

The Way To The Top

A Global Conversation marking
International Women's Day 2019



Accountable Leadership.
Women's Empowerment.
Youth Development.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 03

The Way To The Top 04

Global Voices 08

Global Snapshot 11

Gender Gap 12

Inspiration Abounds 13

Speakers and Panels 15



Executive Summary

New York – London – Athens – Amman – Istanbul – Lahore

More than 30 nationalities attended the inaugural Athena40 Global Conversation on March 6, 2019 held simultaneously in six major cities on four continents. The 45 expert speakers shared their views with more than 500 attendees, 80% of whom were Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and other high-level executives. The thought-leading conversation was moderated by BBC World's Tim Willecox, connecting live from London to the five other panels in New York, Athens, Istanbul, Amman and Lahore. Professionals from the worlds of banking, finance, health, law, media, consulting, civil society, diplomacy, non-profit, technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and many other important fields joined the vital discussion. The content of this Whitepaper highlights the key themes and recommendations revealed during the revolutionary multi-city event, which posed a fundamental question: what are the main challenges for women worldwide?

The Way To The Top

New York – London – Athens – Amman – Istanbul – Lahore



Budding minds overflowing with aspirations must be propelled, not diminished, by the ‘adult’ world, via more unique, uncensored and intelligent events

Inspiring. Unique. Formidable.

This was the sentiment of more than 500 people – women and men – following the world’s first multi-city live event promoting women empowerment. Six sessions held simultaneously across six cities with renowned speakers on one of the world’s most pressing challenges made history on March 6 this year. The extraordinarily ambitious and unique platform for women – from different countries, walks of life, ages, talents, goals – put a much-needed and thought-provoking spotlight on the united goal

of the world’s near 4 billion females: gender equality. This powerful message resonated with women from across the entire age spectrum, including those plotting their path at the threshold of adulthood.

Where do we stand today?

Despite 60,000 years of human evolution, equality only officially became an international goal when the Charter of the UN signed the first international agreement in 1945. This most starkly encapsulates the scale of the challenge. The overall global gender gap will probably

close in 108 years – by the year 2127 – across the 106 countries covered since the first edition of the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Gender Gap report. We will never live to see global equality, but our great grandchildren just might – assuming progress continues. The most challenging gender gaps to close are

the economic and political empowerment dimensions, which will take 202 and 107 years respectively to close, taking us to 2221 and 2126. Females worldwide come from many different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds with different issues (*page 7: Global voice: Top recommendations from six cities revealed*). But women, and many men, share a common cause: to rewrite the inexcusable narrative: "positions of professional power are typically dominated by men". Clearly much more must be done to ramp up female influence worldwide via innovative organisations that promote entrepreneurial thinking among women, like Athena40 (*page 8: Athena40*).

Positive disruption gains speed

A new era in this ancient challenge appears to be dawning. The World Intellectual Property Organization said female inventors nearly tripled their share of patent applications between 2002 and 2016, to 62,400. Among the top 20 origins, the Republic of Korea and China were the most gender-equal, at 46.9% and 46.8%, respectively. Plans for the first all-female spacewalk are underway – women reaching for the sky, literally – and UK companies with 250 or more employees are legally required to publish their gender pay gaps. Plus,

A Brief History International Women's Day

The first National Woman's Day was observed in the US on the 28 February, 1909 – 110 years ago. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honour of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested working conditions. During International Women's Year, the UN began celebrating International Women's Day from 1975 on the 8 March – nearly seven decades after the US had its first National Woman's Day.

the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan launched an initiative called 'Our Time: Supporting Future Leaders'. It is the first and largest-scale programme of its kind to be adopted in the UK's public sector to tackle the gender imbalance in leadership roles and bridge the gender pay gap.

Step by step

Achieving equality is clearly a marathon and not a sprint, so some messages remain mixed. Data that appears to herald progress could also be interpreted as a reminder of how misaligned the stakes between men and women truly are. Pakistan's July 2018 elections are a good illustration of how the significant gap between legislation and social change still exists. The world's fifth most populous country saw an increase of 3.8 million newly registered women voters last year, according to the National Geographic's

report 'The Rising Voices of Women in Pakistan'. For the first time, Pakistani women are truly stepping up to the political plate to share their views, despite being allowed to vote since 1956. Why has it taken more than six decades for tangible progress to filter through to the voting polls? The answer is multifaceted.

