



Ask Me Anything

Building Resiliency – Women's History Month



Featuring: Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte, Captain Joanne McNish,
Winnie Man Yin Pang
Moderated by: Samantha Moonsammy and Delane Boakye

Ask Me Anything: Women's History Month Building Resiliency

Featuring: Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte (DND), Captain Joanne McNish (CCG) and Winnie Man Yin Pang (CH)

Co-hosted by: Samantha Moonsammy (DND) and Delane Boakye (ECCC)

Date and time: Wednesday, October 20 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 Live Event](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Collab! Click [HERE](#) to join the group. Access [past recordings of AMAs on YouTube](#).

Event description

October is Women's History Month in Canada, a time to celebrate the women and girls from our past, and our present, who are contributing to a better, more inclusive Canada.

We are thrilled to invite three outstanding public servants to the Ask Me Anything stage who will share with us their courageous stories of resiliency and gender bias; especially in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will learn more about their efforts to advance inclusion and reconciliation, through their work and commitment to make our country a better place.

About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that are giving us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to becoming 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, 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 experiences 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.

Meet Our Amazing Panelists

Sandra Griffith Bonaparte, National Defence employee and President of Union of National Defence Employees (UNDE) Local 70607



Sandra Griffith Bonaparte joined the Public services in October 2001. National Defence hired her as an indeterminate employee at an entry position. However, it wasn't long after joining the public service that Sandra and another employee (who happened to be racially visible) felt the bitter blow of harassment from their supervisor. Sandra reached out to several union activists who told her to bite the bullet until her probation expired.

During that time, Sandra attended the PSAC Racially Visible Action Committee for support. This process helped her cope with different workplace issues such as harassment and discrimination in all its forms. When this battle was over, Sandra vowed that she would dedicate her life to helping employees, promoting and campaigning for their rights in the workplace.

For the past 19 years, Sandra has been fervently representing and defending employees in the workplace. She represents employees at grievance hearings, human rights issues and even attends human rights hearings as a form of representation with the HR Commission and other committees.

Sandra served in various roles in her union. She has been the vice-chair for the Racially Visible Action Committee from 2002-2003 and the co-chair of RVAC from 2004- 2006. She has also been the president of Union of National Defence Employees (UNDE) Local 70607 from 2007 to the present, and the Human Rights Coordinator for the National Capital Region from 2009 to present. Sandra has a passion for fighting against injustices in her workplace, community and society at large.

Sandra has a BA in Sociology and a BA Honours in Anthropology from Carleton University and Masters of Arts in Public Ethics from the University of Ottawa and St. Paul University in Ottawa. Sandra believes that authentic leadership helps to elevate others. Sandra has a strong interest in grassroots activism and political action. She is committed to breaking down barriers, smashing the glass ceiling, building a more inclusive and equitable labour movement, and raising employment standards for all workers. Sandra owns and operates SGBVoice, where

she teaches the art of singing to many students.

Captain Joanne McNish, Outgoing Senior Director, Western Region's Fleet, Canadian Coast Guard



Captain Joanne McNish has been a leader in marine navigation for over 30 years. As a result of her hard work, dedication to the marine field, and tenacity, she has risen within the Canadian Coast Guard to Senior Director for the Western Region's Fleet. Since her graduation from the CCG College in 1985, Joanne has sailed on almost every vessel in the Coast Guard fleet in Western Region and obtained her certification at the Master Mariner level. Captain McNish has been Commanding Officer of many CCG vessels including John P Tully, Provo Wallis, Gordon Reid, as well as the Tanu. Joanne spent some time with the Transportation Safety Board as a Senior Inspector before returning to her command position aboard the Provo Wallis. As Senior Director Fleet in Western Region, she is a trusted, dedicated leader both at the Regional Management Board as well as Coast Guard's National Operations Executive Board.

Joanne has been a stalwart supporter and leader for the training of the seagoing community at large, and organized Coast Guard's first Seagoing Women's Symposium to highlight the challenges as well as promote networks for women in non-traditional marine roles throughout the organization.

Winnie Man Yin Pang, Director General of the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Branch, Canadian Heritage



Winnie Man Yin Pang began her Public Service over 20 years ago with the Health Portfolio (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Health Canada followed by Public Health Agency of Canada) where she contributed to Canada's bilateral and multilateral collaborations in health.

In 2016, Winnie joined Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) as Chief of Staff to the Deputy Minister, before taking on the role of Director General of the Corporate Secretariat and Corporate Secretary in 2020. During her time with WAGE, Winnie also served as the Executive Champion for WAGE's Diversity and Inclusion Committee and led efforts to establish a culture of inclusiveness that values diversity, and helped develop initiatives to combat racism and address systemic barriers within the Department.

In June 2021, Winnie joined Canadian Heritage as the Director General of the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Branch, leading a fantastic team delivering a wide variety of engagement activities, policy and programs, including Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy.

Additionally, Winnie is very passionate about advancing diversity and inclusion within the Public Service and serves as a member on various departmental and government wide committees including the Steering Committee for Visible Minorities Chairs and Champions. Early this year,

she led the successful launch of the Network for Asian Federal Employees, which aims to cultivate an inclusive workforce and actively support Asian and other racialized visible minority employees in their contributions to the federal public service.

Meet Our Co-Moderator

Delane Boakye (Bo-A-chee), Environment and Climate Change Canada

Delane Boakye is an international relations policy analyst at Environment and Climate Change Canada. She specializes in Canada's bilateral relationship with African countries. In 2019, she supported Canada's United Nations Security Council Campaign, including Prime Minister Trudeau's visit to Ethiopia for the African Union Summit.



Delane is also currently pursuing her M.A in International Relations at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University. Her research focus is international organizations, global public policy and migration.

In 2013, Delane was elected the President of the Black Student's Network at McGill, a university service for the black community dedicated to sensitizing the McGill community to issues concerning black students. During her tenure, Delane focused on making the McGill campus a safe and accessible space for members of the broader black community in Montreal, including youth, local businesses, and black alumni.

Delane is fluent in French and has an elementary proficiency in Mandarin, Spanish and Portuguese. She lives in Gatineau with her partner Jose and their three-year-old daughter Kizola.

Meet the Host of *Ask Me Anything*

Samantha Moonsammy, National Defence

Samantha Moonsammy is the L1 Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion for the Materiel Group founded at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, Canada. She has spent over 15 years in the public service working in numerous communications, outreach and engagement initiatives



that focuses on the people side of business.

But Samantha is much more than that. Her layers include being a woman, mother, partner, daughter, sister, community builder and immigrant. As an Indo-Caribbean Canadian she was born in Guyana, South America and immigrated to Canada as a toddler. From a young age, dating back to elementary school to the present, Samantha has been a leader in diversity, inclusion and equity, always helping to amplify the voice of others and create sustainable change in organizations to build deeper respect and understanding for all humans. Samantha lives in the Ottawa area and spent some time in Toronto and Barbados during her Master's degree in Communications and Culture. She is a passionate world traveller who has worked and studied in India, China, France and the

Caribbean. Her daily mantra: Be the change you wish to see in the world.

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, 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 a "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60mins. 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 a 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, Health Canada, National Defence, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

MCs: Delane Boakye and Samantha Moonsammy

Panelists: Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte, Joanne McNish and Winnie Man Yin Pang

AMA Team: Tara Lockhart, Terri-Ann Hurst, Liliya Ishkaeva, Melissa Michaud, Natasha Lim, Jasmine Cousineau, Shelby Racine, Katie Freer, Lyrique Richards, Salisa Bose, Theresa Graham, Kurtis DePippo, Karim Kanji and Terri Graham.