit and a community of women entrepreneurs that measure the success of their ventures in terms of impacts targeted through the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub

The goal of the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) is to bring knowledge and practice together and contribute to the Canadian government's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES), which will double the number of women entrepreneurs and add \$150 billion to the economy by 2025.

Key Takeaways

- > WEKH is designed to bring knowledge producers and practitioners together, so that those who know best practices can share that knowledge. If one takes a systems-approach, then one can map the system and unpack it in a detailed way.
- > The goal of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy is to double the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025. This will add \$150 billion to the Canadian economy. However, what is the starting point? If we define women entrepreneurs according to the conventional definition, as someone who owns a small or medium sized enterprise and employs at least one person, then there are 205,440 women entrepreneurs in Canada. If we count self-employed individuals as entrepreneurs, then there are 1,050,000 women entrepreneurs in Canada. One change of definition and one can increase the number by five times..
- > Most definitions of entrepreneurship use men as the standard. Women are always compared to men, and this permeates the literature on entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurship should change conventional definitions of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not inherently for-profit. An entrepreneur is someone who makes something new through a novel process, so artists and creators of social enterprises should fall under this umbrella as well.
- > Women entrepreneurs have different tendencies and characteristics. For example, women are not as preoccupied with growth as male entrepreneurs, and women tend to be better educated.
- > Some of these differences have their origin in structural issues. For example, women congregate in the services sector and the hospitality sector, while men start businesses in construction and in natural resources. This might be due to differences in funding and other structural barriers that women face. Women also export less, use less technology, and innovation less than their male counterparts. However, these latter three tendencies may be the result of the industries that are open to women entrepreneurs.
- > One disruptive re-definition of entrepreneurship is SheEO. SheEO does not measure success solely on financial success. Success is evaluated by the impact of the business on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. SheEO also asks participating women entrepreneurs to define success for themselves.
- > One of WEKH's goals is to unpack the various dynamics on different levels of the ecosystem by mapping activities by sector and by programs.

Women congregate in the services sector and the hospitality sector, while men start businesses in construction and in natural resources. This might be due to differences in funding and other structural barriers that women face.

Industry	Total Self-Employed	% Women	% Men
Const, Trans, Trade	623,179	17.3%	82.7%
Fire	121,149	35.2%	64.8%
Info, Culture, Rec	111,558	42.4%	57.6%
Manufacturing	76,483	25.1%	74.9%
Natural Resources	189,994	23.4%	76.6%
Prof Services	367,627	37.3%	62.7%
Public Services	431,412	59.7%	40.3%
Services	250,782	51.0%	49.0%
Not Available	39,186	41.9%	58.1%
Total	2,211,370	36.2%	63.8%

Source: Census 2016



Summary

Will women entrepreneurship lead to gender equity? Dr. Kaplan expressed some doubt about the \$150 billion GDP that women entrepreneurship will supposedly add to the Canadian economy. This number does not account for many considerations: women entrepreneurship might affect jobs for men, require jobs for caretakers, and it is uncertain if women entrepreneurship will create jobs.

Is pushing women into entrepreneurship the way forward? It may be a step backward instead. The leadership gap is closing slowly, especially if we take an intersectional lens. If the workplace is not inclusive, then women get pushed out to entrepreneurship. Women are expected to do housework and have other social expectations put on them. This is why women engage in precarious, sharing economy entrepreneurship. While we often frame entrepreneurship as the solution for women, it is important to remember that entrepreneurship is risky and not suitable for people of all circumstances.

Currently, there are more male CEOs named John than there are female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies. To make the workplace more inclusive, we have to change the whole ecosystem. Companies make an appeal to meritocracy and the pipeline as the reason for not having diverse boards—apparently, they cannot find candidates. However, research shows that our current systems are not meritocratic. Gender biases and stereotypes associate women with the family and men with careers, and in a test with two fictional people of the same qualifications—Jennifer and John—John was more hireable and had a greater chance to obtain start-up investment money.

Companies are also creating the pipeline problem. Female engineering students who take early internships take fewer engineering courses after the internship compared to other students who take early internships. Gender gaps are not just the product of “opting out” out of free choice: the environment is turning women away from certain career paths.

Key Takeaways

- > Is it turning women into entrepreneurs the best solution? Entrepreneurship is connected to leadership: if the workplace is not inclusive, then women get pushed out to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not always a desirable thing to engage in. It is very risky, and it might not always be what women themselves wish to do.
- > The supposed \$150 billion contribution to the Canadian economy that is cited by WES is a misleading number: there might not be additional jobs, jobs for men may be affected, and there are other considerations that do not factor into the production of this number. Instead of pushing women into the current entrepreneurship ecosystem, how can we create a different type of ecosystem?
- > The myth of meritocracy justifies the current status quo and gives corporations an excuse for exclusionary practices. Research shows that the gender imbalance is not the product of a system of meritocracy: John is more likely to be hired and be invested in as the result of a startup pitch than Jennifer, all things being equal.

- > There are various problems with the system that we operate in. There are gender biases: women are associated with the family and men with careers. The system also leads to gender gaps and problems in the pipeline. Research shows that female engineering students who take early internships are discouraged from further pursuing engineering. Companies are involved in creating the supply gap. Research also indicates that unconscious bias training leads to backlash, and women's empowerment training makes women feel good at the time, but does not change the actual system. This is why the ecosystem has to be changed as a whole.
- > Focusing solely on large corporations will not change the system. Most people work in SMEs; more than 90% of all employees in the private sector are in SMEs. This is a problem: SMEs lack financial resources and time, HR management, knowledge and guidance, and data about best practices to pursue diversity practices.
- > How can we approach gender equality as an innovation challenge? If organizations do not have women leaders, they suffer because they lack access to these viewpoints. Organizations like Fenty and McCarthy Uniforms have achieved considerable success because they were able to design for women.
- > Another interesting case study is SheEO. Through its activities, SheEO is changing the entrepreneurship ecosystem and the assumptions embedded within.



Matching Discourse with Dollars: Procurement Strategies to Support Diverse Entrepreneurs

MODERATOR:

Dr. Tania Saba
*BMO Chaired
Professor in Diversity
and Governance,
Université de
Montréal*

PANELISTS:

Patience Adamu
*Community Benefits
Specialist, Aecon
Group Inc.*

Cassandra Dorrington
*President, Canadian
Aboriginal and Minority
Supplier Council*

Stephanie Fontaine
*Country Director,
WeConnect
International*

Paul-Emile McNab
*Director, Business
Development and
Strategic Initiatives,
Canadian Council for
Aboriginal Business*

Summary

The four panelists in this discussion have extensive experience in progressive procurement for women and other diverse people. Prompted by questions from the moderator, they shared their expertise with the audience on the topic of supplier diversity programs.

There are several key challenges in supplier diversity initiatives, both from the standpoint of the company and from the perspective of the suppliers themselves. One fundamental challenge is the lack of pre-established connections between procurement teams and suppliers. Companies who have just begun to implement progressive procurement policies do not have diverse suppliers on their contact lists, and it can be difficult for them to spread the word. After reaching out to diverse suppliers, due to their relative inexperience, diverse suppliers often lack capacity to work on higher-tier projects right away. The lack of capacity leads to other barriers in the procurement process: some administrative processes, like the need for a long, over 100-page procurement document, prevents diverse suppliers from bidding on projects. Panelists discussed challenges from within the procuring organizations as well. Contracting

diverse suppliers for projects represents a change from the status quo and presents new risks for the business. One panelist likened the process to a “divorce.” Because of these risks, successful diverse supplier programs require C-suite buy-in.

Panelists were asked to describe some characteristics of successful supplier diversity programs. Successful supplier diversity programs invest in people, in infrastructure, and in the community. Around 54 percent of supplier diversity programs are being managed by less than one full-time employee, and this does not set the program up for success. Successful programs invest in infrastructure: they invest in supplier diversity programs and teach diverse suppliers how to complete the procurement process successfully. Finally, successful programs invest in diverse communities. They go out to meet diverse suppliers and form relationships with them, and offer scholarships to communities to help them expand their capacity. An example of a company with a good supplier diversity program is Chrysler. The supplier diversity program in Chrysler has strong top-down support, sets benchmarks for improvement, and invests in their diverse suppliers to help them.

