



Dr. Mohani-Preet Kaur Dhillon

EKTAA FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

“My work to make education more inclusive is gaining external traction”.



Mohani is a Lecturer in Interdisciplinary Research & Education, with over a decades worth of experience in academia. In the final year of her PhD, Mohani was prompted to make a change as many of her mentees expressed that they felt underrepresented at university, this was spurred on by the Black Lives Matter movement, as students wanted to know what universities were doing improve equal opportunities. Mohani says **“Students from underrepresented backgrounds often express that they cannot find role models from the same background amongst university staff.”** This was supported by Higher Education equality data which showed a low proportion of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds to students from similar backgrounds. **“I believe that improving the accessibility of role models from minority backgrounds will greatly encourage students to proceed with confidence as they see more accessible pathways to research.”**

“It is clear that we also need to engage with communities as there is a lack of knowledge about what researchers do and why research is so vital to improving evidence-based medicine”.

Today, Mohani has over a decades worth of experience in academia. Mohani says **“My work to make education more inclusive is gaining external traction”.** She was recently a finalist in the Woman of the Future awards. As a leading specialist in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Mohani provides specialist advice to universities on how to improve the access, of people from underrepresented backgrounds to postgraduate degrees and how to make education more inclusive. Mohani says **“it is not clear why we are losing diverse talent from the academic pipeline but this may be due to a lack of visibility of role models from similar backgrounds, poor research culture, cultural biases, lack of diverse teaching staff, a Eurocentric curriculum design and attainment gaps”.** Mohani says **“some of these barriers that have plagued my own journey through academia. I have lived experiences and am currently navigating my way through a leaky pipeline”.**

“Disparity in representation isn’t just specific to one organisation it exists across many, therefore, to have a large impact it is necessary to create a far-reaching entity that can work on removing these barriers simultaneously across sectors. This creates a better flow through the system.”