

Greater Vancouver Board of Trade

Unlearning Gender Roles, Biases, and Stereotypes

September 27, 2021

(Music).

BRIDGITTE: Good afternoon and thank you for joining us. I'm Bridgitte Anderson president and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. I am joining you from the traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples - the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Welcome to Unlearning Gender Roles Biases and Stereotypes.

Gender equality is achieved when all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. As described by U.N. Women, equality does not mean women and men will become the same, but that their rights and roles in society would not depend whether they were born male or female.

Today we are joined by a panel of experts sharing their experiences and best practices on how to effectively and actively unlearn negatively gender stereotypes.

If you would like to utilize our Closed Captioning feature during today's event you can do so by exiting the full screen view and the Closed Caption will be directly below the screen.

As always, we would like you to take part in this discussion. Simply access Slido on the page you are watching or go to [slido.com](https://www.slido.com) and submit a vote for questions. The password for today is GENDEREQUALITY.

Before we get under way it takes a lot of support to put together an event like this one. This event has presented by The Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council and we would like to acknowledge our signature sponsors RBC and Deloitte. Our supporting sponsor, Vancouver White Caps FC. Our community sponsors EA Sports Vancouver and Pacific Blue Cross. Our equity diversity and conclusion partners Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and Presidents Group. Our production artner, Oh Boy Productions and our preferred media partner, Daily Hive. We also want to thank our long standing sponsors called our Pillar Partners and they include Telus, CN, YVR, BCIT School of Business and Media and Air Canada.

We are very grateful for the support of these 5 organizations whose annual partnerships and commitments enable the work of the Board of Trade. I would also like to thank our Board of Directors for their continuous support. Thank you, Radha Curpen and Robin Dhir for joining us virtually today. And now a brief message from our signature sponsor - Deloitte.

(VIDEO ON).

SPEAKER: At Deloitte our work force and actions must reflect a contemporary Canada. It begins with a commitment to systematically overcome racism and discrimination to create a workplace in which all can flourish. Every act that makes an individual feel less than, every act that diminishes someone's

belief in their potential to succeed because of their skin color, gender, indigeneity, disability, religion or sexual orientation no matter how unintended or seemingly innocent, victimizes a human being, harms the whole and requires thoughtful intervention. Equality takes work. Every individual we recruit, every promotion and every partner or executive election we make that moves us closer to being proportionately representative of the discriminated groups to comprise the country in which we work, moves us close to our goal. Equality takes work. Every person has worth and an invaluable contribution to make, to help imagine and bring about the ideal world we seek. To pursue with unrelenting energy and thoughtfulness with each other in our workplace and for the society we share. Equality works.

BRIDGITTE: I now have the pleasure of introducing the MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill and Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equality, Grace Lore for some welcoming remarks. Over to you.

PARLIAMENTARY SECT LORE: Hello everyone, I'm Grace Lore, and my pronouns are she and her. I'm honored to join you from the traditional territory of the Lekwungen speaking peoples of the Esquimalt and Songhees nations.

It's an absolute pleasure to participate with you today in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity. Today marks the start of National Gender Equality Week and the conversation you are having here is critical to the work before us. When we talk about equality often we are talking about treating everyone the same. But we also know that this only works if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. It is recognizing that not everyone's lives are the same.

Many people face violence, discrimination and injustice because of their gender. This is particularly true for women, especially Indigenous women and women of color. Youth, trans and nonbinary people also face barriers that others simply do not. Access to opportunities, to education, experiences, and skills development must not depend on gender.

Gender stereotypes that limit people in the work force, ideas about who is good at what, who should do what kind of jobs and how they should do it, hurt us all. When these opportunities are truly available to everyone, when the doors are open, we all benefit.

It's good for women. It's good for gender diverse people but it's good for men, it's good for employers who can get the best out of all of their workforce. It's good for the economy and community when the energy and creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and ideas of everyone in British Columbia.

As Parliamentary Secretary, my work includes developing an action plan to end gender-based violence and lead work to close the gender pay gap. Work is also under way across government tackling the childcare crisis. Skills training including access to skills and good paying job for women in non-traditional fields. We are working to create more spaces in tech for those traditionally excluded and unrepresented. But the challenges and opportunities before us we need the best of everyone and everyone needs to be able to be who they are.

