



Action through Connection

Women in Employment & Entrepreneurship

October 27, 2023
9:00am to 3:00pm

Boyle Street Plaza,
9538 103a Ave NW,
Edmonton, Alberta

Hosted by:



In collaboration with:

Action through Connection is supported by the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH), a network of 10 regional hubs and over 250 organizations established as part of the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy.



Women
Entrepreneurship
Knowledge Hub

This project is funded by:



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

Welcome

Welcome to Action through Connection! As we settle into an exciting day full of conversations and connections, we want to take a moment and recognize that we are on Treaty 6 territory—the traditional and ancestral territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux and Nakota Sioux, and the home to the Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4 within the historical Northwest Métis Homeland. We acknowledge the diversity and beauty of the many peoples who have resided here for thousands of years. We hope that through ceremony and relationships we can deepen our understanding, become relatives, and transform the way we walk alongside in respect.

Action through Connection

We are happy to have you joining this interactive day of workshopping grassroots-informed program and policy solutions and connecting with others working across sectors to support women's employment and entrepreneurship.

Community non-profits play a key role in supporting women's participation in paid work, through the connections they build and the community they weave where women and families can thrive. Community non-profits have on-the-ground knowledge to develop nimble and innovative solutions. Our goal is to create a space to apply community non-profits' knowledge and solutions to transform the way policies and programs work together to support equitable opportunities for women.

Our Moderator



Shannon Pestun is the Senior Advisor to the Diversity Institute for Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and the 50-30 Challenge where she supports the development of research and strategies that advance gender equity and diversity in leadership and helps organizations accelerate diversity strategies already underway. She is also the co-founder of The Finance Cafe and co-host of The Finance Cafe podcast, and serves as a member of the board of governors at Mount Royal University and board member at NPower Canada. Known as a passionate advocate and change agent, Shannon is a trusted voice on women's entrepreneurship, inclusive finance, EDI and economic reconciliation for educators, government, industry and media.



Shannon is committed to bolstering Indigenous economic prosperity, driving economic growth and bringing an Indigenous-centered approach to her work. In 2020, she created the Gifting Circle Bursary raising over \$150,000 in support of advancing Indigenous women's entrepreneurship in Canada. Originating from the Métis homeland and Treaty 1 territory, Shannon resides in Treaty 7 territory and is a proud member of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Schedule

- 9:00** **Welcome Remarks** **Michelle Okere**
Main Gym
- 9:30** **Keynote Address** **Rochelle Ignacio: Advancing equitable entrepreneurship opportunities**
Main gym
- 10:15** **Parallel Workshops**
- Strengthening the funding ecosystem for women entrepreneurs: a policy workshop**
Main Gym
- Duty to Accommodate for navigators: a co-design workshop**
Evergreen Room
- 11:15** **Coffee Break**

Schedule

- 11:30** **Parallel Workshops** **Wrap-around employment services: key ingredients for impact**
Main Gym
- Navigation support and mentorship: program & policy solutions**
Evergreen Room
- 12:30** **Networking Lunch** With catering by Chapelle Kitchen
Main Gym
- Resource Fair** *Main Gym*
- 1:30** **Workshop** **Duty to Accommodate for Employers**
Evergreen Room
- 2:20** **Closing Panel** **Transforming the ecosystem: how can we build crucial connections?**
Main Gym
- 3:00** **Farewell**

Welcome Remarks

9:00 - Main Gym

Welcome Remarks

Michelle Okere, Entrepreneur & PolicyWise Board Chair



Michelle Okere has over a decade of experience leading the growth of provincial, regional, and national organizations. She is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and an Inclusion Specialist. Her expertise includes: Fundraising, Business development, Public and stakeholder relations, Advocacy, Strategic and operations planning, and Board governance.

Since 2016, Michelle's consulting company, Okere & Associates, has been working with organizations across North America to support transformational growth. In addition to her consulting work, Michelle co-founded the REET Institute.

She also serves as the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee for the YWCA Edmonton and a member of the University of Alberta Senate.

Throughout her career, Michelle has received recognition for her community contributions. She has been honoured with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal and has received the Deputy Minister's Award for Innovation. PINK Magazine featured her on their cover, and Edify named her one of Edmonton's Top 40 Under 40.

