



Tuesday, November 4, 2021
9:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Zoom
Ottawa, Ontario

Creating Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Organizations

Welcome to the 2021 annual Leveraging Our Strengths (LOS) Conference. In its 20-year history, we are offering this year's conference virtually for the first time.

The objective of LOS is to share best practices and provide capacity building and mutual learning opportunities to strengthen the social service sector.

Implementing Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive (EDI) policies across an organization and network of partners can be complex. Taking a systematic approach helps deliver effective EDI programs. This year's keynote speaker and panel conversation will focus on sharing information that organizations can:

- Successfully develop and implement EDI policies and frameworks.
- Remove systemic barriers and ensure that their EDI activities are not tokenistic or performative by ensuring that they are well resourced.
- Take action to make progress on EDI at all levels of the institution.
- Set benchmarks and indicators for diversity and inclusion.
- Monitor progress on EDI policies and practices with an intersectional lens.
- Create a safe space for people who are not always seen and heard to feel comfortable participating.



- Ensure strong and visible commitment to EDI by the organization's leadership

The objective of this year's conference is to set a stage for continuous learning about EDI and help organizations put in place the right conditions for each individual, including those from underrepresented groups—women, racialized minorities, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and members of LGBTQ2+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, plus) communities—to reach their full potential, unimpeded by inequitable practices, including personal and systemic discrimination and racism, imposed by policies, processes and other practices in work environments.



AGENDA

- 9:00 AM Land Acknowledgment
Opening Remarks: Michael Allen, President & CEO of United Way East Ontario
- 9:15 AM Keynote speaker and Q & A
- 10:00 AM Stretch Break
- 10:05 AM Panel Discussion
- Moderator** - Sowmya Rajasekaran
- Awo Nuuh
 - Nathan Hall
 - Yumi Kotani
- Q & A with panelists
- 11:30 AM Closing Remarks (Marie Eveline)



EMCEE: Marie Eveline, Executive Director of Volunteer Ottawa

Marie Eveline has been the Executive Director of Volunteer Ottawa for the past seven years. She is a highly motivated leader with over forty years of experience in the not-for-profit sector at local, provincial and national levels. Marie believes that real change happens at the community level through the efforts of volunteers committed to making a difference. She is a passionate supporter and advocate for not-for-profit organizations and the critical role they play in civil society. By building expertise and engaging our members and partners, Marie and Volunteer Ottawa have been able to build a strong, inclusive, and engaged community. Through our Diversity in Leadership Program, Volunteer Ottawa ensures that Boards of Directors are reflective of the communities they serve.



SPEAKERS



Opening Remarks

Michael Allen, President & CEO of United Way East Ontario

Michael was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and after 22 years in this community, he now calls Ottawa home. Following a career that saw Michael practicing law and then working on Parliament Hill, Michael was drawn to United Way by the opportunity to help others in his adopted community. For Michael, what really sealed the deal was the ice storm, which took place during his first year at United Way. “At a time when the community really had to pull together, United Way didn’t seem to have a role in helping during that disaster,” says Michael. “I wanted United Way to be thought of as a place where the community could turn to in these

different times of need. More and more often, that’s happening today.” Michael gets involved in other ways in his community, a committed soccer dad, he has also been a fundraiser for his children’s hockey teams. For Michael, working at United Way is a constant source of inspiration. “Our volunteers are here helping out in their spare time, and our staff is extremely committed and motivated. We share a common goal of helping others in their community.”



Keynote Address

Dr. Wendy Cukier, Founder & Academic Director; Professor, Entrepreneurship & Strategy

Dr. Wendy Cukier is the Diversity Institute Founder, Academic Director of the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and Research Lead of the Future Skills Centre. She is the co-author of the bestseller, Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership from Java to Jurassic Park and former VP of Research and Innovation. The Diversity Institute has 100 research staff, 100 research associates from around the world, 200 industry partners and focuses on dimensions of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, future skills, and entrepreneurship and innovation.

