

Face of Leadership™ Inclusive Leadership Forum

Meet the Speakers



Adobea Foli
Adobea Foli Consulting

Adobea Foli is a career coach and speaker dedicated to helping accomplished newcomers and mid-career professionals find fulfilling careers in Canada. With over 15 years of experience across tech, finance, and manufacturing, Adobea leverages her deep industry knowledge and adaptability to guide individuals and organizations to success. She is an MBA graduate from UBC and has held key roles at Telus and Lululemon. Since 2017, Adobea has partnered with organizations that support newcomers, young professionals, and students. In 2023, she founded Adobea Foli Coaching and Consulting, offering tailored workshops, career resources, and speaking engagements to empower diverse talent and simplify the job search process.



Amal Masri
Fix the Broken Rung

Amal Masri is the CEO of Fix the Broken Rung, an organization with the mission of helping one million women of color get promoted and supporting organizations in accelerating the leadership pipeline. She believes that top talent isn't discovered, it's developed, and mental well-being is key to elevating performance. Her work has been featured in outlets such as the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, Strategy Magazine, Global News, and Investment Executive. In addition to leading Fix the Broken Rung, Amal is a fractional Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and advisor to high-growth B2B companies.



Aminat Muibi
Researcher, UIVC

Aminat is a researcher and PhD candidate. Together with Dr. Stacey Fitzimmons of the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business at University of Victoria, she authored the report, Beyond the First Job: A BC Study of Immigrants Career Ascension into Top Leadership Teams. She will present key findings of this report at the Inclusive Leadership Forum. Aminat holds a Bachelor in Supply Chain Management, University of Houston; a Bachelor in Public Relations, University of Houston; a Master of Science in Management Science, University of Texas at Dallas; and a Master of Business Administration, University of Texas at Dallas.



Anita Kaur Atwal
Lawyer, Mediator, CPHR

Anita Kaur Atwal is an experienced labour, employment and human rights lawyer, who now practices exclusively in the area of workplace investigations, mediations, equity and inclusion. In her work, she supports institutional and public sector clients with their workplace related needs, including investigations, risk management, policy development and training. Ms. Atwal is frequent presenter and trainer on workplace investigations, mediations and inclusive workplaces. Ms. Atwal recently finished serving as the Principal Consultant of the Human Rights Office at Simon Fraser University (SFU). She now serves as a Special Advisor to SFU's Vice President, People Equity and Inclusion. She also serves as the Integrity Commissioner for the City of Maple Ridge, and is a member of the Board of Directors of British Columbia Infrastructure Benefits (BCIB), a Provincial Crown Corporation responsible for providing qualified skilled trades for the construction of public infrastructure projects.



Candice Loring
Genome BC

As Genome BC's Director of Indigenous Relations and Initiatives, Candice Loring K'wiloo'km N'kwala is working to advance the Indigenous innovation ecosystem. Candice is also an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Management at UBC Okanagan. She held the role of Senior Advisor, Indigenous Relations & Initiatives in Equity, Diversity & Inclusion at Mitacs. Candice is a proud member of the Gitwangak band from the Gitxsan Nation in Northern British Columbia. In 2021, Candice was recognized as one of Canada's most inspirational women entrepreneurs and business leaders by Canadian SME Small Business Magazine for her economic development work in Indigenous communities. She is a Ch'nook scholar scholarship recipient named Kelowna's 2022 BDO Top 40 Under 40. Candice was also named UBC Okanagan's Faculty of Management Alumni Builder Award recipient in 2023.



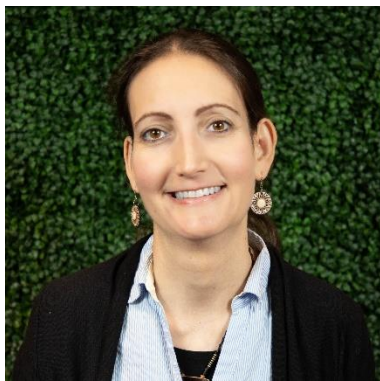
Camelia Cirjoi
Technology Executive

Camelia is a dynamic technology executive with a proven track record in leading global teams to success, particularly in the realms of AI adoption, cloud transformation, and cutting-edge innovation. Renowned for her ability to cultivate high-performing teams, Camelia creates an inclusive and empowering environment where diverse perspectives thrive. She is committed to challenging the status quo and championing user-centric technology solutions that drive meaningful change. With a leadership style deeply rooted in a people-centric philosophy, Camelia excels at empowering her teams while integrating Agile methodologies for value-driven outcomes.



Carolyn Rush
Workforce of the Future, PwC

Carolyn is a partner in PwC Canada's Workforce of the Future practice. She helps clients solve their most important people-related challenges and is an expert in aligning an organisation's performance, culture and behaviours to its strategy, vision and values. She has led a significant number of organisational development, performance, and cultural change programmes for clients in a variety of sectors, focusing in particular on analysing the impact of key organisational reinforcers on influencing and predicting behaviour and driving change. Carolyn has deep experience driving change and results across complex international structures and is adept in understanding how the nuances of national and regional cultures and norms can impact the day-to-day operations of large, complex global companies.