Keynote Address

9:30 - Main Gym

Advancing equitable entrepreneurship opportunities

In our keynote address, **Rochelle Ignacio** will speak about advancing equitable entrepreneurship opportunities through her grassroots community-based experience in building Feed the Soul Dining Week and Black Owned Market Edmonton.



Rochelle Ignacio (she/her) is the Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, a learning institute focused on solving major community challenges including ending poverty, building youth futures, building belonging and addressing climate change. Rochelle brings a diverse range of experiences to her work including a Bachelor of Science in Human Ecology, an Occupational Health and Safety certificate, growing up in rural Alberta, and work experience across a broad range of sectors and roles.

Rochelle is committed to community organizing, creating opportunities for Black mobility and belonging through projects such as Feed the Soul Dining Week

which spotlights Edmonton's Black-owned food and beverage businesses, and the former Black Owned Market Edmonton which created economic opportunities for Black business owners.

In her spare time Rochelle loves to indulge in international travel, snowboard, camp, connect with friends and family (over food), and spend time with her cat Marlo.

Rochelle is the recipient of CIBWE's Top 100 Black Women to Watch in Canada (2022), Edify Magazine's Top 40 under 40 award (2021) as well as the African Caribbean Community Leader of the Year award (2020).

For more information regarding Rochelle's portfolio, check out enidrosecollective.com, feedthesoulyeg.ca, or Rochelle Ignacio on LinkedIn.

Parallel Workshops

10:15-11:15

Strengthening the funding ecosystem for women entrepreneurs: a policy workshop

Main Gym

In this workshop, participants will use their experience to identify opportunities to increase access to capital for women entrepreneurs through policy and programs. This workshop is presented in collaboration with the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (WEKH), a network of 10 regional hubs and over 250 organizations established as part of the Government of Canada's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy.

Facilitators



Marcela Mandeville has explored the world of business through a globally focused business undergraduate degree, designation as a Certified International Trade Professional and more than twenty years of global experience developing and implementing business strategies. She has been taking on leadership roles at Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) to support AWE's goal to build stronger communities and economies through women's participation in entrepreneurship.

Marcela believes strongly in continuous learning and contributing to the community. She serves as Director for the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada, Director for Explore Edmonton, and volunteers on the University of Alberta School of Business Advisory Committee, Works for Women Advisory Board, and the Edmonton Mayor's Business Growth Council.



Shannon Pestun, bio available on page 3.



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Adriana Appau is a Senior Research & Policy Associate with PolicyWise for Children & Families. Adriana has significant experience conducting program evaluation and evidence-based research to inform policy formulation, strategic planning, and program implementation. She has nine years of interdisciplinary research experience with demonstrated abilities in maintaining, analyzing, interpreting, summarizing, and reporting on both qualitative and quantitative data. Adriana holds a PhD in Rehabilitation Science from McGill University and a MA in Economics from the University of Lethbridge. She has a passion for bringing people from diverse disciplines together to inform policy.



Duty to Accommodate for navigators: a co-design workshop

Evergreen Room

In this workshop, participants will use their experience as to help design a tool to support conversations with their clients around workplace Duty to Accommodate. Maximum 20 participants.

Facilitator



Thea Luig is a Senior Research & Policy Associate with PolicyWise for Children & Families where she supports community-centred, action-oriented projects that co-create knowledge to support contextually meaningful solutions and transform practice and policy to support diverse communities' well-being. Thea has a passion for bringing stories of diverse people to light to make sense of the meanings and complexities that shape people's lives. After a career making musical instruments, she has 18 years of experience conducting participatory, community-centred research and evaluation related to health and well-being, implementation science, healthcare, mental models and decision making. Originally from Germany, Thea has found a home in Canada with her partner and two lively boys.



Parallel Workshops

11:30-12:30

Wrap-around employment services: key Ingredients for impact

Main Gym

In this session, PolicyWise for Children & Families together with Women Building Futures will facilitate a discussion on the impact of wrap-around services on employment for women.

Facilitators



WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES®

Zane Hamm is a Community Connector, and Adult Educator and is dedicated to enhancing Inclusive Systems & Workforce Development. Zane works with Women Building Futures as an Inclusion and Community Engagement Specialist. Find her on LinkedIn!



