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# Inclusion & Diversity at Dentons




**Inclusion  
& Diversity**

Today's problems are far too complex to leave all the thinking to people with the same backgrounds and experiences. Building a more inclusive and diverse law firm is core to our strategy because it leads to better business outcomes for our clients and for Dentons.

**– Elliott Portnoy,  
Dentons Global CEO**

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## At Dentons, inclusion and diversity is not just a core value – it is an integral part of our strategy.

In today's globalized world which is changing faster than ever before, we understand the critical role inclusive and diverse teams play in helping us make better decisions, innovate faster and deliver relevant and more sophisticated solutions to you.

We are delighted to share with you:

1. Performance by the numbers
2. Our equity, inclusion and diversity strategy
3. Driving inclusion – The Big Inclusion Project – a case study
4. Allyship – 2020 Year of the Ally – a case study
5. Working together on the inclusion agenda



# Performance by the numbers



**80+**  
countries



**200+**  
locations



**20,000+**  
people

## INCLUSION



**The Big  
Inclusion  
Project**

In 2019, we launched The Big Inclusion Project, designed to accelerate the inclusion agenda at Dentons and leverage the power of our people to build ready-to-implement, relevant equity, inclusion and diversity solutions aligned with our business objectives. People from across Dentons working in all functions, at all levels and all Regions were invited to join teams and participate in a 10-week acceleration program to work on an equity, inclusion and diversity proposal and implementation plan.

In 2020, we delivered on the themes coming out of our teams' 22 implementation plans, categorizing them into 4 workstreams focusing on Flex, Connect, Grow and Lead. Through these workstreams we implemented a Global Agile Working toolkit; we supported the personal and professional development of all our people through our weekly NextTalent: Live programming; we revised our Global Mobility Policies from an inclusion and diversity lens and developed complementary practice guides; and we made 2020 Dentons' Year of the Ally as we continued on our journey toward individual and collective ownership of the equity, inclusion and diversity agenda.

## Key facts

**225**

Participants

**68**

Offices involved

**12**

Global Board Members

**22**

Implementation plans

\*Source: Global Headcount Report (data as of December 31, 2020)

## DIVERSITY

**44%**

of lawyers  
in 2020 are women

**52%**

of lawyer hires globally  
in 2020 were women

**30%**

of the firm's newly  
elected partners in  
2020 were women

**85**

The number of women  
Global Practice and Sector  
Leaders in 2020

**57%**

of director and manager  
hires globally in last  
12 months were women

**100%**

of regions have  
women on their  
leadership teams

**46%**

of our 2020-21 Senior  
Development Program  
participants are women

**25%**

of Regional Board  
members are women

**25%**

of Global Board  
members are women

**59%**

of trainee and student  
hires globally in 2020  
were women

**800+**

members (including allies).  
Dentons' Global LGBT+  
Network is a firmwide group  
for lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
trans, nonbinary, queer and  
questioning colleagues, as  
well as their allies

**58%**

of all cross-regional assignees  
in 2019 were women

**26**

Mental Health First  
Aiders (16 in the UK  
and 10 in Australia)



**80+**

languages spoken

# Our inclusion and diversity strategy

As a polycentric law firm with no single headquarters or dominant culture, inclusion and diversity are fundamental to who we are at Dentons and integral to our vision and strategy. We know that greater equity, inclusion and diversity promote innovative and sophisticated solutions and service excellence, foster a rich and vibrant workplace, and support positive social change.

However the inclusion and diversity conversation is complex, and we know that diversity alone is not enough. If we are truly going to realize the benefits that diversity brings both to Dentons and to our clients, we understand that inclusion is critically important. We take to heart the saying:

**“Diversity is about counting people, but inclusion is about making people count”.**

## Our commitment

To ensure that we make our diversity count, our overall equity, inclusion and diversity strategy and ownership of its success sits with every Dentons leader starting with our Global CEO, Elliott Portnoy. Elliott leads the Firm’s Global Inclusion & Diversity Leadership Council, which is made up of leaders at all levels across our Dentons team. Leadership Council members come from all our regions

With  
over 200 offices  
in more than 80 countries,  
we are naturally diverse.

