

A YEAR IN REVIEW

MINER  A

2021

Together we are changing
the Face of Leadership™



ABOUT MINERVA BC

Minerva BC is a registered charity dedicated to advancing the leadership of women and girls.

For over two decades we have helped women across British Columbia expand their capacities through education, mentorship and leadership training. We also support the business and wider community, as we work together to break down implicit and institutional biases and replace them with attitudes and systems that are supportive to women's achievement.

Minerva BC works on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the *xməθkʷəyəm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *səlílwətaʔt/* Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



TO OUR MINERVA COMMUNITY,

Looking back, 2020 felt like we were building an airplane while it was in flight. To ensure our programs and initiatives could proceed, we were in a constant state of adapting and restructuring. 2021 has been different.

While still requiring a lot of resilience and flexibility, this year has provided more space for reflection on what's missing from our work, where we can deepen our impact, and what we can do differently.

In some cases, this meant expansion of existing work, like offering more virtual workshops at no cost to participants and transitioning our Youth Advisory Council to a year-round program. In other cases, it included launching and piloting new initiatives such as the Emerging Leaders program, and a STEM-focused Learning to Lead™ cohort.

In the end, it was an exciting and busy year. Behind every program, event, and initiative are committed donors, dedicated board members and passionate volunteers. Thank you for helping us elevate the contribution and influence of women and girls in BC. We are grateful for the generous gifts of time, knowledge, and funding that made everything in 2021 possible.

We are proud of the work and partnerships that filled 2021 and are looking forward to what next year will bring.

With gratitude,



Tina Strehlke



Tina Strehlke,
CEO, Minerva BC

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

WOMEN LEADING THE WAY™

After pausing the Women Leading the Way™ program in 2020 to adapt the curriculum to a blended online format, Cohort 15 officially welcomed in a new era of our signature women's leadership program in January 2021!

It was an exciting way to start off the new year, but also a bit stressful. We weren't worried about content which has proven successful. We also felt confident about the amazing guest speakers we had lined up to share their experience and expertise on subjects like coaching, negotiation and leading in complexity. After many hours of testing, we felt confident in our online learning platform and its features. The unanswered question for us, was would women feel connected and supported in this new online format?

We know that women benefit from a strong professional network and a close circle of peers. To help ensure participants felt a sense of connection in the new format, we created the opportunity to work with a small group of peers to apply learnings, receive and offer coaching, and share successes.

We were pleased to hear from participants throughout the program that the peer learning sessions allowed them to make meaningful connections and to deepen their learning. In addition, the new format also resulted in broader participation from women across British Columbia allowing for a province-wide support system.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Nikki Fraser, Indigenous advocate and Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc (Kamloops) council member, has been actively involved with Minerva over the past couple of years through our youth programming and Face of Leadership™ initiatives. We greatly value her leadership and wisdom and were grateful to have her as a guest speaker during the module on Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. After her impactful presentation, many of the participants left with a commitment to learn more about Truth and Reconciliation.

PROGRAM IMPACT

WOMEN LEADING THE WAY™

76%

have taken on more leadership responsibility since taking the program

35%

received a promotion within six months of completion

96%

feel prepared to make changes in their personal and professional life

2021 PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

For her capstone leadership project, Business Coordinator Pardip Garcha was interested in creating a space for women at Lafarge to learn, share and grow. Appropriately titled 'WoW' (Women of Western Canada), the project resulted in the formation of a women's network focused on delivering events, webinars, and workshops to provide leadership development opportunities and foster professional connections for women within Lafarge across Western Canada. As a bottom-up approach to personal development, the WOW committee has tackled topics like imposter syndrome, conquering fear, and mentorship, while helping to create an inclusive and accessible environment for women in Lafarge to develop personally and professionally.



Women Leading the Way™ created a foundation for me to build WOW upon. Since I've completed the program, many of my colleagues have also taken the Emerging Leaders and Women Leading the Way programs. I hope with their gained experiences, they are able to contribute and take this space even further!