Daniela Cohen
Transformative Conversations

Daniela Cohen's mission is to help bridge divides to build communities where everyone can thrive. Her passion stems from the experience of growing up in apartheid South Africa. Even though she was privileged as a white person in this system of institutionalized racism, witnessing the injustice around her at a young age as well as experiencing barriers to connecting with peers of different races left a lasting impact. Daniela has extensive experience facilitating programs to create equitable, inclusive communities. Her expertise includes designing and implementing conflict-positive organizations and environments. Daniela is also a woman-centered coach, helping women to break through hidden internal barriers to soar towards their dreams.



Elaine Lin Hering
Author and Speaker

Elaine Lin Hering is a facilitator, writer, and speaker. She works with organizations and individuals to build skills in communication, collaboration, and conflict management. She has worked on six continents and facilitated executive education at Harvard, Dartmouth, Tufts, UC Berkeley, and UCLA.

She is the former Advanced Training Director for the Harvard Mediation Program and a Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School. Her clients include American Express, Chevron, Google, Nike, Novartis, PayPal, Pixar, and the Red Cross. Elaine is the author of the USA Today Bestselling book *Unlearning Silence: How to Speak Your Mind, Unleash Talent, and Live More Fully* (Penguin, 2024).



Emily Lublow
Workforce of the Future, PwC

Emily Lublow is a Minerva program alumni, and a Manager in the Workforce of the Future practice at PwC Canada. She has a background in Cultural Anthropology from UBC and holds a Masters degree in Organizational Psychology from University College London. Emily focused her dissertation on workplace burnout, specifically around gender differences in burnout rates in the technology industry. She is based in Vancouver, BC and works in consulting, specializing in culture change and change management across all industries.



Dr. Farah Yasmine Shakir
People & Culture Professional

Farah is a dynamic people & culture professional with experience spanning from people management, consulting, and training programs development in the areas of leadership development, organizational development, and diversity, equity and inclusion. Formerly a professor in organizational behavior and cross-cultural management, she has a rich multicultural perspective gained from her own biracial identity and living and working across South Asia, West Asia, Europe, and North America. Farah holds a PhD in Organizational Behavior from IESE Business School, a Master's in Industrial Relations from Queen's University, and a Bachelor's in Management & Organizational Studies from Western University. She is deeply committed to anti-racism and fostering inclusive, engaging workplaces as key drivers of organizational success. She advocates for championing inclusion by ensuring workplaces where individuals can fully express their authentic selves.



Fariba Pacheleh
BC Liquor Distribution Branch

Fariba is a passionate leader and strategic thinker with over 25 years' combined industry and advisory services experience, in corporate leadership roles as well as on non-profit boards. As a skilled, business-focused, and multi-cultural leader in project governance and Information Technology, she has a consistent track record in building the best practices and processes for programs, projects, and cross-functional teams to deliver strategic initiatives and tactical business solutions. Fariba's strengths reside in her ability to provide teams with vision, values and guidelines to enable them making the best possible decisions to advance the organization's objectives. In her current role as Director of Corporate Projects, Fariba provides governance and oversight for all new initiatives and major projects at BC Liquor Distribution Branch spanning from \$200K to \$100M in size.



Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi
Accelerate Her Future

Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi (she/her) is an Iranian Canadian social entrepreneur, speaker and author. She is founder of Accelerate Her Future, a leading career accelerator providing tailored programs by and for Indigenous, Black and racialized women pursuing careers in business and tech while developing networks of solidarity and action towards equitable workplaces. She is also the founder of Divity Group, offering a human centered approach to facilitation and learning and development focused on equity and inclusion and leadership development. A TEDx and Walrus Talks speaker, Golnaz has addressed audiences across a wide range of organizations in public and private sectors. Golnaz is honoured to have been named as a top 50 Changemaker by The Globe and Mail's Report on Business and a New Social Impact Entrepreneur to Watch by Future of Good.



Lyndall Strazdins
Australian National University

Professor Lyndall Strazdins' research centres on work, family and health, with a focus on time as a social determinant of health. Lack of time is the most common reason for not eating healthy food or being active and her work shows why time is a problem, and for whom. Most recently she has been researching the health harms of long work hours, and how long hours are widening social and gender inequality. Lyndall's approach to research has been through partnerships and generating engagement, leading or co-lead on multiple competitive grants, consultancies which have been partnership based. She has served as an expert scientific advisor for Government boards and panels nationally and internationally, including those focused on women's economic and social empowerment. She has been awarded an ARC Future Fellowship and EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie International Fellowship Seal of Excellence. Her new book, the Unequal Hour: How time is shaping health will be published in November this year.



