



**2024 Annual AHF Report**

# Impact Report

**Accelerating With Intention**





# About AHF



Read Our Story



**A social enterprise, Accelerate Her Future® is a virtual career accelerator providing tailored programs by and for Indigenous, Black, and racialized women pursuing careers in business and tech while building a network of solidarity, allyship and action to create more equitable workplaces.**





## **Our Mission**

AHF is on a mission to drive systemic change by advancing the careers and leadership of Indigenous, Black, and racialized women. We deliver community-driven, research-backed offerings, while engaging in equitable partnerships so that Indigenous, Black, and racialized women can thrive in the workplace.

## **Our Vision**

We envision a country where Indigenous, Black, and racialized women are fully participating at all levels of leadership in their careers.







# Land Acknowledgement

Accelerate Her Future® was founded on land and waters of the traditional territory of many nations including the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, the Attawandaron, and the Metis within the lands protected by the “Dish with One Spoon” wampum agreement. We respect Indigenous peoples’ deep connections to the land and waters, and affirm our commitment to continued learning while engaging our head, heart and hands to advance the TRC Calls to Action 92 and the MMIWG2S+ Calls to Justice 6.1, 11.1 and 15.



**Learn about the land you're on**







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# Message from the Team

As we look back on 2024, we do so with immense gratitude and reflection. 2024 marked five years since Accelerate Her Future was born, an idea rooted in intersectional gender equity, solidarity, and community that has grown into a thriving ecosystem of good humans committed to change. Our five-year anniversary celebration in Toronto was more than an event, it was a moment of collective joy, remembrance, and renewal. In a room filled with Fellows, Mentors, partners, and community members, we honored our shared journey and the flourishing community we've growing together.

2024 was also one of intentional slowing down. We paused to rest, reflect, and root ourselves, choosing not to pursue new grant funding so that we could focus on maintaining core programming, advancing our Career Development Research, and deepening alignment with our values. In doing so, we honoured our team's capacity and recommitted to our long-term vision of sustainable, systemic change.

Our commitment to accelerating with intention reminded us that acceleration doesn't always mean doing more, but doing what matters most, with purpose, alignment, and care. It means centering the voices of our community, fostering cultures of belonging, and choosing depth over breadth.

In 2024, we deepened our ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, guided by our Four Pillars of Reconciliation. Looking ahead, we're focused on strengthening relationships with Indigenous-led organizations, creating intentional spaces for listening, and embedding Indigenous ways of knowing into our programming and team learning. Reconciliation is not a checklist, it is long-term, relational work that requires listening, care, and consistent, tangible action.

Now, with a strong foundation, we create the future. In 2025, we are engaging in a strategic planning process with our team and Advisory Group to map out the next phase of AHF's impact. This plan will be anchored by four core pillars: including expanding our networks of influence, forming more intentional strategic partnerships, revenue diversification, and storytelling our impact and thought leadership.

We are excited for what lies ahead, and we are deeply grounded in our values as we take our next steps forward. Over the past five years, we've witnessed what happens when community leads the way. Our team, our programs, and our ecosystem have flourished together.

Thank you to everyone who has walked with us - whether for five years or five days. This movement is not ours alone; it belongs to all of us.

With gratitude and determination,

**The Accelerate Her Future Team**



# Meet the AHF Team



## Chanel Williams Human Resources Lead

Leading with her heart, Chanel strives to foster safe spaces within every room she enters. As the Human Resources Lead, Chanel continues to engage, encourage, and support women of colour at every step in their journey.



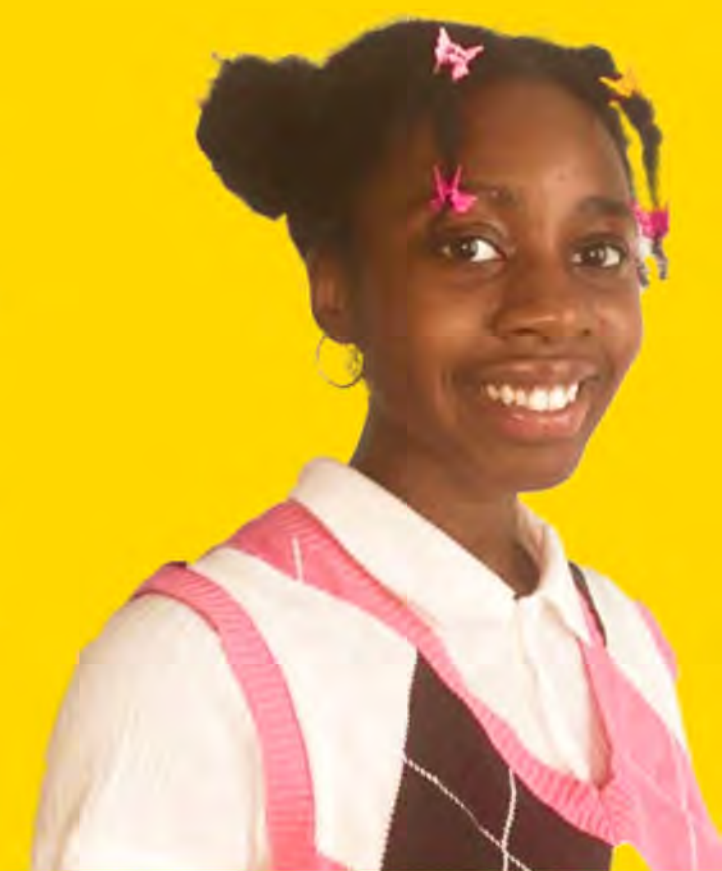
## Dana Carriere Indigenous Engagement Lead

Dana has played a leading role in many Indigenous engagement and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) strategies and initiatives and advocates for building more inclusive practices and processes in post-secondary environments and in workplaces.



## Deborah Eliezer Marketing & Program Associate

Deborah joined AHF as an intern four years ago and is currently working full-time as the Marketing & Program Associate. She has robust experience with research, marketing and graphic design.



## Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi Founder

Recognized as a Globe and Mail, ROB Changemaker and a Future of Good New Founder to Watch, Dr. Golnaz is an award-winning social entrepreneur & leadership, equity and inclusion expert.



## Natasha Sidi Operations & UX Lead

Natasha Sidi is the Operations & UX Lead at AHF, and the Founder of Chasepixel. An advocate for gender and racial equity, she began her career as an educator and further pursued her advocacy work in the non-profit, for-profit, tech, and social enterprise sectors.





# Our Commitment to Truth & Reconciliation

## Message from Dana Carriere, AHF Indigenous Engagement Lead

In 2021, we co-created our Four Pillars of Reconciliation to guide our ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation. These pillars serve as a foundation for how we approach this work with humility, intentionality, and respect. Since then, we have strengthened our relationships with Indigenous women in our community and beyond, deepened our understanding of Indigenous knowledge, values, and worldviews, and woven Indigenous perspectives and practices into our programming. As we reflect on our journey, we recognize that reconciliation is not a destination but an ongoing process of listening, learning, and taking action.

Over the past three years, we have been guided by Indigenous women who have shared their knowledge, perspectives, and lived experiences. Their leadership has shaped how we approach allyship and advocacy, ensuring that we continue to center Indigenous voices in all aspects of our work. Through our initiatives—whether through research, mentorship, educational programs or our marketing platforms, we have made space for Indigenous women to share their stories, influence policies, and lead conversations that challenge systemic inequities.


As we look ahead, we remain committed to sustainable and meaningful actions that align with our capacity as a small organization. Our goal is to ensure that reconciliation remains embedded in our work and that our efforts create lasting impact.