This global reach combined with our polycentric model gives us, by design, the opportunity to learn about, understand, adopt and adapt best practices from our people and clients around the world and an unparalleled ability to integrate different perspectives into everything we do.

around the globe and are accountable to the Dentons Global Board. The Leadership Council sets the tone for how the equity, inclusion and diversity conversation is conducted and acted on at every level of Dentons, driving our strategy as it continues to evolve. In recognition of the importance, value, positive impact and learning that comes from listening to our people, our Global Inclusion Advisory Council, also led by our Global CEO, brings together a group of our people across the globe and across many job functions multiple times each year to hear their thoughts and learn about their experiences directly from them.

“ At Dentons, we know that being valued, welcomed, encouraged and who you choose to be in the workplace is important. We prioritize inclusion of all our people, and work hard to cultivate a sense of belonging that enhances everyone’s experience at the Firm.

– **Jay Connolly, Global Chief Talent Officer**

To enable our colleagues to take ownership of the inclusion and diversity agenda and to make change where needed, in 2019 we strengthened our direct engagement of our people in driving us forward with our Big Inclusion Project designed to accelerate the inclusion agenda and leverage the power of our people to build relevant inclusion and diversity solutions at Dentons. Details of The Big Inclusion Project can be found in the Driving Inclusion section below.

In 2020, we created 4 workstreams from the 22 inclusion and diversity solutions from The Big Inclusion Project focusing on Flex, Connect, Grow and Lead to deliver on the themes from The Big Inclusion project plans. Through these workstreams we implemented a Global Agile Working toolkit; we

supported the personal and professional development of all our people through our weekly NextTalent: Live programming; we revised our Global Mobility Policies from an inclusion and diversity lens and developed complementary practice guides; and we made 2020 Dentons' Year of the Ally as we continued on our journey toward individual and collective ownership of the equity, inclusion and diversity agenda.

In 2020, we also renewed our commitment to take bold action to make positive change. Focusing on how we all operate every day, we made five enhanced commitments focused on all our people to continue to drive our agenda forward. Each commitment has clear action steps to make change a reality.

## Our five commitments are:



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We are committed to advancing equity and ensuring our teams are inclusive and diverse because we know that more inclusive and diverse teams enhance our service to clients and the value we bring.

– **Kate Broer, Partner, Dentons Global Client Development and Women's Clients & Markets**

## Support across Dentons

We support all our people including our frontline leaders and equity, inclusion and diversity champions who embody and drive the strategy through a variety of methods and means. Examples include:

- Our Focus on Allyship as an integral part of our journey toward meaningful culture change with allyship training and engagement opportunities available to all our people
- Inclusive Leadership is a key pillar of our global talent strategy with inclusive leadership content integrated into our people development programs
- Affinity Groups to support the professional advancement of all our colleagues through networking, training and business development initiatives
- Global and Regional Dentons Women Chapters which support women through networking opportunities, training initiatives, business and client development events and strategic partnerships
- Equity, inclusion and diversity speaker series of conversations with clients, diversity leaders, industry champions, and Dentons colleagues addressing inclusion and diversity topics
- Social mobility initiatives, for example, working locally to provide access to legal careers for young people from economically under-privileged backgrounds
- Collaborating with clients to drive shared inclusion and diversity priorities forward





“

Dentons has genuine desire to become more inclusive. I have seen the Firm taking action and tackling challenges to keep improving. I feel my voice matters.

**– Andrea Black, Research Specialist and member of the Global Inclusion Advisory Council, Canada**

“

The Inclusion Advisory Council has been a fantastic experience and connected me to diverse colleagues from around the world. It has exposed me to, and helped me appreciate, different viewpoints and perspectives.

**– Caroline Raven, Senior Communications Manager and member of the Global Inclusion Advisory Council, Australia**

“

Inclusion & Diversity at Dentons is critical. As from and of the communities we serve, we uplift our communities, and our diverse workforce enables us to tackle problems from a multitude of perspectives to work with our clients to provide them with robust and considered legal advice and solutions.

**– Robert Parring, Senior Associate and member of the Global Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Council, Africa**

“

I was overjoyed to join our Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Council, not just so that I can have a say, but so that I can listen to other people's perspectives and struggles. I am hugely grateful that Dentons makes inclusion and diversity a priority. If we strive to get inclusion right then diversity will naturally follow.