Melissa Busse
Essential Impact

Melissa is a professional certified leadership coach and facilitator. She holds the International Coach Federation (ICF) Professional Certified Coach (PCC) designation. She is a facilitator of the Excelerator™ Coaching model at Essential Impact and has a certification in team coaching. She also has a BSc from the University of Alberta. Melissa feels privileged to have provided coaching support to TD Bank Group, winner of 2021 ICF international Prism award; Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, winner of the ICF Prism Award 2020 in addition to Rogers Communication, the 2015 ICF International Prism Award finalist. "Coaching has shown me over and over that sometimes one difference makes all the difference."



Natasha Questel
BCLC

Natasha is responsible for engaging the organization, partners and the public to bring BCLC's social purpose vision to life. Her team leads the strategy and programs that connect BCLC to our players and the public through marketing, communications, player incentive and rewards programs, customer support, stakeholder engagement, Indigenous relations, government relations and ESG. Her significant experience in the non-profit and consumer-packaged goods sectors is underpinned by her commitment to help create a better world. Prior to joining BCLC she was the CEO of One Girl Can, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to breaking down poverty and gender inequality among the world's most vulnerable girls. She was also the President of Happy Planet Foods, a Vancouver-based, sustainable-food company.



Neelam Sahota
DIVERSECity Community Resources
Society

Neelam is a senior executive in the social impact sector. With more than 25 years of leadership experience primarily in the nonprofit sector, her award-winning work in the social and economic development of Surrey, has been based on creating community impact through resource connections, innovative economic drivers and values-based community partnerships. Neelam has a well-established reputation for building and leading high performing teams with transformative business strategies. She is known for her unrelenting focus on quality and efficiency combined with a genuine concern and commitment for all who work with her. As a BIPOC female leader, she uses her voice and champions the advancement of women of all diverse backgrounds using her intersectionality lens to ensure equitable pathways to leadership roles.



Sandhya Ghai
SFU

As the Director, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at SFU Library, Sandhya Ghai is passionate about achieving mindful inclusion and fostering safe and brave spaces for individuals and organizations to learn, unlearn and relearn. She strongly advocates that any organization can be truly equitable only if all its employees take on an individual as well as a collective responsibility towards systemic change. Her lived experiences coming from India where there is race, class, gender, age, religion, education, and all kinds of inequities that one can think of to Canada that at least outwardly celebrates diversity and inclusion have sparked an interest in her to delve deeper into the realities of one's identity and how it can be both empowering and oppressing.



Olga Stachova
MOSAIC

Olga brings 20 years of experience managing a fast-growing, distributing, non-profit organization, as well as operational expertise in program design, delivery, and evaluation, and a proven track record of building strategic partnerships among diverse stakeholder groups. Prior to immigrating to Canada, she was a Senior Project Manager at Management Partners, the leading HR consulting company in the Slovak market. She was highly successful in her role of recruiting personnel for international organizations opening subsidiaries in Slovakia. Olga is the recipient of the 2009 Business in Vancouver Top Forty Under 40 Award, as well as the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.



Sobhana Jaya-Madhavan
MSM Unify

As Chief Impact Officer of MSM Unify's global impact initiatives, Sobhana focuses on strategic planning, fostering innovation, and championing collaboration, reconciliation, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Her extensive career includes nearly 20 years in the BC Public Service, senior roles in the private sector, and serving as AVP of External Relations and Adjunct Faculty at Simon Fraser University. Sobhana has been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award and the Woman of the Decade Award from the Women Economic Forum.



Sydney Stephen
Bucketlist Rewards

Sydney is a Sales Development Representative for Bucketlist Rewards, and an alumna of the Learning to Lead program, and the Youth Advisory Council at Minerva BC. Sydney has worked in various industries like Travel & Hospitality, Construction, Real Estate, Fitness, Marketing. She has also started her own entrepreneurial ventures. She understands the critical role that strong work culture plays in a company's success. It's not just about having happy employees; it's about creating an environment where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.



Tara Robertson
Tara Robertson Consulting

Tara Robertson (she/her) is a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategist, Certified Leadership Coach, and Public Speaker. She helps companies identify their biggest DEI problems and works with stakeholders to co-design interventions based on research, best practices, and experience. Tara also helps women of color in corporate careers go from underestimated and overworked to unapologetic and wildly successful. Tara has been featured in Forbes, the Harvard Business Review, and several podcasts. She lives in Vancouver with her wife.



Tina Strehlke
Forum Host

Tina Strehlke is the CEO of Minerva, a Vancouver based charity dedicated to advancing economic and leadership opportunities for women and girls. She is a skilled senior leader with 20 years of experience in the social impact sector. She has knowledge and expertise in gender equality, inclusive leadership, career development, and creating equitable workplaces. Tina has a BA in International Relations from UBC and an MA in Communications from Royal Roads University. Tina recently completed the Certified Leadership Coach program at Essential Impact. Tina has lived and worked in Germany, Costa Rica, Guyana, and Taiwan. She currently volunteers as a mentor with Young Women in Business UBC and the Rosie Initiative. She is a member of the Prosperity Project's Rosie Initiative Advisory Group and the Essential Impact Advisory Group.