

CANADIAN WOMEN OF COLOUR LEADERSHIP NETWORK

1ST ANNUAL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

JANUARY 2021 - DECEMBER 2021



OUR SINCERE THANKS

OUR FUNDERS

City of Ottawa
Social Planning Council of Ottawa
Ottawa Community Foundations

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The CWCLN would like to give a huge thank you to our exceptional volunteers that have assisted in the growth and development of the Network. We greatly appreciate all the amazing work you have done with us, and we look forward to continuing working with you for the betterment of our community.

OUR PARTNERS

A very special thank you to our partners who have helped us build, connect, and grow our organization over this past year. Working with you all has been a great experience, and we wouldn't have been able to accomplish all this amazing work without your support!



THANKS TO OUR STAFF

Dilaye Desta, Programs Coordinator

THANKS TO OUR DIRECTORS

Jacklyn St Laurent, Wellness Director

Davene Sterling-Wisdom, Financial Director

THANKS TO OUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Yusra Osman

Elaine Hayles

Sadia Jama

Joan Wright

Patricia Ben-Nassar



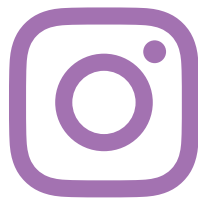
WE INVITE YOU TO FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA



@CWCLN



@_CWCLN



@CanadianWomenOfColour




Canadian Women of Colour Leadership Network

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear community members,

It's been quite a year – when I think back on my journey and becoming a single mother, that's where my story begins. When I became a single mother, I was determined to make opportunities for myself and my son. I went through many challenges and gained valuable knowledge and experience working in various sectors; as I built my career over the years, I noticed that I was not seeing other racialized women out there. I had already established several networks and built up my portfolio through different opportunities and I began to establish myself in this space as an entrepreneur. I never had a fall-back plan - the only option for me was always to go forward; though there were hardships and difficult times throughout my journey, despite it all I was still able to forge ahead. In 2018, I was able to birth CWCLN – a space for racialized women who were not being recognized. The name was reflective of the women I wanted to see celebrated. The organization got its start by launching on social media and that's where I began connecting with other racialized women and organizations who were doing similar work. The goal is to uplift women and femmes by giving these women a platform – a chance for others to read about them, hear their stories and celebrate their accomplishments, not only those who are working abroad but those across Canada as well. I wanted to be able to profile and see women being celebrated at all stages of their careers, whether they're in the first year of their start-up or 20+ years into their speciality. Throughout my journey building this organization, I continuously sought out advice and council from other racialized women and femmes who had experience working in community, and I was able to organically assembled CWCLN's Advisory Committee.

In 2020, I slowly continued to grow the Network and broaden my reach outside of a local scope and things rapidly began developing by the end of the year. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, I knew this was an opportunity to get the ball rolling with the Network. 2021 was a year of growth, capacity, empathy, and compassion for CWCLN as I was able to hire my first employee, create and develop the pillars of the Network, and



Directors were brought on to lead those pillars; the pillars were selected as I believe they are essential components of the work that we do supporting racialized women and femmes.

Throughout this time, CWCLN has successfully launched several programs and virtual events that have been available for racialized women and femmes across Canada. We've been able to successfully collaborate and work in partnership with other community organizations throughout the year. The Directors with the Network are leaders in their own right within their respective fields, and as we continue this work, we will continue to uplift and support other women and femme leaders who want to give back to their communities. We hope to expand on our existing work and delve into other areas as we continue to grow our organization and provide support and community for racialized women and femmes. CWCLN is not an organization for myself – the vision I had for the Network is to carve out a space where racialized women and femmes are uplifted, supported, and given their flowers while they are here and acknowledge the work that they've been doing. Given the unique oppression faced by those whose gender and racial identities intersect, CWCLN believe it's vital that anti-racism and anti-oppression is the foundation of the work that we do.

All this work would not be possible without the efforts and support of everyone that has volunteered with CWCLN – we appreciate all your work and time. We also want to thank our funders and partners for supporting our projects and initiatives throughout the year – without you, CWCLN would not be able to execute the work that we do. You are a tremendous part of our growth, and we are always grateful.

We look forward to more opportunities in 2022 – with our continued growth there is so much to expect from the Network in the future.

