



Leading Difference Differently - Exploring the Role of Leaders in Improving the Lived Experience of Diverse Workforces and Communities

An Above Difference Expert Webinar

7 July 2022

Speaker Biographies



Jennifer Izekor
CEO & Founder, Above Difference

Jennifer Izekor is an Advanced Cultural Intelligence (CQ) Trainer and Facilitator and also a Certified Leadership Coach, Trainer, and Speaker with the John Maxwell Team. She is the Founder and Leader of Above Difference Limited a fast-rising new organisation in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion landscape supporting leaders and managers across the public sector to embrace Culturally Intelligent (CQ) and Inclusive Leadership as a key to delivering Inclusive workspaces where all are valued and diversity is leveraged to produce innovative and inclusive services. Above Difference Limited counts a number of leading NHS Health Trusts, Local Authorities, Government Bodies and other public sector bodies among its growing client lists.

Jennifer brings a wealth of public sector leadership experience as a Senior Civil Servant, Public Appointee, CEO, Trustee, and Public Sector NED to her facilitation and training. This and her lived-in experiences as a BAME Woman Leader provides her with depth, knowledge, and understanding of the challenges for Inclusion and Diversity facing senior leaders of all backgrounds in the public sector.

Jennifer is an exciting, innovative and engaging speaker and facilitator and has been described by Professor David Livermore, President of the Cultural Intelligence Institute USA as 'one of the best CQ trainers and facilitators on the planet' and a public sector Leader recently described the Above Difference 'Leading Inclusively With Cultural Intelligence Leadership Masterclass' as "the single best training, development, reflection time I have had in over a decade".

Jennifer has recently been highlighted as one of the leading 125 people to follow on LinkedIn for Diversity and Inclusion. Jennifer lives in Essex with her daughter and is a mentor and coach as well as a lay minister.



Harprit Hockley
Head of Equality and Inclusion, NHS England and Improvement (east of England)

Harprit started a career in communications and engagement in the private sector where she acquired her relationship skills and collaborative approach.

Harprit joined the NHS in 2009 looking to use her skills and experience to improve the experience of those working for and accessing their services.

Prior to joining the east of England team at NHS England and Improvement Harprit held a national role where she was an integral part of the team responsible for tackling violence, bullying and harassment towards NHS staff. She was successful in securing £8m of funding towards equipping ambulance staff with bodycams and a further £2m to tackle bullying and harassment.

She has been with the east of England team since March 2020 where her first responsibility was to support the covid response including bringing back ex NHS staff and the covid-19 vaccination programme. She has also developed a regional anti-racism strategy whereby the goal is for all NHS employers in the region to be anti-racist organisations. She did this working alongside several key partners from HR Directors and EDI leads to staff networks and trade union partners. This partnership approach has developed a real sense of ownership amongst senior leaders in the region.

Harprit was recognised as one of the most influential HR practitioners by HR Magazine in 2021 and also in the top 50 leaders creating the workplace of tomorrow by PM Insight which she is incredibly proud and humbled by.



Dr Sandra Upton
Founder and Chief DEI Strategist with Upton Consulting Group (UCG)

Dr Sandra Upton is Founder and Chief DEI Strategist with Upton Consulting Group (UCG), an innovative team of strategists who work with DEI professionals and organisations around the globe to design and implement proven strategies that create inclusive work environments. Using a research-based change management framework and culturally intelligent strategies, UCG supports organisation's efforts to create behaviours and systems that support diverse, equitable and inclusive work environments.

Prior to launching UCG, Dr. Upton was Vice President, Global Diversity Practice with the Cultural Intelligence Center and was responsible for providing strategic leadership and expertise on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) matters for numerous clients such as Starbucks, Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Saks Fifth Avenue, Amway, McDonalds, Perrigo, Harvard, Stanford, MIT, University of Michigan, across the globe. She led the organisation's response to the growing demand from global and Fortune 500 companies to Ivy-League universities.

Dr Upton is also a subject matter expert in unconscious bias training. In sum, she has over twenty five years of DEI experience consulting, coaching and training with businesses, educational institutions, governmental agencies and non-profits.

She is a frequent speaker and consults with numerous businesses and institutions on how to effectively integrate DEI strategies into business and educational settings. She had written numerous articles and blogs on DEI and has been featured on several podcasts. She travels frequently and has consulted with organizations, educational institutions and schools and facilitated keynotes and trainings across the US and in numerous countries around the world such as Brazil, China, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Israel, Singapore, South Africa and several countries throughout Europe.

She and her husband Robert are the proud parents of two amazing adult children, Alexis and Devin.

More information on UCG can be found at www.uptonconsultinggroup.com