To further strengthen our commitment, we have identified sustainable goals for each of our Four Pillars of Reconciliation as shown on the right:








Pillar	Commitment	Goals
<div></div> <div>Appreciative Listening</div>	To create intentional spaces for Indigenous women to share their perspectives and shape AHF's programs and initiatives.	<p>Establish an annual sharing circle for Indigenous women in our community to ensure their voices continue to shape AHF's direction.</p> <p>Ensure representation on AHF's volunteer Advisory Group.</p>
<div></div> <div>Amplifying Indigenous Voices</div>	To uplift Indigenous women's leadership, expertise, and stories within AHF and beyond.	<p>Share key findings from AHF's career development research with Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences through facilitated discussions, blog, articles, partnership with Indigenous organizations, and panels driving awareness and action for Indigenous women's career advancement.</p> <p>Ensure representation of/provide a platform for Indigenous women through invitation to speak at our Virtual Summit, facilitate sessions, and collaborate on projects and research..</p>
<div></div> <div>Active Committment</div>	To integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and leading within AHF's programs and research.	<p>Offer an annual learning session for AHF team members, volunteers, and Advisory Group focused on deepening understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and contemporary issues.</p> <p>AHF team members attend Indigenous gatherings and virtual and in person events in our local communities.</p>
<div></div> <div>Active Allyship</div>	To take consistent, tangible actions that support reconciliation and Indigenous women's advancement in the workplace and beyond.	<p>Expand our community outreach and establish relationships with Indigenous-led organizations such as Indspire, Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, or Indigenous Professional Association of Canada (IPAC).</p> <p>Host an annual roundtable discussion with Indigenous and non-Indigenous women focused on allyship, solidarity, living reconciliation, inviting the AHF community to engage in meaningful dialogue and action-oriented discussions.</p>





We recognize that reconciliation is not about checking boxes, it is about long-term, relational work that fosters trust, respect, and meaningful change. As a small organization, we are committed to taking sustainable actions that reflect our values and responsibilities as allies. We will continue to listen, learn, and evolve in our journey, ensuring that truth and reconciliation remain at the heart of AHF's mission.

We extend our gratitude to the Indigenous women who have guided us and to our broader AHF community for walking this path alongside us. Reconciliation is a shared responsibility, and together, we will continue to build spaces that honor, uplift, and create opportunities for Indigenous women to thrive.

**Dana Carriere**

Indigenous Engagement Lead, Accelerate Her Future



## Amplifying Indigenous Voices

At our Virtual Summit - Flourish, Indigenous women represented **15%** of our speakers, sharing their leadership, expertise, and lived experiences across topics such as imposter phenomenon in STEM, creating psychologically safe workplaces, cultivating the power of authentic community, and an intersectional look at allyship in the workplace.



**Amanda Ens** 



**Dana Carriere** 



**Jessica Vandenberghe** 



**Patricia A. Crowe** 



**Sarah Midanik** 

Their voices exemplify our commitment to **Amplifying Indigenous Voices** by ensuring representation and fostering learning that bridges Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.




## Active Allyship Celebrating AHF Mentors

We are thrilled to celebrate **Patricia A. Crowe** and **Starrlee DeGrace**, two extraordinary leaders who have been recognized as finalists for their outstanding contributions to equity and mentorship. Their dedication to creating meaningful change embodies the very values we care about at Accelerate Her Future. We are honored to have supported their nominations and to witness the profound impact they continue to make in their communities and beyond.



**Patricia A. Crowe** has been recognized as a finalist for the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award 2025 in the Igniting Equity category for her lifelong commitment to dismantling barriers and advocating for justice. As a proud Métis-Cree woman, Patricia's work spans grassroots activism, mentorship, and policy influence, amplifying the voices of Indigenous women and marginalized communities. From co-founding Rise Up Against Abuse to leading Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) advocacy, she has fostered healing, systemic change, and solidarity. Her leadership continues to inspire and create meaningful impact, embodying the very essence of this award.





**Starrlee DeGrace** has been selected as a Mentor of the Year finalist for the Leadership Awards 2025, a testament to her extraordinary dedication to guiding and empowering women in the digital economy. Since 2021, Starrlee has been a steadfast mentor with Accelerate Her Future, supporting early-career women through the Fellowship Circle, leading an IBM mentorship pilot, and hosting over 400+ “Tea with Starrlee” career conversations. A champion for equitable access, she has also established two STEM scholarships for Indigenous students. Starrlee’s leadership and human-centered approach to mentorship have changed countless lives, making this recognition well deserved.





# Celebrating 5 Years of Impact

## A Night to Remember



This event was more than just a celebration - it was a heartfelt thank you. For five years, AHF has been fueled by the time, energy, perspectives, and trust of our incredible community. This night was about honoring that collective impact. It was also a homecoming! Our first in-person event in five years, right where it all started: Toronto.

With **80 AHF community members** in the room, the energy was electric. We even had out of town visitors including Deborah Eliezer (AHF's Digital Marketing Associate), and AHF Mentors and Advisory Group Members, Shahzia Noorally and Jade Jocko. Laughter, heartfelt moments, and deep connections filled the space as we reflected on our journey, celebrated our achievements, and showed our gratitude to the people who make AHF what it is. Over food and refreshments, community members caught up, shared stories, and strengthened the relationships that make this network so powerful.





 **Play Video**



# Moments that Mattered

## Community Voices

Members of the AHF community took the mic to share their AHF stories. Some who started as fellows and now mentor others, proving the power of investing in women. Others reflected on how AHF helped them navigate their careers, build their leadership, and find a sense of belonging in an “ecosystem of amazing humans”.



## Partners Who Show Up

Representatives from IGM Financial and Scotiabank, our event sponsors, spoke about why they partner with AHF. They highlighted the importance of organizations like AHF in shaping the next generation of leaders and shared how their commitment is about long term transformational relationships. We thank Enbridge, IGM Financial and MLSE for their swag bag contributions.



## A Legacy of Impact

Over the past five years, AHF has not only grown in numbers but in influence, impact, and reach. We've had successes and experienced bumps in the road, all serving as learning opportunities.







# **Our 5 Year Impact**

## **A Snapshot**





**7**

Programs & services launched

**2000+**



Participants across programs

**300+**



Fellows

**145+**



Mentors

**200+**



Paid speakers and  
facilitators

**65**



Women entrepreneurs hired  
for project-based work

**30**



Interns hired & mentored

**22+**

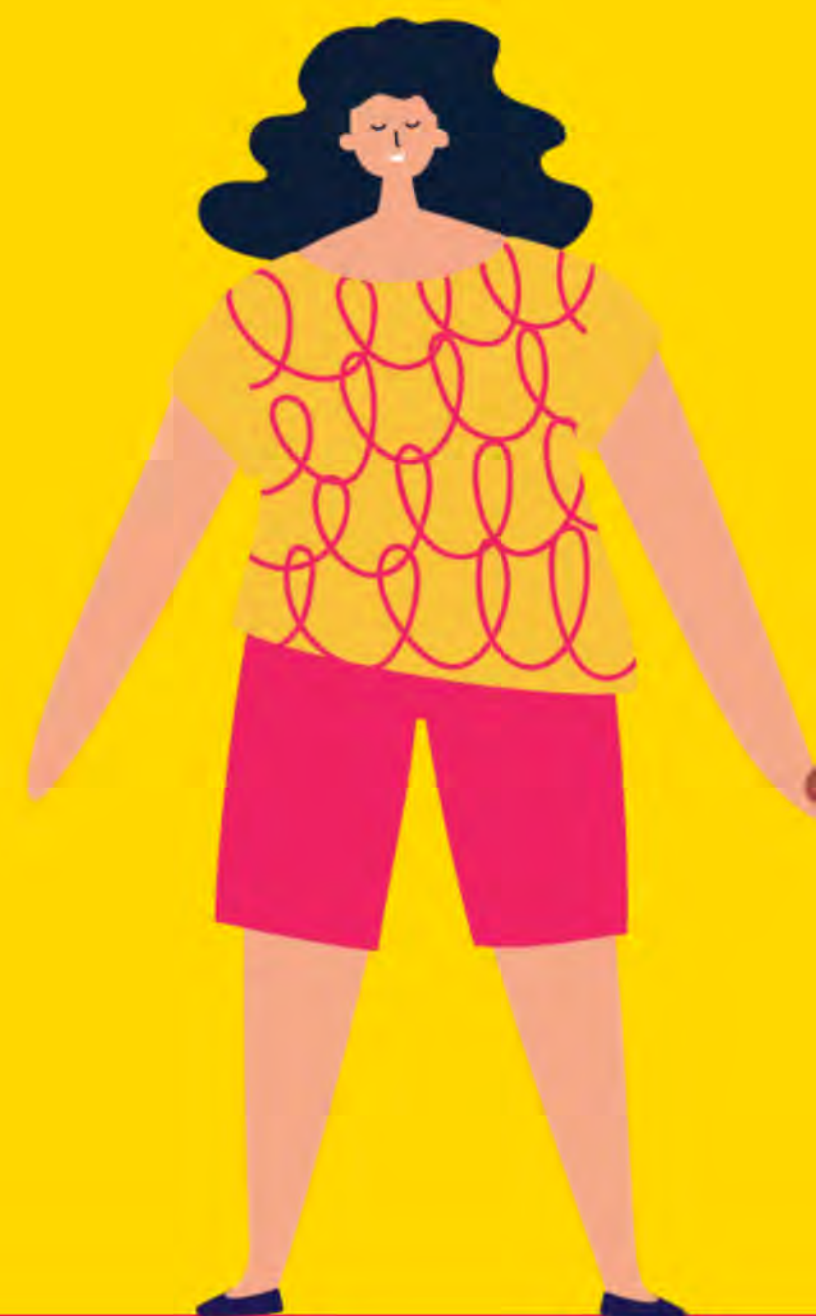


Collaborators, funders  
sponsors & partners



# Fellowship Circle

AHF's Fellowship Circle is a highly curated and tailored 10-week program, designed by and for Indigenous, Black and racialized women in Canada launching their careers in business and STEM. The program focuses on developing social capital and career readiness skills.