And with the collaboration across government and with the many community partners and organizations that work side by side, we know we can get there. I want to say thank you to everybody presented today participating in these conversations. It's critical to raise awareness, to bring new ideas to the forefront and to make meaningful change. I sincerely hope today's event is one of celebration, celebration of differences, of diversity, of inclusion, of mutual respect. It will take all of us to build a

future where there's true equality and true equality for every person in every community and we can't stop until this is our shared reality.

BRIDGITTE: Thank you very much, Grace. It really will take all of us and I now have the pleasure of introducing our panelists for today's discussion where we will dive into this topic. First we have the co-founder of MATURN - Sonja Baikogli Foley. Next the president and CEO of Innovate BC - Raghwa Gopal. And the Director of Women's Football Development at the Vancouver White Caps FC – Emma Humphries. And a reminder to go on Slido to submit or vote for your question.

Welcome panelists. Nice to see you virtually at least. Nice to have you here and I want to kick off the conversation with a question for all of you. You obviously come from very different experiences and industries so first off tell us about the stereotypes you have felt or you have faced in your industry or your career either through your own experience or through shared experience and maybe I will start first with Sonja.

SONJA: Thanks for the question Bridgitte, it's an honor to be here today with my fellow panelists. When I was 2 months pregnant with my daughter, my first child. I applied for a fairly senior role and was transparent about my pregnancy during the interview you process and my decision to take a senior leadership role while pregnant was met with a lot of raised eyebrows and comments like “Are you sure you want to start a new job when you're pregnant?” Or “Wow you must have a really supportive husband”. If I was the father in this situation, would I have been met with the same comments, questions, and concerns?

You know most people assume that I wanted stability and familiarity when actually I wanted growth, and I didn't want to sacrifice my career growth for the sake of my pregnancy, and the questions and comments I received were really rooted in people's biases and stereotypes that pregnant women are too sick or too distracted to contribute to important decisions or that they should focus on motherhood rather than work. And so leaving the organization pregnant was met with one set of questions, and joining a new organization at 4 months pregnant was also met with another set of comments, questions, looks at my belly and surprises around why I would start a new job pregnant, like something had gone wrong with my old job to take on a new job while pregnant.

And I had a week in between my jobs and I had the fortunate opportunity to fly to New York to attend the U.N. Women's conference as a YWCA candidate delegate, and I remember people's unsolicited advice about this decision to you know fly to New York alone, to an international conference and so I really had to dig deep to make sure I was staying aligned with my goals and values and I can't tell you how empowering it was to be there as a pregnant woman because I wanted to be a role model for my unborn child and for her to know it's okay to move past people's discomfort to lean into growth opportunities and to challenge yourself. Like so many women, by the time I was pregnant, I had developed as a leader through you know my experiences with boards, with different industries and different organizations so when I seized opportunities I really had to fight this false dilemma of between motherhood, or career.

And I'm not saying it's easy to do both, but it is possible. And we need to create space and we need to make deliberate efforts to support mothers to do both if they choose to. And you know if my daughter one day decides to become a mother, I will tell her that you can lead, you can grow and you

can have an impact when you're pregnant and I'm hopeful that there will be a major culture shift by that time and that she won't be up against the same gender biases and stereotypes

BRIDGITTE: Thank you, Sonja. And you know, there's a McKenzie report from 2020 that reinforce that point, and one of those findings was that women are twice as likely to worry about their performance or being judged due to care giving and there are a number of stats in that McKenzie report but it does reinforce the experience you just shared with all of us.

Emma I will come to you now. As a woman working in sport, I am sure that there are lots of examples that come to mind but what would you like to share.

EMMA: Yeah, I think- thanks first of all for having me. I think the first one that sort of jumps out to me is you may or may not know that within our own game, in the women's game, we have very few female role models. And in my industry obviously as a coach, same thing, very few female coaches out there.

My personal experience with it would be that I was about to sit with my wife, the [unclear] she's one of the top coaching courses that you can achieve, and I remember sitting down with a male coach that I have huge respect for, at his house and he said to me you know, you and Bev shouldn't sit this course together because they will never pass 2 female coaches, and I sat back and I thought, well I can accept that, you know, and I can go on a different course, but the reality was that I knew that both of us were good enough, so I challenged it a little bit but I thought the best way to challenge this is to go ahead and both of us do it together.