Harnessing the power of innovation, it promotes the advancement of underrepresented groups. The Diversity Institute is also a research lead for the \$300 million Future Skills Centre and the \$8.6 million Women

Entrepreneurship Hub. Wendy has been recognized with the Harry Jerome Diversity Award, the Bob Marley Award, the Canada-Pakistan Business Council’s Female Professional of the Year, the Metropolis Research Award, the CATA Alliance, Sara Kirke Award for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and 100 Most Powerful Women by WXN. She has been named a YWCA Woman of Distinction and one of the International Women’s Forum 2020 Women Who Make a Difference, a Woman of Influence and



one of the "100 Alumni who shaped the Century" by the University of Toronto. Wendy holds a PhD, an MBA, an MA, and honorary doctorates from Laval and Concordia.



Sowmya Rajasekaran
Moderator

Sowmya is a champion and an outspoken advocate for inclusion & women’s empowerment with a key focus on social impact. When COVID-19 hit, Sowmya was laid off and began reaching out to her community to check in. These conversations inspired her to launch Buildup women Series, an online community created to inspire, learn from, share, support, engage and build up women during and post-COVID-19.

So far, the series has launched over 12 live series discussions on key subject matters including LEAD-HER-SHIP, Economic Abuse, Job Loss & Creating opportunity, Anti-Racism & Inclusion, Accessibility, Education, Allyship, Miscarriage, Motherhood & Everything in between, Post-Pandemic Support for Women Entrepreneurs and several more. The series included over 40+ inspiring female disruptors, change-makers, influencers, advocates and community leaders across Canada with a core focus on diversity and inclusion. This year, Buildup women Series was named Canada's Top 100 Recovery Projects in 2020 by Future of Good.

Sowmya currently works with the Ontario Disability Employment Network to focus on Diversity & Inclusion with a key focus on Promising Practice, Innovation and Impact Measurement.



Awo Nuuh
Senior Policy and Program Strategist

Awo Nuuh is proud member of the local Somali community and a public servant of 14 years. She holds an undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Ottawa and a graduate degree in public administration from Carleton University. Awo has over 20 years of volunteer experience with the Somali community, working primarily with Somali youth in the areas of education, leadership and culture and identity. She is passionate about supporting Somali youth to reach their full potential and to help them to see their multiple identity factors as superpowers. As a volunteer and a public servant, Awo has worked on diversity, equity and inclusion issues such as anti-Black racism, Islamophobia and intersectionality.





Nathan Hall,

Founder and CEO - Culture Check

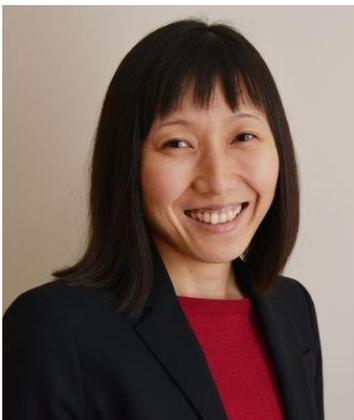
Nathan Hall is an award-winning entrepreneur, business leader, and educator. He is the CEO of Culture Check, a support centre for workplace belonging— specializing in anti-racism through a combination of peer networking, research, best practices and tools. Nathan is also the CEO of Simple Story, a video marketing agency that he took over when it was facing closure. With piling debts, a soured reputation, and a toxic work culture, he was able to keep the doors open long enough to implement significant changes. Since then, Simple Story has seen tremendous success, has won multiple awards, and is beloved by both staff and

clientele. Nathan attributes their success to the culture.

Powered by stories, Nathan utilizes his position to amplify the voices of the marginalized and excluded within organizations and communities. It has been said that his ability to simplify complex issues and put audiences at ease when discussing such uncomfortable topics have been his secret weapon.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mrnathanhall/>

<https://www.instagram.com/mrnathanhall/>



Yumi Kotani

Senior Policy and Program Strategist

Yumi joined the federal public service in 2016, where she strives to make public policy more relevant for the diverse people and communities it serves. She has worked on social, economic, and humanitarian policy, and currently serves as Senior Strategist on the Deputy Minister’s Task Force on Anti-Racism at the immigration department. Yumi came to this work after an accomplished career in the nonprofit sector, where she has developed expertise in equity, inclusion, and diversity. She was a key leader in the development of the Equity and Inclusion Lens for the City of Ottawa, a nationally recognized guide on how to integrate inclusive thinking into municipal public service. She’s led Equity Ottawa, a cross-

sectoral initiative to help local institutions become more welcoming for newcomers, and promoted gender and cultural diversity within Ottawa’s banking sector. Today she continues to advance equity in the city as the Director of the Board at the Ottawa Community Foundation.