## Fellows Impact



**53**  
Participants



**19**  
Postsecondary  
institutions



**3**  
Provinces



# 1000%



**100%**



Were satisfied with the Fellowship Circle 10-week experience

**100%**



Indicated the overall Fellowship Circle program was a quality experience

**97%**



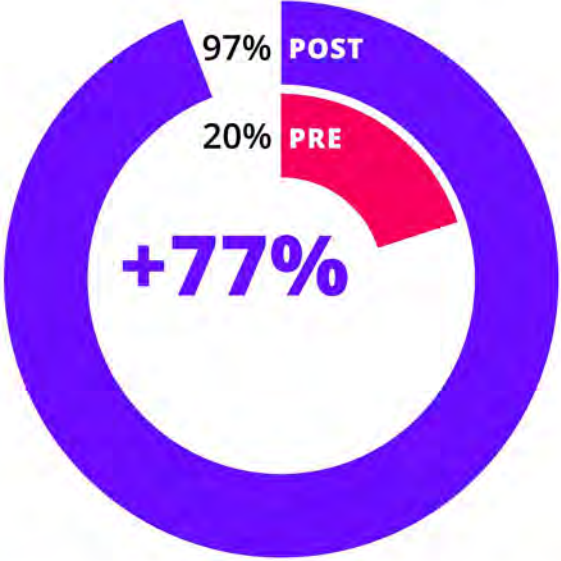
Would recommend the Fellowship Circle program to a friend



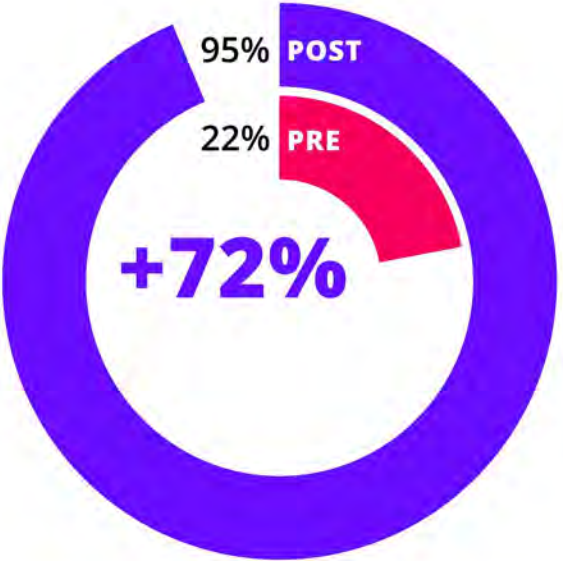


# What we heard from the Fellows in the Fellowship Circle

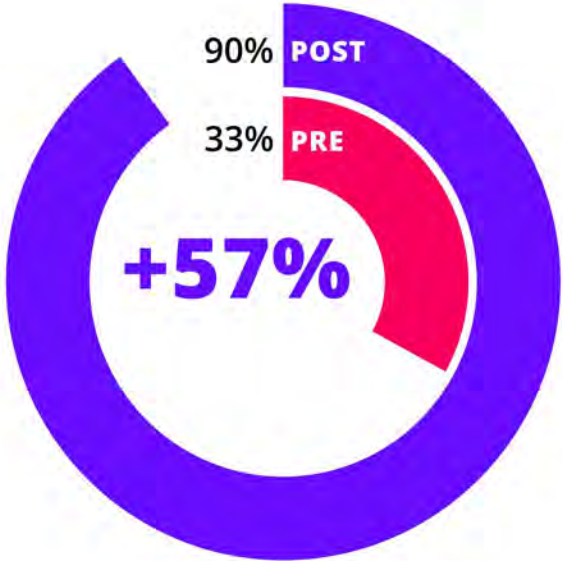
Had access to mentorship by other Indigenous, Black, and women of colour who were in manager or senior leadership roles.



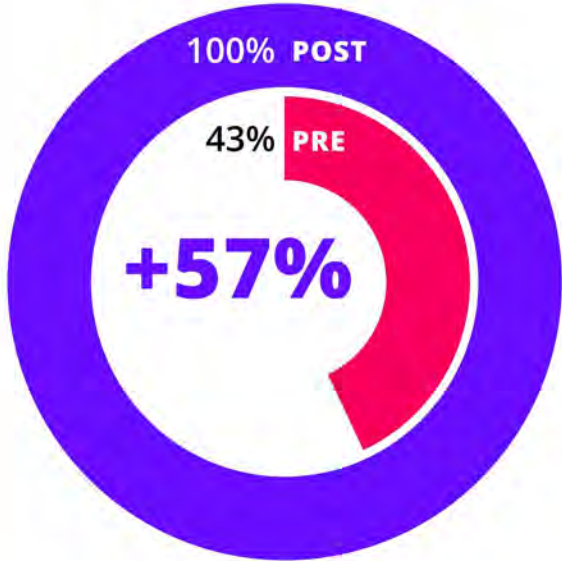
Feel more confident and equipped about navigating their career development



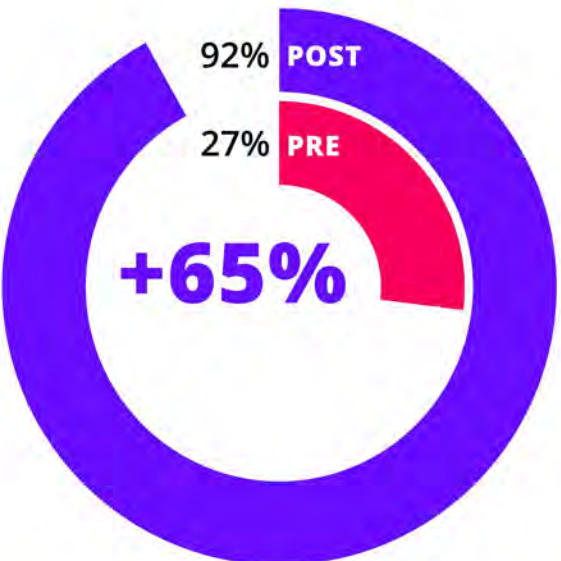
Feel more confident about their networking skills



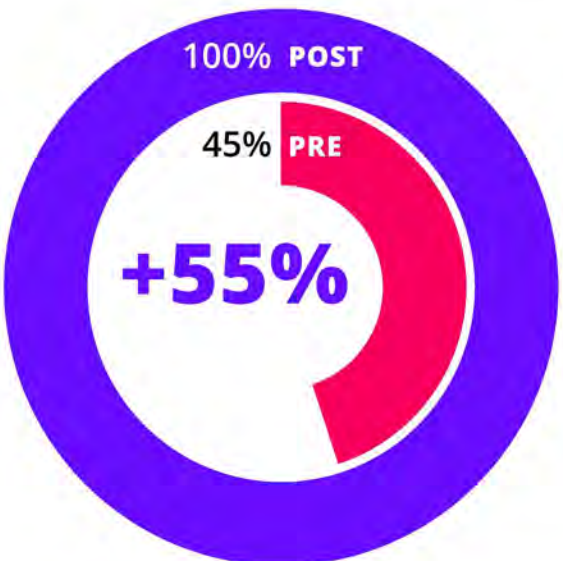
Had access to a supportive and inclusive community of peers and professionals where they could bring their whole selves.



