

BIOGRAPHY

Léonie Tchatat

Founder and Chief Executive Officer
La Passerelle-I.D.É. · Toronto and Paris



Two languages. One table.

LONG FORM *about 330 words*

Léonie Tchatat has spent more than three decades turning advocacy into opportunity for Black and Francophone communities in Canada. A strategist and activist, she arrived in Toronto as a student from Cameroon and could already see what the province could not: that the unemployment and underemployment of French-speaking newcomers was not their problem alone, it was Ontario's loss.

She founded La Passerelle-I.D.É. in 1992. Three decades on, that first act of advocacy is an organisation working from Toronto and Paris, a cultural competency training program recognised as a best practice by the federal and provincial governments, and thousands of newcomers accompanied into work, school and citizenship.

Her method has been consistent: identify what needs to change, make the public argument, then build the structure that answers it. She has led two major public awareness campaigns on the contribution of Francophone immigrants in Ontario, and turned that advocacy into training, programming and institutional responses rather than leaving it as a position paper.

She has worked against systemic racism throughout her career. A former Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, she co-chairs the Call to Action Against Racism advisory committee, which she founded in 2021. That same year she was appointed to the City of Toronto's Black Mandate Funding Committee, charged with building a Black-mandated funding framework to deliver on the City's commitment to the International Decade for People of African Descent. She co-founded the conference Résolutions: Overcoming Racism Together, and speaks internationally on inclusion, urban safety and the francophonie.

In 2009 she was named Chevalière de l'Ordre de la Pléiade. In 2024 she received the RBC Black Diamond Ball award and the City of Toronto's Community Champion Award. She has served two terms on the board of TFO and sat on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada steering committee for Francophone minority communities.

She is still building. Her current work includes L'Agapanthe, La Charité Léo and Café du Jardin, in Canada and in Cameroon, in French and in English.

MEDIUM FORM *about 150 words*

Léonie Tchatat is a strategist and activist who has spent more than three decades turning advocacy into opportunity, and building it to last. She founded La Passerelle-I.D.É. in 1992, after arriving in Toronto as a student from Cameroon. The organisation she leads works from Toronto and Paris and has accompanied thousands of French-speaking newcomers into work, school and citizenship, through a cultural competency training program recognised as a best practice by the federal and provincial governments. A former Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, she co-chairs the Call to Action Against Racism advisory committee, which she founded in 2021, and was appointed that year to the City of Toronto's Black Mandate Funding Committee. Named Chevalière de l'Ordre de la Pléiade in 2009, she received the RBC Black Diamond Ball award and the City of Toronto's Community Champion Award in 2024. She is still building, in Canada and in Cameroon.

SHORT FORM *55 words*

Léonie Tchatat has spent more than three decades turning advocacy into opportunity. She founded La Passerelle-I.D.É. in 1992, and the organisation she leads has accompanied thousands of French-speaking newcomers into work, school and citizenship. A former Ontario Human Rights commissioner and Chevalière de l'Ordre de la Pléiade, she builds structures designed to create lasting change.

ONE LINE

Léonie Tchatat has spent more than three decades turning advocacy into opportunity for Black and Francophone communities in Canada.