Jonah Elke (he/they) is a Senior Research & Policy Associate with PolicyWise. His academic background is in developmental cognitive neuroscience, where studied the neural correlates of attention-emotion interactions in youth. Jonah then shifted to working in community, building research capacity amongst queer and trans community members, supporting youth in interactions with the justice system, and translating scientific literature in accessible ways for diverse communities. Jonah is passionate about community collaborations, engaging people with lived experience, and creative data collection. In his spare time, Jonah enjoys gardening, cooking for his partner and two teenage children, and meditating.

Navigation support and mentorship: program & policy solutions

Evergreen Room

In this workshop, participants will use their experience and on-the-ground knowledge to identify core components of and policy needs for navigation and mentorship support women in employment and entrepreneurship.

Facilitator



Thea Luig, bio available on page 9.

With support from



Workshop

1:30-2:30

Duty to Accommodate for employers

Evergreen Room

In this session, the Human Rights Commission will present on Duty to Accommodate in the workplace for employers and entrepreneurs.

Facilitator



Lara Apps is currently a Director of Complaints Management with the Alberta Human Rights Commission. She was a Human Rights Officer at the Commission for nearly seven years, specializing in investigations; she was part of the Case Inventory Resolution Project team, and served as the Alberta Human Rights Tribunal Registrar for six months. Lara also works for Athabasca University as an Individualized Study Tutor in History. Her past work experience includes teaching courses in History and Religious Studies at the University of Alberta and Concordia University; FOIP Advisor at Alberta Health; and Ombudsman for Graduate Students at the University of Alberta. She has a PhD in History from the University of Alberta.



Resource Fair

1:30 - Main Gym

Action for Healthy Communities
Africa Centre
Alberta Human Rights Commission
Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Elizabeth Fry Society
Francophonie Albertaine Plurielle
Futurpreneur
Gateway Employment & Family Services
GEDI Hub & Multicultural Health Brokers
Grow Women Leaders
PolicyWise for Children & Families
WJS
Women Building Futures

Closing Panel

2:20 - Main Gym

Transforming the ecosystem: how can we build crucial connections?

Panelists



Arzoo Sabour works at Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) as Program Coordinator for the I-WIN (Immigrant Women Integration and Network) and Global Girls (youth- 15- 21 years old) programs. Arzoo has worked for EMCN for 13 years in different positions and has supported newcomers with resume writing, job search, cold calls, mock interviews, and community connections.

Arzoo moved to Canada from Iran in January 2002 as an International Student. She studied psychology at University of Saskatchewan and started volunteering and working in Not-for-profit agencies supporting immigrants while studying. She worked at the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association as Program Coordinator and Program Manager for over 3 years. She then moved to Edmonton in 2010 and has been working for EMCN since. Empowering women is Arzoo's passion.



Marcela Mandeville, bio available on page 8.





Róisín McCabe is the Director of Status of Women Policy and Engagement at Arts, Culture and Status of Women. Her portfolio includes women’s economic development, sexual violence prevention and Alberta’s implementation of the National Action Plan to End Gender-based Violence. Róisín has a MA in Politics from University College Dublin and a BA in Political Science from the University of Calgary.



Shannon Pestun, bio available on page 3.



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Tracy F. Barry is a career strategist and recruiter. As the Founder and CEO of GROW Women Leaders™, Tracy is dedicated to promoting Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) in workplaces. Her focus is helping women, especially immigrants and minorities secure meaningful employment and advance their careers. At GROW Women Leaders, women are connected with job opportunities through its Digital Talent Platform, fostering personal and professional growth. While the GROW Space is designed to be a flourishing and nurturing environment, offering "Nurture Services" - a continuous career support encompassing training, workspaces, event venues, and childminding, all meticulously designed to improve retention. The proceeds from Nurture go directly to support the women at GROW Foundation. Tracy has received numerous awards and recognitions for her contributions to building a more equitable and inclusive society.



Thank you

The event team would like to thank all our partner organizations who played a part in putting this gathering together, including our co-hosts Status of Women and Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub. Thank you to Meg at Boyle Street Plaza for her help. Thanks to the amazing Lara Tang and her audio/visual team for making sure sound and video are taken care of.

Big drum roll for Aya and her team at Chapelle Kitchen Catering for our delicious lunch.

Finally, we'd like to thank everyone who joined us and contributed their experiences, wisdom, and enthusiasm.

If you have any further thoughts about the discussions today or would like to reach out to PolicyWise, please email info@policywise.com.