And we did sit it and we did pass, both of us. We were some of the best marks within our class, but to a lot of women that would be a huge barrier, a lot of women that would put them off going on the course and go to somewhere else. So it's not just the perception that maybe men win more than women do or maybe men are more successful at under pressure or whatever else it is, but for me in that moment I just remember thinking, it was one of the first times because I'm a fairly competent person, that I, I felt being a woman in the industry, and I thought it was sort of my chance to step up. But I also remember thinking women shouldn't have to feel this way. And- it's a big part of why I want to help try and reduce some of these barriers in the future

BRIDGITTE: Thanks so much, Emma. Congratulations to both you and your wife for passing that. That's great. Raghwa come to you now - your expertise in the tech sector. And the tech sector is another industry where there are gender stereotypes and all kind of issues related to that particularly as women going into that industry, so what would you like to share in regards to what you experience?

RAGHWA: First of all, thank you Bridgitte for having me here. I'm very happy to be here with some great panelists. I have a few examples, but I'm just going to dwell on one that continues to stand out in my recollection. This goes back to a previous organization that I led. I was working at a software development team you know looking at the whole team were male, and I had a quick chat with the executive that manages that to just kind of understand what was going on.

And found it very interesting. His response to me was men are wired to be great software engineers. I said wow. So, knowing the person previously and knowing- and getting to know him more after that incident, I know that he was not intentionally being you know discriminating, but what had happened is somehow, well for multiple reasons he had built an unconscious bias and couple of examples was you know as he was going through university for his own education, and the room full of people that he was

being educated with were all male, and then as he came out into workplace, when he started working as a software engineer he had worked with you know more than 99% of male employees.

So somehow in his mind it was set up that male were more apt or more wired to be software engineers, which is not true but that's what- how- some- you build unconscious biases and you start to act and behave like that. The tech sector is really ripe with gap especially with gender and other diverse representation and I'll talk about that later but I'm happy to say that Innovate B.C. the organization that I'm currently leading is a little different. Currently we have 85% women employees as opposed to 15% men so there is a bit of a change happening.

BRIDGITTE: Well, let's stick with this for a minute because this is really the theme of what we are talking about: Unlearning that bias. But when we are talking about the tech industry for example, as you just you alluded to it's much more about it is the right thing to do. It is- there is really an economic imperative to this as well so can you speak a little bit about the economic benefits around unlearning some of these gender biases and stereotypes and bringing more women into a traditionally male sector like the technology sector.

RAGHWA: Yeah, happy to do that. I mean, it's well known that an organization that is diverse brings different kind of perspectives, definitely results in a higher quality products and services, and businesses last longer and are more profitable. So it's imperative that every organization, every business look at that, and make sure that they are diverse and they bring, you know diverse views to whatever they're doing.

Tech sector you know is definitely like I said before you know, not very well represented in that space. I'll just briefly talk about the survey that HR Tech Group did in 2020 - The Diversity in Tech Dashboard Survey. They collected data from about 15,000 employees in BC tech sector and 32% only identified as women. But the problem there is those that self identified as women were concentrated in the very lowest level of the job hierarchies, entry-level positions and para-professional roles. When you get to sort of the next level, the specialist level it was down to about 16%. And then and senior you know lead level was around 20%. So, it's still a problem. It's not- we need to do something. One thing that we- that was very out standing was the largest job family in tech sector which is software developers only 15% identified as women so definitely we need to change and I can talk about that later as well.

BRIDGITTE: And certainly that is something we see right across all the sectors I think about the lack of women in senior roles. Emma I'll come to you next. You talked about the lack of women in some of those senior roles certainly seeing that in the McKenzie report. Senior level women are burning out at a higher level than senior level men so as a senior woman in sport and by the way some of us were cheering on the women's soccer team at the Olympics over the Summer so so great to see so many more women being celebrated for their achievements in sport but what do you do as a senior woman in sport to bring more women in and to help elevate them.

EMMA: Yeah, I think it's good question. I think on my end as a leader. I see my role in making really clear pathways for future women coming through the system, I see my role in reducing the barriers that we all know do exist to women putting their hand up. Trying to reduce some of the barriers that make us feel like men are more successful than women as coaches, or as our lead doctors or as our physios, all of the support staff as well.

