


Panelists



Ask Me Anything

Black History Month:
Celebrating Black Voices
across the Diaspora

Time: 1:00 pm EST **Date:** February 15, 2023 **Hosts:** Suzan Richards and Nadia Cétoute

Ask Me Anything

Black History Month:

Celebrating Black Voices across the Diaspora

Featuring: Bernadeth Betchi, Christopher Scipio, and Roselyne Zamor

Opening remarks by: Lila Turenne

Co-hosted by: Suzan Richards and Nadia Cétoute

Date and time: Wednesday, February 15 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Register: [Online registration form](#)

Link to join: [Join the webinar](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA>.

Event Description

Although, Black History Month is celebrated all around the world at different times of the year, in Canada, the month of February is the month designated to remembering the contributions Black people have made in the past and continue to make in various sectors and regions across Canada and beyond. It is about embracing innovation, resilience, and togetherness towards a united country in which everyone has a chance to prosper.

This month, the Ask Me Anything stage is shining its light on the rich representation of the Black Voices across the Diaspora. Our panelists come together from various backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives as public servants.

Join the Ask Me Anything event to learn more from members of the Black community, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to becoming a more inclusive organization.

About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to have more inclusive organizations.

As individuals, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, movies you watch and interactions with your community. The *Ask Me Anything* series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective by shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Opening Remarks by Lila Turenne, Parks Canada



Lila Turenne has been appointed Senior Director, Values, Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion at Parks Canada this month. Prior to that, she had been appointed Ombud at Parks Canada in February 2022. Before that, she had joined Parks Canada in June 2021 as the Director of the Planning and Performance Branch where she was reviewing all planning and reporting procedures for the Agency.

Before joining Parks Canada, Lila had recently joined the Treasury Board Secretariat as Acting Senior Director, Strategic Management and Engagement, at the Centre on Diversity and Inclusion within the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO).

Prior to that, she was the Director of Official Release and Communication Services at Statistics Canada, as well as the Champion for Visible Minorities at the agency.

She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in translation and a minor in German from Concordia University in Montréal, then went on to earn a master's degree in translation from the University of Ottawa.

She officially joined the public service in 1999 and worked in various departments before joining Parks Canada in 2021. As a Director in the Communications Branch at Statistics Canada, she oversaw the agency's official release program, centralized language services, as well as creative communications.

Lila has two daughters and enjoys music, dancing, traveling, nature and reading, and speaks six languages.

Meet Our Amazing Panelists



Bernadeth Betchi, Acting Section Head, Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defense

Bernadeth has a Bachelor of Communication, a Masters of Women and Gender Studies and is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa.

She has worked at the Prime Minister of Canada's office, at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and as a professor of Communications and Human Rights at Algonquin College.

As a Black woman living in Canada, she is constantly reminded that she could be an outsider. Having always been intrigued by the experiences of other marginalized groups, Bernadeth has always been drawn towards their narratives, recognizing that their similarities and differences brought them together as they strive to construct or deconstruct their cultural identity.

Bernadeth is the mother of three humans. She is also a sister, a daughter, an aunt, and a friend.



Christopher K. Scipio, the Deputy Director of Black Executives Network Secretariat, National Defence

Christopher specializes in Black inclusion, anti-racism, and Gender-Based Analysis Plus. An intersectional feminist, Christopher is committed to using his work to contribute to collective efforts to dismantle systems that oppress individuals and groups due to their race, gender, sexual identity, ability, religion, and other identity factors.

Since joining the federal public service in 2010, Christopher has worked primarily in strategic policy on a wide range of files including: change management, justice and security, digital government and performance reporting. He is also involved in public service renewal efforts through his active participation with Black Employee Networks including as one of the co-founders of the Defence Team Black Employees Network and his involvement with the Anti-Racism Ambassadors Network (ARAN).

Outside of his day job, Christopher is a father and a past volunteer with Family Services Ottawa, the Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment, Ottawa Community Immigration Settlement Organization and is presently a board member for the Institute of Public Administration of Canada-National Capital Region, the Great Canadian Theatre Company, and the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce.



Roselyne Zamor, Acting Manager, National Human Rights Policy Centre, Workplace Responsibility Branch, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Passionate about human relations, Roselyne Zamor is a dynamic collaborator who is always looking for solutions in any situation. With a bachelor's degree in Applied Political Studies, her analytical mind and interpersonal skills make her an inspiring and motivating member of a team. Enthusiastic and charismatic, Roselyne leaves no one indifferent. Her knowledge of different environments is a great asset on different projects. She is currently the Acting Manager of the National Human Rights Policy Centre at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. She is

currently pursuing her Master's degree in Executive Business Administration at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

Meet Our Co-Hosts



Nadia Cétoute, Section Head, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC), Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity at the Department of National Defence.

Armed with a University of Ottawa Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Nadia joined the Public Service almost 23 years ago. Prior to joining DND, Nadia has worked for several other Departments such as Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) where she served in various capacities aimed at managing change and providing excellent service delivery to clients and stakeholders.

Apart from being a Public Servant Nadia has over 15 years of hosting experience that run the gamut from weddings to corporate events, Nadia has quickly become an in-demand Masters of Ceremony in the Nation's Capital and beyond, engaging crowds in both official languages. This talent has also been utilized for different events organized at DND. Her easy candour and ability to relate to her audience have continuously been praised by clients and attendees alike, many of whom have taken to social media to express their awe over the "Best host in the game!"



Suzan Richards, Community Advisor for Black Communities, Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion Division, Infrastructure Canada

Suzan is also the founder and artistic director of The Cultural Arts Studio, providing programs where folk dances from Africa & The Caribbean can be shared and celebrated. She is committed to the preserving and sharing of Afro-Caribbean culture through dance and believes that everyone should have the opportunity to dance regardless of age, fitness level, or ability. In addition, Suzan is a Professional Artist & Arts Educator with Multicultural Arts In Schools and Communities (MASC) a local non profit organization that offers schools and communities providing artistic

experiences that awaken the creative process, deepen cultural awareness, encourage engagement, and give vivid demonstration of Canada's diversity. You can also find her on Rogers-22 as a host of Caribbean Calendar as part of their Cultural Mosaic programming. Suzan is proud recipient of a 2022 -100 Most Accomplished Black Canadian Women Award by the Honourable Dr Jean Augustine and Canada International Black Women Excellence(CIBWE) - Top 100 Black Women to Watch of 2022.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, that workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.

[#AMAChallenge](#)

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Infrastructure Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Parks Canada.

MCs: Suzan Richards and Nadia Cetoute

Speakers: Bernadeth Betchi, Christopher Scipio, Roselyne Zamor, Lila Turenne

Production Team: Terri-Ann Hurst, Tara Lockhart, Shelby Racine, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Chyanna Belaire, Liliya Ishkaeva, Lamare Robinson, Kelly Brewer-Balch, Katherine Hogan, Lyrique Richards, Terri Graham