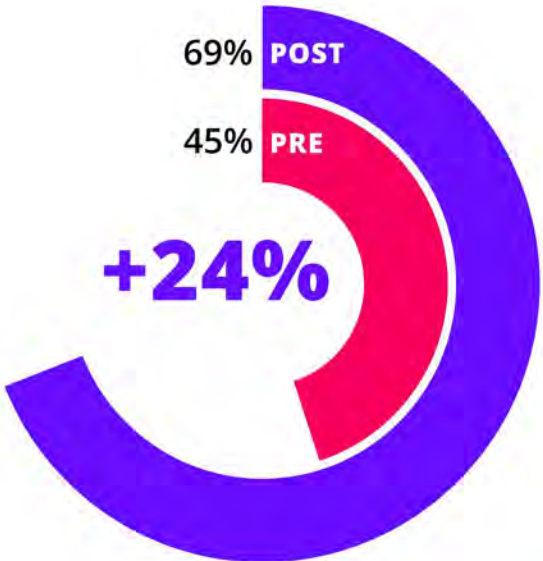
Had access to career learning opportunities tailored to their needs as an Indigenous, Black or woman of colour.



Had opportunities to network with other Indigenous, Black, and women of colour and develop their peer and professional contacts.



Are more aware of job opportunities in their field.



[\*5-point Likert Scale (% of respondents with Strongly Agree and Agree ratings)]



## Fellow Spotlight

### Anabelia Rocha Martinez Finds Value in Reciprocal Mentorship

For Anabelia Rocha Martinez, a Business Technology Management Graduating Student at Toronto Metropolitan University, joining the AHF Fellowship Circle marked the beginning of a powerful experience in her career journey.

“AHF is an experience I would absolutely recommend to any person that is beginning their career journey and wants to connect with a kind and welcoming community of career accomplished women of colour,” she shared.

From the very first orientation to the final Career Learning Lab, Anabelia found herself surrounded by encouragement, inspiration, and compassion. But it was the experience of reciprocal mentorship that left the biggest mark.



“The most meaningful part of this program was the reciprocal mentorship. This experience has helped me learn many new skills, expand my self-confidence, and garner a stronger sense of community. I now feel like I can navigate my career effectively due to every valuable thing I learned while participating in the Accelerate Her Future Fellowship Circle.”

**Anabelia Rocha Martinez,**  
**Business Technology**  
**Management Graduating Student**  
**at Toronto Metropolitan University**



# Fellowship Circle

## Mentors Impact



**30**  
Participants



**23**  
Organizations



**5**  
Provinces

**100%**



Were satisfied with the Fellowship Circle 10-week experience

**100%**



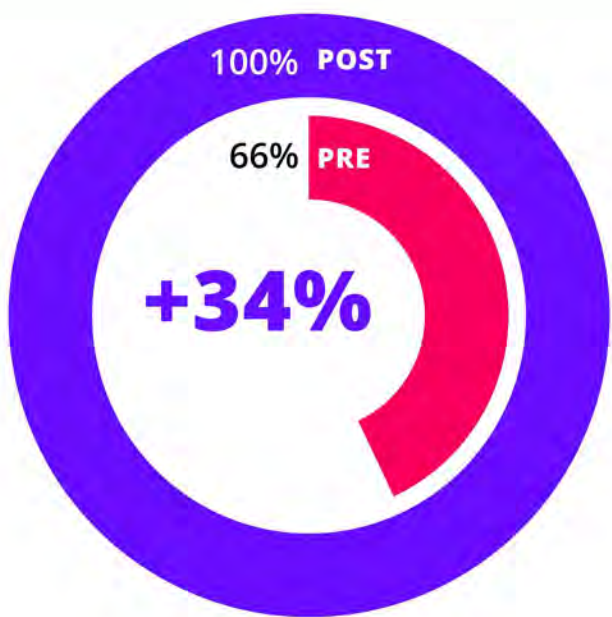
Would recommend the Fellowship Circle program to a friend

**100%**



Indicated the overall Fellowship Circle program was a quality experience

Had access to a supportive and inclusive community of peers and professionals where they could bring their whole selves.



**92%**



Had access to a supportive and inclusive community where they could bring their whole selves

\*10-point Likert Scale (% of respondents with 8-10 ratings)







## Mentor Spotlight

### Safina Hussein is Drawn to the Safe Space Where Vulnerability is Welcomed

For longtime AHF mentor Safina Hussein, the Fellowship Circle isn't just a program, it's a space of shared growth, transformation, and deep connection. Having mentored in several cohorts, Safina is drawn by the energy, wisdom, and community she's come to cherish. "Since my first year as a mentor, I have been inspired by the program, Fellows, and Mentors I've had the privilege to cross paths with," she shared. "The amount of a-ha moments I have and the energy I walk away with after each Fellowship Circle is something that can't fully be described in words."

Her biggest takeaway? The power of pausing to truly listen. "We all learn so much more when we pause, listen, reflect, and appreciate where each individual person comes from and the experience they bring with them."



That spirit of deep listening came to life in a moment Safina recalls vividly when a Fellow bravely voiced the loneliness of navigating her career. "You could hear how alone one of the fellows felt in their experience. As a collective group of mentors and fellows, we were able to share our varied experiences, and you could see the complete pivot, the moment where the fellow realized she was no longer alone."

For Safina, that moment was a reminder of what makes the Fellowship Circle so special: "a safe space where vulnerability is welcomed, authenticity is celebrated, and solidarity is powerful." She believes programs like this are essential. "As people of colour, we can sometimes feel like we're slipping through the cracks or that our voices don't have the same impact as those who don't look like us. The Fellowship Circle reminds us that we matter, we make an impact, and we have a community behind us."



## Mentor Spotlight

### Meet Maryam Amussah Who Believes Programs Like the Fellowship Circle Are Essential

For Maryam Amussah, Production Unit Manager at Shell Canada, joining the Fellowship Circle as a mentor in 2025 was an easy decision. “I was inspired by the intelligent and driven women I got to share time and space with in my first Fellowship Circle in 2024,” she shared. “I couldn’t wait to come back for more!”

Her biggest takeaway? The bold, authentic, and “can-do” mindset of the next generation.

“They’re ready to run where we walked, challenging the status quo, stepping outside their comfort zones, and taking up space in ways that are powerful and true to themselves. Their energy renewed something in me.”

Maryam believes that programs like the Fellowship Circle are not just meaningful, they are essential.



“This isn’t just about gender equity, it’s about intersectional equity. Indigenous and Black women are often left out of the broader conversation. Mentorship like this creates space for them to rise, to gain clarity early in their careers, and to feel seen and supported on their journey.”

**Maryam Amussah, Production Unit Manager, Shell Canada**





# **Career Readiness Bootcamp**

## **Turning Learning into Action**

In today's job market, knowledge alone isn't enough. What sets future leaders apart is the ability to apply what they learn with a sense of readiness. That's why our Career Readiness Bootcamp is designed to bridge the gap between knowledge and action, providing hands-on, immersive experiences that equip participants with real-world skills. Through expert-led sessions, interactive coaching, and invaluable networking opportunities, our bootcamp is a catalyst for career acceleration.



In 2024, our Career Readiness Bootcamp focused on **Interviewing With Confidence**, equipping participants with the skills and mindset to navigate the hiring process effectively.

Over two transformative days, attendees engaged in a thought-provoking panel discussion, *Breaking the Digital Ceiling: Celebrating Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Women in Tech*, featuring industry leaders from IGM Financial, including past AHF mentor **Fisyani Sinyama**. They also participated in three immersive workshops led by women at Scotiabank, including AHF mentor **Hoda Abokhadra** and career strategist **Zeinab Kahera**, offering deep insights into interviewing. The second day featured a **group coaching session** with **Kadine Cooper**, **Gwenna Kadima**, and **Zeinab Kahera**, followed by **mock interviews**.

## Impact at a Glance



48

Participants



9

Faculty & speakers



3

Career coaches



15

Mock interviews



24

Hours of interview time



**Our Deepest Thanks to Our Partners**

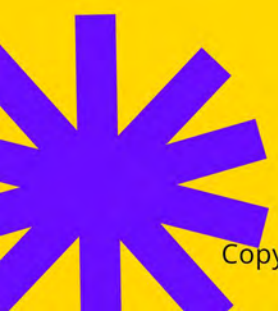






AHF x Scotiabank Networking Event at Rotman Commerce Career Discovery Week

# **AHF x Corporate Partner Networking Events Building Genuine Connections**





At AHF, we believe that intentional and inclusive networking opportunities are essential to advancing Indigenous, Black, and racialized women in the workplace. That's why we co-create tailored networking events with our corporate partners, designed not just to connect talent with opportunity, but to foster meaningful relationship-building. These events allow our partners to demonstrate their commitment to building inclusive cultures, while providing our community with meaningful touchpoints, access to industry professionals, and a platform to engage in powerful career conversations.