The road to equality stretches, largely unconquered, towards the horizon. Let's pick up speed!



The quest as we stride into a new dawn is to correct a global mistake of inequality that has persisted for millennia. The question is: are you in?

Try, try and try again

Generally, women aren't as prepared as men to push their professional comfort zones – in politics, the workplace, as entrepreneurs, for example – for fear of jeopardizing family life. But why can't women choose to be both committed family members and professional heavy hitters? Social norms suggest that women can only do one job thoroughly;

walking both roads risks getting lost. Dispelling this narrative will be challenging, for it permeates deeply. Gender-neutral language really does matter, for example. Michelle Obama, First Lady(2009-1017), accomplished lawyer and mother, said she still feels impostor syndrome (*page 11: Inspiration abounds: Success stories*).



Failure leads to success

A 'safe to fail' culture that is underpinned by a no-blame mentality is also integral to success. Again, social norms mean that women especially have an aversion to failure and the critique that often goes with it. Pushing women up the social and professional league tables

means embracing failure; each mistake is a signpost towards success. For example, Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb in the late 1800s, said he had hadn't failed 10,000 times. Instead he had succeeded in finding 10,000 methods that didn't work. The value of intellectual persistence and curiosity supersedes the fear of getting it wrong; mastering this means standing among the tallest in professional circles. The same applies to embracing diversity. Being different could be your unique selling point (USP) in the workplace or as an entrepreneur, rather than a hindrance. But it is important that you always aim to stand

by 'the great and the good'.

Intellectual gold

Women represent an underutilized pot of intellectual gold; thriving potential suppressed by archaic social norms. The world cannot afford such intellectual wastage. Around 2.3 billion people still do not have toilets or improved latrines (the equivalent of India and China's populations combined) and a child dies from a water-related disease every 90 seconds. Through this prism, gender inequality is reckless and indeed, deadly.

Global Voices

Top recommendations from six cities revealed

New York, US

- ✔ Momentum for positive disruption is building; we must keep increasing our efforts.
- ✔ Quantifiable growth is vital. Transparent and detailed data helps keep an accurate track of progress of female empowerment and highlights where more action is needed.
- ✔ Pay your wisdom and energy forward by having conversations with younger girls; nurture the leaders of tomorrow. Building confidence and aspirations begins before we even learn how to walk.

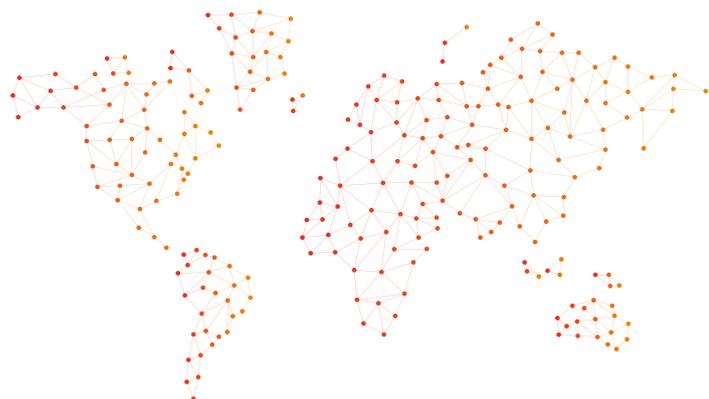
London, UK

- ✔ Pay your success forward; the more you achieve, the more you can contribute to others, young and old.
- ✔ Women in senior positions must become the norm, not a major point of interest.
- ✔ Embrace failure. Take risks and push your boundaries to maximise your potential, as glass ceilings are only glass feelings.

Amman, Jordan Athens, Greece

- ✔ Educators must make more effort to prompt positive change, disrupt stereotypes and decrease the masculinization of language in teachings and educational literature, including text books.
- ✔ Changes in accommodating women at work, integrating them into the private sector and supporting female entrepreneurs must continue. The paradigm shift in the mobilisation of women as part of the political and social setting is key for Jordan to have female economic engagement at 27% by 2025.
- ✔ Legislation must improve. Women's economic participation still faces many challenges due to gender bias in legislation i.e. misalignment between constitutional rights and reality.

- ✔ Family and the broader social environment are major, yet largely undervalued, drivers of positive change. Their support is a key enabler to push for flexible working conditions and career advancement.
- ✔ Cultivate entrepreneurial skills, including the promotion of a 'safe to fail' culture and financial acumen.
- ✔ Leverage mentor programmes to inspire others and help females view prospects through a gender-neutral prism. Mentoring especially heightens aspirations and networking capabilities.



