



Investing In Women Founders: **Addressing the Gender Health Gap**



IWD 2025: Investing in Women Founders: Addressing the Gender Health Gap

#AccelerateAction

In celebration of International Women's Day (IWD) 2025, Diversity UK, Greenwood's and Murray Edwards College, will host a panel debate on 'Investing in Women Founders: Addressing the Gender Health Gap' on Wednesday 12 March 2025 from 6.00pm - 8.00pm at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, to discuss the barriers faced by female healthtech entrepreneurs and how to #AccelerateAction on addressing women's health equalities.

This event represents the fifth event in the 'Investing in Women Founders' series co-organised by equality charity Diversity UK in its bid to keep the spotlight on the extremely low levels of venture capital funding that women founders receive globally and highlight the challenges that tech innovators face specifically; from the misunderstanding about women's tech and business skills, to biases in grant funding programmes; the lack of awareness of market access and growth pathways for femtech to improving women's health and wellness.

Theme: Investing in Women Founders - IWD2025 #AccelerateAction

The IWD 2025 campaign theme focuses on the need to #AccelerateAction emphasising the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality. It calls for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both in personal and professional spheres. At the current rate of progress, it will take 134 years, which is roughly five generations from now, to reach full gender parity in 2158, according to data from the World Economic Forum.

Together, the panel will discuss questions such as, why is it so hard for women entrepreneurs to attract funding? Do women find the tech sector more difficult to work in than other sectors? Where do women founders go to get help?

What type of help is needed?

How do women founders manage the work/life balance?

Can women founders ever close the gender funding gap?

How can women tech founders #InspireInclusion in the face of algorithmic biases in AI and machine learning?

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Programme

Registration & Networking

6.00pm - 6.30pm

Opening with a Tai-Chi demonstration

Faustina Yang, Chinese Women in Peterborough

6.30pm - 6.35pm

Introduction to Murray Edwards College

Dorothy Byrne, President

6.35pm - 6.40pm

Introduction to Greenwood Legal LLP

Francesca Jus-Burke

6.45pm - 6.50pm

Introduction to Diversity UK

Panel debate + Q&A

moderated by Lopa Patel MBE, Diversity UK Chair

6.50pm - 7.15pm

Tech Showcase 3 mins each + 6 mins Q&A

Lorna Maclean, Sandra Igwe, Shefali Bohra

7.15pm - 7.30pm

Closing remarks

Ramesh Vala CBE, Deputy Chair, Diversity UK

7.30pm-7.35pm

Networking, drinks & canapes

7.35pm-8.30pm

Close

8.30pm

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HOST

Dorothy Byrne, President - Murray Edwards College, Cambridge

PANEL SPEAKERS

- *Dr Avi Mehra, Co-Founder & Managing Director - Doctorpreneurs*
- *Dr Elsa Zekeng, Founder - SokerData*
- *Hanadi Jabado DL, Managing Partner - Sana Capital*
- *Jiahao Huang, Founder - Nuclera*
- *Lopa Patel MBE, Chair - Diversity UK (moderator)*

SHOWCASE FOUNDERS

- *Lorna Maclean, CEO & Founder - Demetria*
- *Sandra Igwe, CEO - The Motherhood Group*
- *Shefali Bohra, Co-Founder - Dotplot*



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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

In order of appearance on the schedule and then in alphabetical order by first name.

Faustina Yang, Founder & Leader - Chinese Women in Peterborough

Faustina Yang, is the founder and leader of Chinese Women in Peterborough, a community support network that has wellbeing initiatives like tai chi lessons that have been offered to over 8000 people. Educated to Master's Degree, a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Associate Member, CIPD level 7 qualified, she is a highly skilled, inspirational and diplomatic professional. Prior to moving to the UK in 2005, Faustina was a high school teacher to pre-university level young people aged 16 to 18 in China. Faustina's experience in the UK spans from project management in City University London, then CLS Bank in Canary Wharf, to Human Resources in global companies including AB Marui and AB Sugar, providing vital HR and employment support. She is now Head of People at The Lettings Hub.

Dorothy Byrne, President - Murray Edwards College

Dorothy Byrne is the President of Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. Previously, she was Editor-at-Large and Head of News and Current Affairs at Channel Four Television, as well as Commissioning Editor of Dispatches and producer/director for World in Action. A Fellow of the Royal Television Society, Dorothy has received numerous awards, including the RTS Journalism Award, the Grierson Trustees Award, a Women in Film and Television Award, and a Scottish BAFTA. Programmes she has overseen have won multiple Emmy, BAFTA, and RTS awards.

