

Ask Me Anything: Representation in Leadership



Featuring: Nicole Elmy, Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins and Wendy Desir
Co-Hosted By: Samantha Moonsammy and Parthiban Muthukumarasamy

EVENT DESCRIPTION

We've heard from previous panelists the importance of representation in leadership and management. The Government of Canada, including its Public Service leadership, should reflect the beautiful mosaic of Canada. Decisions cannot be made without engaging and involving the populations they represent. For this Ask Me Anything we've asked a group of diverse Government of Canada Executives to share their experience and provide advice on how we can learn more and do better. This Ask Me Anything will focus on representation in leadership, asking the courageous question: "Are we on the right path?" Ask Me Anything is hosting this conversation with Reginald Desjardins, Nicole Elmy, Wendy Desir, Chris Scipio, Parthiban Muthukumarasamy and Samantha Moonsammy.

OUR PANELISTS



Wendy Desir, Director, Workforce Performance & Development at Department of National Defence

In 2001, when I joined the Federal Public Service through a self-identified process for Visible Minorities in the PE Category I had never dreamed of becoming an Executive, 20 years later via another self-identified process to address bias at the EX Level. I just knew that I needed to work hard simply because I was raised with the belief that our most difficult experiences often lead to the greatest moments of our lives. This has been the foundation upon which I have built my life.

I have a diverse background with a unique blend of experience leading a broad range of operational, corporate and international functions, including in Foreign Affairs, Trade, Consular and Security abroad.

Everything that happened in my life happened by design, not by accident.

There are key moments in life that shape the course of who you are and who you'll become.

First, the conditions in which I immigrated to Canada were very difficult, especially the political context in Haiti. Secondly, the reality check of being a woman and Visible Minority both in private and public workplace were a roller-coaster and quite hard. Thirdly, the experience of being a single mother pushed me to another level and I give thanks to my daughter for strengthening my wings so I could fly like an eagle above the challenges I had to face which enhanced my resilience.

Was I lucky? My answer to that is that I don't get lucky...I make my own luck.

Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins, Manager, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Born Reginald Akem Aton Desjardins, father of two, husband of one, Master of ceremony for various events and a strong believer in physical activity.

Reginald was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and moved to Montreal in the late 80s to reunite with his family. He is the youngest of three, with two older sisters. Growing up in a single-parent home, he modeled himself after his sisters and mother which later helped him become a father and husband. His family survived Haiti's history of violence and dictatorship. He recalls being evacuated from school as gunmen were terrorizing the streets a few blocks away. His family moved to Ottawa in the mid-90s where he spent most of his teenage years and adulthood. He now calls Ottawa home and the best city to live in.

Starting his career as a Programmer Analyst for the Royal Canadian Mint and various not-for-profit organizations, Reginald also spent 13 years at Canada Post in increasingly senior positions, as Senior Manager in Business Operations and Planning for a Digital Division and an Advisor to the Director and Senior Vice President in Strategic Planning.

He joined the public service, indeterminately, in 2020, and is now Manager, Financial Oversight and Reporting, IT Framework Enablement at Environment and Climate Change Canada.

He has a BA in Marketing and Public Relations from l' Université du Québec en Outaouais, and is also a graduate from Collège La Cité in Computer Programming.

Nicole Elmy, Director of Indigenous Relations, Canadian Coast Guard

Nicole Elmy is looking forward to speaking about her interesting journey to the Executive cadre in the federal government. Her varied experiences over the past 15 years range from working in Enterprise Architecture and Information Management in long-term acting executive assignments, to working directly with Deputy Ministers to advance Reconciliation priorities with Indigenous Peoples.

Nicole is a proud member of the Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte First Nation. She lives her passion for advancing Reconciliation through respecting each individual's ongoing journey and promoting the voice of Indigenous youth in the Public Service. Nicole advocates strongly for education and cultural awareness as meaningful demonstrations of Reconciliation commitments.

She has recently taken on a new role that will position her to advance Reconciliation at the Canadian Coast Guard. As the first Director of Indigenous Relations (CCG), Nicole is accountable for enabling First Nations, Metis, and Inuit partnerships and collaboration across Canada, at CCG and in inter-departmental fora. Before joining CCG, Nicole led the establishment of the Canada Border Services Agency's first Indigenous Affairs Secretariat, delivering on key commitments including an Indigenous Framework and Strategy for the Agency.



NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

Thank you for participating in the September AMA : Representation in Leadership! We are thrilled to have collected and curated an extensive list of resources we believe are helpful for our colleagues, we realize that this is not an exhaustive list. We recognize that not every resource will be valuable to each reader, though we hope that each reader can find helpful and interesting resources within our guide.

- In collaboration, The AMA Team

SUPPORT

Remember, **support is available for you and your family when you need it**, some of the discussions at the AMA or the content shared may bring forward past trauma or uncomfortable feelings, please seek professional help if this is the case.

Employee Assistance Program - Canada.ca Toll-free: 1-800-268-7708 TTY (for people with hearing impairments): 1-800-567-5803

The **Canada Suicide Prevention Service** - Connect with a responder now by calling our toll-free number 1.833.456.4566.

RESOURCES

WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS - STUDIES

[Diversity Wins: Why Inclusion Matters](#)

[L'importance de la diversité culturelle en entreprise](#)

[Unleashing the Power of Inclusion](#)

Why do millennials leave organizations for more inclusive ones?

[To Retain Employees, Focus on Inclusion, Not Just Diversity](#)

How can we understand who our employees really are?

[The Facts Support the Claim : Diversity Matters](#)

[Infographic]

[Codex des biais cognitif](#)

[Les femmes et le travail au Canada: d'aujourd'hui à demain](#)

REPRESENTATION MATTERS: IN TODAY'S CULTURE

[Why on-screen representation matters, according to these teens | PBS NewsHour](#)

[Why authentic representation matters – and how this impacts our future generations. - Women of Influence](#)

[Céline Dion : l'envol d'une carrière internationale | Radio-Canada.ca](#)

[Challenging media stereotypes of Indigenous people | CBC Radio](#)

[The Loop: Why representation matters | CBC News](#)

[Megan Rapinoe: This moment is 'so much more than soccer' | nbcnews.com](#)

[Lil Nas X: 'I 100% want to represent the LGBT community' | Lil Nas X | The Guardian](#)

[Diversité à l'écran : le plafond de verre des rôles vedettes | Radio-Canada.ca](#)

[Growing Up With Colin Kaepernick | Vanity Fair](#)

[The Black Academy and Insight Productions Announce CBC as the Exclusive, Multi-year Broadcast Partner for Live Award Show](#)

REPRESENTATION MATTERS: IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

[Visible Minorities in the Senior Ranks of the Public Service of Canada: Challenges and Opportunities](#)

[Diversity in the public service's executive ranks](#)

[Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Public Service Commission of Canada publishes audit report on employment equity representation in recruitment](#)

[Diversity and inclusion in the public service - Canada.ca](#)

REPRESENTATION MATTERS: THE LEGAL SYSTEM

[Jurisprudence/case laws on racial discrimination](#)

[Examples of Charter-related cases](#)

[Rights of LGBTI persons](#)

[Les Droits de la Personne](#)

[Pacific Society for the Advancement of Employment Equity \(psaee.org\)](#)

[Droits des minorités sexuelles au Canada](#)

[Increasing Indigenous Representation on Canadian Juries](#)

[Droit des Autochtones](#)

[Policy on discrimination and harassment because of sexual orientation](#)

[Race and Equality Rights in Canada | CCLA](#)

[2013 FC 49 \(CanLII\) | Murray v. Canada \(Attorney General\) | CanLII](#)

[Dupuis v. Canada \(Attorney General\) - Federal Court \(fct-cf.gc.ca\)](#)

[Confronting Racism in Supreme Court of Canada Case Law - Ideablawg](#)

RESOURCES

IMPACTS OF DISCRIMINATION

[Why does racism prevail? Leading scholars apply their minds \(theconversation.com\).](#)

[The Performance of Transgender Inclusion – Public Seminar](#)

[Racism as a Determinant of Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis \(nih.gov\).](#)

[Racial Discrimination and Asian Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis – Debbiesiu L. Lee, Soyeon Ahn, 2011 \(sagepub.com\).](#)

[Racism has a physical impact on the body -- here's how \(theconversation.com\).](#)

[Discrimination impacts health of LGBT people, analysis finds. | Cornell Chronicle](#)

[Indigenous experiences with racism and its impacts \(nccih.ca\).](#)

REPRESENTATION MATTERS: INTERNAL RESOURCES

[Diversity and Inclusion Hub \(ccg-gcc.gc.ca\).](#)

[Public Service Pride](#)

[Indigenous Learning Series](#)

