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# ZAHRA EBRAHIM

## Process Co-Design, Musing



## SUMMARY BIO

Leader in the space of design-driven change, institutional innovation, participatory approaches, and community engagement. Pioneering innovator in Canada, bringing design process to institutions in the charitable, philanthropic, private, and public sector to boldly evolve services, policies, and organizations to be more human-centered. Led the integration of the world's first design-led innovation firm, Doblin, to Monitor Deloitte, growing it to the largest design and innovation firm in Canada serving the transformation needs of public and private sector clients across the country. Seasoned organizer, with deep relationships in grassroots communities.

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## EXPERTISE

- Institutional innovation
- Engagement strategy development
- Community co-design

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## EDUCATION

- Masters of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation, OCAD University
- B.A. Urban Systems (concentration on Architecture and Urban Planning) and International Development, McGill University

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Present  
Executive Advisor, Civic Innovation and Human-Centered Design, Deloitte
- Present  
Senior Advisor, Inclusive Urban Innovation (Independent)
- 2015–2018  
Co-Leader, Doblin Canada (subsidiary of Monitor Deloitte)
- 2015–present  
Instructor, City Studies and Urban Planning, University of Toronto
- 2017–2018  
Co-Author, Duty to Innovate
- 2006–2015  
Founder, Principal, archiTEXT
- 2008–2014  
Instructor, Faculty of Design, OCAD University
- 2008–2010  
Innovator in Residence, Design Exchange

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## SELECT PROJECTS

### **Doblin Canada 2015–2018**

Built Doblin’s Canadian practice after its acquisition by Deloitte, scaling it to the largest design-led innovation firm in Canada. Focusing on bringing together design, social science, and strategy to solve the country’s most complex challenges across charitable, public, and private sectors. Encouraging cross-sector collaboration and user-centric approaches to transformation and change-making projects. Leveraging a long-established history of service design, ethnography, design thinking, capability building to do disciplined innovation.

### **archiTEXT 2006–2015**

Founded and led one of the first civic innovation firms (a social enterprise) in Canada, focusing on design-led approaches to innovation to drive social impact in charitable organizations, philanthropic bodies, and government. Designed and led large scale participatory processes to citizens and communities in high-level decision making and design efforts. The firm is known for its deep commitment to engaging citizens in the co-design of large-scale capital projects in priority neighbourhoods across the Canada, and pioneering new approaches to social innovation.

### **OCAD University 2008–2014**

Piloted and taught in the Think Tank program, a mandatory course for students in their second year of studies in the Faculty of Design at OCAD University. Think Tank focuses on the intersection of each student’s choice to be a designer, how they position a unique creative identity in a saturated marketplace, and how they connect what they do to social impact.

### **Design Exchange 2008–2010**

Pioneered thinking in Canada on the application of design beyond artifact making, and built the foundation for the practice of service design and design thinking in Canada.

## NOTABLE ACTIVITIES

- WXN “Top 100 Women in Canadian Business”
- Next City Vanguard “40 under 40”, Civic Leadership award
- Toronto Life’s “Tomorrow’s Titans”, 50 Most Influential People
- United Way “Changemaker to Watch”
- CBC “12 Young Leaders to Watch”
- Advisor, Toronto Public Library,
- ResilientTO, Sidewalk Labs, Center for Connected Communities
- Fellow, Brookfield Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Advisor: ResilientTO, Progress
- Toronto, Code for Canada