Istanbul, Turkey

- ✔ Women must embrace the belief that they can be a leader. Solidarity and unity between women are deeply important to building confidence and in turn, spurring positive change.
- ✔ More initiatives are needed in business to broaden women's access to education, mentorship programmes, scholarships and grants. Government support could especially have a large-scale impact.

- ✔ Women in male-dominated industries must make a particular effort to encourage other women to engage, including those in STEM fields, construction, design and the automotive industry.

- ✔ Technology is our partner and must be leveraged to help women be more successful. Social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have given an important voice to women.

- ✔ A stronger spotlight is needed on successful women to drive inspirational and positive momentum. This includes sharing stories of how women running businesses are thrice as likely to save and twice as likely to send their children to school than women who don't have their own businesses.

Lahore, Pakistan

- ✔ The onus is on institutions and the state to create a more gender diverse ecosystem. They must accept some, if not all, of this responsibility and respond accordingly.

Athena40

Athena40 is the world's first ever global list of the top 40 most forward thinking women. Launched in March 2018, Athena40 selects the most innovative women every two years. The Athena40 Global Committee which votes for the list consists of men and women who are dedicated action-takers with a proven record of thought leadership, integrity, originality and fearless speech.

In a world of disinformation, fake news, failing leadership and constant change, innovative thinking is pivotal to growth. Women's role is crucial in the creation of understanding in our societies and they must collectively push their limits and fly high. Women can balance reason and emotion; both are needed in today's polarised and uncertain world.

Athena40's scope is to cultivate an entrepreneurial

approach among women and to amplify the ideas and projects launched by women or focusing on women. Indeed, the very idea of Athena40 was born from conversations between world acclaimed author and activist Elif Shafak and journalist and social entrepreneur and Founder of Global Thinkers Forum, Elizabeth Filippouli.

By adopting an entrepreneurial approach, Athena40 enables women to be open and curious.

Entrepreneurs ask questions and are open to risk, therefore they can rise above failure. Entrepreneurial thinking has no limitations. Athena40 recognises women who embrace entrepreneurial thinking regardless of their professional realm, expertise or aspirations. Among other principles, Athena40 promotes partnerships and ideas exchange among women and men worldwide and fights clichés and tribalism, for they raise the walls of segregation.

Global Snapshot

Women are making positive inroads as business leaders and professionals, underpinned by supportive entrepreneurial conditions. The results of the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) 2018 continue to show a strong correlation with the Benchmark Women Business Owners, especially in Asia Pacific, North and Latin America, Russia, Europe and Scandinavia.

1st

New Zealand remains at the top of the Index for the second consecutive year with a score of 74.2. Sweden and Canada hold 2nd and 3rd place with scores of 71.3 and 70.9, respectively.

7%

Korea saw the biggest gain overall with a 7% increase in score. Other countries also made significant progress; Costa Rica's increase of 5% from 61.9 to 65.0 propelled it from 20th to 10th place, for example.

60%

Commendable results are also evident in Saudi Arabia, Costa Rica, Sweden, Mexico, Italy, Egypt, the US, Portugal, Poland, Colombia, Russia and Argentina, where the overall MIWE scores advanced between 2% and 7%. Out of the 57 markets, 34 showed an improvement – a healthy 60%.

46.4%

Ghana far outstrips all of its peers with the highest percentage of women business owners (46.4%). Some of the least wealthy and developed economies have higher women business ownership rates than their wealthier developed global peers.

4th

On a global scale, women in the US continue to thrive in the business world, retaining one of the top spots in the MIWE, taking 4th place with a score of 70.8. The outstanding rating continues to be driven by the economy's efficient business regulations, established financial and training systems with wide outreach to female entrepreneurs, and a vibrant, competitive and innovative environment.

10th

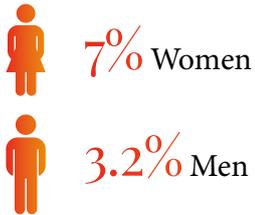
Women in the UK tend to set up businesses in the wholesale and retail sector the most, and in manufacturing and transportation the least. The overall women entrepreneurial landscape is positive, closely positioned with Belgium, Denmark, the Philippines and Botswana. The country ranks 10th in the 2017 Index, with a score of 67.9.