## 2024 AHF x Corporate Partner Networking Highlights

**310**



Attendees

**5**



Tailored networking events

**3**



Corporate partners engaged

**18**



Corporate representatives



# AHF x Scotiabank at Rotman Commerce

## A Milestone Moment

In November 2024, AHF celebrated a major milestone: our first in-person partnership with a post-secondary institution, by teaming up with long-standing corporate partner Scotiabank to host a dynamic networking event at Rotman Commerce Career Discovery Week. And what a moment it was!

The evening kicked off with warm welcomes from Natasha Sidi (Operations & UX Lead, AHF) and Angela Cheatley (Campus Recruitment Team Manager, Scotiabank), who energized the crowd of over 40 Rotman Commerce students by sharing insights into AHF’s career development programs and Scotiabank’s campus recruitment opportunities.

Want to host events like this?



“What stood out to me most about the AHF x Scotiabank Women in Financial Services event at Rotman Commerce was how inviting and genuine the entire atmosphere felt. Unlike many networking events that can sometimes feel transactional or uptight, this event was filled with warmth, real conversations, and an incredible sense of community. It was such a powerful reminder of the impact of being in spaces where women are truly uplifting each other.”

**Diana Zohrabi**  
**Undergraduate Student,**  
**Rotman Commerce**



Next came a powerful panel discussion moderated by Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi (Founder, AHF), featuring Scotiabank leaders Melissa Dalmacio (Director and Global Head, Campus Recruitment and Talent Development), Hoda Abokhadra (Analytics DevOps Engineer), and Jennifer Slegers (Senior Manager, Global Banking and Markets). Together, they delivered real talk on launching careers with purpose, touching on non-traditional application pathways, navigating the school-to-work transition, and how to shine without losing your authenticity.

The event wrapped on a high note with students building new relationships, and connecting directly with Scotiabank professionals.



“One insight that really resonated with me was when Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi mentioned that ‘women tend to apply to jobs only when they meet 100% of the qualifications, while men apply at 60%.’ Hearing that again was a powerful reminder not to let perfectionism get in the way. Since the event, I’ve been more proactive in my job search and kinder to myself throughout the process—recognizing that I’m not alone on this journey. What made this event stand out was not only the opportunity to better understand Scotiabank’s unique campus recruitment process, but also being introduced to AHF. That moment inspired me to apply to become a Fellow, where I’ve since connected with inspiring women leaders in STEM and found a deeper sense of community.”

**Shelly Zhou,**  
**Masters Student, University of Toronto**



# AHF Virtual Summit 2024

## Flourish

### **Nurturing Inner Joy, Thriving in Community, Flourishing in the Workplace**

Flourish is about redefining success on our own terms. As Indigenous, Black, and racialized women, our 2024 virtual summit challenged the notion that success must be synonymous with struggle, overwork, and burnout. We redefined success on our own terms. We explore what it means to flourish in every part of our lives – within ourselves, our communities, and our workplaces.







**303**

Total registered



**28%**

of attendees received a scholarship



**83%**

Attendance rate



**95%**

Satisfaction rate



*Representation from*

**7**

Provinces



**42**

Cities



**75+**

Organizations






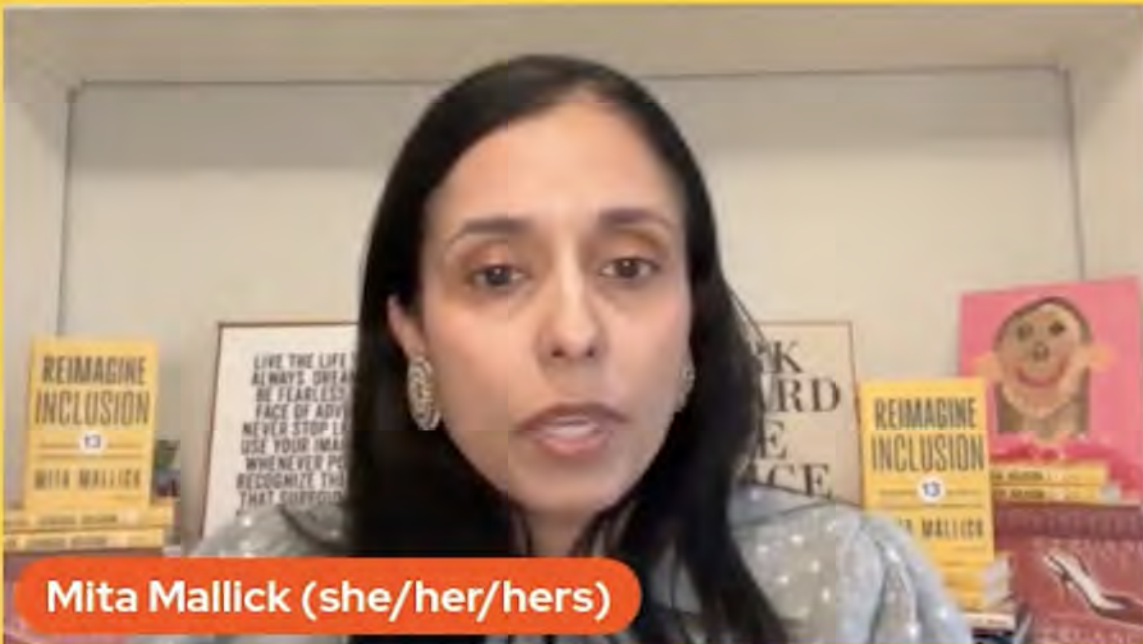




## Spotlight

### Opening Fireside Chat with Mita Mallick

Reimagine Inclusion: Creating Workplaces Where Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Women Flourish







We opened the 2024 AHF Virtual Summit with the kind of conversation that reminded us why we gather: to speak truth and reimagine new futures - together. Mita Mallick, trailblazer in equity and inclusion and Wall Street Journal best-selling author of Reimagine Inclusion, joined us in a raw, powerful, and energizing fireside chat, moderated by Shahzia Noorally.



# Virtual Summit Highlights

11



Sessions

34



Speakers

10



Career expo booths

363



Expo booth interactions

2,201



Chat messages

1,829



Chat reactions

120



Networking meetings



Students/New Grads

25%



Early-Career

13%



Mid-Career

25%



Senior Executive

20%



Self-Employed

7%



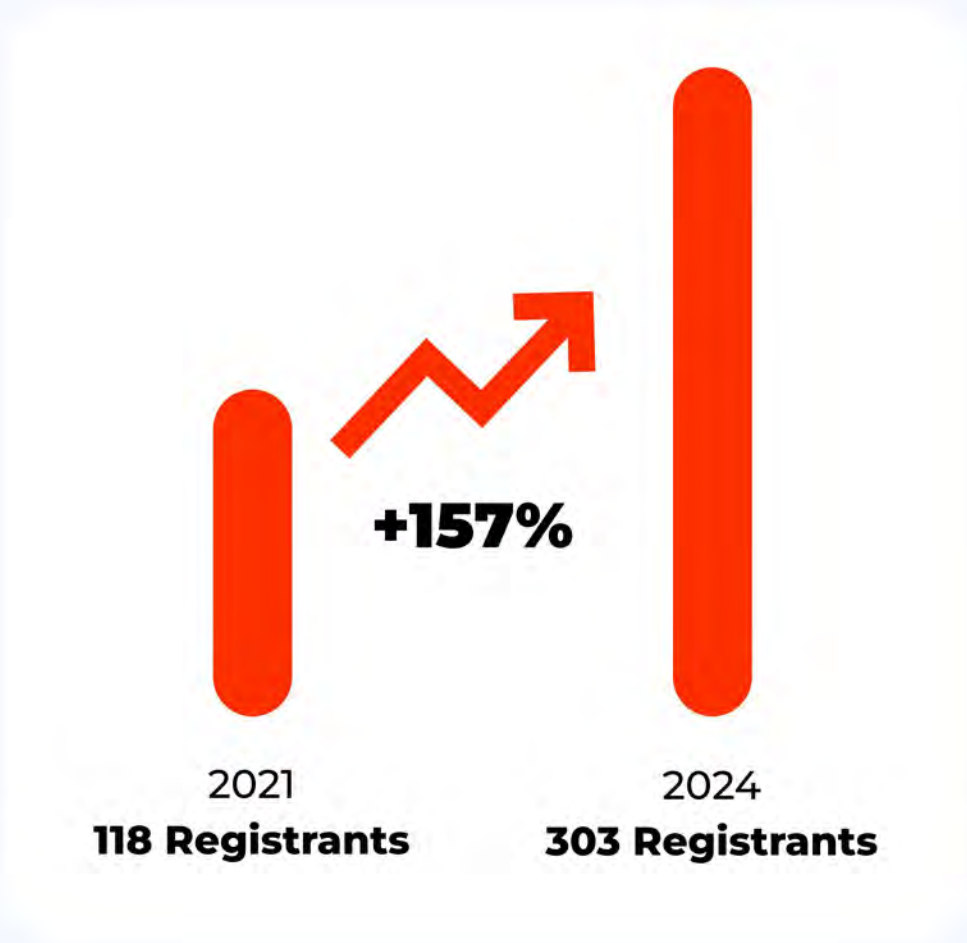


# Spotlight

## Virtual Summit Growth


### From Seed to Bloom

Our Virtual Summit has grown into a powerful annual gathering that centres Indigenous, Black, and racialized women in conversations around leadership, belonging, and reimagining success.