Pardip Garcha,
Participant,
Women Leading the Way™

PROGRAM IMPACT

EMERGING LEADERS

96%

feel the program changed their practice of leadership

96%

feel prepared for new opportunities

100%

feel more self-aware and committed to being an inclusive leader

EMERGING LEADERS

The start of 2021 saw us hard at work on the design and content development for a new leadership program geared for women at an early stage in their career. We recognized a gap in our program offerings between opportunities for youth and leadership training for mid to senior-career women, and this is where Emerging Leaders was born. While some challenges and skills are relevant to all stages of a woman's career, there are specific challenges that earlier career leaders face, including a lack of a professional network and feeling like they need to conform to a certain leadership approach to be successful or to advance in their roles.

We are so proud of this new program which focuses on the fundamental skills that new managers and early career leaders need to move from individual contributor to a confident and effective leader. With less control over their work calendar and time management, we designed a seven-week program specifically to accommodate the time demands of early career women. Launched in April with a full cohort, and

run again in October, this group of leaders showed up to each session with a growth mindset, vulnerability, and a willingness to contribute to the learning of others.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Creating connections and a community of women leaders is an essential component of our leadership programs. We were honoured to have Jessie Williams, Minerva Board member, and member of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, Squamish Nation, co-facilitate the welcome and closing sessions of the program. Jessie shared powerful teachings from the Squamish Nation around the importance of community and unity in leadership work, particularly for women leaders. The notion of Nch'ú7mut – to be one, to be in unity, to be connected - resonated strongly with program participants.

2021 PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Leah Prisque joined the Emerging Leaders program to grow her confidence, explore her leadership style and engage and network with individuals at a similar career stage. Since completing the program, Leah has been using what she learned to develop her own leadership program as part of her work as a Decent Work for Youth Officer for the National Association of Friendship Centres.



I had an amazing experience with Minerva. Not only did I meet so many incredible women, but I learned so much about myself and my strengths in all new ways. I've gained more confidence in my leadership style and will share what I've learned with others. From the program I have gained a mentor and an experience that I will reflect upon for years to come.



Leah Prisque,
Participant,
Emerging Leaders

Funding Partners: We are grateful to the individual donors who provided bursary support in 2021 to those who would otherwise not be able to participate in these leadership programs.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP

LEARNING TO LEAD™

We often say at Minerva that we learn as much from our youth participants as they learn from us.

Beyond inspiration, they bring emerging issues to our attention and hold us accountable to ensure program material and delivery continually evolves to stay relevant and impactful.

Notable developments in 2021 to the Learning to Lead™ program for self-identified girls in grades 10-12 included:

- Increasing the responsibility and participation from our Youth Advisory Council (YAC);
- Creating an opportunity for participants to connect with a leadership coach after the program to debrief on their experience, reflect on their learning, and discuss how they will put their leadership into action; and
- Piloting a STEM cohort

Although the regular Learning to Lead™ program was designed to expose participants to a range of career options, we know that women and girls interested in pursuing male-dominated fields face specific challenges. With this in mind, in early 2021, we started discussing the idea of piloting a Learning to Lead™ STEM

cohort as a space for like-minded youth to connect with one another, build their self-confidence, and learn from a community of mentors working in a variety of STEM fields. In October, we were able to welcome a cohort of participants from across the province to a weekend of virtual learning with a network of speakers and mentors all working in STEM professions to inspire the youth and model what is possible.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- The spring Learning to Lead™ program wrapped up with a celebration event featuring special guest Karina LeBlanc, retired Olympic soccer player, in conversation with Learning to Lead™ alumna Riya Khanna
- Learning to Lead™ STEM participants learned about robotics and were led through an exercise to build an exoskeleton hand; and
- Each week of the program began with an Opening Circle and ended with a Closing Circle facilitated by an Indigenous leader.

2021 PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Tavneet Jandu did not waste any time putting the lessons from Learning to Lead™ into action. We were so inspired to see the way she demonstrated values-based leadership by working on mental health awareness as well as promoting inclusion and diversity, in her school and community in Delta.