Key Takeaways

- > It can be difficult to reach out to diverse suppliers when an organization starts up a supplier diversity initiative. Organizations need to find and identify suppliers in order to share these opportunities.
- > Diverse suppliers encounter various barriers when they start out. There are practical barriers in the procurement process, like a 100-page procurement document. Diverse suppliers also lack the capacity to work on higher-tier projects in the beginning.
- > A good supplier diversity program will invest in diverse suppliers and coach them through the process. It will help them expand their capacity to do projects.
- > A good supplier diversity program will also develop a relationship with diverse communities, and try to understand the communities’ histories and barriers.
- > Inclusive procurement can be risky. It involves a “divorce” from previous suppliers, with whom the organization has a solid working relationship and a certain set of expectations.
- > Supplier diversity initiatives require C-Suite buy-in to be successful. One major barrier for supplier diversity programs is the lack of resources from the corporations or the government. 54% of supplier diversity programs are managed by less than one full-time employee. This constrains supplier diversity operations.

Supplier diversity initiatives require C-Suite buy-in to be successful. One major barrier for supplier diversity programs is the lack of resources from the corporations or the government.



Networks to Support Diverse Entrepreneurs

MODERATOR:

Dr. Mary Kilfoil
President, Canadian Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship; Founder and CEO, Innovate Atlantic Inc.

PANELISTS:

Elise Ahenkorah
Programs and Partnership Lead, UCalgary Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking's WELab; Founder, #shemeets

Paulina Cameron
CEO, Forum for Women Entrepreneurs

Alison Kirkland
CEO, Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada

Megann Willson
Partner and CEO, PANOPTIKA; CCSBE Board member

Despina Zanganas
Co-founder, Lean in Canada

REGRETS:

Dr. Mai Thi Thanh Thai
Editor in Chief, Journal for Small Business Entrepreneurship (JSBE); Associate Professor, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, HEC, Montreal

Summary

The panel featured five women entrepreneurs who discussed the importance of networks for women entrepreneurs. Many of the panelists are leaders in women entrepreneurship networks and have experience creating networking events for diverse women. Networks are necessary for entrepreneurial success. However, research has consistently shown that women face challenges forming networks. These challenges are compounded for racialized women and women of other underrepresented groups.

All of the panelists are leaders in organizations that help women build networks. They employ different strategies to help diverse women entrepreneurs build their networks. These include speed networking, free training, a mentorship program to connect mentors and mentees, and casual networking breakfasts. Panelists also understood that intersectional dynamics were at play, and they put in special attention to make sure that diverse women were welcome to their networking events as well.

As one panelist remarked, “network is net worth,”—it is important for women to network to overcome the barriers they face as women entrepreneurs. Only six percent of funding goes to women, and even less investment money goes to women of colour. Panelists shared their tips for networking. Women entrepreneurs should always be networking with others and keep their eyes open for networking opportunities everywhere. LinkedIn was brought up as a valuable tool. Panelists thought of networking as a give-and-take relationship: prospective women entrepreneurs should know themselves and what they are selling, and offer their services to others. On the other hand, women entrepreneurs should also not be afraid to ask for what they want. Asking for help and resources is necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Key Takeaways

- > Entrepreneurs make things happen even if they lack the expertise. Networks and networking are a part of having the entrepreneurial mindset.
- > There are different ways to set up networking events and to facilitate networking. One panelist started networking breakfasts, because the women she talked to felt uncomfortable going to the Chamber of Commerce and networking in those kinds of environments. Another panelist talked about the mentorship program run by her organization.
- > “Network is net worth” – Megann Willson
- > There are biases in the world of investment, and, depending on one’s identity, barriers will compound. Only six percent of funding goes to women, and even less for women of colour. A good ally should sponsor people. Talk good things about people behind their back to lift them up.

- > When you go to an event, sponsor someone and bring them to meet new people at these events. Women of colour are often invited on panels for diversity, but not for panels about building technology, customer acquisition, etc. Advocate and work to improve representation for women of colour in the ecosystem. Diverse women need role models to help their journey.
- > Networking involves selling yourself. Know who you are and what you are selling. When networking, ask “what can I do for you?” and “who can I introduce you to?”
- > Networking should happen even when you do not need it. Connect with everyone. Connect with people on LinkedIn, and, while women primarily tend to connect only with other women, women also need to be connecting with men as well. Networking does not have to happen at networking events; it can happen anywhere.



Unlocking Resources Women Need

MODERATOR:

Dr. Mary Kilfoil
President, Canadian
Council for Small
Business and
Entrepreneurship;
Founder and CEO,
Innovate Atlantic
Inc.

PANELISTS:

Nouhaila Chelkhaoui
Founder, Scale
Without Borders

Brooke Gordon
Senior Advisor,
Women Entrepreneurs,
Business Development
Bank of Canada

Danielle Graham
Principal, Dream
Maker Ventures

Chioma Ifeanyi-Okoro
Founder, My African
Corner

Shannon MacDonald
Managing Director,
Accenture

REGRETS:

Amanda Munday
CEO, The Workaround

Summary

This panel centered on the all-important topic of funding for women entrepreneurs. The panelists were women leaders in the corporate sector and in the non-profit sector, or they were entrepreneurs that could speak from their own personal experience.

All of the panelists commented on the various barriers that women entrepreneurs have to confront on their journey. On the societal level, women are still beholden to certain roles and duties in the family economy. This makes it difficult to pursue the laborious path of the entrepreneur. There are also unconscious biases that limit the pursuit of entrepreneurship for women. Unconscious biases affect their confidence and their entrepreneurial imagination. Even after entering an incubator and formally being accepted into a community of other entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, women entrepreneurs face problems. One panelist recounted her personal experiences. She was in an incubator in which the participants were all male. She felt excluded and was unable to access the networks that the men developed through informal socializing.

These barriers are compounded for women of colour. Women of colour have difficulties accessing programs and networks. Even if they are able to enter into a program to pursue their entrepreneurial goals, funding remains elusive: women of colour raise only \$42,000 for every \$1,000,000 raised by a man. On the other side, women are under-represented as venture capitalists, and this is amplified for women of colour. This limits the ability for women to be understood and treated with respect in this environment.

Panelists had suggestions to improve the entrepreneurship ecosystem for women and women of colour. Several of the panelists affirmed the importance of representation: diverse women need to be able to see themselves in another woman who is similar to them. Allies are also important for diverse women. One panelist recommended that allies learn the terminology and language to assist diverse women in a respectful way. Panelists were aware of the power of technology to improve outcomes for diverse women. Given the unconscious biases that come into play in investment decisions by venture capitalists, one panelist offered data screening and identity anonymization as a potential solution.

Key Takeaways

- > The entrepreneurship ecosystem is not a welcoming environment for women entrepreneurs. One panelist described her experiences in an incubator: all of the other entrepreneurs were men, and, while they networked with each other, she was left out.
- > Women entrepreneurs face barriers for funding. This is particularly pronounced for women of colour. For every \$1 million in funding a male entrepreneur is able to raise, a woman entrepreneur of colour is only able to raise \$42,000. Even after being admitted access to a venture capitalist, there are problems getting the same level of respect. There is a lack of representation of women as venture capitalists as well. This is compounded for women of colour.
- > Women entrepreneurs need better access to programs and networks. These need to be intentionally designed for equal access. For example, the heavy focus on tech in a lot of incubator programs sometimes limits the ability of women entrepreneurs to participate.
- > Women entrepreneurs face various barriers that prevent them from engaging in entrepreneurship. These include conservative gender roles and unconscious biases that associate entrepreneurship with men.
- > There are a lot of myths about women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs do not only run social enterprises; they also run for-profit enterprises. Women do not need more support to run a business; women-run businesses make two times more revenue than men.
- > Allies can help include diverse women. Allies should educate themselves about diverse people and use the correct language to include them in a respectful way. Representation opens doors for under-represented women: diverse women entrepreneurs are encouraged by role models who look like them.
- > Research shows that resume screening is highly biased. There are ways to anonymize personal information to make hiring processes more objective. Is it possible to do introduce such methods to make venture capitalist funding more objective?