**– Tessa O'Brien, Legal Practice Coordinator and member of the Global Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Council, New Zealand**

# Action

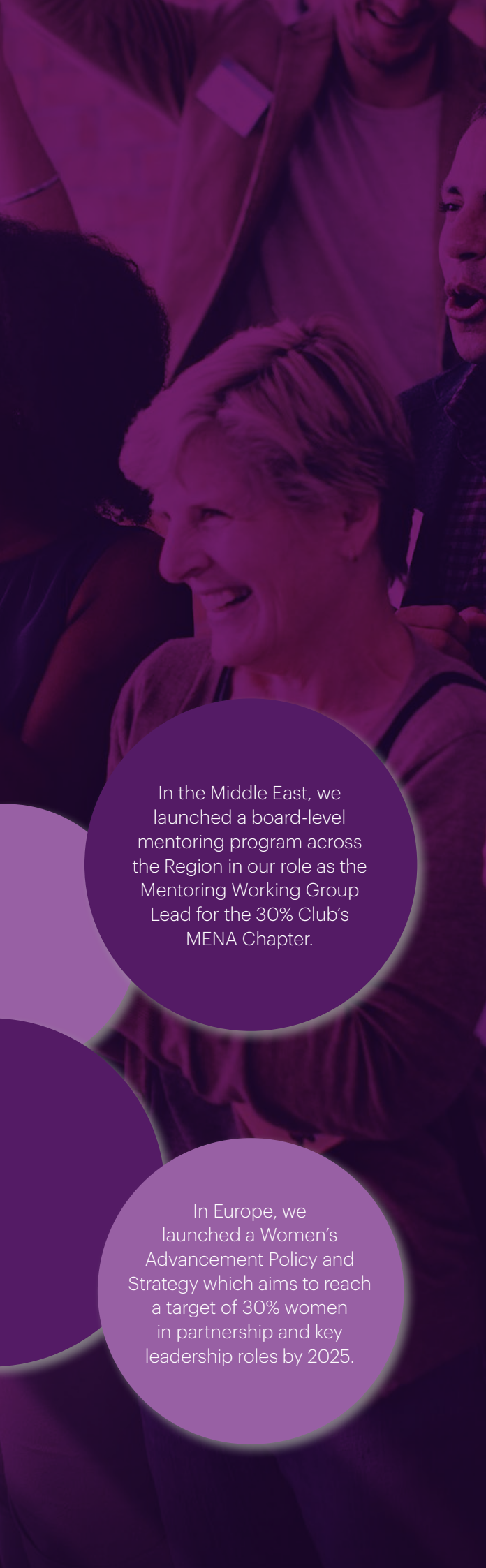
In our Africa Region, we are committed to developing the next generation of African commercial lawyers and transforming the legal industry. In South Africa, we are a proud black-owned firm and long-time supporters of the Black Lawyers Association.

In Canada, we launched our "Discussion to Disrupt" panel series to better understand privilege and the impacts of discrimination. Further, we pledged a 10-year commitment with leading law firms to provide CA\$1.75 million in funding for the Black Future Lawyers, investing in Canada's next generation of Black lawyers.

Our Latin America and the Caribbean Region has created the first truly pan-Latin American and Caribbean Law Firm Inclusion and Diversity Committee with chapters in 25 countries.

In Australia, we established our DentonsAble network for people with disabilities as well as the Dentons Trans and Gender Diverse Legal Service providing pro bono services to the LGBT+ community. We also actively protect and promote the interests of First Nations peoples through our Third Reconciliation Action Plan, which was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

In the UK, we took steps to accelerate our progress on race inclusion and diversity with an action plan focused on raising awareness, opening up the dialogue and advancing black, Asian and minority ethnic talent. We signed the Rare Race Fair Recruitment Commitment, running race at work webinars and opening up the dialogue on race internally and with our clients. We were recognized by the FT Innovative Lawyer among the Firms taking action on race.



Our annual Dentons Global Pride Day celebrates our LGBT+ colleagues worldwide and helps raise LGBT+ visibility and awareness across our offices.

Our strategy must have measurable outcomes for our clients, our teams, and for Dentons.

We are keenly focused on what our people and our clients tell us is important to them, what they want us to do differently, and take this into account when we review our strategic initiatives. As we measure our progress, we ask our people:

- How included, engaged and confident they feel in the workplace
- Whether they feel they have fair access to leadership opportunities, and can influence the Firm's culture
- How they perceive leadership's commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity
- Whether they think we are focusing in the right areas in our programs and initiatives are they getting the "right" work assignments

We then take action.

In the Middle East, we launched a board-level mentoring program across the Region in our role as the Mentoring Working Group Lead for the 30% Club's MENA Chapter.

In Europe, we launched a Women's Advancement Policy and Strategy which aims to reach a target of 30% women in partnership and key leadership roles by 2025.

