

**LIFTING AS
YOU LEAD**

MENTORING CIRCLES PROGRAM

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PROGRAMME DES CERCLES DE MENTORAT

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Celebrating Inclusion and Mentorship

Highlights from the Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles (LLMC) Launch Event

October 23, 2023

This year, the highly anticipated launch of the Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles (LLMC) program took place on September 19, 2023 to celebrate the 700 plus members from over 30 departments who raised their hand, put in the commitment and said yes - I want to Lift as I Lead - I want to make the Public Service the best workplace in Canada and the world to serve in.

In this article we recap the key moments and insights from the LLMC launch event, where participants gathered virtually to celebrate mentorship, sponsorship, and the journey towards a more inclusive public service.

Facilitated by LLMC program founder, Samantha Moonsammy and LLMC Program Manager Kelly Brewer-Balch, the event proved to be an enriching experience, with hundreds of members in attendance. The launch served as a comprehensive introduction to the 10-week LLMC program with over 85 mentoring circles, illuminating its goals, and emphasizing the significance of networking in career development. Furthermore, it offered essential circle leader training to LLMC participants, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to cultivate a supportive and nurturing learning environment, while also providing an intimate networking opportunity for LLMC participants using breakout rooms.

One of the highlights of the event was the contributions of several esteemed guest speakers who added depth and substance to the discussions surrounding mentorship and sponsorship. Ambassador Tarik Khan, a distinguished speaker and thought leader from Global Affairs Canada, shared profound insights that struck at the very core of the LLMC's philosophy. He underscored the pivotal role of mentorship and sponsorship in

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building an inclusive public service that genuinely reflects the diversity and values of Canada.

Ambassador Khan articulated that mentorship and sponsorship initiatives are pivotal not only for personal and professional growth but also for the broader context of public service. He emphasized that when our public service is inclusive, it sends a powerful message: Canada is not just talking about diversity and inclusion; it's actively embracing them. Ambassador Khan's words resonated deeply, highlighting the creative potential of mentorship and sponsorship programs in fostering a diverse and vibrant public service.

Furthermore, Ambassador Khan addressed the vital role of leadership in this context. He distinguished leadership from mere management, emphasizing that leadership begins with self-reflection and self-awareness. His insights underscored the importance of mentorship and sponsorship programs in nurturing the leaders of tomorrow within the public service.

Following Ambassador Khan's impactful address, Melanie Dawson, a participant in the LLMC 2023 program, shared her vision for an inclusive workplace. Her words were a call to action, advocating for opportunities that align with individuals' abilities and contributions, irrespective of any other factors. Melanie's vision encompassed a workplace where unconscious bias, systemic racism, sexism, and ageism are acknowledged and addressed as relics of the past. Her impassioned remarks served as a reminder that the journey towards inclusivity is not only essential but also profoundly impactful on individuals' lives and the broader fabric of society.

Speaking after Melanie, LLMC Cohort 3 participant, Ken Fortin, shared his insights. Ken invited us to reflect on our roles in raising awareness for employment equity and initiating DEI practices. He emphasized that DEI platforms, like LLMC, ensure that everyone's voices are incorporated, heard, and equally respected. Suzan Richards, another participant, echoed Melanie's earlier assertions, noting likewise that her vision

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of inclusivity is of a workplace where one can show up as their authentic self, a workplace where we truly celebrate and respect differences.

As Samantha Moonsammy emphasized, connecting to Ambassador Khan's earlier words, the LLMC integrates the **Deputy Minister Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion** and strives to build on the **Clerk's Call to Action** to better support leadership development towards addressing anti-racism, equity, and inclusion in the federal public service. The launch event showcased the commitment and passion of LLMC participants and organizers in their pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable public service.

The LLMC launch event was a testament to the program's dedication to fostering mentorship, sponsorship, and inclusivity within the public service. As the program progresses, it holds the promise of nurturing a new generation of leaders who will champion diversity and equality, not merely as a slogan but as a lived reality. Inclusion is not just about words; it's about actions, and the LLMC program is taking meaningful steps in the right direction.

To learn more about the LLMC program and to access the Discussion Guides and Learning Library visit:

https://wiki.gccollab.ca/Lifting_as_You_Lead_Mentoring_Circles_Program_2023

The Lifting as You Lead Mentoring Circles program is hosted by Materiel Group, National Defence and is open to all Federal Public Servants. For more information please contact: DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca.

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