“Change is always treated with resistance. Be committed to what you believe.”

Gender Gap

Unemployment rates

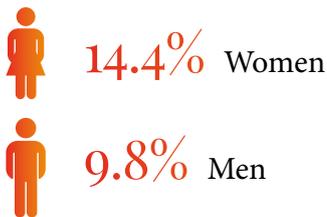
Pakistan



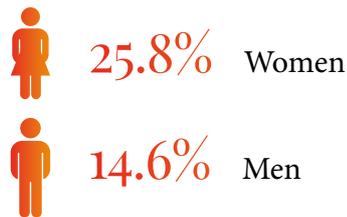
England



Turkey



Greece



“The onus of making our work spaces more women friendly is on the institute itself.”

Jordan



US



Source: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2017; International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Inspiration Abounds

Stories from around the globe



Lili Hall

A humanitarian and a successful and visionary businesswoman who leads Knock Inc, while supporting projects for women and youth.

I listen and open my mind, which means I am always learning. One of the most significant accomplishments happened very early in my career. My first job after college was an internship with a designer in New York. I was clearly at the bottom of the food chain and barely making any money – certainly not enough to live in New York. At the time, I was shocked at how I was treated. But I chose not to quit because I needed that job to stay in that city, which I was committed to. I promised myself, that I would

never, ever subject anyone to anything less than full respect. That shaped me for every job going forward. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. It's something that took me years to accept, and now it's the first advice I would give anyone starting out in their career. Stay open-minded and curious. Plus, if you are a business owner, the challenge is access to the networks that get you the resources and opportunities every business needs. And if you're within an organisation, it's finding good sponsorship within your company – that's key to individual success. My mother's dinner table was like the UN – always filled with people from different cultures, sharing what they had in common. They were global thinkers, sharing and conversing. They showed me how listening to other points of view can give you a mindset that understands how different cultures come at problems in different and very useful ways.



Nurdeniz Tunçer

Owner of law firm Nurdeniz Tunçer, President of the Guide Dogs Association in Turkey, the country's first, and a passionate advocate of disability rights.

Turkey is more progressive than some countries. For example, we've had a female prime minister, but scepticism from more male-centric parts of society force women to be more determined, myself included. Whenever I meet resistance and doubt, I push back until I've proven my abilities. In Turkey, if women receive a good education, they have an increasing number of opportunities open to them. It's common to see women in places of authority and this is most often due to

their academic achievements. Unfortunately, the same is not true for poor or uneducated women in society. Life is still difficult for them, so we must find opportunities to support and educate them too. Determination is a necessary part of any success. Women especially shouldn't expect to have anything handed them. They will have to earn their position in life through hard work and continued self-improvement. I've found it helpful to dismiss negativity and doubt about a woman's ability, focusing instead on constructive influences in my life that will give me the motivation to persevere. Real authority comes through kindness and a generous attitude.

“Be patient. If there is no light at the end of a tunnel, find another tunnel and there will be light there!”



Annabel Karmel MBE

A career spanning more than 25 years, the London-born mother of three and entrepreneur has pioneered the way families all over the world feed youngsters.

Credited with starting a food revolution with her trusty recipes and methods, Annabel has become the UK's No.1 children's cookery author, best-selling international author, and the mother of all feeding experts with 45 cookbooks... and counting. It all started with *The Complete Baby and Toddler Meal Planner* in 1991 – a book which has become the 2nd best-selling non-fiction hardback of all time. It was a legacy to her first child Natasha who sadly died of a viral infection when she was just three months old. Feeling vulnerable when her son Nicholas came along, she wanted to give him the very best foods. She rolled up her sleeves and set to work on cooking-up inventive combinations that Nicholas

would love. Never in her wildest dreams did she think that these would culminate in a cookbook that would go on to sell over four million copies worldwide. Annabel is a regular media commentator on food related issues and she regularly undertakes consultancy work for major nursery chains, leisure resorts, restaurants and hotels worldwide. In 2006, Annabel received an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for her outstanding work in the field of child nutrition, and she has since become recognised as one of the UK's leading female entrepreneurs

Speakers

Welcomes & Hosting Speakers

Tim Willcox

International News
Broadcaster, BBC World News

Doug Wills

Managing Editor, London
Evening Standard & The
Independent

Deema Bibi

CEO, Injaz

Michael E. Economakis

Executive Vice Chairman &
CEO, A.G. Leventis Group
(Nig.) Plc

Christopher Gaunt

Chairman, British Chamber of
Commerce Turkey

Edward Oakden CMG

British Ambassador,
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Nighat Said Khan

Executive Director at ASR
Resource Centre (ASR)

Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan

President, The Royal
Scientific Society

New York Panel

HRH Princess Beatrice of York

VP Partnerships & Strategy,
Afiniti

Lili Hall

Founder & CEO, Knock

Lisa Baldwin

Chief Information Officer,
Tiffany & Co.

