



Arezoo Najibzadeh *Young Woman of Distinction*

Arezoo Najibzadeh is a rising voice for women's civic and political participation in Canada. As the founder and managing director of Platform (formerly Young Women's Leadership Network), Arezoo collaborates with young women and gender diverse leaders and civic institutions to identify and address barriers to their engagement, as well as opportunities for success within grassroots and institutional politics.

Since its inception in 2017, Platform has built leadership capacity among Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender diverse youth. Platform has supported more than 1,000 young women and gender diverse leaders realize their own potential to drive change and has provided professional development to 150 young leaders.

Rooted in transformational feminist leadership, Arezoo's work is strengthening the social determinant of civic engagement by challenging sexual violence and sexism as barriers to women's civic participation and leadership. She advocates for intersectional, anti-racist and anti-oppressive policies while providing tools to civic organizations that aim to be harassment-free spaces.

A watershed moment in Arezoo's career came in 2018 when she established 'It's Time,' a set of survivor-centric, trauma-informed resources for addressing sexual violence in political institutions. This project has provided training to more than 100 politicians, political staff, and volunteers on creating a consent culture within campaigns and in legislatures.

As a resounding voice for issues impacting young women and girls, Arezoo is regularly consulted to lend her expertise and perspective. Most recently, she was a member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the World Forum for Democracy, and the Platform Women Convention.

In addition to her work at Platform, Arezoo is a Women Deliver Young Leader and a Muslim Youth Fellow at the City of Toronto.

Arezoo is boldly challenging systemic barriers in her quest to improve the experiences of marginalized young women and gender diverse youth in politics.