Shortly after the program finished, I rolled up my sleeves to take action on mental health awareness and became a student representative for the Mental Health Literacy Program at my school. After working closely with my counsellor and school staff, I am organizing workshops for grade 8 to 12 students to reach the 1300+ students at my school and teach them about the various types of mental health illnesses, resources, and where to seek help.

Funding Partners: Shaw, RBC Foundation, ITA BC, Fluor, Enbridge, The Hamber Foundation, Prince George Community Foundation, Novak Family Foundation and many individual donors.

IMPACT | SPRING COHORTS

96%

participants say the program was personally meaningful to them

96%

felt a strong sense of community with the other participants

IMPACT | STEM COHORT

100%

said the program gave them knowledge that will help them reach their goals

100%

were satisfied with the program experience

Tavneet Jandu,
Participant,
Learning to Lead™



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (YAC)

The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was created to engage a group of Learning to Lead™ alumni to build community, share ideas, and develop leadership skills for the future. In 2021, the YAC became a formal program and a year-long initiative.

YAC members participated in leadership projects, program support, professional development and team building socials. These activities included engaging in meaningful mentorship opportunities as both a mentor and mentee, as well as learning opportunities on job readiness and preparing for the future of work.

Funding Partner: Aritzia

Over 12 months, the YAC worked on some amazing projects. Here are a few of our favourites:

- Facilitated the Learning to Lead™ Confidence workshop each week after working for months with a skilled facilitator to learn the content and acquire the required skills;
- Developed and executed a Learning to Lead™ story-telling campaign to share program highlights each week;
- Developed a 'University Survival Guide' as a resource for high school students transitioning into university; and
- Launched a podcast titled 'Mindful Moments' as a way to highlight youth voices on topics such as the importance of mentorship and challenging traditional stereotypes of what it means to be a leader.

“My greatest learning from the YAC took place during the many presentations from female leaders in the community. The stories and invaluable advice they shared has reinforced the importance of values-based leadership in my life. Being a part of the YAC has also instilled in me an optimism for the future, specifically the next generation of female leaders.”

- YAC Member

EXECUTIVE DAYS

One of the most rewarding aspects of our work is seeing how the companies and individuals we partner with are not only motivated to help guide youth on their leadership journey, but also value the leadership, wisdom, and perspectives of youth.

The Executive Days program began with the idea of pairing a young leader with a senior executive as a way for them to gain exposure to leadership in the world outside of high school. This initiative continues to be a cornerstone of the program and this year, we matched 20 youth with 20 leaders for virtual mentorship sessions.

Introduced with the belief that mentorship is a mutual exchange, roundtable discussions were also hosted to facilitate two-way learning between youth leaders and the corporate sector. We were thrilled to see the enthusiasm from the business community for this mentoring option. Each of these sessions saw three senior leaders meet with three youth for a discussion on the topic of the future of work, health and wellness in the workplace, or gender and racial equality.

“I have taken away from this experience that I need to be open and ready to accept new opportunities that may come my way.”

Participating Youth,
Executive Days

“Such an enriching and rewarding experience. The conversations with two emerging young leaders filled my bucket and left me feeling really excited about their future and the contribution they will make to our community!”

Participating Mentor,
Executive Days

Funding Partner: Ted Rogers Community Grant



FACE OF LEADERSHIP™ LEARNING EVENTS

With the success of our virtual events in 2020, we knew we wanted to increase the array of offerings in 2021. We saw the opportunity to not only extend our reach provincially, but also expand our impact by engaging more men in Minerva's work, as well as offering shorter, no cost webinars to engage a wider audience.

We were fortunate to work with great partners who not only sponsored the events, but also played an active role through session design, providing speakers and supplying additional resources. We also took advantage of the access to our broad spectrum of stakeholders to help inform our work.

From our women's leadership programs participants and alumnae, we regularly hear about the challenges and barriers they face as they progress in leadership. Lack of access to mentorship and workplace sponsors, the pay gap, balancing home and work with increased demands, and the motherhood penalty were all issues we heard about in 2021.

