

Episode 3: Building Community | Akeisha on Reconciliation and Inclusion

Published 11/29/2024 by [Iman Hajihassani](#)

The third episode of *Beyond the Classroom* featuring Akeisha Lari delves into the themes of reconciliation, inclusion, and the importance of equity in educational environments. Akeisha, the Manager of Reconciliation and Student Inclusion at Seneca, begins by sharing her personal journey from Trinidad and Tobago to Canada, her multicultural family, and her passion for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. She emphasizes the value of understanding and embracing diverse identities, cultures, and backgrounds within the academic space to help students feel empowered and accepted.

Akeisha's role at Seneca involves guiding faculty, staff, and students on best practices for inclusive learning environments. She works with departments to ensure programs and policies are equitable, particularly for marginalized groups who may face additional barriers. One of her primary objectives is to elevate student voices and experiences, encouraging faculty to view their role as an "honor" and a collaborative journey rather than a hierarchical one.

The conversation covers the complexities of balancing academic and personal lives, especially for students managing jobs, family responsibilities, and cultural or religious observances. Akeisha advocates for flexible learning environments and policies that honor students' needs and life circumstances, making education accessible and achievable for all.

Toward the end of the episode, Akeisha stresses the importance of peer connections, student groups, and support networks that allow students to grow beyond academics. She shares how student groups can be powerful avenues for cultural exchange and lifelong friendships, empowering students to carry their unique identities confidently through their educational journey and into their careers. This episode is a heartfelt reflection on the role of empathy, human connection, and flexibility in education, urging faculty and students alike to embrace diversity and advocate for an equitable learning environment.