At Flourish, Rodmesia Clarke of Enbridge and Jenna Tharani of MLSE offered bold, reflective perspectives on re-defining career conversations that lead to growth and advancement.

**Transforming Career Conversations: A Human-Centred Approach with Jenna Tharani**



Transforming Career Conversations: A Human-Centred Approach with Jenna Tharani

[Read Blog](#)

**Rodmesia Clarke: Transforming Career Conversations into Pathways for Fostering Trust and Growth**



Rodmesia Clarke: Transforming Career Conversations into Pathways for Fostering Trust and Growth

[Read Blog](#)

 **Get First Access to Virtual Summit 2025 Tickets**



**Thank You To Our Summit Sponsors**







# AHF's Career Development Research

In 2024, we devoted a year to one of the most ambitious research efforts in AHF's history, analyzing 80 transcripts drawn from 21 sharing circles and 59 in-depth interviews with Indigenous, Black, and racialized women and HR, DEI and people leaders about career development and experiences in the Canadian workplace. This work built on our efforts in 2023, which focused on securing REB (Research Ethics Board) approval, recruiting participants, and conducting the sharing circles and interviews.



# Meet the AHF Research Team



**Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi**  
Lead Investigator



**Dana Carriere**  
Sub Investigator



**Seema Taneja**  
Sub Investigator



**Natasha Sidi**  
UX & Project Management




**Deborah Eliezer**  
Research Assistant

At the heart of this study was our commitment to centering community voice, co-creating knowledge, and turning insights into meaningful solutions.







We grounded our process in a community-informed and participatory approach, prioritizing relationality, collaboration, and deep listening at every stage. The 80 transcripts served as our primary data, and our team-based, participatory thematic analysis reflected our belief that knowledge is most powerful when built collectively.

Each member of our research team coded transcripts independently and then came together in virtual gatherings to discuss, debate, and converge around key emergent themes. We used a web-based visual collaboration tool to bring our analysis to life in real time, allowing the entire team to engage with the data dynamically by posting and moving thematic notes on a shared board. This approach deepened our understanding of the lived experiences, helping us identify the most resonant and recurring themes.

#### **A quote from a research participant**

“I think what they're doing, if they're doing it well, is they're asking the Black, Indigenous, and racialized folks: what do you want to see, support wise? Because clearly what we've been doing holistically may have been from the lens of equality, but from a more equitable and ethical perspective, how can we support you and your needs? And so what I've seen as a practitioner, where it's helped, is when they actually ask the people to identify it this way... I will say it's not common. And blanket statements being like “all the women” is not going to help because there are so many intersections within that identity alone.”



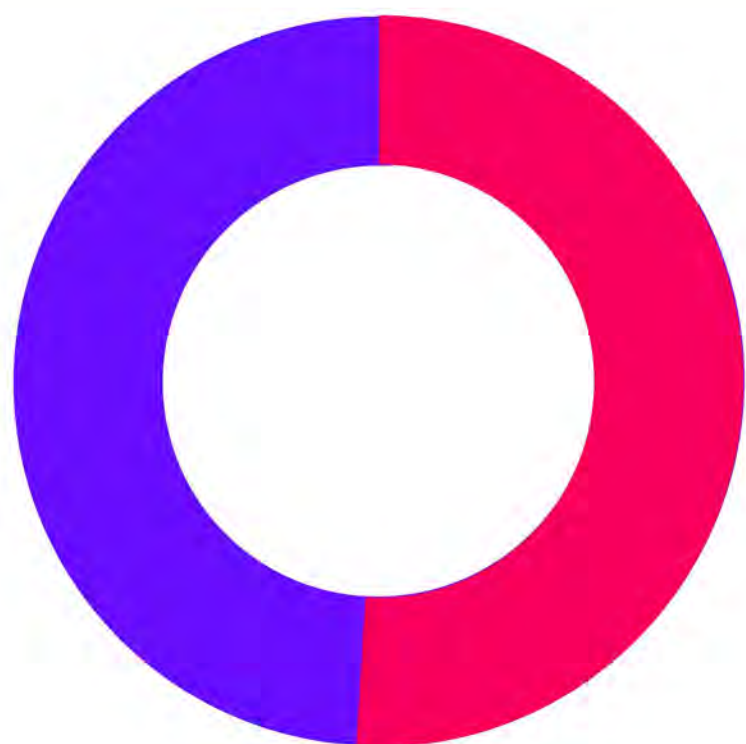
Throughout the process, we engaged our Advisory Group, composed of Indigenous, Black, and racialized women, to reflect on and respond to the evolving themes and language, ensuring that our interpretations remained accountable to community insight.

To bring our findings into a cohesive and accessible format, we collaborated with an external report writer, working closely with the research team in a highly iterative and participatory way.

In 2024, the project was resourced through AHF’s operating budget, which supported both our research assistant and report writer.

Who We Heard From

**59** Interviews    **21** Sharing Circles    **7** Provinces



**63** sharing circle participants  
**59** 1:1 interview participants  
**122** total research participants

Accelerate Her Future’s Career Development & Experiences of Black, Indigenous and Racialized Women in the Canadian Workplace research project was partially funded by the Government of Canada’s Future Skills Centre. This study was approved on ethical grounds by Veritas Independent Review Board.







# **Marketing & Social Media Highlights**



In 2024, our voice carried further than ever before – across social platforms, national publications, and keynote stages. From celebrating milestones to sparking conversation on equity and leadership, our most engaged content reflected the collective power of our community and the growing resonance of our mission.

In her op-ed for The Future Economy, our founder Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi calls for bold, systemic change, arguing that gender-only approaches to workplace equity fall short without an intersectional lens that centres race, power, and lived experience.



**Intersectionality at Work:  
Why Gender-Only  
Approaches Aren't Enough**

 **Golnaz Golnaraghi**  
Founder and President - Accelerate Her Future

Diversity / Women Leaders / Work



**Read the Full Op-Ed**

**Our Most Read Blogs of the Year**

**Decoding Data Science: An Intimate Conversation with a Leader in the Financial Industry**



Decoding Data Science: An Intimate Conversation with a Leader in the Financial Industry