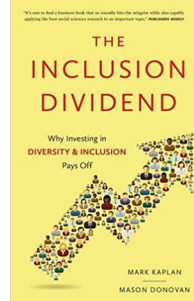
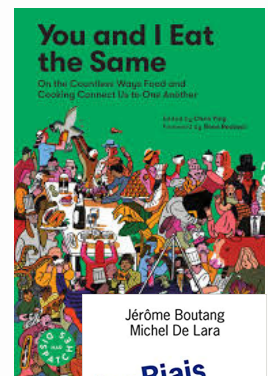
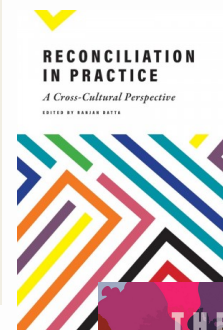
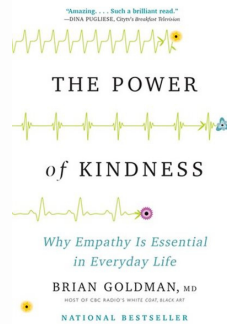
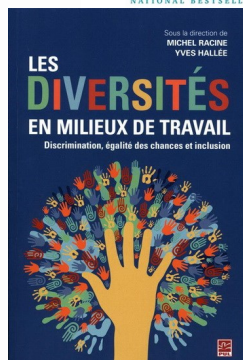
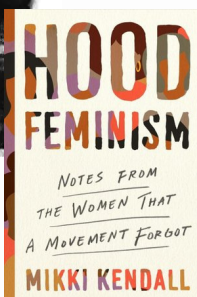
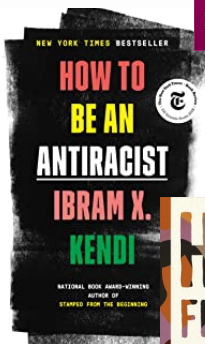
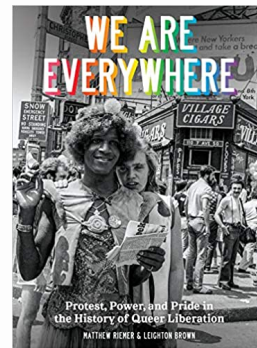
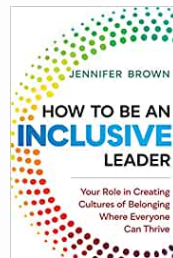
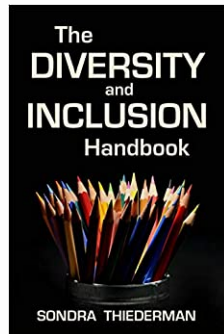
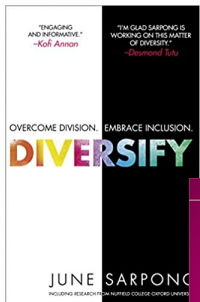
[FBEC – CEFN | Federal Black Employee Caucus](#)

[Network of Asian Federal Employees \(NAFE\) will officially launch – Canada.ca](#)

[Centre on Diversity and Inclusion – Canada.ca](#)

[Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada – Canada.ca](#)

REPRESENTATION MATTERS: FURTHER READING



DEFINITIONS

Belonging - The psychological feeling of belonging or connectedness to a social, spatial, cultural, professional, or other type of group or community (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Bias - A prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that is considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institution and can have negative or positive consequences (University of California Office of Diversity and Outreach).

Conscious Bias AKA Explicit Bias: the traditional conceptualization of bias. With explicit bias, individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes towards certain groups. Positive or negative preferences for a particular group are conscious (US Department of Justice).

Unconscious Bias AKA Implicit Bias: social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing (University of California Office of Diversity and Outreach).

Disabilities - an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations (Federal Disability Reference Guide).

Discrimination - an action or a decision that treats a person or a group badly or disadvantageously for reasons such as their race, age, or disability. These reasons, also called grounds, are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Exclusion The process or state of excluding or being excluded (Oxford Languages)

Intersectionality - The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups (Merriam-Webster).

Inclusion - The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups (Oxford Languages). Inclusion Individual racism is a form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious, personal prejudice (Henry & Tator, 2006, pp.329).

Racism - a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race (Merriam Webster).

Individual racism - a form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious, personal prejudice (Henry & Tator, 2006, pp.329).

Systemic/Institutional racism - a form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organization. It can lead to issues such as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues (Pager & Shepherd, 2008).