In the US, our Executive Mentoring Program, launched in 2020, pairs members of our US Board with Black and LGBT+ associates in a two-way mentoring program.

# Measuring our commitment to diversity & inclusion



Dentons was named Small Employer of the Year at Australian Workplace Equality Index Awards 2020 for our work around LGBT inclusion



In 2021 Dentons was named Top-Ranked Global Firm and also received the overall Excellence Award for LGBTI inclusion at the Australian Lawyers Weekly Champions of Pride Awards 2021.



Dentons placed in the top 25 in Law360's 2020 Glass Ceiling Report, which ranks the top firms based on their percentage of female lawyers and female equity partners.



Law360's 2020 Diversity Snapshot ranked Dentons 19th overall, 13th for number of equity partners of color, sixth for promotions of partner of color and 13th for lawyers of color represented on the executive committee. The annual report ranks the top 30 law firms with more than 600 lawyers on key metrics of diversity and inclusion.



Dentons US is a founding member of the Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance, a coalition between the private bar and legal services organizations to amplify the voices of communities and individuals oppressed by racism and promote racial equity in the law. The Dentons US CEO serves as a member of LFAA's Advisory Board and our Pro Bono Partner serves as secretary of the Board, highlighting their personal commitment, and the Firm's, to action on anti-racism.



Dentons won seven awards and was shortlisted in 16 categories for the 2020 Euromoney LMG Women in Business Law Awards. The awards recognize law firms which are taking a leading role in advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession in Europe. They also recognize the top women lawyers providing exemplary services and driving success for their practices.



Dentons UKIME actively participates in the 30% Club and our partners serve on the Steering Committee that founded the MENA Chapter of the 30% Club.



Dentons US achieved Mansfield Certified Plus status for 2020. This is the Firm's third consecutive year sustaining Mansfield Rule Certification, and second straight year earning Mansfield Certification Plus Status.



Dentons has been recognized as a Best Place to Work on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index for nine consecutive years (2012-2021). The national benchmarking tool has recognized the Firm as one of the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality."



Elliott Portnoy, Global Chief Executive Officer of Dentons, is a member of the Board of Directors of Catalyst, a global nonprofit working with some of the world's most influential business leaders and companies committed to advancing and progressing women in the workplace



Dentons won Standout Firm For Diversity at the Financial Times' Innovative Lawyers Europe Awards 2020.



LCLD Compass Award designee (2020) and Top Performer for five consecutive years



Dentons was one of only 17 organizations to be named a Stonewall Top Global Employer in 2020.



In 2021, Dentons Canada and Dentons Kensington Swan in New Zealand were shortlisted for Outstanding Law Firm for D&I at the Chambers Diversity and Inclusion Awards North America and Asia-Pacific, respectively. In 2020, Dentons Latin America & the Caribbean, Dentons US and Dentons Canada were all shortlisted for Outstanding Law Firm for D&I at the Chambers Diversity and Inclusion Awards Latin America and North America, respectively.



Dentons Canada has committed to the BlackNorth Initiative Law Firm Pledge, which is designed to make changes in the legal industry with concrete, measurable actions to create a more inclusive legal industry.



Dentons is the first global firm with Level 1 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment status



Dentons Business Services EMEA (DBSE), the Firm's shared services center in Warsaw, won the Business Leader Award for the most Vibrant Workplace at the ABSL Diamonds Awards 2020.



Since 2019, Dentons UKIME has been a signatory of the Mindful Business Charter, actively working with client signatories of the Charter to develop collaborative opportunities to promote mindful working practices as part of a shared agenda on mental health and wellbeing.



Dentons UKIME is a founding member of Aspiring Solicitors, an organization set up to increase diversity in the legal profession by providing increased access, enhanced opportunity and assistance to aspiring solicitors from underrepresented groups to support their entry into the profession.



Dentons has been recognized as one of Canada's Best Diversity Employers for 11 consecutive years for the Firm's exceptional workplace diversity and inclusion programs. Dentons is the only law firm in Canada to achieve this tenure of recognition.



Dentons US received the "Tipping the Scales" award by the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance for having 50% or more women in the 2019 new partner class.



Dentons was named employer of choice for Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) for the past two years. The citation places Dentons among just a few organisations in Australia to be recognised for making tangible progress towards creating a workplace that provides equal opportunity for women and men.



Dentons was recognized as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People for the fourth time in 2021, reinforcing the important role young professionals play in supporting Dentons' forward-thinking culture and vision to be an employer of choice.