**Read Blog**

**Creating Inclusion and Belonging: Insights from a DEIB Leader in Tech**



Creating Inclusion and Belonging: Insights from a DEIB Leader in Tech

**Read Blog**

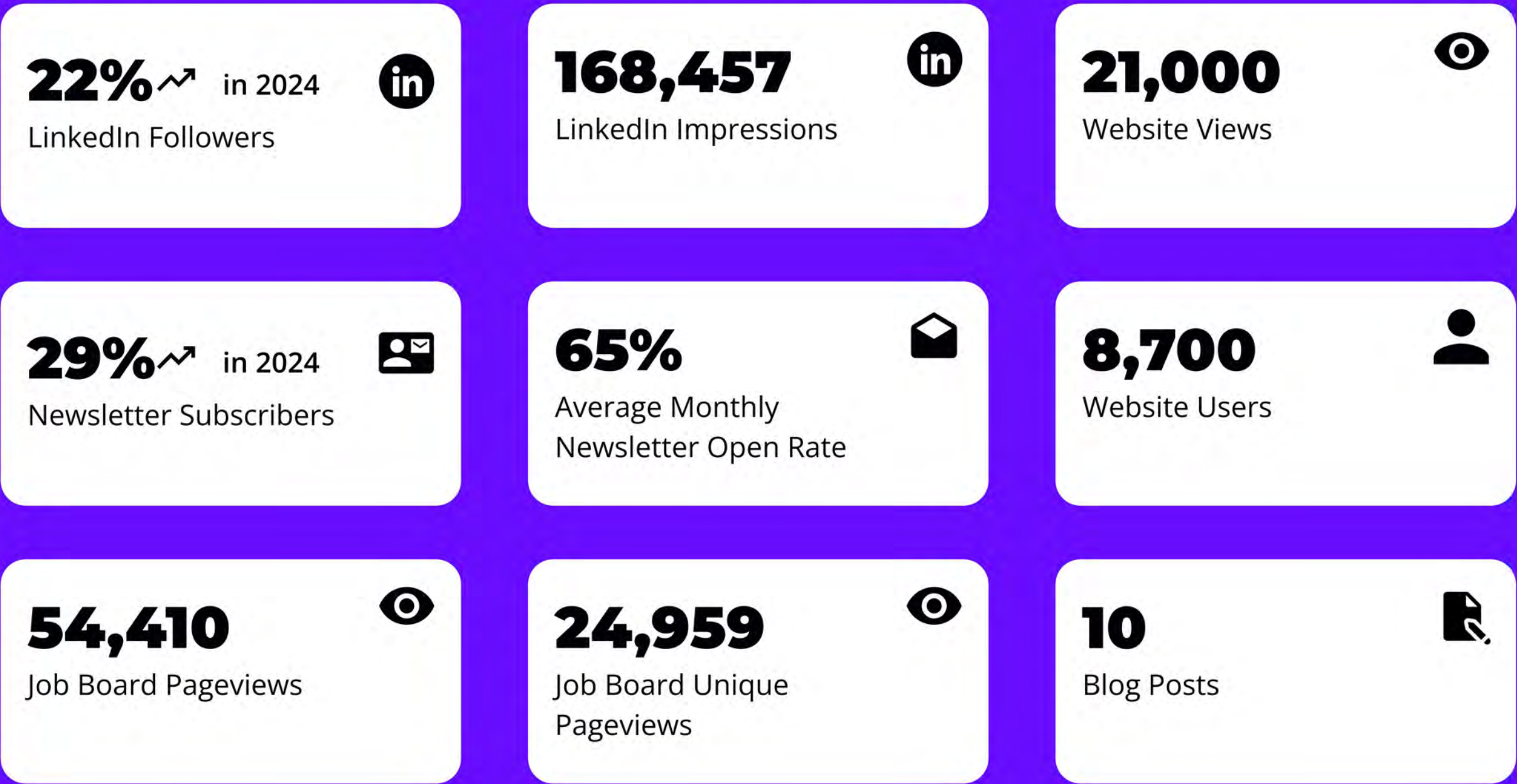


**Creating Impact: Why Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Women Need Sponsors in the Workplace**

**Read Blog**



# Marketing & Social Media Analytics Highlights



## AHF Speaks at Women in Tech Conference at Microsoft

AHF participated in a session at the Women in Tech Conference 2024 at Microsoft Toronto, titled “Empowering Diversity: The Impact of Mentorship in Business and STEM.” During a powerful conversation moderated by Hoda Abokhadra, Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi and Natasha Sidi explored how mentorship can break down barriers, foster belonging, and create more inclusive pathways in business and STEM for Indigenous, Black, and racialized women.



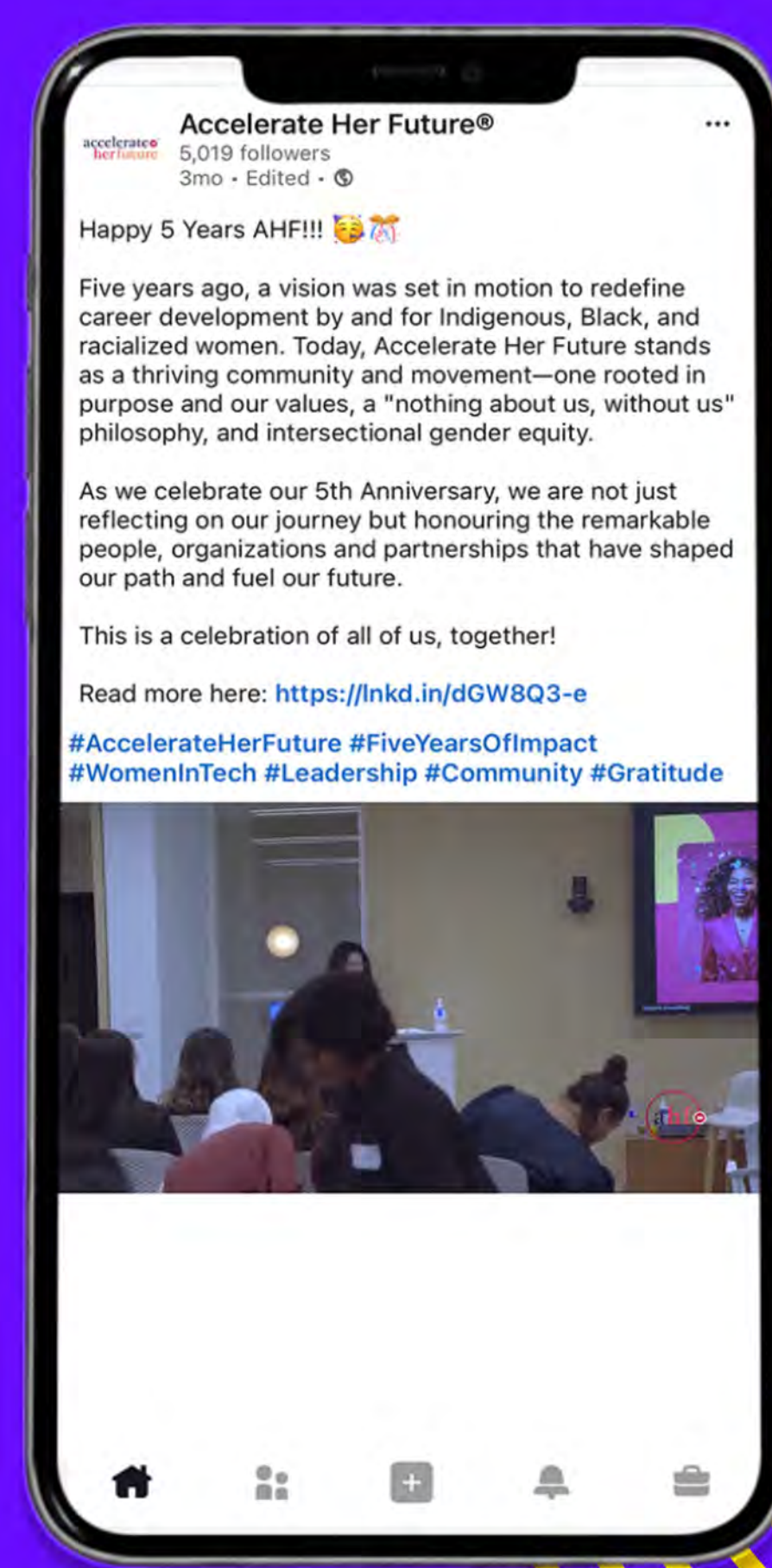
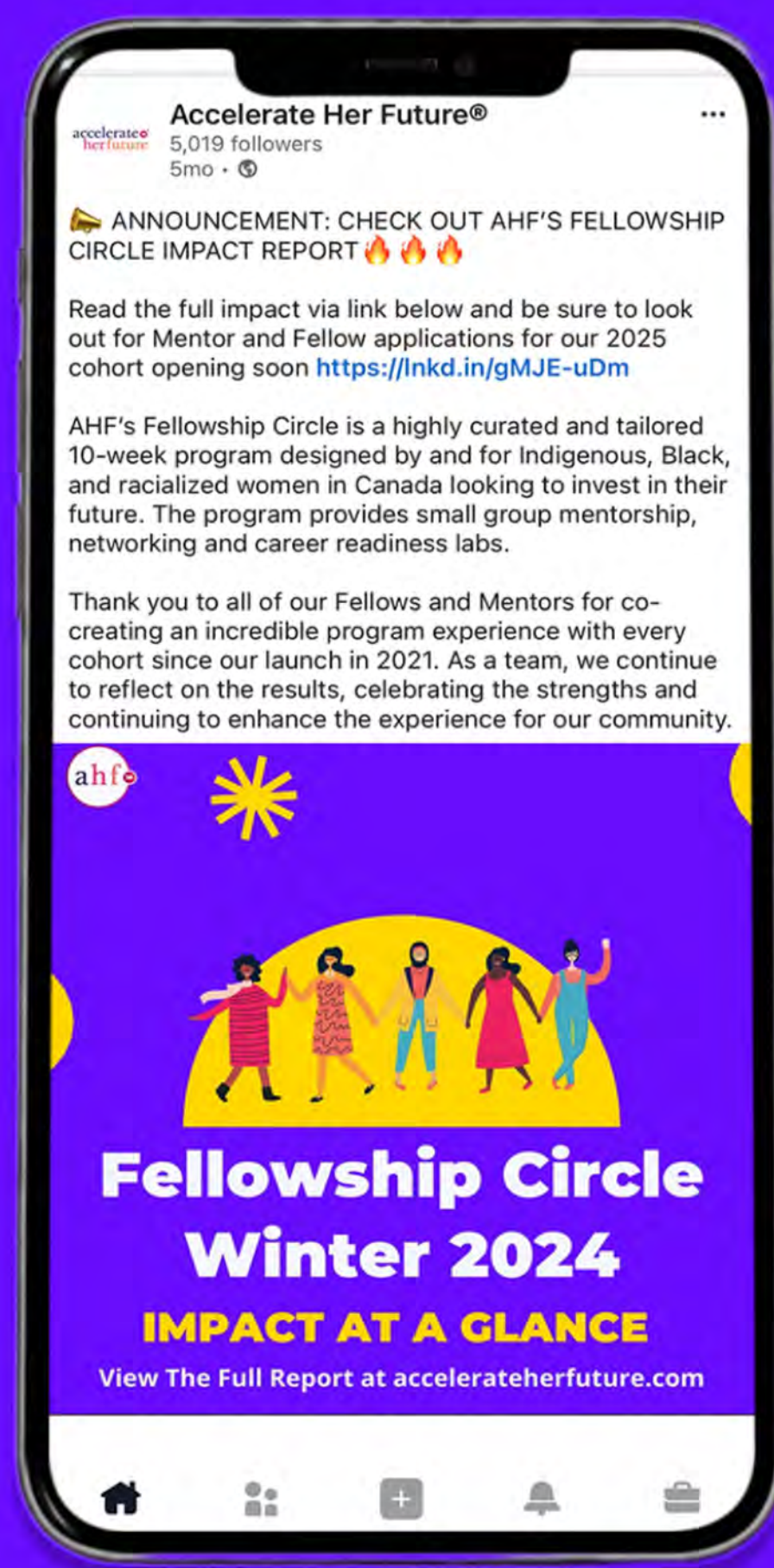
Left: Natasha Sidi, Center: Hoda Abokhardra, Right: Dr. Golnaz Golnaraghi

