

Panelists



Ask Me Anything
A Courageous Conversation on
Sikh Heritage Month

Time: 1:00 pm EST **Date:** April 20, 2022 **Hosts:** Seema Chowdhury and Amnit Litt

Ask Me Anything: Sikh Heritage Month

Featuring: Imaan Sandhu, Jodi Rai and Captain Sarabjot Anand

Co-hosted by: Seema Chowdhury and Amnit Litt

Date and time: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Register: [Online registration form](#)

Link to join: [Join the Live Event](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA> .

Event description

April is Sikh Heritage Month in Canada, an opportunity to celebrate Sikh culture and heritage and facilitate the connection between the community and Sikhi, as well as the past and present contributions of Sikhs in building a better, more inclusive Canada.

We are thrilled to invite three outstanding public servants to the Ask Me Anything stage who will share with us their stories and reflections, demonstrating personal, generational and community strengths and discussing the strong roots that compel Sikhs' efforts to advance inclusion, justice and equality.

About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that are giving us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to becoming more inclusive organizations.

As individuals you can't necessarily change where you live, you certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, music you listen to, movies you watch and interactions with your community. The *Ask Me Anything* series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived-experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their experiences to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone, these experiences, especially the negative ones are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective by shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Meet Our Amazing Panelists

Imaan Sandhu, Policy Analyst, Financial Sector Policy Branch, Department of Finance Canada



Imaan Sandhu is a Policy Analyst in the Financial Sector Policy Branch at the Department of Finance. Imaan has several years of experience in the federal public service, including at Treasury Board Secretariat, as a Trade and Economic Policy Intern at the Embassy of Canada in Washington, DC, and a Page in the House of Commons.

She holds an MPhil in International Relations and Politics from the University of Cambridge (2017), and a Bachelors in Public Affairs and Policy Management from Carleton University, where she was awarded the President's medal for outstanding academic achievement. Imaan also completed a year exchange at Sciences Po, Paris.

Imaan is a second-generation Sikh Canadian. She was born in Toronto, but her family roots are from the Sikh community in British Columbia. Imaan considers Sikh philosophy as having equipped her with the values of community service, social justice, and equity and fairness. In this regard, she is active in a number of local initiatives, including volunteering with Syrian refugee children and mentoring new Canadian youth.

Jodi Rai, Canada's Free Agents



Jodi is a mom, social justice advocate, Free Agent and founder of heyHUMANTIS, a Human Connections strategy, training, and coaching social venture. She is on a mission to bring humanity into our workplaces and communities and does this by elevating people and cultivating intentional living. Jodi has a 'keeping-it-real' and caring approach drawing on legislation, jurisprudence, behavioural theories, organizational behaviour research, neuroscience, and systems thinking. She also has created and works with an 'elevating human potential' framework, called Intentionification, to co-create happy individuals and teams.

Her superpowers are flexibility, empathy, strategic thinking, solid interpersonal skills and communication skills. Jodi's qualifications include a Masters in Organizational Leadership and a Bachelors of Commerce in Industrial Relations Management, certifications in coaching,

instructional design, facilitating dialogue, emotional intelligence, personality profiles, and Mental Health First Aid, extensive experience (over 19 years) in HR within the Canadian Federal Public Service across three departments, working and volunteering in the not-for-profit sector, and management consulting as a Free Agent with Canada's Free Agents for over three years.

Captain Sarabjot Anand, RCAF C2IS Systems Design Engineer, Aerospace Equipment Program Management (Radar and Communication Systems), Canadian Armed Forces



Captain Sarabjot Anand is a Communications and Electronics Engineering (CELE) officer currently posted to DAEPM(R&CS) as a Systems Design Engineer. He graduated RMCC Kingston in 2015 with a BSc in Computer Science. Within the RCAF, he has been posted to 8 Wing as a Communication and Information Systems (CIS) Flight Troop Commander and was responsible for 8 Wing IT projects, support to classified networks and deployed communications support. In 2018, he deployed to Air Task Force (ATF) Romania as the A6 (senior communications officer to the commander) under Op REASSURANCE. He is also the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) advisor to BGen Rodgers (DGAEPM). On his own time, he is helping develop new gas mask extensions for CAF members to accommodate beards, turbans and hijabs to make CAF more inclusive.

Meet Our Co-Hosts

Amnit Litt, Policy Analyst, Tax Policy Branch, Department of Finance Canada



Amnit has been a Policy Analyst in the Tax Policy Branch at the Department of Finance since 2019. Prior to joining the federal public service, she held roles in research and evaluation, policy, and advising at Simon Fraser University (SFU), the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and Vantage Point.

Amnit holds a Bachelor of Arts Honours in Economics from SFU, where she was awarded the Gordon Shrum Gold Medal for service to the university community and academic excellence. She went on to graduate from the London School of Economics and Political Science with a Master of Science in Economics in 2017. Amnit is passionate about the power of data and research in designing policy that improves the quality of life for Canadians. More recently, she has been an active member of the Department of Finance's Anti-Racism Committee where she contributes to initiatives that

address systemic racism in the workplace.

Born and raised on the west coast, Amnit has fond memories growing up in the vibrant and diverse communities of Delta and Surrey. As a child of immigrants and a second generation Punjabi Sikh Canadian, she carries with her values of community service, inclusion and equity, and respect and compassion for people from all walks of life. When she is not immersed in data analysis and coding, Amnit enjoys hiking with friends, traveling, and going on photo walks.

Seema Chowdhury, Civilian Advisor, Anti-Racism Secretariat, National Defence



Seema Chowdhury is a Civilian Advisor with the Anti-Racism Secretariat under the newly created Chief Professional Conduct and Culture organization. She has been with the department of National Defence for over 15 years, and has significant experience in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion space including HR Planning and Programs. Seema is a strong advocate for promoting open dialogue and conversation, and turning them into meaningful action in advancing equity and inclusion within the Defence Team.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.

#AMACHallenge

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book a "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60mins. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of a systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, Health Canada, National Defence, Department of Finance Canada.

MCs: Amnit Litt and Seema Chowdhury

Panelists: Imaan Sandhu, Jodi Rai, and Captain Sarabjot Anand

AMA Team: Tara Lockhart, Terri-Ann Hurst, Natasha Lim, Jasmine Cousineau, Shelby Racine, Danielle MacKinlay, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Lamare Robinson, Lyrique Richards, Terri Graham, Liliya Ishkaeva, Laura Raine, Kelly Brewer-Balch