# Driving Inclusion

## The Big Inclusion Project 2018-2021 & beyond

Make change. Take action. Be more inclusive. We set out to accomplish all three with our Big Inclusion Project.



### The Big Inclusion Project

In 2018 we ran an innovative, firm collaboration jam - The Big Inclusion Conversation - an online, facilitated discussion for 72 hours which engaged all of our people across Dentons. The level of participation was high and generated a fantastic set of ideas and themes, including:

- Promoting flexible working
- Increasing engagement through inclusivity
- Collaboration and networks
- Talent and performance
- Being heard and valued
- Partnering with others to leverage success

Building on the The Big Inclusion Conversation, in May 2019, we launched The Big Inclusion Project, designed to accelerate the inclusion agenda at Dentons and leverage the power of our people to build ready-to-implement, relevant inclusion and diversity solutions aligned with our business objectives.

**Total  
Participants:**

**225**

**Offices  
Involved:**

**68**

**Global Board  
Members:**

**12**

**Total  
Engaged:**

**300+**

## Key elements

People from across Dentons working in all functions, at all levels and across our entire global platform were invited to register to join teams and participate in a 10-week acceleration program to work on an inclusion and diversity proposal and implementation plan for their proposed solution.

Themes around which proposals were built were identified in advance based on priorities identified through The Big Inclusion Conversation and by our global management team. Participants specified their preferred area of focus and teams were assembled in alignment with team members' interests.

Diverse teams of 10 were created and each team was supported by:

- a Dentons Global Senior Executive or a member of our Global Board
- a Dentons Inclusion Champion with experience leading I&D initiatives in the Firm and conversant with the Firm's inclusion and diversity objectives as well as organizational operations and procedures
- an external inclusion and diversity expert.

Teams were then briefed and challenged to:

- Develop a proposed solution around an identified inclusion and diversity imperative related to one of the inclusion themes
- Prepare an end-to-end implementation plan to support their proposed solution.

Implementation plans were to address the following:

- Success parameters
- Identified risks
- Project milestones
- Resourcing and budget requirements.

## Engaging the whole Firm

All Teams produced a short video outlining their solution which was shared with the entire Firm. Videos were broadcast across the Firm and our people were asked to vote on which proposals they felt were the most innovative, impactful and actionable. The videos resulted in over 15,000 page views and more than 2000 likes.

Detailed implementation plans were shared with our Global Board.

A short video summary about The Big Inclusion Project can be found [here](#).

## Implementation

The Big Inclusion Project saw 22 teams develop 22 different project plans to advance inclusion within the Firm. These 22 project plans were consolidated into 4 thematic workstreams which we have been implementing in 2020-2021: **Flex, Connect, Grow and Lead**.

**FLEX:** We made the global commitment to support everyone at the Firm in their requests for flexible and/or agile working. We developed a relevant Toolkit for use globally that has been shared with Talent teams across all Dentons Regions.

**CONNECT:** Our NextTalent programming with sessions focused on personal and professional development saw 7,000+ of our people joined our weekly NextTalent: Live calls, and we developed a global mentorship program.

**GROW:** We reviewed and revised the Firm's Global Mobility Policies from an inclusion and diversity lens, as well as developed complementary practice guides, all of which are available on our dedicated Global Portal page.

**LEAD:** Our 2020 Year of the Ally work responded to many of the themes stemming from The Big Inclusion Project, including our successful Global Allyship Training series.

# Focus on Allyship

In further recognition of the shared imperative and the important role to be played by those in the majority group where they work and the need to take active steps to include those in a minority who may feel excluded or isolated, we made 2020 Dentons' Year of the Ally and have continued our Focus on Allyship into 2021.

We actively encourage allyship across the Firm to empower people to act together to create change through:

- creating and hosting relevant training webinars
- conceptualizing and promoting interactive internal campaigns built around allyship themes (e.g. International Women's Day and Pride Day celebrations; commemoration of Trans Day of Remembrance, etc.)
- facilitating cross-region resource-sharing.