So reducing some of these is really important to bringing more women into the space. These things will take time though. You know you see the benefit of putting on growing the base of female coaches, with women only courses, with recruiting more women to be involved and putting them into mentorship programs over time because that naturally creates more female role models within the community but it will take 5, 6, 7, 10 years to see the fruits of some of that work. So it's also being a little bit patient with it but making sure pathways are critical clear. They can see people that they can hopefully one day be like.

And then also celebrating a bit of success as well. Knowing when we have produced top quality women that they- then share what we have done you know for example, the past year we've had Jasmine Mander work as well with the Olympic team that won the gold medal. Jasmine was a player on our Girls' League program within the White Caps and she's been coaching with us since 16 years old, and is now gone on to be part of that gold medal winning staff and it's quite a few women within that program that came through that that over time we've helped put in place, not just myself. Within the White Caps we have many men that believe massively in women leading women. We also have a female COO in Rachel Lewis that sets a great example for all women coming through our system and it's important to celebrate that success and educate everyone on what's going on as well.

BRIDGITTE: That awareness is so important and I know I was at the Rugby Sevens recently and it was great to see some of the women rugby players out on the field as well as some of the men and the opportunity I guess a smaller pool because we didn't have all the international players come that gave more opportunity to women so it was fantastic to see.

Sonja, I want to come to you now because I would like- I mean we are talking about barriers and certainly I think motherhood and parenthood can be a barrier for anybody in career progression. It shouldn't be but it can be or perceived to be. So maybe you could first tell us a little about MATURN the program initiative you founded and what you're trying to achieve with it.

SONJA: Sure, research shows that as soon as women have children they are at a disadvantage. Maternity leave and the year surrounding it represent the largest single why time women off ramp from organizations. So we can do more for women during this time. The truly the economy and the success of our businesses depends on this, and as a mother of 2 I understand and realize that many mothers have walked this path before we without the support.

And I know firsthand the challenges motherhood can pose to career growth. My business partner Jen Murtaugh and I created the solution we wish we had, and personally my wife, I've been on the board of the YWCA Canada for 5 years and I've always been driven towards work that advances gender equity. And as a mother, and a feminist MATURN deeply aligns with my goals and commitments towards lifting women up, and we continue to talk about and read about the power gap, the gender gap, yet it seems that we are not really talking about the maternity leave and the lack of focus on maternity leave I think is costing us and there were several many other factors that contribute to the power gap but the maternity leave is one that we shouldn't be ignoring.

And so I see this glaring gap in how mothers are left behind when they want to grow and advance their careers and MATERN is meeting that by flipping the motherhood penalty on its head to create the motherhood opportunity to really normalize the experiences, and transitions of motherhood. The transition to motherhood, whether that be a birthing or non birthing mother is a pivotal time that

requires more support, and I co founded MATERN with the mission to support mothers during what is one of the most challenging times in a woman's life and to also shift the narrative and support systems around maternity leave in Canada so that more mothers can continue to advance in their career and retain and gain leadership position with greater support from employers, their partners and like minded women along the way.

And what we know is that in Canada approximately 375,000 women take maternity leave per year so that's a lot of women who are being penalized for growing the population and the economy, but more than you know the way our systems and organizations are currently set up they haven't been done so in a way that considers the mother, and this contributes to a significant hole in the female talent pipeline which, as you're aware drops dramatically beyond middle management so in creating MATERN. We offer organization a concrete way to advance gender equity and retain and grow talent by developing long term investment strategies in mothers which are rooted in evidence and lived experience, and so as a result of MATERN we are challenging the power gap. We, you know, developing more women leaders, changing systemic gender inequities and increasing economic productivity. There really is a beautiful domino effect to supporting mothers.

BRIDGITTE: Sonja can you give us a couple of examples of some of the specific initiatives and things that you do with these women and with employers as well.

SONJA: Sure. Yeah, so MATERN supports expectant moms through all the intersection of being pregnant. So, from the moment a mother announces her pregnancy they can join the program, and organizations are providing this for their employees. And we support them through you know, the early stages of preparing for their baby, post-partum changes, going through the identity shift, equitable partnership parenting, maternal keeping- gatekeeping and the transition back to work because we all know how crucial of a transition that is. And in addition to the online component that includes 8 modules, there are live group coaching calls every- 2 every month where we bring in guest experts but also in addition to MATERN because the onus shouldn't just be on the mothers we also work with organizations to create systemic change by providing a people's workshop. A people leader's workshop to really create greater awareness around maternal bias, the maternal wall, the motherhood penalty and how to overcome these biases by leading with more after inclusive and equitable approach. And organizations truly do have a significant opportunity to be a part of that solution.