Dorothy continues to executive produce international documentaries and has chaired the Ethical Journalism Network. She has held academic roles at institutions including Oxford and Sheffield universities. She holds a BA in Philosophy from Manchester University and a Diploma in Business Studies from Sheffield University.

Francesca Jus-Burke, Managing Associate - Greenwoods Legal LLP

Francesca Jus-Burke is a corporate and commercial lawyer at Greenwoods Legal LLP in Cambridge. She advises businesses and individuals based in the UK and internationally with private acquisitions and disposals, joint ventures and shareholder arrangements, as well as contract reviews, general commercial issues and company law matters.

At her previous firm she founded a CSR Committee and sat on its D&I Steering Committee. Before becoming a lawyer, Francesca worked as a rowing coach for Putney High School and Barn Elms Boat Club, as a tutor & assessor for British Rowing, and as a sports performer coordinator and mentor for the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust. More recently, Francesca has been a trustee of Love Rowing (British Rowing's charitable foundation), a charity that changes lives by increasing diversity in the sport.

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Ramesh Vala CBE - Deputy Chair

Ramesh Vala CBE is a Consultant and International Brand Ambassador, having worked for a number of leading law firms, including as a Partner and Head of Property, where he gained extensive experience in advising clients on property related matters. Graduating from the London School of Economics, Ramesh went on to achieve a distinction in his finals at Lancaster Gate College of Law. He became a partner within eighteen months of qualification and soon became one of very few Asian equity partners in a top UK law firm. In his personal life, he is dedicated to improving the lives of those less fortunate by fundraising for various charities. In 2001, Ramesh was appointed an OBE for his charitable work and in 2022, he was honoured with a CBE in recognition of his services to the community and to the Covid-19 Response.

PANEL DEBATE MODERATOR



Lopa Patel MBE, Chair - Diversity UK

Lopa Patel is a digital entrepreneur with significant experience of creating start-ups and transforming businesses through technology. The founder of two ventures in online media and a data-driven marketing consultancy, she is also Chair of equality and inclusion charity, Diversity UK; a Non-Executive Board Member of The National Archives, a non-ministerial department and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and she is a Non-Executive Director on the NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Lopa is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (FCIM) and a Fellow of the Institute of Data & Marketing (FIDM); holds a BTEC in Computer Science; a BSc degree in Biochemistry, attained at the University of Manchester (UMIST) and a postgraduate qualification, the FT Diploma in Corporate Governance. With a lifelong love of science and technology, she is an evangelist for STEM, innovation and bridging the skills gap in business.

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PANELLIST BIOGRAPHIES

Dr Avi Mehra, Co-Founder & Managing Director - Doctorpreneurs

Dr Avi Mehra is the Co-Founder & Managing Director of Doctorpreneurs, a not-for-profit organisation and global community for doctors, medical students and individuals passionate about transforming healthcare through technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Avi is also an Associate Partner for Healthcare & Life Sciences and Clinical Safety Officer at IBM, where he is responsible for supporting healthcare clients to improve patient care through leveraging IBM's technology capabilities and consulting expertise, and leading clinical safety assurance for IBM's digital health solutions.

Avi is also currently an advisor to digital health startups, accelerators and innovation units, a passionate coach and mentor, and a Fellow at the Faculty of Clinical Informatics. Prior to joining IBM, Avi held roles as the Clinical Lead for Digital Health at Bupa and as a NHS National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow. He previously practised as a medical doctor in the NHS and private sector. He received his MBBS from Imperial College School of Medicine and BSc in Management from Imperial College Business School.

Dr. Elsa Zekeng, Founder & CEO - Soker Data

Elsa Zekeng is a scientist, an entrepreneur and a policy advocate. With a PhD in Infectious Disease and Global Health and 7+ years as a consultant with organisations like the World Health Organisation and 2+ years in life science strategy consulting at LEK Consulting and Guidehouse (ex-Navigant), she is founder of SökerData, a start-up increasing equity in clinical trials for women and black and ethnic minority groups by engaging with Pharmaceutical and biotech companies to support them in diversifying their drug development process.

Elsa has been listed as; one of 40 under 40 future black leaders by the British Cultural Archives (BCA), the "Top 50 Most Inspiring, prominent and influential black voices in UK Tech" by TechNation, nominated as "One to Watch" and an 'Agent of Change' by Northern Power Women. Elsa received a medal from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (RIP) for exceptional work with the World Health Organisation (WHO) during the biggest Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Africa. Elsa is also an advisory board member at the Science and Industry Museum, University of Salford and a Trustee at SmartWorks Greater Manchester charity.'