From the business community, we heard from CEOs, HR and EDI specialists and mid-leaders who are working to establish systems and structures to address gender barriers, learn how to be an effective male ally and how to foster a safe environment that prioritizes equity.



The hardest part of making change is to stop trying to change people. Our job is to set conditions that allow emergent change to happen.

Dr. Yabome Gilpin-Jackson,
Chief People Officer, BCLC,
at the Inclusive Leadership
Forum 2021



It was excellent that the workshop had a broad scope of industries and companies represented. This really helped me get insight to the challenges others face, and some of the good practices I can look to leverage.

Male Allyship Participant

Through our workshops, webinars and annual Inclusive Leadership Forum, we were able to establish learning and training opportunities for our Minerva community.

Inclusive Leadership Forum – a three-day event featuring 10 sessions on topics which included: the power of mentorship; leading inclusive cultures from the inside out; allyship and the role in reconciliation, equity and inclusion; and advancing equity through hybrid work.

Men as Allies in Gender Equity – one day workshop designed for executive and mid-level male leaders.

Leading with Trust – no cost provincial workshop which explored trust as it relates to leadership in the workplace.

Creating an Inclusive Culture – no cost provincial workshop focused on culture and authenticity in the workplace.

Shifting the Conversation: How to Engage and Support Employees 18 Months into a Pandemic – webinar for community members located in the BC Interior.

Leadership Skills for Uncertain Times – webinar for community members located in Northern BC.

Cultivating Leadership Resilience – two regional workshops held during the week of International Women's Day for attendees located in Northern and Interior BC.

RECONNECT: Minerva Alumnae Social – an entertaining social event for program alum to help them stay connected to a supportive network.

Funding Partners: We are grateful to the corporate sponsors who make these events possible: BCLC, PwC, Best Buy, BC Maritime Employee Association (BCMEA), HRx, Odum Brown Limited, RBC Dominion Securities Kamloops, RBC Dominion Securities Prince George



ADVOCACY, COMMUNITY AND DRIVING CHANGE

Although Minerva is best known for our leadership programs and Face of Leadership initiatives, a third area of our work is concentrated on changing the narrative around what it means to be a leader and working to address the conditions holding the current system of inequity in place.

We know that leadership is still widely associated with stereotypical masculine traits and gendered attributes. Gender bias and exclusion continues to be entrenched in institutional practices, systems and policy making. Added to this, women and girls have less opportunity to develop and practice

leadership skills. While the factors at play are plentiful, the outcome is the same – women are underrepresented at all levels of leadership.

Over the past year, we worked in a number of ways to help contribute to a shift in the representation and diversity of women in leadership roles and decision-making spaces. This process asked us to look deeper into how we can tackle traditional gender norms through communications campaigns, engaging men as allies - particularly in male-dominated sectors, and amplifying the work of partners also doing critical work.



My field is male-dominated, and while women make up over half of early-career positions, only a small fraction of upper management are women – most leave the field sometime around the stage I'm currently at in my career.



SOME OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

Michelle Pockey Award – Minerva partnered with Business in Vancouver, Vancity, and Michelle's family to present this \$5000 bursary at the BIV 2021 Influential Women in Business Awards. Congratulations to Megan Newman for being the successful recipient!

Due to the strength of this year's award submissions, two additional women were also each awarded a \$1,500 bursary.

Beedie Luminaries – As a community partner of the Single Parent Awards, Minerva helped facilitate applications for single parents in our community. We are delighted that one of the applicants we put forward was funded for two-years to complete a post-secondary diploma.

Builders Code - Minerva continued to work with the BC Construction Association this year. Minerva facilitates an individual assessment

process with companies to benchmark their policies and practices, and we help evaluate nominees for the Champion Awards. The [Builders Code](#) is designed to ensure all employees can reach their full potential in the skilled trades and we are pleased to contribute to its success.

In the News – Minerva was featured in several publications discussing the impact of COVID-19 on women. Minerva CEO Tina was also a guest on the EDI on BIV podcast focusing on the Gender Gap. You can [listen here](#) if you missed it!