BRIDGITTE: Thanks very much, Sonja. There's question on Slido that I saw a minute ago and it slipped down below but it will come back up. But it really is about ensuring equity and conclusion for white women, women of color, women with all different levels of abilities. So maybe Emma I'll put this over to you if you could talk about how you ensure that you're not only addressing the gender biases and stereotypes but ensuring equity inclusion in the broadest way possible.

EMMA: Yeah. I think on our end I think it's important not only just to recognize women who are a minority in our sport but certainly women of color are an even bigger minority. We also have an even further gap I think there's only- there was only one woman of color that has coached in the professional league which I was in the past couple of years in England. So certainly, again it's making sure that gender equity is not just being equal opportunity to things, it's making sure that we look to reduce any barriers possible. We actively help recruit so recognizing female players of color that are showing an interest. My profession is obviously coaching. In coaching and nurturing them through the

environment. Making sure we reduce any barriers that may stop them from putting up their hand or make them feel any less confident.

And including them in if our structures while reducing the barriers and providing mentorship so that it's individual attention, and individual development plan where they feel that all their needs are being met. Again it's all about creating role models. For me it's reducing barriers, creating role models, more people seeing people at that look like themselves in the community that will enhance the next generation in seeing the pathway is accessible for themselves.

BRIDGITTE: And that mentorship piece is so important Emma. There's question here really directed toward you Raghwa and providing some suggestions how men can become better allies for gender equity. What suggestions do you have?

RAGHWA: A couple of things. I think first of all, men need to make sure that they take some training. So, number one is kind of understanding what's out there, just having a baseline to know what's there today. And then looking at multiple organizations and programs where it kind of helps them think how to bring diversity, whether it's gender or other diversity into their business.

So, I think the first part is accepting and learning and knowing where you are. Second part is you know taking some training, but the most important part I think, the most effective is when organizations start to put out the dashboard or some sort of formally documented process or metrics that says this is where we are today, this is where we need to go. Whether it's gender diversity or other diversity I think things start to move. So those are I think 3 critical things. When organizations or leaders don't accept or buy into it that that's where they are, I think that becomes a problem so having that understanding first, and then there's lots of tools to learn how to do it and then operationalizing that. So those are the 3 components.

BRIDGITTE: I this I that education piece is a really important one but I just want to go back to something we were talking about a few minutes ago and the tech sector specifically. So how do you as a male leader try to attract more women into your industry?

RAGHWA: There's 2 big areas we are trying to focus on. One is more educating the employers. You know how, where and when we work you know becomes a barrier you know for a different group especially women. So, prior to pandemic you know working from office eliminated a lot of women that had families.

Now over the last 18 months employees are seeing that, you can- employees can be effective working remotely from home but the problem is when you still you know prescribe the 9 to 5 of working hours that also eliminates a certain amount of women, but if you- if the employers were more flexible for those working hours I think you would attract a lot more women coming into the work force so that's one area that we're really trying to help and educate people.

But the second area that I think is really important and critical as well is how can government and other organizations support initiatives where we can bring more gender balance, gender equity into the work force. And just few minutes ago actually one example of this is our minister, minister Ravi Kahlon announced a program called Innovator Skills Initiative, this is a program where 3,000 diverse skills of people will be placed into businesses, into tech jobs and all of these 3000 positions are focussed in

equity, diversity and inclusion with a huge focus on women, so I think you know getting government involved in supporting this kind of programs and activities also helps.

BRIDGITTE: And certainly you know starting earlier back in elementary school and there's work that has been done and work continues to be done and getting more women involved into STEM or some say STEAM so that is really important to make sure that all of those opportunities are offered to kid when they are very young.

The flip side of the question around men being better allies is about what women can do to empower one another and support each other and that's the question on Slido there. Sonja would you like to try to answer that: "What can women do to ensure they are empowering one and another?"

SONJA: Yeah, I think it all comes down to coming from a place of compassion, and understanding that everybody has different experiences and those experiences could lead to a lot of bias and stereotyping and discrimination. And so you know while one person might have for example a great maternity leave and love maternity leave, mother person might be really struggling with that, and so how can you, as an employee, or as an employer, meet that and support women in their transition to maternity leave and their transition back to work. And so really not putting your assumptions aside and being open to the fact that everyone has very different lived experiences.