For every \$1 million in funding a male entrepreneur is able to raise, a woman entrepreneur of colour is only able to raise \$42,000.

Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub Action Planning Session

Summary

Women entrepreneurs from all different sectors participated in the WEKH planning roundtable to discuss key issues to inform the research and project design moving forward.

The main topics of discussion can be broken down into the following key themes (in order of discussion): 1) Definitions, Biases, and Self-Identification as Entrepreneurs; 2) Mainstreaming Supports for Women and Diverse Groups; 3) Knowledge-Sharing through Hubs and the Advisory Group; 4) Need for Role Models and Developing the Pipeline; 5) Need for Diversity Data for Developing Programs; and 6) Impact.

Key Takeaways

- > Definitions, Biases, and Self-Identification as Entrepreneurs
 - > Underrepresented groups, including Black women and Indigenous people, do not self-identify as entrepreneurs; this impacts who gets supported in programming
 - > When the term “entrepreneurs” was used to call a meeting, it brought “the same people,” but saying the meeting was for “changemakers” brought artists, social scientists, etc.
 - > Even the language of “self-employment” can exclude some groups; the term self-employed carries a stigma in some communities
 - > Some self-employed women do not self-identify as a CEO; there is the idea that if you’re not intending to scale, you are not an entrepreneur
 - > Ecosystem values in technology and profits to the exclusion of other forms of innovation
 - > Definitions of entrepreneurship are preoccupied with technology; technology is not the only pathway
 - > Progress can be seen in Zone expansion from DMZ to the Fashion Zone, Social Ventures Zone, and others
 - > There is still pushback from institutions who see investment in non-tech forms of entrepreneurship as a waste
- > Mainstreaming Supports for Women and Diverse Groups
 - > WEKH should highlight the diversity of women entrepreneurs using categories like geography, sector, background, and other dimensions
 - > There is recognition and support for women (e.g. Women Executive Honors Award, BDC, Calgary, Chamber of Commerce Halifax Awards), but it is fragmented
 - > Issues within mainstream organizations around diversity: there was an award at the Chamber of Commerce where only two women were present. If it is an issue of women not applying, organizations cannot stop there. They need to develop the pipeline to increase diversity in their awards.
 - > We do not need more women and diversity awards. We need more women winning mainstream awards. The Globe and Mail and the Catalyst leaders have very few women, and most of them are white.

- > Knowledge-Sharing through Hubs and the Advisory Group
- > WEKH has an advisory committee that meets monthly and has a research group. The local hubs are in communities in Halifax, Calgary, etc., and data is collected at the regional level.
- > Participants expressed the desire to be a part of the advisory group, and they wished to spread awareness among their members about this group and their work. There is a need for an open feedback mechanism (email, etc.) into the network by members of the community.
- > WEKH needs a sponsorship network; it needs door openers who will actively bring people in. There could be value in getting sponsors from people who are not in the space.
- > There could be an entrepreneurship model that mimics the 30% Club, where there is a target and a commitment. Sheldon Levy, Mary Ng's advisor, hangs out with Nadir Mohamed and others, and he was willing to take forward a set of principles that they would all adhere to like sponsoring, promoting women to leadership
- > Participants suggested the Hub should be cautious about targets. Sponsorship would be more like signing on for a mentorship program and pledging to help
- > Bottom-up and top-down approaches are needed. Policy is disjointed both nationally and locally. The hubs can rise above that by convening, bringing more people into the space and building them from the bottom-up. This will be paired with top-down endorsement.
- > Hubs should be more than collectors of information; they should be "networks" that collect and also disseminate information and connect to other resources.
- > One limitation of having the hubs in universities is the schools' focus on technology. At the Hunter Hub, decision-makers were resistant to initiatives that would shift the focus to fashion, food, and other fields, saying it was a waste of time.
- > However, universities work with the funding structure (give money to get money). WEKH offers 3 years in exchange for 3 years. Limitations in seeking funding from BDC, etc., but it can be guaranteed by the universities
- > Universities are also seen as impartial, neutral, and lack competing interests in most communities. Hubs are academic, but we have 50 partners, many of which are in industry, both women's and mainstream organizations. WEKH is committed to breaking down the walls in the mainstream.
- > WEKH will be more valuable the more organizations that are plugged in.
- > Need for Role Models and Developing the Pipeline
- > Young women must be prepared to be leaders, from junior high and high school, and we need to look at ways for parents to encourage their children in terms of entrepreneurship, and how to formulate entrepreneurial intent
- > In terms of the research, socioeconomic status comes into play. In terms of the idea of self-sufficiency, you need to see it. We need to promote the idea that the cause is not to self-aggrandize, but to contribute your talents.
- > When you see people in Regent Park and poorer areas, their awareness of opportunities is limited. It is harder if you grow up in an environment where there aren't a lot of opportunities, or you don't see anyone in that environment.

- > Without a parent or relative who had gone to university; young people do not know about joining networks, negotiating grades, etc.
- > Need for research on what social values amplify entrepreneurial intent and research on values that make it more challenging
- > Need for research on skills, how to manage resources, and how to better integrate this training into any program, not just business (social sciences, etc.)
- > Need for research and measurement on role models: Which part of the value comes from someone who looks and lives like you, and which part comes from the person who has the power, experience, etc. but looks nothing like you?
- > Often you want someone who has both of these attributes. It may be valuable to be intentional about adding men to the discussion.
- > We should be thinking about the impact of various training and services
- > Need for Diversity Data for Developing Programs
- > Need to look at social impacts, entrepreneurial training as essential skills
- > Data on equity seeking groups is growing within research journals, but not in places accessible to communities - need to improve publicly accessible research
- > There is also a lack of intersectional data and representation of smaller communities (i.e. aside from Indigenous, Black communities, etc.)
- > Language must be considered in inclusivity. There is exclusion of Black Francophone people in Toronto, in the labour market and other social spaces. Language is considered in translation, but not in action and in leadership. The DIN conference was the only [recent] conference in Toronto where the agenda was in French and English. Looking at impact means seeing how many PhD French-speaking people in call centres are transferred into meaningful work [mention of the Toronto French Business Network].
- > Impact
- > 2 billion in funding – need for impact and statistics for future funding
- > Example statistic: How many startups are becoming diverse because of the knowledge we have and the impact we shared?
- > WEKH can have a larger impact as the B2B, for example getting FedDev to apply the DAT across all their programs, as opposed to running more training programs.
- > Reaching male entrepreneurs who do not currently understand the importance of diversity

Speaker Bios



Patience Adamu

Community Benefits Specialist
Aecon Group Inc.

An experienced Communicator and Community Investor with a proven history of working in the education, sports and construction sectors, Patience Adamu has been active in the diversification of construction supply chains for about 5 years. With experience working for the largest transit infrastructure project in Canada as well as her current role working on the Joint Venture responsible for designing, building and maintaining the Finch West Light Rail Transit project. Patience specializes in delivering on community benefits agreements, through equity, diversity and inclusion in her role at the Aecon Group.



Elise Ahenkorah

Programs and Partnership Lead
UCalgary Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking 's WELab
Founder
#shemeets

Elise is the founder of #shemeets, a non profit that supports women of colour and Indigenous female entrepreneurs through mentorship and resource sharing. She joined the Hunter Hub in June 2018 as a Marketing and Communications Specialist. In her new role, she is leading the University of Calgary's first women in entrepreneurship program — WELab. Elise brings extensive experience in program development, fundraising, change management, institutional-wide strategic planning, public speaking and communications. She is also an award-winning entrepreneur as the inclusion strategist and founder of inclusion FACTOR, a data-driven inclusion and equity strategic planning firm. Her work has taken her across North America to speak about the power of inclusion and inclusive innovation in various sectors. In 2019, she received the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) Community Contributor award.



The Honourable Jean Augustine

Queen's Privy Council
Companion of the Order of Canada

Born in St. George's, Grenada in 1937, Jean lost her father at a young age, but blossomed into an outstanding young student raised by a wise grandmother.