Our virtual **Global Allyship Training** was a highlight initiative of our 2020 Year of the Ally, with approximately 5000 logins to our live training sessions, a four-part webinar training series designed to build fundamental allyship skills. Each session was hosted at several times to be inclusive of time zones; featured senior leaders sharing their personal stories; and encouraged participant interaction through the use of breakout rooms and Q&As. Sessions were recorded and continue to be available for viewing by all our people increasing access to this training content. Our Allyship Session topics are:

- **Global Allyship Training Session 1.0: "Acting Alongside"** Introducing the concept of privilege and allyship; examining the importance of action and working alongside others from marginalized groups to bring about change in the workplace and beyond.
- **Global Allyship Training Session 2.0: "Airtime, Amplification, Advocacy"** Focusing on how to incorporate three key allyship skills into every day actions – ensuring others are given ample airtime to speak and express themselves; amplifying others' voices ; and advocating for others, their ideas, and their work.
- **Global Allyship Training Session 3.0: "Overcoming Adversity"** Addressing the importance of cultivating a "speak up culture" even in the face of potential barriers on the allyship journeys.
- **Global Allyship Training Session 4.0: "Accountability"** Examining holding both oneself and others accountable to ensure that our efforts lead to positive change.

Our Global Allyship Training sessions are complemented and supported by our online "Allyship Hub". Built on the themes of Reflect, Educate and Take Action, our Dentons Allyship Hub is accessible to everyone across the Firm and houses resources and information to help colleagues cultivate and grow their allyship skills. The site also provides a safe space where colleagues can share with one another specific commitments they are making in their allyship journey.

“ I have spent years reading up on how to be a good Ally and fell into the trap of feeling like I 'knew it all'. The Global Allyship Training sessions helped me learn the lesson that I never did 'know it all' and I never will. It's up to me to keep listening and learning.

– **Emily Gray, Business Development Executive, Australia**



# 2020 Year of the Ally

## Taking action together to drive positive change

Inclusion and diversity are core to who we are at Dentons and to our business strategy. We know that embracing the individual perspectives, experience, insight and ideas each of us bring makes us stronger.

We also know that in a world where discrimination, oppression and unequal treatment surround us, it takes courage, hard work and the collective commitment and actions of each of us to make a difference.

In our continued effort for greater diversity and to achieve real inclusion, we made 2020 the **Year of the Ally** at Dentons.

Our year-long focus on allyship featured in our annual International Women's Day and LGBT+ celebrations, and is supported by our four-part Global Allyship Training course offered to all Dentons colleagues across the globe via live video link.

Centred around the actions each of us can take as allies and our **Dentons Courage Commitment**, our **four-part allyship training series** covers concepts of privilege, oppression, marginalization and the meaning of allyship, and equips participants with concrete actions they can take now to work alongside others to be better allies.

Built on the themes of **Reflect, Educate** and **Take Action**, our **Dentons Allies site** is accessible to all our people. The site contains resources and information to help colleagues build out their allyship skills and provides a place where they can make the Dentons Courage Commitment and share with one another specific personal actions they commit to take as allies.

**We embrace hard truths and welcome difficult conversations.**

**We listen to understand and connect.**

**We acknowledge and learn from our mistakes, and when it is our turn, we speak with passion.**

**When we value different perspectives and work together, we are better.**

**— Dentons Courage Commitment**



### Global Allyship Training Series



**Inclusion & Diversity**



# Working together on the inclusion agenda

We would be delighted to talk with you further about how we can work together to advance our shared inclusion and diversity priorities.

Here are some ideas on where we might collaborate.

## **The Big Inclusion Project**

- Can we work with you to help you deliver your own big inclusion project geared toward your inclusion priorities?

## **Shared education and learning sessions**

- Are there opportunities for us to bring our people together through shared education and learning?
- Can we work together to share and develop inclusion and diversity strategies and best practices?
- We have worked with clients in a number of shared efforts including:
  - The critical role that diversity and inclusion plays in advancing innovation, retaining talent and managing risk
  - Dimensions of diversity

- Allyship as key to driving inclusion and diversity in an organization
- What makes people feel included
- What inclusion means from culture to culture
- How inclusion ignites the power of diversity
- Inclusion as an innovation accelerator

## **Affinity collaboration**

- Are there opportunities to bring together people in our respective affinity groups or organizations to define and work on shared objectives and participate in shared events?

## **Networking and mentoring sessions**

- Could we have senior members from both our teams bring their protégés to a networking event where we encourage protégés to practice their networking skills and connect with one another?
  - The protégés could participate in a networking learning event in advance of the gathering



## **ABOUT DENTONS**

Dentons is the world's largest law firm, connecting top-tier talent to the world's challenges and opportunities with 20,000 professionals including 12,000 lawyers, in more than 200 locations, in more than 80 countries. Dentons' polycentric and purpose-driven approach, commitment to inclusion and diversity, and award-winning client service challenge the status quo to advance client interests.

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