BRIDGITTE: That's a really great point Sonja for sure because I think when we have more empathy and more compassion and we all are certainly learning that more and more through the pandemic especially, and that's actually, again, empowers and supports one another.

There's question in Slido here about women's sports so Emma this one is obviously is for you and I'm going to actually use part of that question as a framework. But they're talking- the person who's asked the question is about women's sports don't get nearly as much coverage on media, doesn't receive the same funding and rather than should the media be held accountable I would ask the broader question of how can we hold these institutions accountable so that change can be made?

EMMA: Yeah, I think it's important to understand a little bit around the history of why this has kind of occurred. I know obviously more about my sport than other sports but I can imagine there's very similar things that have gone on in terms of women's rights and the progression of women's rights. But with soccer, for example, many women's soccer- many country banned women's soccer for large amounts of times historically.

So, for example, in England women's soccer was banned 1921 through to 1971 so you can imagine if you just hit pause on the men's game now for the next 50 years would the women's game flourish?

Absolutely. Would we take a lot of the media attention? Absolutely. Would more investors come in? Yes. However obviously that's not something that we ever want to happen, nor anything like that but you can see who you over time you can't- can't necessarily compare the 2 right now because one game has literally been stopped.

How we look to address that is another kind of point to it. So the woman's game since women's rights progressed has started to regrow. The interest in women's football has come over time. For example, the last women's world cup held 1.2 billion viewers. The women's game we talked to it before gold medal match had 4.4 million Canadians getting up to watch it. And with some of these comes again the new financial investments start coming.

So for example, now the women's champion league final now got a prize bonus of 16 million euros to it in the women's soccer, same with the first ever Sky Sports deal for the women's super league so all the women's games are now on Sky Sport. So, I do think it's about holding people accountable. I agree because it's a bit of chicken and egg situation. You've got to have people willing to invest, take a calculated risk in investing at some point to recognize how high the ceiling could be. So, it is on us to educate people to a degree and to make sure the founding organizations are educating the people around them, and then it does take people willing to take that educated risk in investing in women's football. I think we are seeing some of the growth now with the leagues as well is that start week and week conversation.

BRIDGITTE: And your point is really well taken just about consumer demand. I was one of those many people that got up at are 5 o'clock in the morning as did my daughter and my mother so we were all watches together as we were away on vacation. So when consumer demand is there, often the industry will respond to that so more people going out to see more women in sport for sure.

So the next question on Slido and I will put this one to you Raghwa. What is one thing an individual can do to make a positive impact on gender equality at their organization, just one, and may maybe I will ask all of you this. If you could think of one thing for somebody to do to make a positive impact what would be your advice. Raghwa I will start with you and go to Sonja and Emma.

RAGHWA: I think if the leaders can make sure that they have a very clear guideline on where they are and where they need to go, and they talk about it, I think it will make a huge impact in the change as long as we- as long as the dialogue is happening all the time and it's front and center, I think there will be a good change, a movement towards you know equality. So that's the thing that I would say. One big thing is just making sure that organizations actually have some sort of measurement.

BRIDGITTE: Thank you. Sonja?

SONJA: Yeah, I think that's a great and big question, and I don't have the full answer to it but what I can say is that you know, if your organization is touting DEI and the importance of it and that it's big commitment or objective of the organization then take a look around and see whether you know, that's actually being practiced, as an organization.

And if it's not, you know, be brave, and call it out, and you can do that in a way that isn't offensive and get people's backs up but you could do it in a way that it comes from a place of curiosity to really call people in and to you know point out that you know perhaps your organization is lacking representation. Perhaps it is you know you take a look around the decision making table and it's all middle aged white men then you know take that up, send an e mail or speak to your supervisor, and see where you can you know, bring- highlight those glaring gaps and bring forward solutions or offer yourself up, volunteer to be part of those conversations.

BRIDGITTE: Emma, what are your thoughts on this one? One tangible thing that individuals can do in their workplace to make positive changes?

EMMA: I'm going to merge one into two here a little bit which is a bit naughty but I think the number 1 thing is reduce barriers because we know more than ever why women are struggling to get into these leadership positions so if you don't understand what those barriers are, those key things then educate yourself on what that might be if you're in a leadership role.