In 1960, already a qualified teacher, Jean immigrated to Canada through the Canada-Caribbean Domestic Program. With focus, she attended Toronto Teachers College and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto.

Jean earned her Master's in Education degree while working as an elementary school teacher with the Metropolitan Separate School Board in Toronto. She would later become principal/supervisory officer while remaining deeply involved in grassroots efforts in the community.

Jean's contributions extended to many social causes. She was an active member on boards including York University Board of Trustees, The Hospital for Sick Children, the Donwood Institute, Harbourfront; and served as Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority. She was the National President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada. Her capacities were recognized by government leaders who requested her assistance when undertaking important initiatives — the development and launch of Canada's official multiculturalism policy in 1971; member of the Ontario Judicial Council; the Toronto Crime Inquiry; and the training of teachers in Equity and Diversity.

In 1993, Jean Augustine made history. She became the first African Canadian woman elected to Canada's House of Commons. She served as the Member of Parliament for the Toronto-area riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, winning four consecutive elections until her retirement from politics in 2006.

Jean's work as a parliamentarian included service as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Minister and Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, Chair of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee and Chair of the National Women's Caucus. In her final year, Jean was elected Deputy Speaker by her peers.



Dr. Rupa Banerjee

Associate Professor
Ryerson University

Dr. Rupa Banerjee is an Associate Professor of Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour in the Ted Rogers School of Management. Her research investigates the integration of immigrants and racial minorities into the Canadian labour market and society. Funded by SSHRC and the CIHR, her recent work has resulted in the adoption of fairer hiring practices (e.g. by the federal government) and in the development of a digital app that facilitates newcomer access to information and resources vital to successful settlement in Canada. Her research has significant implications for policymakers, employers, jobseekers and the immigrant-serving sector.



Julie Cafley

Executive Vice President, Programs and Partnerships
Public Policy Forum

Julie is an accomplished leader and academic with expertise in higher education leadership and governance. As Executive Vice-President, Julie builds bridges and enhances the profile and visibility of the PPF while directing its research, external partnership and membership teams. She takes a lead role in projects about democracy and governance, reconciliation, innovation and growth.

In her previous role as Chief of Staff to two presidents at the University of Ottawa, Julie worked closely with the senior executive team to develop and advance strategic initiatives. She also played a key role in profile-raising, fundraising and internal communications. Before her time in the president's office, Julie led the student recruitment and liaison portfolio.

Julie was chosen as one of the delegates for the Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference in 2012, and was honoured in 2010 as one of Ottawa's top 40 under 40. The Canadian Council for the Advancement in Education chose her as one of Canada's rising stars in higher education in 2000.

Julie is very passionate about diversity and the promotion of women in leadership roles. She is the inspiration behind cafileycommittee.org, an initiative designed to encourage the nomination and promotion of female leaders. Deeply committed to her community and to the world around her, Julie also lends her support to initiatives tackling poverty and literacy. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Parkinson Canada.

Julie holds a PhD in education leadership from the University of Ottawa. Her thesis focused on higher education leadership and governance through the lens of unfinished terms of Canadian university presidents. She also holds a MEd, which examined organizational change in the higher education sector, a BEd and a BA.



Paulina Cameron

CEO

Forum for Women Entrepreneurs

As CEO of the Forum for Women Entrepreneurs, Paulina leads a national organization that educates, mentors and connects women entrepreneurs to be wildly successful. She is the author of bestselling *Canada 150 Women: conversations with champions, leaders and luminaries*; and was the co-founder and president of Young Women in Business. Paulina serves on the Board of Directors for the YWCA Metro Vancouver, the Immigrant Employment Council of BC, and the Government of British Columbia's Small Business Roundtable. She has been recognized in the community by being selected as Business in Vancouver's Top 40 Under 40 2019, and being awarded the BCBusiness 2019 Most Influential Women in Finance Award, the Vancouver Board of Trade's inaugural Wendy McDonald Award, The International Alliance for Women Top 100 Award in Washington DC, the KPMG National Leadership Award, and the YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards.



Nouhaila Chelkhaoui

Founder

Scale Without Borders

Nouhaila is the founder of Scale Without Borders. In parallel, she is the Programs Lead at the Digital Media Zone (DMZ) DMZ for the DMZ Accelerator and has spearheaded the creation and execution of the DMZ Women Founders Accelerator, which also included a curated trip to New York City where DMZ Women Founders secured investments, closed customer deals, and participated in Y-Combinator's Female Founders Conference, connecting with Silicon Valley's tech leaders. In this role, she helps tech entrepreneurs scale their start-ups into world class businesses that create global impact. Nouhaila has worked closely with over 40 of Canada's most promising tech start-ups. Nouhaila was once a newcomer from Morocco when she came to Canada to attend the U of T as an international student. As an immigrant well immersed into Canada's tech ecosystem, Nouhaila is passionate about helping newcomer tech entrepreneurs access the abundant resources available here to scale their start-ups globally. This is the primary reason she founded Scale Without Borders, a one-stop shop for newcomer tech entrepreneurs in Canada. Previously, she helped run a start-up based out of the University of Toronto. Nouhaila has lived in 4 different countries and speaks 4 languages.



Dr. Wendy Cukier

Founder and Academic Director
Diversity Institute, Ryerson University

Dr. Wendy Cukier is one of Canada's leading experts in disruptive technologies, innovation processes and diversity. She has written more than 200 papers on technology, innovation and management and is coauthor of the bestseller *Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership from Java to Jurassic Park*. She is the Founder of Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, which she founded in 1999 and has led projects aimed at promoting the participation and advancement of underrepresented groups. Dr. Cukier has assisted organizations in becoming more inclusive through innovative programs such as DiversityLeads funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which tracks the progress, impediments and evidenced-based strategies for promoting diversity in organizations.



Brian DePratto

Senior Economist
TD Bank

A graduate of the University of British Columbia, Brian began his career with the Bank of Canada before joining TD Bank in 2014. In addition to producing the Canadian economic forecast, Brian also focuses on the day to day issues facing Canadians. He also contributes to a number of TD publications, and his commentary is frequently featured in financial media.



Cassandra Dorrington

President
Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council

Cassandra Dorrington and her team lead the charge of championing business relationships and economic growth of the Canadian supply chain through the inclusion of Aboriginal and Minority suppliers. During her tenure, Cassandra has been focused on in expansion of the CAMSC brand both nationally and internationally resulting in significant growth and impact in the Canadian marketplace.

Known for her involvement in both the business and community environment, Cassandra has been named one of Diversity Canada's Influential Women in Diversity and HR and sits on the National Advisory Council for the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises for the Government of Canada, the Black Business Enterprise, Dalhousie University Board of Governors as well as a national Departmental Audit Committee.

With approximately 400 certified suppliers, 85 corporate members and more \$4 Billion plus in diverse spend, CAMSC is a proud member of both (SDAC) Supplier Diversity Alliance Canada the single voice for supplier in Canada and GSDA promoting supplier diversity across the globe with sister councils in Australia, China, South Africa and the United Kingdom.



Stephanie Fontaine

Country Director
WeConnect International

A well-known leader in the supplier diversity community, Stephanie has spent the last 6 years working closely with entrepreneurs, corporations and not for profit organizations and government to increase procurement opportunities for diverse suppliers. As a business owner herself, Stephanie knows the importance a small gesture can make and she has long been committed to empowering others through sharing of knowledge and connections.

Following a decade in the corporate world, where she held operations, sales and procurement roles, Stephanie went on to assist some of North America's largest corporations to fulfill their objective of a more diversified supply chain. Through building programs and facilitating connections between buyers and suppliers, Stephanie has championed supplier diversity efforts and been a driving force for increased collaboration and innovation in the space.



Suzanne Gagnon

Canada Life Chair in Leadership Education
Asper Business School, University of Manitoba

Professor Gagnon joined the Asper School in Fall 2018. She holds the Great-West Life Chair in Leadership Education and is the inaugural director of the Institute for Leadership Development in the School. A professor of Organizational Behaviour at McGill University for 14 years, Prof Gagnon's courses engage the power of active, experiential learning including peer learning and reflection for leadership and management education at all levels. Prof Gagnon's research focuses on identity dynamics and leadership development in international firms, on emergent and collective leadership and its links to organizational change in both private and public sector organizations, and on social diversity and equality in business organization. She has also published on innovative pedagogy for leadership education. Her work is published in leading management and organization journals. Prof Gagnon has held several competitive grants to support her work including as a co-lead investigator for a five year SSHRC funded Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) entitled DiversityLeads/ DiversitéEnTête (2011-2017). She is an Editorial Board member of Leadership, the Sage journal, and Organization Studies.