Locelle: This year we partnered with Locelle – a local solution to address gender inequality in the workplace through mentoring. Minerva alumnae have the opportunity to join Locelle as mentors, and share their expertise and knowledge with up and coming leaders. Contact us if you would like to participate!



COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

While we work to break down gender and equity barriers at the individual, organizational and societal levels, we also recognize the need to look inward at our own work. In 2021, we formed an EDI task force to facilitate a review of Minerva's culture, policies, practices and service delivery to help us address and remove obstacles to equity.

Outcomes of this work included:

Minerva further integrating reconciliation and right relations with Indigenous people within our leadership programs. This included co-facilitating opening and closing sessions with an Indigenous leader and incorporating teachings around the importance and value of land acknowledgments and creating a space for all participants to acknowledge the land they were joining from.

This proved to be a powerful way to welcome participants into the programs, to recognize the breadth of locations across the province, and to set the stage for a safe and vulnerable learning space.

We also worked with a group of Indigenous leaders, who are part of the broader Learning to Lead™ community, to hear their perspectives on the needs of youth today and what leadership concepts are important for us to explore with young Indigenous women. What we learned will help inform our work as we develop new ways to support Indigenous girls and help them advance on their leadership journey. In appreciation for the time and knowledge provided, all participants received an honorarium and a thank you gift from Sisters Sage – an Indigenous owned business based in Vancouver.

BY THE NUMBERS

REPRESENTATION

We work to ensure diversity amongst program participants, and that the diversity is also reflected in those we hold up for their leadership experience and wisdom. Below are the percentage of participants and speakers in 2021 who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Colour.

59% of youth participants

83% of youth mentor panelists

63% of speakers in our women's programs

75% of youth workshop speakers

50% of youth program mentors

60% of speakers at Face of Leadership™ events

REACH

In 2021, over 1000 people from around the province participated in our programs and events.

102 women in leadership programs

750 attendees at Minerva events

255 youth in programs

REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS

We recognize that many women face barriers when it comes to learning opportunities. In 2021, we distributed over \$30,000 in bursaries and awards to help women access leadership training and post secondary education.

\$20,000 in post secondary scholarships

\$12,600 in leadership program bursaries



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

There is critical work ahead. Here are some of the things we have planned for 2022.

Learning to Lead™

We plan to serve 200 young leaders from across BC in 2022. Sessions will run in May, June and October. The October cohort will be STEM-focused, featuring women working in STEM as the speakers and mentors.

The Face of Leadership™ BC Scorecard

We are currently evaluating next steps for the BC Scorecard and plan to re-launch this report in 2022. We are delighted to be working with Dr. Victoria Gay on the research and evaluation process.

Making Space for Youth Leadership **New Program Alert**

To help advance women's recovery from the current impacts of COVID-19, this new project will address systemic barriers related to young women's access, and exposure to leadership opportunities. Stay tuned for more details in the New Year!

Women Leading the Way™

Two cohorts will run in 2022: January and September.

[Learn more](#)

Emerging Leaders

Two cohorts will run in 2022: April and October.

[Learn more](#)

Learning Events

We will host our fourth annual Inclusive Leadership Forum during gender equality week in September. We will also host free events + workshops throughout the year to explore relevant leadership topics.

Board Training Workshop

In 2022 we are excited to partner with Synergy on Boards to support Indigenous, Black and Women of Colour on their leadership journey through governance training.

Advocacy + Leadership

We will continue to lend our voice and expertise to accelerate a shift in the representation and diversity of women in leadership roles and decision-making spaces.



SUPPORT OUR WORK

We are grateful for the support we received in 2021, which allowed us to continue delivering our existing events and programs and expand and pilot new initiatives.

As we remain resolute in our mission to change the Face of Leadership™ in BC, we will need your help. Please consider supporting our work in 2022.

Donations to Minerva receive a tax receipt. To give, please visit our secure online portal minervabc.ca/ways-to-give/

For information on sponsoring an event, program, or initiative, please contact Trina, Director of Partnerships + Engagement, at trinap@minervabc.ca

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