



**Venture - Generation
Purple Limited**

Institution - University of Manchester

**Social science
discipline -** Business & Management
Studies

Sector - IT & Communications

Route-to-market -

**Addressing the
diversity gap in
recruitment**



Generation Purple

Riddi Viswanathan


Role - Founder

Degree - BSc Business Studies and Economics,
University of Manchester, 2017

Riddi is an award-winning advocate for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and has worked with students from diverse underrepresented backgrounds for over 3 years to enhance their employment prospects. She is the former elected Overseas Representative of the National Union of Students (NUS), UK, where she has represented over 400,000 overseas students from 192 countries. She has also served the University of Manchester Students' Union as the diversity officer, the first Full-Time International Students' Officer and an officer trustee, leading a multimillion-pound charity with oversight over the operational and financial performance. Riddi is frequently invited by leading media outlets such as the BBC, ITV, The Guardian, The New York Times and other leading Indian publications for expert opinions on diversity and student issues.


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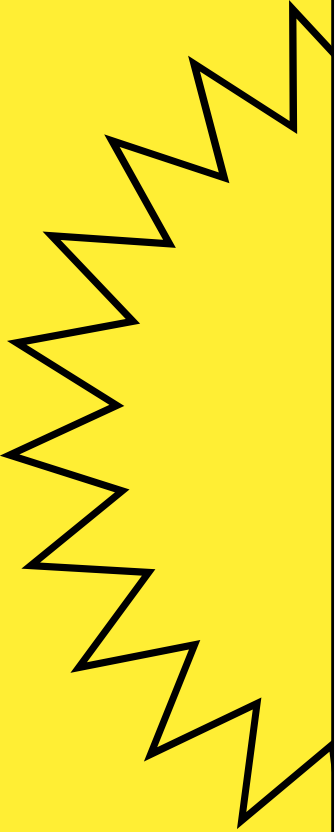




**A new venture is
enhancing
diversity in
graduate
recruitment
through digital
initiatives**

Inequalities is a global challenge. There is huge demand for more inclusive workforces. Students from underrepresented areas do not know how to access graduate jobs. Existing graduate recruitment portals do not provide opportunities for connecting these marginalised students, with their graduate employers.





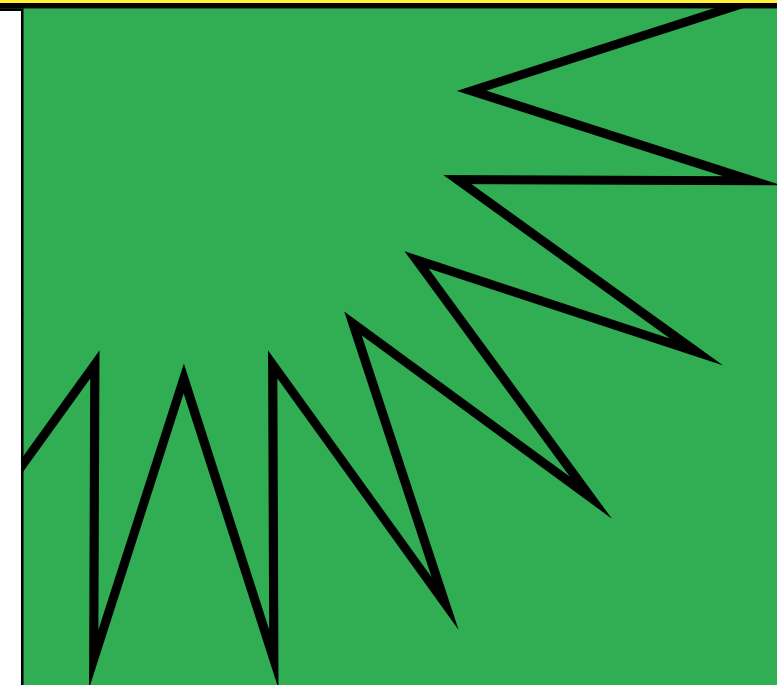
Generation Purple is a graduate recruitment start-up which aims to enhance diversity in graduate recruitment, by leveraging technology. Through a unique job portal, the start-up's social mission is to help students from the top 5 underrepresented groups: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME); Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning/Queer (LGBT+Q), women, disabled and lower socio-economic communities connect to top graduate employers, helping employers to build inclusive workplaces. Through an engaging creative technology tool, Generation Purple will use alternative digital initiatives including gaming technology to replace the conventional psychometric tests used by recruitment platforms, ensuring that employers are matched with the correct skills and qualifications required for the vacancies.