Professor Gagnon holds a PhD in Management from Lancaster University and a Masters degree in Industrial Relations from Oxford University. Earlier in her academic career, she taught at both Oxford and Oxford Brookes Universities in the United Kingdom, and consulted in organizational change for KPMG Management Consulting.



Dr. Abby Goodrum

Professor and Program Co-ordinator, User Experience Design
Wilfrid Laurier University

Abby is a Professor and Program Coordinator for the User Experience Design degree at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus where she teaches courses in Design Thinking, UX/User-Centered Design, Information Architecture, and UX Research Methods. Before this, she was the Vice President for Research at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Prior to her appointment at Laurier, she held the Rogers Research Chair in News, Media, and Technology at Ryerson University where she was also Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Communication and Design. She also held faculty positions at Syracuse and Drexel Universities where she taught courses in Usability, Information Retrieval, Knowledge Management, Information Architecture, and Digital Reference.

Her research bridges multiple disciplines and appears in the journal literature of computer science, humanities, communication studies, information management, and media studies. For more than 20 years, her research has focused on the study of how humans seek, use, share, manipulate, store, retrieve, and organize digital multimedia. She was founding Director for Social Science Research in a \$23M Canadian Centre of Excellence (NCE GRANDE) that served as both a research network and commercialization engine in order to address complex issues in digital media, and transform multidisciplinary research into user-centered solutions.

Abby served on a variety of research committees, management boards and boards of directors, and has extensive experience in peer review processes at all levels including: the Ontario Ministry for Research and Innovation, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation (U.S.), and the Institute for Museum and Library Studies. She has served on the boards of Canada's Technology Triangle, the Canadian Digital Media Network, the Accelerator Centre, SHARCNET, the Southern Ontario Water Consortium, and the Ontario Council on University Research.



Brooke Gordon

Senior Advisor, Women Entrepreneurs
Business Development Bank of Canada

Brooke Gordon was recently appointed to the new position of Senior Advisor, Women Entrepreneur (WE) for BDC in Ontario where she assumes the responsibility of helping majority women owned businesses accelerate their growth and scale up — and ensuring women thrive through every step of their business journey with the help of dedicated partner organizations and regional hubs from across the WE ecosystem.

Brooke joined BDC in 2017 with the High Impact Firms (HIF), Advisory Services where she led a team of Business Advisors and Analysts that support the Growth Driver Program as the HIF Service Delivery Manager for Ontario. Prior to joining our organization, Brooke served as a trusted businesses advisor and consultant for over 19 years in the areas of strategic planning, organizational development and operations.

Brooke is a weight lifting enthusiast and certified Health Coach who is passionate about nutrition and implementing plans that are developed with a focus on sustaining a work life balance for the whole team. She is a proud volunteer with Soroptimist International, an organization that provides financial support for women enrolled in training (Live Your Dream) and career counseling for girls in high school (Dream It Be It).

Brooke is certified in ITIL and holds a Master's in commercialization (MEEI), in addition to both a Bachelor's and Master's in Engineering Physics from McMaster University, where she was awarded a patent in semiconductor manufacturing processes. She currently teaches the Engineering and Management final capstone project.



Danielle Graham

Principal
Dream Maker Ventures

Danielle Graham, founder of Communitech's Fierce Founders program, joined Dream Maker Ventures as a principal to help the VC firm to raise a \$75 million Diversity Fund.

Dream Maker Ventures is the investment arm of Dream Maker Corp., the first Canadian venture capital fund founded by persons of colour and women, focused on investing in diverse, underrepresented, and underestimated entrepreneurs. The firm is currently working to secure LPs, with the target of launching a \$75 million fund, named Diversity Fund I. Danielle brings to Dream Maker Ventures experience fighting to bring women's equality to the Canadian entrepreneur and investment world. She founded Communitech's women entrepreneurs bootcamp, Fierce Founders, in 2016, which has since grown into two bootcamps a year, as well as an accelerator providing \$500,000 annually to early-stage female-led startups.

Danielle started her own company, Crio Water, focused on a patented water purification device that offered a sustainable impact because of its high recovery rate while completing her MBA at Laurier University in Kitchener. With her experience at Communitech, and as an entrepreneur herself, Graham started to notice she was often the only female founder in the room. When the Fierce Founders program was launched at Communitech, about eight percent of startups had one female founder and it is now up to 29 percent.



Chioma Ifeanyi-Okoro

Founder
My African Corner

Chioma is an award-winning speaker and strategy consultant focused on delivering business growth and personal brand building strategies to students, professionals, women entrepreneurs, large enterprises and professional associations across the world.

She is also the founder of My African Corner, a platform dedicated to advancing its community of 3000+ black professionals and entrepreneurs spread across Canada, United States and Europe through providing access to education, networks and resources in partnership with global brands.

She has been recognized by Betakit as one of 80 Women in Canadian Tech worth following, by Elevate Tech Fest as a Leader in the Canadian Innovation ecosystem, been nominated for a Toronto Region Board of Trade Business Excellence Award for Young Professional of the Year, received the University of Toronto African Alumni Association African Scholars Social Innovation Award, and the Points International Ltd Points for Good award for outstanding commitment to community.

Her work has been featured in Globe and Mail, GlobalLive Media, PayPal Blog and more. She currently sits on the CPA Emerging Leaders Advisory Board, Civic Action's Future of Work Champions Council and is a founding executive of Black Professionals in Technology Network.



Vinita Jajware

President

Toronto Insurance Women's Association

Vinita Jajware is President of the Toronto Insurance Women's Association (TIWA), a not-for-profit trade association. Established in 1960, TIWA has a rich history within the insurance industry of producing compelling educational events and unparalleled networking opportunities. Vinita was elected President in 2016 after serving several years on the Board of Directors in senior positions. Under her leadership she has modernized the organization's goals and has successfully reinvigorated a celebrated staple of the insurance industry. As President of TIWA, Vinita acts as a resource for the entire insurance community, including brokers; underwriters; claims; and risk management professionals.

Along with her work with TIWA, Vinita is also the Vice President, Operations & Business Development with the Brosz Group of Companies, an engineering firm with operations rooted in the Construction and Insurance Industry. Vinita is responsible for the management and financial oversight of the entire organization, including Enterprise Risk Management. Originally a small, family run firm, Vinita has guided Brosz to year over year growth without losing its small-business and customer-first roots.

A graduate of the University of Guelph with a Bachelors of Commerce, Vinita has since earned her Certificate in Risk Management from the University of Toronto and is a designated Canadian Risk Manager through the Global Risk Management Institute. Vinita also holds a Certificate in Construction Law from Osgoode Hall Law School.



Sarah Kaplan

Director Institute for Gender and the Economy, Professor

University of Toronto

Sarah Kaplan is Distinguish Professor, Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, and Professor of Strategic Management at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto. She is a co-author of the bestselling business book, *Creative Destruction* as well as *Survive and Thrive: Winning Against Strategic Threats to Your Business*. Her latest book, *The 360° Corporation: From Stakeholder Trade-offs to Transformation* appeared in 2019. Her research has covered how organizations participate in and respond to the emergence of new fields and technologies in biotechnology, fiber optics, financial services, nanotechnology and most recently, the field emerging at the nexus of gender and finance. She recently authored "Gender Equality as an Innovation Challenge" (2017) in the *Rotman Management Magazine*, "The Risky Rhetoric of Female Risk Aversion" (2016) in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, "Meritocracy: From Myth to Reality" in the *Rotman Management Magazine* (2015), and "The Rise of Gender Capitalism," in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2014). Her current work focuses on applying an innovation lens to understanding the challenges for achieving gender equality.