Sophia Jacob

CEO/Founder

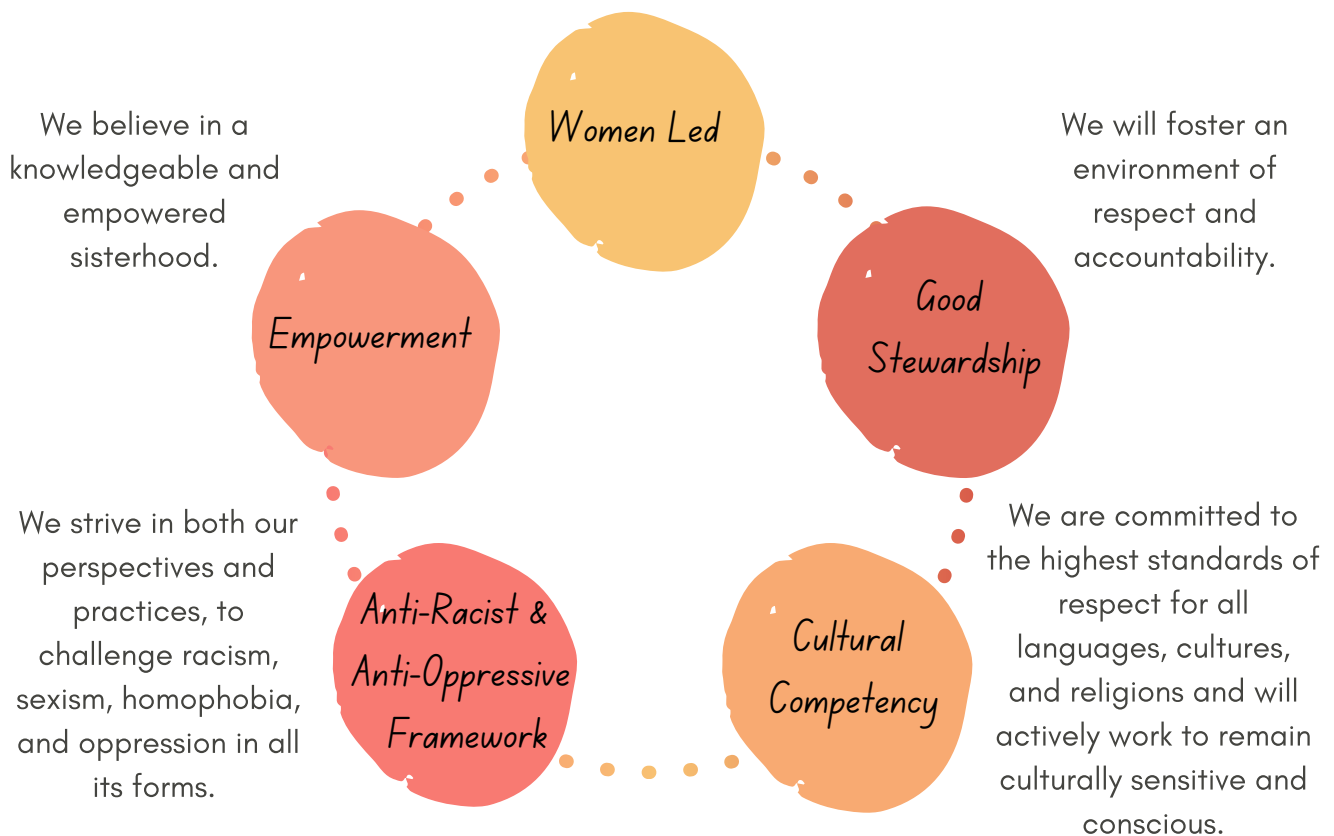
Canadian Women of Colour Leadership Network

OUR MANDATE

The Canadian Women of Colour Leadership Network (CWCLN) is a non-profit, grassroots organization that was established in 2018 in Canada's National Capital Region, Ottawa. The CWCLN recognizes that our office is located on the unceded and unsundered land of the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation.

Founded on the pillars of Wellness, Women in Leadership, Economic Development and Community Partnerships and Events, the CWCLN operates through the lens of an intersectional feminist and post colonialist framework in our objectives. Our aim is to see racialized women, Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary femmes reflected in upper-level leadership and management positions in the workplace by providing the necessary skills, tools, and connections to mitigate systemic barriers.

The Network is entirely led by a team of racialized women and femmes.





PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES 2021

WELLNESS

One of our aims is to address the mental, emotional, and social well-being of racialized women, Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary femmes across Canada. Our current healthcare system fails to address the negative impact that racism and other systemic barriers can have the health and quality of life of racialized women and femmes. At the CWCLN, we are committed to an intersectional and holistic approach to wellness, and through this lens we can inform, share, and promote healthy lifestyle habits as well as provide programs and services that would improve the overall health of women's lives.

Let's Celebrate BIWOC & Femmes: Mental Health Workshops

Within the healthcare system, the conversation about Black and racialized women's mental health is often neglected, whether that is due to culture barriers, lack of diversity and representation as well as barriers when

accessing sexual health information and services. To support our women, we created and hosted our first Mental Health series Let Us Celebrate Our Women. In this workshop series, we discussed and introduced the topic of mental health and how it affects Black and racialized women in different aspects of their lives as well as discussing the ways we can change mental health stigma within the Black community.

ACB Peer Support Group: Virtual Peer Support

The CWCLN offers free virtual Peer Support groups, once a week, for anyone identifying as part of the African Caribbean Black (ACB) community living with mental health challenges and looking for support from a group of empathetic peers.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Our programs and services are designed to support, uplift, and equip women with the necessary tools and resources to continue being leaders. We aim to empower our staff and our community members by fostering an atmosphere of love, mutual support and accountability that allows individuals to make better choices for their futures.

Building Online Communities for Women of Colour

For International Women's Day, the CWCLN held a virtual panel with guests Brenda Williams (Founder of NewLife Project Inc.), Halcian Joseph-Clost (Co-Founder of Women Speak Up), Marie-Ange Massunken Ahinful (Founder of Leading Ladies Canada) and Stacey-Ann Morris (Co-Founder of Build Out Loud) where they discussed and shared their experiences building and hosting their online community platforms for racialized women and reflect on the impact of their initiatives.

Success Speaker Series

The CWCLN presented a series of virtual conversations hosted by our Founder Sophia Jacob, sharing the amazing stories of 3 different successful women of colour as they discuss their journeys and the challenges and rewards of becoming successful entrepreneurs in their field. Guest for the series were Darpan Ahluwalia (Owner of Manotick Natural Market and Wellness Hub), Mimi Do (Entrepreneur & Realtor) and Andrea Pierce (owner of ImmigrantsCAN).

Women's Entrepreneurship Day

On Women's Entrepreneurship Day, the CWCLN hosted a virtual conversation with the Founder of POP TikR, Kamal Dhanoa where she shared her journey and experience of becoming an entrepreneur and how this app is helping communities across Canada connect to their local small business.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At the CWCLN, we believe that achieving and maintaining economic stability is a key factor for racialized women, Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary femmes to live happy and fulfilling lives. We support the socioeconomic development of racialized women and femmes by providing free and accessible educational programs on covering topics such as financial literacy, wealth creation and building generational wealth for them to take control of their economic success. We also offer resources and resources catered towards entrepreneurship and financial management for small business owners and entrepreneurs who are looking to learn and grow their businesses and careers.

All About Taxes

Just in time for tax season, the CWCLN presented a two-part virtual seminar on the topic of taxes led by our Financial Director. These sessions provided a thorough overview including filing taxes for small business owners,

entrepreneurs, retirees, and post-secondary students.

Getting Online: Tips and Tricks to Help You Grow

The CWCLN hosted 4-week virtual workshop series teaching small business owners, entrepreneurs, and creatives how to digitize their products, businesses, and services. The pandemic has hit BIPOC women and femme entrepreneurs the hardest which is why we launched this workshop to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to learn and adapt to this digital age - especially those who are from historically underserved or underrepresented groups.

Finances 101

The CWCLN's Financial Director introduced the 1st workshop in our online financial series centred around the basics of finance. This session covered the basics of money management, the consequences of money mismanagement and what individuals need to do to manage their personal finances better.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND EVENTS

We recognize the importance of collaboration and building connections when it comes to both personal and professional development which is why we continuously seek out partnerships from various community groups and organizations with shared values. We want to ensure that all our programs and services are inclusive for all racialized women, Two-Spirit, trans and non-binary femmes as we recognize that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful shared power of community.

[Getting Online: Tips and Tricks to Help You Grow](#)

In collaboration with the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO), the CWCLN presented a free 4-week virtual workshop series teaching individuals a few tips and tricks to transitioning your business, products, and services online. This series was hosted by Mailyene Briggs, an interdisciplinary artist, writer, digital media marketer, content creator and digital communications officer from the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.



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