[Hire Us to Speak](#)



## Top LinkedIn Moments of 2024

From community celebration to national recognition, our most viewed LinkedIn posts of the year reflected the milestones that shaped 2024, and the movement we're building together.





# Our Unique Culture

At Accelerate Her Future, our team culture is grounded in shared purpose and built on trust, care, and collaboration. We show up with passion for our mission, take ownership of our work, and bring our voices and lived experiences into everything we do.





## In Our Words

### What AHF Culture Feels Like



## Our Commitment to the 50 – 30 Challenge

### Representation Matters. Equity Is Non-Negotiable.

As a proud signatory of the Government of Canada's 50 – 30 Challenge, AHF is committed to advancing gender parity and increasing representation of equity-deserving groups in leadership. We don't just meet the benchmark, we exceed it.

**100%** of our team and Advisory Group identify as women, and **100%** identify as Indigenous, Black, or racialized women.

Our leadership is a reflection of the communities we serve and the systemic change we're driving across sectors.





# Celebrating Our Team Successes



## Building a Values-Aligned Vendor Risk Assessment Framework

In 2024, we deepened our commitment to operational integrity and ethical collaboration by developing our first-ever Vendor Risk Assessment Framework, with the guidance of AHF Mentor and sustainability leader Shilpa Tiwari.

The framework was designed to ensure that all vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors working with AHF uphold our standards of ethical, legal, and socially responsible sourcing with a specific lens on sustainability, gender equity, and DEIB.





# Riipen Level Up Program Interns

We hired 9 interns through Riipen’s Level Up program, which provides opportunities for students to work on short-term remote projects and gain real-world experience. Student projects included creating AHF’s brand book, graphics design, Shopify store, blogs, and video creation.

## Student rating of AHF Internship Experience



Student interns rated their AHF internship experience 4.93/5 stars.



“This was my second time working at AHF. Golnaz and Natasha both gave me projects I was interested in working on and that would help me grow. I had a great experience and would recommend it to others looking to gain a great learning experience!”

**Miraal Kabir**

“Golnaz was incredibly organized and straightforward with her feedback. The work was meaningful and our weekly check-ins were always both beneficial and enjoyable. Working with Accelerate Her Future has been a privilege.”

**Maddie Boldt**



# Financial Sustainability





In 2024, we made a conscious decision to slow down as a team in order to pause, rest and reflect. This meant that we were in maintenance mode and chose not to apply for new grant funding or launch new programs. We focused on maintaining existing programs and our career development research. Going forward, our continued focus remains on building financial sustainability through revenue diversification while ensuring our values are embedded in every financial decision we make.

All revenue, funding, and earned income directly support our program delivery, administrative operations, and long-term strategic development. Every dollar is intentionally allocated to sustain our mission, amplify our impact, and support the community we serve.

Importantly, all team members were paid for their time in 2024, with hourly rates set above minimum wage. Our founder continued to contribute full-time hours, with a greater portion of her time provided in-kind. When compensated, her hourly rate remained aligned with that of our team leads, reflecting our values of equity, transparency, and shared leadership.

**-12%** from 2023  
Operating Revenue

**-100%** from 2023  
Grants & Subsidies





## Revenues & Grants



## Expenses by Category





## **Operational and Financial Priorities Going Forward**

- We are engaged in strategic planning with our Advisory Group in Q1 of 2025 with a focus on financial sustainability while staying true to our values
- We will collaborate with our accountant to continue to maintain timely financial budgeting and monthly reconciliation process
- We will work with our accountant and coaches in our network to create more robust and proactive monthly processes for monitoring financial KPIs aligned with our strategic plan that will inform decision making
- We will continue to centre health and wellbeing as a team and will take time off after each significant offering to rejuvenate



# Our Deepest Thank You

We'd like to acknowledge and thank all individuals and organizations that we've had the honour to engage and work with in 2024.

## 2024 ADVISORY GROUP VOLUNTEER MEMBERS

Angela White  
Anne Steptoe  
Camara Chambers  
Cidia Prentt  
Hoda Abokhadra  
Jade Jocko  
Nicole Denbow  
Rashmi Venkatesh  
Ruby Lukach  
Shahenda Abou-Aly  
Shahzia Noorally  
Shavonne Hasfal-McIntosh

## OUR RIIPEN LEVEL UP INTERNS

Charlotte Lemon  
Javeria Mubasher  
Khafia Iftikhar  
KonsolerMandah  
Maddie Boldt  
Miraal Kabir  
Mishalle Jogezei  
Mahira Morshed  
Tia Osuma  
Umama Khalid

## MENTORS

Aleena Mazhar Kuzma  
Banu Raghuraman  
Fatoumata Camara  
Helena Yu  
Jagrati Setpal  
Jasleen Manhas  
Jharna Deshmukh  
Kadine Cooper  
Kelsey Rodricks  
Kristina Adel  
Margaret Farrugia  
Maryam Amussah  
Michelle Davis  
Mitu Mann  
Monique Ashpole  
Nicole Denbow  
Patricia A. Crowe  
Rachita Ranjan  
Rebecca Lee  
Rosanne Leung  
Ruchira Patel  
Safina Persaud  
Sarah-Almaza Cox  
Shahenda Abou-Aly  
Shahzia Noorally  
Shereen Gomez  
Shimaa AbdelMohsen  
Shola Agoro  
Starrlee DeGrace  
Velia Diaz

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UN Global Compact  
Network Canada  
Wealthsimple

The AHF Team would also like to acknowledge the contributions of **Optinum, Deborah Eliezer and Natasha Sidi** at various stages of our impact framework, analysis and report development process.



# Learn more about **Accelerate Her Future**



[www.accelerateherfuture.com](http://www.accelerateherfuture.com)



Accelerate Her Future



@accelerateherfuture



## Ready to advance our **shared mission?**



**Become a Partner**