Founder, Riddi Viswanathan, is a social entrepreneur whose business and management studies and academic knowledge of business models has helped to shape the venture, along with her extensive experience of diversity in graduation recruitment. She has developed strong relationships with employers who see the platform's social value and impact. Employers are willing to invest in societal return. The Manchester based venture incorporated in August 2019 and its social mission is closely aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 10 - Gender Equality and Reduced Inequalities. The start-up pledges to reinvest most of its profits to advocate for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, through awareness campaigns and lobbying for mandatory unconscious bias testing to be undertaken by UK institutions.



Generation Purple demonstrates social impact by addressing and reducing social inequalities in the UK graduate recruitment space. Social science concepts drive change in the start-up including addressing unconscious bias and context-based learning and assessment framework where the company selects outperformers, given the context (Equity vs Equality theory). Solving the diversity issue in graduate recruitment by adapting from proven social science concepts like unconscious bias, the context-based assessment adds to the credibility of the start-up and genuinely addresses the problem.

The company aims to measure their social impact based on the number of students from underrepresented communities they help in applying and securing jobs at corporate organisations. They also aim to carry out inclusion audits at leading organisations, to measure the diversity of the graduate intake.



THE I M P A C T

In anticipation of its launch the platform currently has over 5000 students waiting to log on.



Stakeholder relations via primary research methods (including interviews and focus groups) with employers has revealed there is a huge demand for this service; there has been a huge demand from employers, with feedback received that the technological solution will solve a genuine, global problem and will have significant positive impact on society.

“ Riddi’s work in helping students from underrepresented communities gain access to corporate workplaces has been phenomenal. There is an increasing need for workplaces to embrace diversity and equality; there needs to be more support for students from marginalised backgrounds to access corporate jobs. Riddi has a proven track record in this field and her idea to leverage technology to solve the problem of workplace inequality will not just benefit students in the UK but will break down barriers helping students access workplaces equally globally.

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Kwame Asamoah Kwarteng, General Secretary,
University of Manchester Students’ Union



The start-up journey

The University of Manchester and the Masood Enterprise Centre (MEC) have been of immense support in transforming Riddi's idea into a fully functioning start-up. The Nick Sanders Kickstarter Fund provided by the Centre helped to validate the business idea and develop the platform prototype. She has also received monthly one-to-one mentoring which has helped to give her the guidance and reassurance that she is going in the right direction.

The Venture Further business startup competition organised by the MEC also helped to refine her ideas and business plans and gave Riddi the confidence to take her start-up forward.

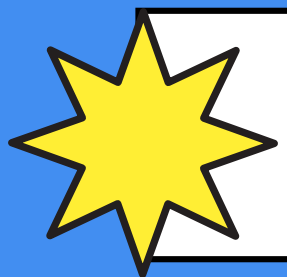
Through the University of Manchester, Riddi was invited to attend the Commonwealth Youth Forum as a delegate in India to speak about Diversity and Inclusion, where she was able to connect with prospective clients, through the The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) mentoring network, a global network of entrepreneurs.

Riddi has also found working with social sciences forums such as the Diversity and Inclusion Leaders Forum helpful, where she interacted with lecturers from the Alliance Manchester Business School to carry out research on inequalities of opportunities.

Key Learnings

Despite Riddi feeling that she's still learning about the start-up world, she offers the following advice to fellow students/graduates:-

- ◆ If you believe in a cause, then shape it into a product/service.
- ◆ There are hundreds of funding opportunities to help develop your start-up – don't let finances hold you back.
- ◆ It's a great learning curve – we've had a number of technology issues during the platform development which pushed out timelines back but that's all part of the learning process for a start-up – timelines change depending on the needs of the business!
- ◆ Get started! If your vision for your business is strong then your entrepreneurship journey will flourish.
- ◆ It is not the idea that matters, it's all about how well the idea is implemented: Investors, clients and other stakeholders look for traction to prove the viability of your idea. Either building traction for your idea by investing minimally and getting traction for your minimal viable product (MVP) or having an established work experience in the field associated with your idea plays a vital role in taking the start-up forward.
- ◆ Validating the solutions/services provided by the start-up through research theories/social science concepts make the start-up credible and more likely to be successful.



What's next for Generation Purple?

The start-up has a huge list of plans, starting with the imminent launch of the portal. A marketing and social media campaign will accompany the launch, to promote the portal to students and further increase engagement with employers.

The start-up has secured its first corporate client and anticipate increasing this following the employer demand already received. In addition to securing large organisations, Riddi is exploring affordable tariffs for small and medium sized companies.