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PANELLIST BIOGRAPHIES

Hanadi Jabado, Managing Partner - Sana Capital

Hanadi Jabado is passionate about entrepreneurship and innovation. She supports early-stage businesses across a range of sectors with a focus on HealthTech and Deep-Tech. She has helped set up entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Middle East, Russia and China. In 2012, Hanadi was the inspiration and driving force behind the creation of Accelerate Cambridge, which enhanced the Cambridge Judge Business School's contribution to the Cambridge entrepreneurial cluster by providing help, nurture, and support to innovators and entrepreneurs in the cluster.

Since January 2019, Hanadi has centred her work around the investment needs of early-stage ventures and more specifically, the funding gap in the UK for ambitious life-sciences and biotech businesses. Hanadi has served as a Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire since 2023. In addition, she is an independent external member of the Innovate UK Innovation Loans Credit Committee, sits on the LIF steering committee at the Royal Academy of Engineering, and is a President Fellow at Murray Edwards College.

Jiahao Huang, Founder - Nuclera

Jiahao Huang is a Co-founder of Nuclera, a pioneering company in rapid protein prototyping, which he led through Series A funding and grew the company to 100 people across the UK + USA, completing a raise in excess of \$150M through Series C in 2024. Previously, Jiahao worked as a Research Analyst and holds a PhD in Molecular Biology and Epigenetics from the University of Cambridge, along with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Biology from the University of California, Berkeley. Jiahao also completed the Newton Venture Program at London Business School and a Certification Program in Leading with Finance at Harvard Business School Online. Moreover, Jiahao also participated in the Accelerate Cambridge Entrepreneurship Programme at Cambridge Judge Business School. Jiahao is now an Angel Investor at Alma Angels.

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SHOWCASE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Lorna MacLean, CEO & Founder - Demetria

Lorna Maclean is the founder of Demetria, a pioneering firm that leverages AI technology to enhance TV UltraSound for the diagnosis of endometriosis. With a personal journey that spans over 15 years of experiencing typical endometriosis symptoms, Lorna received her official diagnosis and first excision surgery in December 2022. This experience has fuelled her passion for improving healthcare outcomes and addressing health inequalities. Her commitment to global health is further exemplified through her involvement with Chatham House's Common Futures programme and her leadership role at The Endometriosis Foundation.

Her international outlook is shaped by her work on human rights issues in the UK, island of Ireland, US, India, and China. Lorna has also held youth leadership positions in global institutions such as the OECD, World Bank, and United Nations.

Academically, Lorna holds a Master's degree from the University of Cambridge and a Bachelor's degree from Queen Mary University of London, with additional studies at George Washington University and Sichuan University.

Sandra Igwe, Founder - The Motherhood Group

Sandra Igwe is a pioneering Black maternal health leader and FemTech innovator, revolutionising digital support for Black mothers through AI-powered platforms. As the Founder of The Motherhood Group, she has connected and supported thousands of Black mothers through her social enterprise, which delivers community-based events, training workshops, peer-to-peer support, and culturally sensitive programmes. Sandra is the visionary behind several ground-breaking initiatives in the UK, including the Black Maternal Health Conference (the largest of its kind in the UK), Black Maternal Mental Health Week, and the Black Maternal Health Awards.

Sandra is the author of 'My Black Motherhood: Mental Health, Stigma, Racism and the System,' where she amplifies both her voice and the experiences of countless Black mothers, advocating for healthcare professionals to listen to, believe, and understand Black women. She served as a Trustee for Birthrights Charity, the leading organisation for human rights in pregnancy and childbirth in the UK. A compelling TEDx speaker, Sandra regularly shares her expertise at major organizations including Meta, Diageo, Dove, Mbrace-UK, NHS E&I, and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) Conference. She effectively bridges the gap between Black maternal communities and service providers, policy-makers, and organisations.

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SHOWCASE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Shefali Bohra, Co-Founder - Dotplot

Shefali Bohra is Co-Founder at DotPlot, a breast health monitoring tool. Having won Imperial College London's Venture Catalyst Programme 2022, she has also been accepted onto the InnovationRCA Startup Programme as well as is a part of MedTech Super Connector 2022 where DotPlot was selected as the national winner of the James Dyson Award 2022. It is a handheld device designed to provide month-by-month comparisons of breast tissue, helping to flag abnormalities as soon as possible as part of self-checking by using sensing technology to build a map of the user's chest.

Shefali is a Product Designer who is driven to explore various tangible mediums and technologies to address unmet needs. Her interest lies in healthcare innovation. Previously she has also worked as a Design Researcher and Strategist. She holds a Bachelor of Design, Industrial and Product degree from the National Institute of Design; a Master of Arts degree in Innovation Design Engineering from the Royal College of Art and an MSc degree in Innovation Design Engineering from Imperial College London.

