

Abbas Alimorad, MA, MPEd, PMP

Author Biography

Abbas Alimorad is an international keynote speaker, executive leader, author, educator, executive coach, and strategic advisor whose remarkable journey—from a child displaced by war to a respected executive leader in Canada—has shaped his perspective on leadership, resilience, change, and the transformative power of adversity.

Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Abbas was forced to leave his homeland with his family at the age of three. After spending years as refugees in Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, his family immigrated to Canada in search of safety, opportunity, and a better future.

Starting over in a new country brought its own challenges. Adapting to a different language, culture, and education system required resilience, perseverance, and the willingness to continually learn and adapt. Those early experiences would ultimately influence not only the direction of Abbas's life, but also his philosophy of leadership.

They taught him a principle that continues to guide his work today: **leadership is not defined by where we begin or by the circumstances we encounter, but by how we choose to respond.**

From Adversity to Executive Leadership

Today, Abbas brings more than two decades of leadership experience spanning government, healthcare, higher education, and the private sector.

Throughout his career, he has led complex strategic initiatives and organizational transformations, advised senior leaders, strengthened governance and project delivery, and helped organizations navigate environments characterized by change, complexity, and uncertainty.

He currently serves as a **Senior Project Management Consultant with Global Affairs Canada**, where his work supports strategic initiatives connected to national and international priorities.

Across his career, Abbas has developed a leadership philosophy grounded in the belief that successful transformation requires more than strategy, processes, and technology. It requires trust, adaptability, communication, and an understanding of the people experiencing the change.

His professional experience has reinforced many of the lessons first shaped through his own life: uncertainty can be navigated, setbacks can become opportunities for learning, and adversity can develop leadership capabilities that cannot always be learned in a classroom.

Educator and Developer of Future Leaders

Education has remained an important part of Abbas's leadership journey.

He teaches **Project Management at Western University** and has previously taught Leadership, Business Operations, and Project Management at Conestoga College. His approach to education combines academic knowledge with practical executive and project leadership experience, helping professionals connect theory with the realities of leading people, projects, and organizations.

A lifelong learner himself, Abbas holds a **Master of Arts in Leadership from the University of Guelph** and a **Master of Professional Education in Educational Leadership from Western University**. He is also a certified **Project Management Professional (PMP)**.

His contributions to the project management profession extend beyond the classroom. Abbas contributed to the Project Management Institute's *Risk Management in Portfolios, Programs, and Projects: A Practice Guide*, bringing his professional experience to the continued advancement of the discipline.

Leadership Through Service

For Abbas, leadership is inseparable from service.

He serves as **President of the Project Management Institute (PMI) Southwestern Ontario Chapter**, representing a professional community of nearly 2,000 project professionals, and serves on the **Board of Directors of the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital Foundation**.

Throughout his career, he has contributed to professional and community boards and initiatives, guided by a belief that leadership carries a responsibility to create opportunities for others, strengthen communities, and leave organizations better than we found them.

His commitment to service also extends to mentoring professionals and emerging leaders as they navigate their own careers, challenges, and leadership journeys.

Author and Thought Leader

Abbas's work increasingly brings together three dimensions of leadership: **lived experience, executive practice, and academic insight.**

His thought leadership has been published in *Ivey Business Journal*, including “**How Adversity Can Shape Extraordinary Leaders,**” which explores how challenging life experiences can contribute to resilience, adaptability, empathy, and leadership capacity.

Abbas was also **featured on CTV Weekend Spotlight**, where he was interviewed about his book, *From Displacement to Leadership: How Adversity Shapes Extraordinary Leaders*, the personal journey behind it, and his perspectives on adversity, resilience, and leadership.

These conversations reflect a central theme throughout Abbas's work: some of the most powerful leadership lessons are developed not only through professional success, but through the experiences that challenge us to adapt, reconsider what is possible, and continue moving forward.

From Displacement to Leadership

Abbas's debut book, *From Displacement to Leadership: How Adversity Shapes Extraordinary Leaders*, brings his personal and professional journeys together.

Part memoir and part practical leadership guide, the book explores experiences of displacement, immigration, education, setbacks, professional growth, leadership, and service.

Rather than presenting adversity simply as something to overcome, Abbas examines how difficult experiences can become powerful environments for developing resilience, adaptability, empathy, courage, and purpose.

His message is both personal and universal:

Adversity does not have to define us. It can help develop the person—and the leader—we are capable of becoming.

Through his story, Abbas encourages readers to reflect on their own experiences differently: to recognize the lessons hidden within setbacks, to understand resilience as the capacity to adapt rather than simply endure, and to discover how difficult circumstances can ultimately contribute to growth and purpose.

International Keynote Speaker

As an international keynote speaker, Abbas brings these ideas to audiences through compelling storytelling, executive experience, and practical leadership frameworks.

He has spoken to audiences across North America, including conferences, universities, government organizations, healthcare institutions, and professional associations.

His keynote presentations explore **leadership, resilience, organizational change, artificial intelligence, governance, strategic project leadership, and the relationship between adversity and leadership development.**

Whether speaking about leading people through uncertainty, transforming adversity into opportunity, or helping leaders make better decisions in an increasingly AI-enabled world, Abbas connects complex leadership challenges to practical ideas audiences can apply within their own organizations and careers.

His speaking is distinguished by the intersection of personal experience and professional leadership. He does not approach resilience and change solely as academic concepts; they are experiences that have shaped his life and career.

A Leadership Philosophy Shaped by Experience

From displacement and immigration to education, executive leadership, teaching, writing, and community service, Abbas's journey reflects a consistent belief:

Extraordinary leadership is often shaped long before someone receives a leadership title.

It can be developed through uncertainty.

It can be strengthened through setbacks.

It can emerge through adaptation.

And it can become meaningful through service to others.

Today, through keynote speaking, executive leadership, education, coaching, writing, and advisory work, Abbas helps leaders and organizations navigate change with greater confidence, resilience, and purpose.

His mission is to encourage people to see adversity differently—not simply as an obstacle standing in the way of success, but as an experience that can develop the resilience, perspective, courage, and purpose required to lead.

Because leadership is not determined by where we begin. It is shaped by how we respond, how we grow, and how we use our experiences to serve others.

Website: www.abbaskeynotes.com

Email: abbas@abbaskeynotes.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/abbasalimorad