Formerly a professor at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (where she remains a Senior Fellow), and a consultant and innovation specialist for nearly a decade at McKinsey & Company in New York, she completed her doctoral research at the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). She has a BA with honors in Political Science from UCLA and an MA in International Relations and International Economics from the School for Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.



Dr. Mary Kilfoil

President

Canadian Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Founder and CEO

Innovate Atlantic Inc.

Dr. Mary Kilfoil, President of the Canadian Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship and Founder and CEO of Innovate Atlantic Inc. Over the past six years, Dr. Kilfoil has reshaped entrepreneurship teaching and programming at Dalhousie University. She designed and launched the campus-wide, award-winning immersive Launch Dal program based on lean entrepreneurship and design thinking methodologies. She has received numerous teaching awards and in 2014, Mary received the national Entrepreneurship Educator award from Startup Canada.

She has more than 20 years' experience in the private sector and held the position of Senior Economist at Gardner Pinfold Consultants, with over 80 major reports and publications related to innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development to her credit, including research examining issues and challenges facing women entrepreneurs in the advanced technology sectors. Mary's non-profit organization, Innovate Atlantic Inc., focusses on assisting early stage companies establish market traction.



Alison Kirkland

CEO

Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada

Alison was named the inaugural CEO of WEOC in September 2019 but has been working with women entrepreneurs for close to 20 years. A seasoned communications professional, she joined the team of the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba in 2002 where she spearheaded the re-development of the Centre's brand, the creation of a comprehensive training program and participated in the development of innovative programming and funding initiatives. An APEC-IBIZ Certified Small Business Counsellor, Alison has worked directly with women entrepreneurs at various business stages and in urban and rural communities throughout Manitoba. Over the past seven years, she has travelled to Ukraine and Vietnam to share knowledge and best practices gained as a result Canada's support for women entrepreneurs. A graduate of the University of Manitoba, Alison is an active board member of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.



Ruby Latif

Research Associate

Ryerson University

Ruby Latif is a Doctor of Social Science candidate at Royal Roads University. She has over 15 years' experience building strategic partnerships having cultivated relationships with over 1,000 community organizations across Ontario, and engaged with over 500 ethnic media outlets. She is a sought-after political strategist who has worked with senior leadership at all 3-levels of government.

As a Research Associate at the Diversity Institute, her research focuses on workplace diversity using an intersectional lens that goes beyond gender. Her Doctoral research seeks to understand how Muslim women in Canada construct their identities in their professional lives, and how they navigate those identities in the workplace.

Her work has been published in academic journals and she has contributed to government policy documents. She hopes to use her experience and academic pursuits to drive policy change.



Shannon MacDonald

Managing Director
Accenture

Shannon MacDonald, MHSc, BBA, FCA, CPA, ICD.D is a Managing Director for Accenture Canada. As the lead for the health practice, she brings her experience to a new and rapidly modernizing health and public-sector environment. Accenture's strategic focus on Artificial Intelligence, Digital and Security services makes it a very strong advisor in the current Canadian (and global) health care environment.

Leveraging this strategy, Shannon applies her experience to enable change in areas that she has long been passionate about. She leads the innovation agenda for Accenture's Canadian Health and Public-Sector practice, building on her strengths of identifying innovations for acquisition and implementation. She also leads the Provincial Government practices and is very adept at understanding the workings of governments and how they support the provision of health care. Shannon is an Associate at the Creative Destruction Labs in Atlantic Canada and also sits on the Board of the University of Prince Edward Island and is the Chair of the Governance Committee.



Rahima Mamdani

Vice President, People and Culture
United Way

Rahima is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership on organizational culture, talent management, human resources, and Diversity & Inclusion. Rahima began her career at Bell Canada and has worked for Saville Systems, Rogers iMedia and Buy Buddy Inc. Her most recent volunteer work includes participation on the Talent Advisory Council for United Way Worldwide, the Steering Committee of the Common Good Retirement Plan, and committees supporting diversity and inclusion at the Association of Fundraising Professionals and Sidewalk Labs. Rahima holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology and a Masters of Library Sciences from the University of Toronto and is a Certified Human Resources Executive (CHRE).



Laura McGee

Founder & CEO
Diversio

Laura is the founder and CEO of Diversio, a software company that uses machine learning to help organizations become more inclusive. Diversio works with companies, asset managers and development banks in North America, South America and Europe, and has been featured at global events like the G20 and Davos.

Prior to Diversio, Laura was a consultant at McKinsey & Company in their Public and Social Sector Practice. She is a serial founder of social movements like #GoSponsorHer, #HackInclusion and Summit Leaders. She was named a Top 25 Women of Influence in 2017 and currently serves as Co-Chair of Canada's Expert Panel on Women Entrepreneurs.

Laura's board positions include ArcTern Ventures, Global Citizen, University of Waterloo, and Ted Rogers School of Management. She is a David Rockefeller Fellow with the Trilateral Commission.



Eleanor McIntyre

Managing Director, Chief Operating Officer
BlackRock Canada

Eleanor McIntyre is Canada's Chief Operating Officer for BlackRock, a global investment management and technology solutions firm that manages approximately US\$6 trillion in assets on behalf of investors worldwide.

Through its institutional client and iShares businesses, and growing technology and advisory services, BlackRock Canada helps a wide range of investors build better financial futures. The BlackRock Canada team is focused on sharing the very best of our firm's global capabilities and local expertise with our Canadian clients. Eleanor has held her current position since October 2013 and is responsible for strategy, business analytics and project management for the Canadian region.

Eleanor has been with BlackRock since 2006 and has held a number of positions within the Human Resources team prior to moving to the Canadian COO role. Prior to joining the firm, Eleanor was Managing Director of Human Resources for a Canadian mutual fund company.



Paul-Emile McNab

Director, Business Development and Strategic Initiatives
Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

Paul-Emile re-joined the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business on October 31st, 2016. Prior to that, he was active in the field of Research, Consulting and Business Development for fifteen years. In 2007, he completed his honours degree in History, Political Science and Canadian Studies at the University of Toronto. In 2010, he completed his Masters in Environmental Studies at York University with a focus on Indigenous knowledge and a Major Research Paper titled The Traditional Rights of Ways on the Walpole Island First Nation.

He is a Métis scholar who has been published in numerous books, articles and magazines. He has served as a Member of the Research Advisory Committee with Canadian Energy Research Institute, a Member of the Leadership Advisory Circle for the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship with the City of Toronto and the Chair of the National Advisory Committee with ORIGIN Inc. He is of Métis descent with ancestors attached to Métis Scrip applications and currently resides in Toronto.



Senator, The Honourable Marilou McPhedran

Senate of Canada

Marilou McPhedran is a human rights lawyer, professor and activist, appointed as an independent senator in the Parliament of Canada by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in November 2016. Marilou was one of the most influential leaders of the 1981 Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Women on the Constitution conference- the grass roots social movement of women across Canada resulting in stronger equality rights in the constitution. She co-founded several internationally recognized non-profit Canadian organizations such as the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF); the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC); and the Gerstein Crisis Centre for homeless discharged psychiatric patients.

She was the founding Principal of the University of Winnipeg Global College and has facilitated student access to UN sessions for more than 20 years to provide practical skill building by providing rapporteur services to NGO presentations. She is a founding board member of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (Young Women for Peace and Leadership) and has given extensive voluntary support to civil society organizations that focus on peacebuilding and women's rights, including the Afghan Women's Organization, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, and Manitoba Women for Women of South Sudan.



Amanda Munday

CEO

The Workaround

Amanda is the Founder and CEO of The Workaround, a parent-friendly workspace with childcare in Toronto. She is also the author of *Day Nine: A Postpartum Depression Memoir*. She has received international media coverage, including being named an Inspirational Speaker in Forbes Magazine, and is a regular contributor to The Globe and Mail. Her work has been showcased by The Toronto Star, CP24 Breakfast, CBC, The Associated Press, Toronto Life and more. Amanda is an active advocate for universal childcare. In November 2017, she secured a federal petition on universal childcare which was tabled in the House of Commons and sponsored by MP Julie Dabrusin. Amanda has served as President of the Board of Directors for Creative Preschool of East Toronto since 2017 and serves on the Board of Directors for the Danforth Mosaic Business Improvement Area (BIA).