Alicia Hatch

Chief Marketing Officer,
Deloitte Digital

Shelley Zalis

CEO, The Female Quotient

Dana Strong

President, Consumer
Services, Comcast Cable

London Panel

Elizabeth Filippouli

Founder & CEO, Global
Thinkers Forum & Athena40

Julia de Boinville

VP Business Development,
Afiniti

Annabel Karmel MBE

Entrepreneur & Best-selling
International Author

Neishaa Gharat

Designer & Founder, House
Of Gharats

Ayesha Hazarika MBE

Journalist & Broadcaster

Bridget McIntyre

Former Chief Executive
Officer, RSA Insurance

Athens Panel

Olga Stavropoulou

Founding Member - Member of BOD, Knowl Social Enterprise

Natalia Katifori - Kolotoura

Co-founder & Marketing Director, OPUS Integrated Communication

Kate Smith, CMG

British Ambassador, Hellenic Republic

Katia Stathaki

Director Vodafone Business, Vodafone Greece

Myladie Stoumbou

Director, Commercial Partner Channels & Programs for Multi-Country cluster, Microsoft Corp.

Lefteris Trechas

Chief Operations Officer, APIVITA SA

Istanbul Panel

Nurdeniz Tunçer

Owner, Law firm of Nurdeniz Tuncer - President, Guide Dogs Association

Tim Bright

Partner, One World Consulting & Advisory Board Member, British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey

Lale Can

Managing Director, Afiniti Turkey

Didem Altop

Managing Director, Endeavour Turkey

Ebru Özdemir

Chairwoman, Limak Investments

Begüm Candaş Özgür

Designer

Simay Dinc

Co-founder & Game Producer, Recontact

Lahore Panel

Attiya Mahmood

Pakistani Diplomat

Rishm Najm

Alternate Director, Lahore Grammar School

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar

Former Acting Finance Minister, Pakistan - Former Under-Secretary-General, United Nations & Former Governor, State Bank, Pakistan

Seema Aziz

Founder & Managing Director, Sefam

Omer Aftab

Campaign Strategist

Maria Umar

Founder & President, Women's Digital League (WDL)

Roshaneh Zafar

Managing Director, Kashf Foundation

Amman Panel

Mary Nazzal-Batayneh

Partner, 17 Asset Management

Shermine Dajani

Owner & CEO, Panmed Energy

Dr. Salma Nims

Secretary-General, Jordanian National Commission for Women

Dr. Wafa Al-Khadra

Dean, Faculty of Languages & Communication, American University of Madaba

Samar Nassar

Board Member, United Arab Football Association & Jordan Football Association

We wish to thank our Sponsors and Partners



SHARON SCHWEITZER, J.D.



Production Team

David Hawkins, Eve Conway, Katerina Chatzi, Madison Keller, Rawan D'aas, Bige Kerimoglou, Pinar Kim, Michelle Meineke

Afiniti

Afiniti launched its Women in Leadership event series in 2017 to support women and help them find inclusivity in technology, a sector that has traditionally not been known for its diversity.



Global Thinkers Forum

The Global Thinkers Forum (GTF) is a global platform incubated at Said Business School University of Oxford, that works as an agent for positive change by connecting international thought leaders and promoting values-based leadership, collaboration and partnerships. GTF's mission focuses on three areas: fostering accountability in leadership, promoting women's empowerment and creating opportunities for young people to develop. GTF has mentoring programmes for women and youth and is an organisation that promotes public-private sector partnerships opening conduits for collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

Please visit www.globalthinkersforum.org for more information.

Global Thinkers Forum
8, St. James's Square SW1Y 4JU London – UK

E: info@globalthinkersforum.org
T: +44(0)8456347820 F: +44(0)8447747558
W: athena40.org - globalthinkersforum.org - globalthinkersmentors.org