

Accessibility and the Federal Public Service

[Main AMA Page](#)

[FR](#)



Ask Me Anything
Accessibility and the
Federal Public Service

Hosts

Time: 1:00 pm EDT | Date: December 13, 2023

Panellists


Samantha Moonsammy
National Defence


Richard Soulliere
Fisheries and Oceans Canada


Elyse Hamel
Environment and Climate
Change Canada


Chichi Ayalogu
National Defence


Myriam Fucina
Public Service and
Procurement Canada



Featuring: Richard Soulliere, Elyse Hamel and Myriam Fucina

Co-hosted by: Samantha Moonsammy and Chichi Ayalogu

Date and time: Wednesday, December 13 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EDT

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Contents

About Event and Speakers

[Event description](#)

[About the Ask Me Anything series](#)

Meet our panellists

Richard Soulliere, Senior Procurement Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Elyse Hamel, Acting Strategic Communications Manager, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Myriam Fucina, Specialized Graduate Diploma (DESS) in andragogy, reflexology therapist

Meet our co-hosts

Samantha Moonsammy, Section Head Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence

Chichi Ayalogu, MA, PhD Student, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, Department of National Defence

Mission: Ask Me Anything series

Thank you to our contributors

Join the webinar

Resource Guide

Canada.ca

Session Recording

Post Event Article

About Event and Speakers

Event description

Join us for December's Ask Me Anything, where we commit to have courageous conversations for International Day for Persons with Disabilities. Our speakers this month are public servants and inclusive leaders from a variety of backgrounds, departments, and stages of life, who will have real and raw conversations on the challenges persons with disabilities face in the public service.

More than 6.2 million Canadians have disabilities, and for many of them, these are disabilities that cannot be seen. People with disabilities experience discrimination, have many additional expenses and often face obstacles that prevent them from finding meaningful, well-paid employment. We recognize that there are various forms of disability – physical, sensory, cognitive or ones related to mental health – and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The Government of Canada is committed to making our country more accessible and more inclusive for all. Whatever a person's needs may be, we must commit to making our organizations more accessible and more inclusive for everyone.

Come to the Ask Me Anything and learn strategies from our diverse panellists whose experiences have shaped their careers. Whether you're a new or a seasoned member of the Federal Public Service, this event will equip you with the knowledge and tools to navigate your public service career through a lens of accessibility.

Join us as our speakers share their sincere stories and raw reflections on the Ask Me Anything stage!

About the Ask Me Anything series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything discussions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to have more inclusive organizations.

As an individual, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, the movies you watch, and the interactions with your community. The 'Ask Me Anything' series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective — to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective of shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward toward a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Meet our panellists



Richard Soulliere, Senior Procurement Officer, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Richard is a seasoned procurement officer who was diagnosed with colour deficiency (also known as colour blindness) at age nine, but that is not all he is or has done. He has lived all over eastern Canada as well as in Germany growing up and then as a language teacher in Asia and Europe. His formal education started in business and later

flourished to include theoretical linguistics and applied language studies from having lived abroad and picking up additional languages, earning him a three-majors-in-1 Bachelor's degree.

Richard's technical interests also flourished with Master's studies in data analytics, although he focuses on procurement and special projects. He has participated in the Government Games, created Procurement Bliss (on GCpedia), and has been learning more about how to engage colleagues with disabilities and those from cultural minorities. He has published many articles on vocal.media and continues to author books.

Elyse Hamel, Acting Strategic Communications Manager, Environment and Climate Change Canada



Elyse discovered her passion for communications during her master's degree in international relations at the University of Ottawa, where she studied political speeches and discourse. A creative soul with years of improv theatre experience, she was unsure how the public service's rigidity would suit her, but quickly changed her mind after joining the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency as a senior communications officer in 2017.

Her dynamic personality, problem-solving skills and innovative thinking were immediately put to good use as she supported files of increasing complexity and importance, eventually accepting a formal leadership role in 2020. After guiding the creative services and digital communications team through the renewal of the Agency's website, she deployed to Environment and Climate Change Canada, where she has been an acting strategic communications manager since January 2023.

Elyse's Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis in 2021 came as a surprise, generating both questions and answers. She has since applied herself to reconciling her new label with her sense of identity, celebrating how her neurodivergence helps her thrive in her chosen career while recognizing how it may have hindered her in the past. As a manager, she uses this experience to lead her team with authenticity and compassion.