Dr. Eddy Ng

Professor and James and Elizabeth Freeman Chair in Management

Bucknell University

Eddy Ng is a Professor and the James and Elizabeth Freeman Chair in Management at Bucknell University. Prior to that, he held the F.C. Manning Chair in Economics and Business at Dalhousie University. His research focuses on managing diversity for organizational competitiveness, the changing nature of work and organizations, and managing across generations. His work has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grants. He has published 4 books and more than 80 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* and an Associate Editor of *Personnel Review*. He is also the Program Chair-Elect for the Gender and Diversity in Organizations division of the Academy of Management (2019-2024).



Hon. Ratna Omidvar

Senator for Ontario

Senate of Canada

Ratna Omidvar is an internationally recognized voice on migration, diversity and inclusion. She came to Canada from Iran in 1981 and her own experiences of displacement, integration and citizen engagement have been the foundation of her work. In April 2016, Ms. Omidvar was appointed to the Senate of Canada as an independent senator representing Ontario. As a member of the Senate's Independent Senators Group she holds a leadership position as Scroll Manager. Senator Omidvar also served as Deputy Chair of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector.

Senator Omidvar is a Councillor on the World Refugee Council, a Director at the Samara Centre for Democracy and Chair Emerita for the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council.

Previously at Ryerson University, Senator Omidvar was a Distinguished Visiting Professor and founded the Global Diversity Exchange, a think-and-do tank on diversity, migration and inclusion. Prior to her appointments at Ryerson, Senator Omidvar was the President of Maytree, where she played a lead role in local, national and international efforts to promote the integration of immigrants.

Senator Omidvar is co-author of *Flight and Freedom: Stories of Escape to Canada* (2015), an Open Book Toronto best book of 2015 and one of the Toronto Star's top five good reads from Word on the Street. She is also a contributor to *The Harper Factor* (2016) and co-editor of *Five Good Ideas: Practical Strategies for Non-Profit Success* (2011). Senator Omidvar received a Honorary Degree, Doctor of Laws, from Ryerson University in 2018 and from York University in 2012.

Senator Omidvar was appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2005 and became a Member of the Order of Canada in 2011, with both honours recognizing her advocacy work on behalf of immigrants and devotion to reducing inequality in Canada. In 2014, she received the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in recognition of her contribution to the advancement of German-Canadian relations.

Senator Omidvar has also been recognized by Canada's national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, by being named as its Nation Builder of the Decade for Citizenship in 2010. She was named to the inaugural Global Diversity List sponsored by *The Economist* magazine in 2015, as one of the Top 10 Diversity Champions worldwide. In 2016, she also received Lifetime Achievement Awards from CivicAction and the Canadian Urban Institute, honouring her strong commitment to civic leadership and city building. In 2018, Senator Omidvar was named as one of the RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award winners and in 2019 she received the Dr. Jean Mayer Global Citizenship Award from Tufts University.



Dr. Pamela Palmater

Chair in Indigenous Governance
Ryerson University

Dr. Pam Palmater is a Mi'kmaw lawyer, professor, author, and social justice activist from Eel River Bar First Nation in New Brunswick. She has four university degrees, including a BA from St. Thomas in Native Studies; an LLB from University of New Brunswick, and her Masters and Doctorate in Law from Dalhousie University specializing in Indigenous law. She currently holds the position of Professor and Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University.

A practicing lawyer for 20 years, Pam has been volunteering and working in First Nation issues for over 25 years on a wide range of issues like socio-economic conditions, Aboriginal and treaty rights, and legislation impacting First Nations. Her books, *Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens* and *Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity*, and her other publications focus on Indigenous law, politics, and governance and the importance of native sovereignty and nation-building.

Pam was one of the spokespeople and public educators for the Idle No More movement and advocates alongside other movements focusing on social justice and human rights. She is frequently called as a legal expert before Parliamentary and United Nations committees dealing with laws and policies impacting Indigenous peoples. Her current research focuses on police racism, abuse and sexualized violence against Indigenous women and girls and its contribution to the crisis of murdered, missing, traded, and exploited Indigenous women and girls.

Pam is a well-known public speaker and media commentator – considered one of Canada’s Top 25 Influential Movers and Shakers by the Financial Post and the Top 5 Most Influential Lawyer in Human Rights by Canadian Lawyer Magazine. She has been recognized with many awards for her social justice advocacy on behalf of First Nations generally, and Indigenous women and children specifically, including the 2012 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in Social Justice, 2012 Women’s Courage Award in Social Justice, and the Margaret Mead Award in Social Justice 2016, to name a few.



Mark Patterson

Executive Director
Magnet, Ryerson University

Mark Patterson is a changemaker pioneering new approaches in career development, inclusive recruitment and contextualized labour market information to drive social and economic change. For more than a decade, he has focused on providing opportunities for diverse job seekers and addressing the needs of employers.

As Executive Director, Mark leads Magnet, a technology enabled social innovation project based at Ryerson University. A first-of-its-kind in North America, Magnet harnesses intelligent matching technology, data and analytics to effectively connect people, businesses, and organizations to opportunity; with the singular goal of helping regions and communities collaborate and grow. Magnet provides the digital infrastructure for Canada’s new Future Skills Centre, a forward-thinking research centre with a focus on how to best prepare Canadians today for workforce opportunities of the future.

Mark serves on the following boards:

- > Founding Member of the Future Skills Centre Advisory Board
- > National Stakeholder Advisory for the Labour Market Information Council (LMIC)
- > Advisory Board member on the “Employers’ Partnership Table” in support of Ontario’s Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities
- > Advisory Board for Ontario’s Office of the Fairness Commissioner, which oversees regulated professions in the province of Ontario
- > Advisory Board member for Compute Ontario’s Industry Engagement Committee



Sadaf Parvaiz

Director, Americas Diversity and Inclusiveness Office
Ernst & Young

As Director – Americas Inclusiveness Office at EY, Sadaf Parvaiz is responsible for developing and implementing strategies and initiatives supporting the firm’s efforts to create an inclusive workplace in Canada, the US and South America. She serves as a consultant to help EY leadership teams drive and execute the D&I strategy across the Americas. Sadaf has led and facilitated several high-profile leadership development programs and training internationally. As a thought leader in the D&I space Sadaf is highly sought after to share her perspective at conferences, on external panels and with EY clients. Prior to her role in the Americas Inclusiveness Office, Sadaf worked in the assurance and audit practice of EY in Toronto.

Sadaf received a Bachelor of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business at York University (Canada). She has a Chartered Professional Accountant designation from CPA Ontario and holds a Certified Public Accounting designation in the US. She has also completed a Certificate in Intercultural Studies from the University of British Columbia and provides internal coaching and consulting to leadership teams across the Americas.

Sadaf has served as a board member on the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and previously served on Board of Directors of the United Way of Peel Region as the Secretary and Chair of the Nominations Committee.

Sadaf lives in Oakville, is married to a fellow CPA and has three daughters. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, working out and watching her daughters play hockey.



Svend Robinson

Former Member of Parliament

After graduating from high school in north Burnaby, BC, Svend went on to study science and law at UBC, graduating with the top scholarship, the Sherwood Lett Memorial Scholarship. Svend also served as a labourer-teacher with Frontier College in northern Ontario. He did post graduate study at London School of Economics, and was called to the BC Bar as a lawyer. Svend was a federal New Democrat MP for over 25 years representing Burnaby and Vancouver, from 1979-2004. He was widely recognized as one of the most outstanding backbench MPs, and had a legendary reputation for serving his constituents. Svend was particularly active on justice, human rights, environment and international issues, and was the first openly gay MP in Canada. He has received many awards and honours for his work. For the past decade Svend served in a senior humanitarian diplomatic post with The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, based in Switzerland, in charge of Parliamentary engagement for resource mobilization, access to medicines, human rights and gender equality. Recently he was the federal NDP candidate in the BC riding of Burnaby North – Seymour, finishing a strong second in that race. Svend lives with his partner of 25 years, Max Riveron.



