

Leadership Profile: Samara Randhawa, Change Leader and Manager of Board of Directors of Ashoka

Maria Velasquez and Chris Cobbs 23 January 2018



Founded in 1980, Ashoka began with a hope to create the field of social entrepreneurship Bill Drayton believed in, one focused on investing in individuals with a system-changing idea and entrepreneurial skillset that would achieve the greatest social impact. Ashoka understood that innovative and leading entrepreneurs are spread all over the world, so in 1981 Ashoka began identifying what would become the Ashoka Fellows in India and supporting their social change ideas with a three-year stipend and powerful network. The work that began in India started formalizing and expanding in 1986 when their Fellow reach spread to Brazil, Nepal, and Bangladesh. Today, Ashoka has furthered its reach to more than 93 countries

and a network of more than 3,000 Ashoka Fellows globally.

Change Leader and Manager of the Board of Directors, Samara Randhawa is based out of the Ashoka headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Samara began her career with Ashoka as a 22-year-old working on a two-year apprenticeship directly with Bill Drayton. Samara believes that the opportunity to learn from Bill Drayton truly changed the way she views the world today.

Following the apprenticeship, Samara's role within Ashoka evolved with her working as the Manager of Global Communications, Co-Leader on the Strategic Planning Team, and most recently as the Partnership Manager and Manager of the Board of Directors. Recently, as part of the Framework Change Team, Samara proudly worked on the internal strategy guide of Ashoka's organization framework change strategy to achieve **Everyone a Changemaker.™**

Samara brings a global perspective to her work as she is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carleton University in 2006.

Leadership

Samara believes that by working behind the scenes in support of Fellows and Ashoka constituents and assuring that Ashoka grows financially and strategically she is in

fact setting the stage for everyone to have the self-permission and empowerment to contribute to change. The following quote perfectly describes Samara's view of the world and her purpose as a leader. *"Everyone has a calling -- a way of doing and being -- and I am working to create a world where everyone has confidence and self-permission to creatively contribute to change and shape the world for the good of all."*

Vision

Samara is clear in her commitment and dedication to system changing solutions and every person knowing they are a changemaker. Samara appreciates the opportunity to partner with leaders across Ashoka's team of teams to achieve the shared goal of **Everyone a Changemaker**. According to Samara, for hundreds of years the world has largely organized in a model of repetition; where rigid hierarchies were the norm and people learned a set of skills that could serve them for life (e.g. Henry Ford assembly line). This old paradigm is quickly disappearing and the world is now in a new paradigm that is defined by rapid change. She describes it as a world led by open fluid systems where everyone must be contributing to change, particularly for the good of society. As part of this shift, Ashoka is introducing a new framework for living and working together in this new paradigm: **Everyone a Changemaker**. Social entrepreneurs are at the heart of this transformation

because they are the architects of the new systems we need -- individuals focused on ensuring a more equal, just, and healthy society. In a world of rapid change and increasing problems the answer is more problem solvers. Ashoka is dedicated to achieving maximum impact by introducing this powerful new **Everyone a Changemaker** framework that ensures empathy, teamwork, leadership, and changemaking as the guiding framework for all.

Most Important Contribution

Samara welcomes and appreciates the opportunity to expand Ashoka's marketing and revenue plans. Her current challenge includes helping to spearhead a global youth campaign and messaging strategy for Ashoka.