And the kind of key part that goes alongside that is ask yourself the question when you're employing people. Have I done everything to make sure that women are having a chance at this role being theirs.

BRIDGITTE: So, that's a really good point so I'll pick up on that because the next subsequent what are some of the things that women expect men to do. And I don't want to have you answer that question. I want to dig into the idea of equal opportunities especially when we look at the next question with talks about gender analytics. We have a higher percentage of youth and adults identifying as nonbinary and they don't want to be labelled a particular gender. So, what does equal opportunity mean in that framework, and how do we ensure in our workplaces that there's equal opportunity for all regardless of gender, nonbinary and what does that mean. And Raghwa- I mean this is a complex question, it's a tough one. Raghwa when you think about creating opportunities or when you're working with employers creating opportunities in tech how do you make it as I guess as fair and balanced as possible then, equal in every way that it can be.

RAGHWA: When we- an organization should look like what the community is so I think that's the very the fundamental starting point so if the community is you know male, female, BIPOC, indigenous and so on and so forth so I think if you can mimic to be somewhat representatives of what your community looks like I think you're going to have a pretty good organization.

As far as how do you do that, I think the focus is on- mostly on inclusion and diversity as opposed to a lot of focus on one area. Definitely you know gender is definitely part of the discussion but you should also look the an all the other ones, whether they're people of color, how- what did you doing with indigenous? What about racialized minorities and so on and so forth.

BRIDGITTE: Thank you very much Raghwa. I'll come to you now Emma and you know I recognizing that in sport there will be some differences. There will be men's only teams and women's only teams but when we are talking about equal opportunity in the broadest way, I mean you have spoken about eliminating those barriers which is really important but when opportunities are created how do we ensure that they're equal?

EMMA: Yeah, so I can speak a little bit to. So with the Canada women's national team you're absolutely right it's called a women's team but we also have a trans player on the team Quinn - who uses they/ them pronouns, so I think just a bit- when we try in the workplace just always start from a point of understanding, and if you start from a point of trying to understand where people are coming from and usually in a good place rather than we are always come with preconceived biases around black and white situation when the reality is the future hasn't- will probably look different in this space for sure.

So you know educate yourself on what that looks like. Speak, in our case it's 2 players around you know how would they like themselves to be accepted within the team, what things may need to be changed. For example, now that you see sometimes it's Canada's women national team. Sometimes it has the symbol Canada X National Team to reflect that's something the girls themselves came up with. I don't work with the senior team but I only know some of the things that have gone on behind the scenes but if we all start from a place of understanding it first, and I still have a long way to go. We will all make mistakes in this journey, but starting there to get to know everyone's differences is the key.

BRIDGITTE: Thanks so much, Emma. Sonja, I'll let you weigh in on this one as well.

SONJA: Yeah, I really agree with what everyone said but I think really including everyone. If you want to create internal policies that support you know nonbinary people, or you know anyone, any gender, include those people. Don't create those policies without including them in those conversations because what then happen is we are creating rules and a framework based on assumptions, which can really get us into a lot of trouble. And so I think it's really critical to ensure everyone is involved and sometimes that means you have to do an anonymous survey because not everyone want to identify themselves as a nonbinary or as a transgender and so it's really critical to provide different ways of participation when creating that internal change, and when you're trying to provide that inclusion so I think just having everyone at the table and providing different ways of participation.

BRIDGITTE: Great, thank you. Want to switch gears a little bit. We have seen a movement in the business community particularly at corporate board about setting quotas where it comes to gender equity. Raghwa, what is your thought about quotas? Is this something that actually would be one of the many things in a toolkit to really start to see some big improvements.

RAGHWA: Absolutely. So the 50-30 challenge in terms of making sure the boards are represented or how diverse especially in terms of gender, that I think- that initiative I think has taken a lot of momentum right now. I'm seeing you know I'm involved in a number of boards and I'm seeing some of them have already embraced that, and others that have not embraced it are already talking about it so I think that will continue to happen. One thing that we need to be you know cognizant of is that in boards you need to have people that have the right kind of skill sets, so trying to make sure that you're balancing both the diversity side and also the right kind of skills. Even having said that I think there is good momentum in terms of the 50-30 challenge for the gender balancing.