Dr. Tania Saba

BMO Chaired Professor in Diversity and Governance
Université de Montréal

Tania SABA is the founder and holder of the BMO Chair in Diversity and Governance and is a Full Professor at the School of Industrial Relations at the Université de Montréal.

Tania is an expert on issues of diversity management, workforce aging, intergenerational value differences, knowledge transfer, future skills, transformation of employment relations and work organization. Over the course of her career, she has contributed to more than sixty book chapters and scientific articles. Her publications were awarded on many occasions. She collaborates on major research projects with public and private organizations on issues of employment integration and adaptation of disadvantaged groups. Tania oversees the Quebec and Canada Francophone chapter for the Ryerson-led Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH) project. She is a member of CRIMT (Interuniversity Centre on Globalization and Work), CERIU (the Montreal Centre for International Studies) and OBVIA (International Observatory on the Social Impacts of AI and Digital technologies).

In addition to her academic career, Tania Saba has held several leadership positions at the Université de Montréal; first female Chair of the School of Industrial Relations (2008-2010); Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies (2010-2012) and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and External Affairs at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (2012-2015). She acted as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science from 2015 to 2017.



Denise Shortt

Vice President Industry Development and Diversity and Inclusion
Information Technology Association of Canada

Denise Shortt is an internationally respected writer, researcher and speaker specializing in information technology, gender issues, entrepreneurship and innovation. Denise co-authored *Technology with Curves: Women Reshaping the Digital Landscape* (HarperCollins, 2000) and *Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership from Java to Jurassic Park* (Wiley & Sons, 2002).

Denise is also a former faculty member of Ryerson University's School of Information Technology Management and helped to found Ryerson's Diversity Institute which specializes in gender research. She also founded SwingThink, a marketing and communications company focused on online community building, social media and gender research. Denise was co-founder and President of Wired Woman Toronto (launched in 1996) and currently sits on the Board of Directors for Women in Communications and Technology (WCT). She has a Masters in Technology from Harvard University and studied gender and technology at MIT. Denise was recently awarded a CWC Leadership Award for her life-time of work as a champion for the advancement of women.



Dr. Malinda Smith

Professor
University of Alberta

Dr. Malinda Smith is a full professor in the Department of Political Science, a 2018 Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Fellow in the Faculty of Arts and a Provost Fellow in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy at the University of Alberta. She is also the President of the International Studies Association (ISA)-Canada. Her research and engaged scholarship draws on critical theoretical perspectives in the social sciences and the humanities to explore questions of equity, human rights and social justice, African political economy and security studies, and diversity and decoloniality in higher education. Her recent published research traverses four main areas: first, diversity in theory and practice; second, critical African security studies including the temporality and spatiality of terrorism; third, the genealogy of poverty and inequality, and, fourth, gender, critical race and intersectionality in higher education.



Ashley Walker

Vice President, Operations
The Evidence Network

Ashley Walker is Vice President of Operations at The Evidence Network (TEN), a boutique consulting firm located in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Her work focuses on measuring the impact of entrepreneurship and research support programs delivered through incubators, accelerators, economic development organizations, and research institutes. Recent projects include a Canada-wide study to

demonstrate the impacts of Indigenous Economic Development Officers, an evaluation of Business Finland's six health and wellbeing SME support programs, and an assessment of the impact of SME support programs in Vietnam and Cambodia. Throughout her work, Ashley is a passionate advocate for the use of evidence-based metrics in informing programming decisions for entrepreneur support programs. She holds a Bachelor of Economics and Society from the University of Calgary, and an MBA from the Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa.



Rachel Wernick

Senior Assistant Deputy Minister
Employment Social Development, Government of Canada

Rachel Wernick is Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Skills and Employment Branch (SEB) at Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Early in her career, Rachel held a variety of policy and program positions within former versions of the Department (HRDC, HRSDC) including Employment Insurance policy and Literacy and Essential Skills programming.

Before joining ESDC, Rachel was Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Planning and Corporate Affairs at Canadian Heritage. Prior to this, Rachel held executive positions with the Privy Council Office, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and created and led the National Fighter Procurement Secretariat within Public Works and Government Services Canada. Rachel is Co-Champion of the Clerk's Policy Community initiative, which aims to enhance supports for policy professionals across the Government of Canada.

Rachel holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with Joint Honours in Political Science and History from McGill University and a Graduate Diploma in International Development and Cooperation from the University of Ottawa. Following her graduate studies, Rachel worked with several international development organizations, including two years working in a Vietnamese refugee camp in Malaysia.



Kory Wilson

Executive Director Indigenous Partnerships and Initiatives
British Columbia Institute of Technology

Kory Wilson, BSc. JD, is the Executive Director of Indigenous Initiatives and Partnerships for British Columbia Institute of Technology. She is Kwakwaka'wakw. Kory is Chair of the National Indigenous Education Committee of Colleges and Institutions Canada and she has over 20 years of experience in post-secondary education, community development, and the legal profession. She has a deep commitment to education and has dedicated her working life to ensuring that under-represented learners succeed, both within learning institutions and the larger community. Good governance and supporting communities to move towards self-government is a specialty and passion. Innovative and creative solutions are needed to move Reconciliation into ReconciliACTION. Education is the key and access to knowledge is vital to move everyone forward.



Megann Willson

Partner and CEO
PANOPTIKA

CCSBE Board member

Megann is currently CEO and Partner at PANOPTIKA, a boutique consultancy she co-founded in 2001 serving B2B clients in Biotech, Pharma, Healthcare, Technology, and Industrial Spaces. Megann holds an MBA from Queen's University with a specialization in Marketing Strategy, and is the former Director of Strategy and Marketing at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Management. Megann loves challenging and interesting projects where she can help Business Developers, Marketers, and Founders – especially those in their second career, to find, understand, and keep customers.

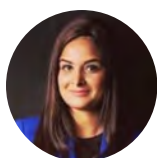


Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Toronto City Council

Kristyn Wong-Tam was elected to Toronto City Council in 2010 and has an extensive career investing in the city through both the public and private sectors. She was an accomplished human rights advocate, entrepreneur, and supporter of the arts. Recognized for her focused advancement of diverse cultural and urban economic renewal, Kristyn was appointed to Mayor David Miller's Economic Competitiveness Advisory Committee which produced Toronto's Agenda for Prosperity in 2008. Kristyn was also the co-founder of Asian Canadians for Equal Marriage, and the past president of the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter that successfully lobbied the federal government for the Chinese head tax apology and redress.

Kristyn is currently working in partnership with numerous Indigenous organizations including the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business to create the world's largest Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Toronto's Downtown East. She is vice-Chair of the Toronto Board of Health and Chair of the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, which provides advice to City Council on the identification, prevention, and elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities with the goal of achieving social, cultural and economic well-being. Kristyn is a founding board member of the Toronto Biennial of Art and was voted Toronto's Best City Councillor by NOW magazine readers four years in a row (2015-2018).



Fatima Zaidi

Co-founder & CEO
Quill Inc.

Fatima is the co-founder and CEO of Quill Inc. the world's first one-stop marketplace where podcasters can find pre-vetted expert freelancers who will save them time, improve their podcast quality, and help grow their audience. As a member of the National Speakers Bureau, Fatima has spoken at various events around the world on issues surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion, and has shared stages with Gary V, Arlene Dickinson, and most recently Richard Branson. In addition to being a commentator for Global News and BNN, she is a frequent contributor to publications including The Globe and Mail, Huffington Post, Financial Post, and BetaKit. Over the past few years she has been named as a Top 30 under 30 Marketer and Sales Developer by Marketing Magazine, Young Professional of the Year by Notable Life, and one of Flare Magazine's Top 100 Canadian Women.



Despina Zanganas

Co-founder

Lean in Canada

Despina spent 20 years in the digital design space, co-founding companies, winning awards, and killing it as creative director. In 2013, Sheryl Sandberg's book inspired her to co-found an organization called Lean In Canada. A strong proponent of empowering women. Despina's passion for providing networking opportunities, building communities and empowering women to be financially independent has led her to become a public speaker, advisor, mentor, coach and realtor. Despina has been featured on CBC Radio, the National Post, Sun News Network, Livabl and in Flare Magazine discussing issues that are pertinent to women.

