



EMERGING LEADERS COMES FULL CIRCLE: KANDASI GRIFFITHS DRIVES CHANGE

“ **Emerging Leaders is an experience and community that continues to give to me and allows me to give back.** ”

2022 marks my unexpected transition to Emerging Leader Facilitator only three years since completing my fellowship. As an Emerging Leader in 2018-2019, I leaned heavily on the support of my cohort and used my Stretch Project to establish my social enterprise, SR Collaborative, with the mission of empowering fellow women of color in the social change sector.

I loved the Emerging Leaders curriculum because it gave dedicated time to reflect on what is important to me and the unique challenges we face pursuing social justice. Emerging Leaders challenged my definition of leadership and encouraged me to fully embrace my strengths – namely, connecting others and creating community, which is reflected in SR Collaborative’s mission.

SR Collaborative equips women of color and mission-driven organizations with the tools, advising, and community to execute their visions for social impact. Combining consulting, project management, coaching, and design thinking, SR Collaborative launches initiatives from ideation through implementation.

Following completion of the Emerging Leaders program in 2019, I embarked on a public-private partnership role focused on Community Health Worker advocacy in Togo (West Africa) and continued to build my business on the side. This role reinforced the importance of lived experience and adapting solutions to culture and community, which stuck with me during my move back to the US.

When AlumniCorps' Executive Director, Caryn Tomjlanovich, mentioned AlumniCorps was partnering with the New Jersey Department of Health to launch an initiative focused on leadership development for Community Health Workers, I was eager to be involved in any way possible. I couldn't believe two of my passions - leadership development and community health - were intersecting! I attended a Q&A session with applicants, and I lit up with excitement for them and all of the synergies with my experience as a Black woman in public health. Selected to lead the group and partner with a dynamic set of co-facilitators, I am dedicated to making the EL curriculum resonate with these community leaders by reinforcing an equity lens throughout the program. I am humbled and honored to serve as EL Facilitator for this inaugural CHW cohort!

SR Collaborative would not exist without Emerging Leaders, and now I can adapt the program to serve those pursuing health equity at home in the U.S. My definition of leadership continues to evolve, and I'm excited to co-create a new definition with this fantastic cohort of Emerging Leaders. We had a great first session in March, and I wholeheartedly believe that we can continue to change our society by empowering every person to see how she can lead in her own way.

Written by: Kandasi Griffiths