Myriam Fucina, Specialized Graduate Diploma (DESS) in andragogy, reflexology therapist

Myriam Fucina is a Quality Assessment Agent at Public Service and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) Customer Contact Centre, and is also involved in committees such as the Well-Being Committee, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness Committee of PSPC.

As an adult educator, she has contributed to the career development of many leaders in National Defence and many other departments by teaching French as a second language (FSL).

Using the Growth Model approach and other coaching techniques, she has specialized in teaching individuals and groups with learning disabilities and post-traumatic stress disorder to military members in particular.

She actively participated in the FSL teaching pilot project within PSPC's pay division and co-created, with 2 other andragogy, evaluation grids for her division's internal exams, and became an evaluator during the pandemic under the responsibility of Human Resources.

She acted as a union delegate for 3 years while also being involved in her community with organizations fighting poverty. She is also President of her condominium's Board of Directors.

One of her current projects is to contribute to the expansion of the Moose Hide campaign by organizing events to demonstrate the leadership that exists among Aboriginal women from a matriarchal culture.

She is currently participating in the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program organized by the Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, National Defence.

Myriam is a single mother of two wonderful children, Tiska and Orion. Of Italian origin, with French and Canadian citizenship, she treated her chronic anxiety by practising outdoor activities, but following a serious depression, she was diagnosed with two anxiety disorders, one of which affects 1 in 10 Canadians. Today, under medical care, she continues to treat herself with yoga and reflexology as well.

Also interested in the aboriginal medicine wheel, she wants to honour people who have died assassinated or by suicide by giving you her presentation on identifying destructive masks.

Finally, she has a passion for discovering people and cultures from all over the world and travels as often as possible.

Meet our co-hosts



Samantha Moonsammy, Section Head Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence

Samantha has spent over 15 years in the public service working in numerous communications, outreach and engagement initiatives that focuses on the people side of business. She presently leads the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion portfolio at Materiel Group National Defence and is the creator of the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles program - the largest group mentoring program for the Government of Canada. But Samantha is much more than that. Her layers include being a woman, mother, partner, daughter, sister, community builder and immigrant.

As an Indo-Caribbean Canadian she was born in Guyana, South America and immigrated to Canada as a toddler. From a young age, dating back to elementary school to the present, Samantha has been a leader in diversity, inclusion and equity, always helping to amplify the voice of others and create sustainable change in organizations to build deeper respect and understanding for all humans. Samantha lives in the Ottawa area and spent some time in Toronto and Barbados during her Master's degree in Communications and Culture. She is a passionate world traveller who has worked and studied in India, China, France and the Caribbean. Her daily mantra: Be the change you wish to see in the world.



Chichi Ayalogu, MA, PhD Student, Diversity and Inclusion Office, Materiel Group, Department of National Defence

Chichi Ayalogu is a mother to two children, a wife, PhD student at Carleton University in the cultural mediations program, and a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Office. She immigrated to Canada from Nigeria in 1998 at the age of nine, and situates her doctoral research and writing in her experience as a member of the Nigerian diaspora. Her work is grounded in a commitment to human rights and the recognition of its denial to numerous communities globally.

Mission: Ask Me Anything series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, that workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a sense of belonging at work where people feel valued.

Visit our wiki page to watch past episodes and continue your self-directed learning with our Resource Guides. <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA>

#AMACHallenge

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA: Team session discussion questions

1. What was my main takeaway? – Expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Public Service and Procurement Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada

MCs:	Samantha Moonsammy and Chichi Ayalogu
Panellists:	Richard Soulliere, Elyse Hamel and Myriam Fucina
Production Team:	Terri-Ann Hurst, Tara Lockhart, Shelby Racine, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Quinn Brown, Terri Graham, Kelly Brewer-Balch and Lyrique Richards.

Join the webinar (https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YWVjNGRjZWEtZjQ5Zi00OTJILWEyODUtYzg5ZmE1ZmQzMWEy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%221594fdae-a1d9-4405-915d-011467234338%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2260a74130-5e0c-4d7a-82aa-e5a81e5f8b51%22%7d)

Resource Guide

Canada.ca (<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2023/12/ask-me-anything-accessiblity.html>)

Session Recording



Post Event Article Feedback Form

Retrieved from 'https://wiki.gccollab.ca/index.php?title=Accessibility_and_the_Federal_Public_Service&oldid=122432

This page was last edited on 21 June 2024, at 14:45.

Content is available underCreative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licenseunless otherwise noted.