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ABOUT DIVERSITY UK

Diversity UK is a charity whose mission is to improve equality and inclusion in Britain. We do this by: informing and educating the public about equality and inclusion initiatives, particularly in relation to race diversity; holding public bodies to account about the appointment of ethnic minority individuals to senior positions in the public sector and by promoting greater diversity in the tech sector in Britain. Diversity UK has achieved many successes over the years, including:

- Publishing a flagship 'Beyond the Glass Ceiling' Research Report in 2013.
- Participating in 4 Reviews including the McGregor-Smith 'Race in the Workplace' Review.
- Establishing the annual Paul Stephenson lecture on race equality.
- Devising and leading the Asians in Tech initiative over the past decade.
- Supporting 160 industry events; organising 38 events; celebrating 14 IWD events & 2 Summits.

Diversity UK is a registered charity (No: 1155189) in England & Wales. For further information, visit <https://diversityuk.org/>

About the Asians in Tech initiative

The Asians in Tech initiative was established in 2015 with Lord Vaizey, then the Minister for the Digital Economy launching the first Top 100 Asian Stars in UK Tech list. Successes of the Asians in Tech initiative over the past decade include:

- ★ 10 Top 100 Asian Stars in UK Tech lists published;
- ★ 8 Tech Showcases + 1 Demo Day hosted (Cambridge, London, Manchester);
- ★ 6 Chairman's Awards presented;
- ★ 148 Asian Tech Pioneers recognised;
- ★ 4 Investing in Women Founders panel debates held,
- ★ a Queen's Award for Enterprise Masterclass delivered,
- ★ an Asian Tech Pioneers video + ★ AI Inclusion Podcast published.

Diversity UK is proud that the aim of showcasing Asian talent in the tech sector has been realised with founders achieving their investment targets, receiving grant funding, forming new partnerships and recognition in scaling their ventures. In 2023, Executive MBA students at the Cambridge Judge Business School undertook an 8-week project to evaluate the impact of the Asians in Tech initiative. Some of their findings are presented in the Asians in Tech Impact Report.

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ABOUT GREENWOODS

Not an identikit law firm

Greenwoods is a law firm that invests in the stories of its clients. We work with real people, doing remarkable things across a variety of situations.

Connecting with people is critical to everything we do. Our brand highlights our ability, willingness and desire to combine a feeling of professional integrity with a genuine affinity for (and curiosity about) people and what they do.

As lawyers, we dedicate ourselves to providing advice and support that positively impacts the people who need us. One of the areas we focus on is helping early-stage founders and entrepreneurs, just starting out, create thriving, growing businesses. We recognise how unbelievably hard it is for women to raise money in the current start-up climate, and we want to do our part to facilitate the process by giving women the bespoke advice they need to make fundraising a success.

As lawyers and women, we value personal relationships and believe they are crucial to every aspect of our business: externally, with clients, contacts, and winning work, and internally, within and across teams and offices. We will take the time to talk through and understand your business, and you as the founder. We will give you tailored advice and support that reflects both our understanding of your business and our extensive experience.

Find out more about us on our website at: <http://www.greenwoods.co.uk>

ABOUT MURRAY EDWARDS COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

Murray Edwards College, founded in 1954, is a Cambridge college dedicated to educating women from diverse backgrounds. Originally New Hall, it began with 16 students in a borrowed building, driven by a vision to expand opportunities for women. Over 70 years, it has grown into a thriving institution with iconic buildings, stunning gardens, and Europe's largest collection of art by women. Renamed to honour its first President, Rosemary Murray, and alumna Ros Edwards, whose £30 million donation secured its future, the college continues its mission.

Welcoming over 100 female undergraduates annually, Murray Edwards offers outstanding education with personalised support. While prioritising women, it warmly includes men in its community. Known for its informal, collaborative, and supportive environment, it empowers students to think boldly and be themselves.

About the Enterprising Women programme

Murray Edwards College, in partnership with AstraZeneca, has unveiled the Enterprising Women programme to support female entrepreneurs at Cambridge University. This initiative offers mentorship, expert advice, and tailored support to women in early-stage ventures, with a focus on life sciences and board diversity.

Key elements include SheStarts for aspiring innovators, SheSoars for recent alumnae-led start-ups, and SheScales for advisors, investors, and growth-stage ventures. AstraZeneca and other partners will provide mentors and resources to accelerate impact. The programme aims to address the gender gap in entrepreneurship, where women receive just 2% of venture capital.

For further information, visit <https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/>



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