BRIDGITTE: I'm also seeing the same with our board at the Board of Trade. We have achieved the 50-30 challenge and I see it some other boards that I know of and I sit on. So, I think it is a great initiative. Sonja I want to ask you more about MATERN and about career progression because many women drop out of the work force when they're having children but also continues on through the journey of parenthood where you see women take a step back particularly in the pandemic to look after younger children or to look at aging parents so what kind of things could employers do to better support women in those situations?

SONJA: Yeah like you said there are so many impacts and effects of missing that focus on mothers. You know there are multi lateral benefits to supporting women. And you know from a business perspective when we don't support mothers to return to the work force we are increasing the labor shortage which creates a significant impact on our economy. And like you said, we all know about the pandemic further highlighted those inequities mothers face, and has actually even reversed progress.

And there was a BMO study and it was found that the Canadian economy would actually be 250 billion dollars smaller without women. And so cumulatively that has huge impacts on our society, and from a societal perspective it can really contribute to the widening of the pay gap because when you take a step back and re-enter it will take longer to re-enter and to earn the same money as counter parts and when women drop out of the work force that gap widens as fewer women have opportunities to advance into leadership, and therefore will increase the wage gap that the currently at 87 cents to a dollar in Canada and we also see increased inequity when we don't have women in the work force. And to really move that dial, what MATURN is doing is supporting mothers to remove the systemic and cultural barriers that prevent them from full participation and, of course, the lack of representation in

decision making is a really big problem and if our decision making lacks representation then how do we expect to create diverse and inclusive communities?

So you know investing in improving that maternity leave experience from an employer perspective represents one of the most single- you know single biggest opportunities to close that gap and to continue to advance women forward.

BRIDGITTE: I think you've just painted the picture around the economic comparative here. We are coming to an end with our time and on gender equality week I really thank you for your thoughts but I want to give you a moment each to close off, and maybe a call to action. We have about 150 people watching today, thank you for joining us today and what is one thing- I asked this question earlier but you know I would ask it again, and if you've got any kind of specific anecdote or specific calls to action for individuals that can take a stand in their own organization what would be your final thoughts, and Raghwa I'll start with you and go to Emma and Sonja.

RAGHWA: Thank you. The first thing I would say is try and educate yourself. Try and learn more and there's a lot of resources out there. One is the diversity and leadership that's run by Greater Vancouver Board of Trade. The other one is that we find that employers have trouble most of the time in hiring so we have partnered with HR Tech Group and created a diversity and inclusion resource hub. And what this does- this hub provides a curated guide for employers to understand and implement inclusive hiring practices. So we don't have to try and do everything by yourself, there are a lot of resources there and you need to utilize those to build more diversity and conclusion in your organization.

BRIDGITTE: That is a great tip. Thank you so much Raghwa. Emma what could we do to move the dial more quickly.

EMMA: I think my big thing would be help create more role models for Canadian women in the future. Help young kids to see people that they can believe they want to be one day. The more we have women in leadership roles the better and the more men supporting women and educating themselves around why it's important to have both genders in these types of roles the better. The more women we have empowering each other and making sure that yeah we may have had some tough experiences in our lives but why would we have to put every future woman through that as well. So empower each other, empower the workplace and Canadian women are awesome.

BRIDGITTE: Thanks very much. And Sonja final word to you.

SONJA: Thanks Bridgitte. From MATERN and a mothers perspective, really look at how are' supporting mothers in the workplace and take a look at the maternity leave experience, and perhaps rethink what maternity leave might mean to your employees and the transitions of motherhood are really challenging, and so consider how you can better support mothers and to create you know a space for them to be able to come back and to thrive and to have that flexibility and autonomy so that they can flourish in your organization.

BRIDGITTE: Thank you so much to Sonja, Raghwa and Emma. Training and education, mentorship, and removing barriers and and role models all really great tactical things that can be done to make change and fast moving change in organizations. So thank you all for joining us today. And a special thank you to all of our sponsors who are making today's event possible.

And last August in partnership with the Canadian Center for Diversity and Inclusion we held our first foundations and diversity inclusion certificate training. Since then over 450 people have completed level one and level 2 certifications. Our September sessions are sold out but you can register for November sessions at boardoftrade.com/diversity and thank all for joining us for today's virtual event. We look forward to connecting soon, and hopefully soon in person. Have a great day.