

# Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age

The 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conversation marking International Women's Day 2023



Women in the Digital Age  
5th Global Conversation  
Malmö, Sweden  
8 March 2023

For Women in the Digital Age  
5th Global Conversation  
Malmö, Sweden  
8 March 2023

Launched by:

GLOBAL  
THINKERS  
FORUM



Accountable Leadership.  
Women's Empowerment.  
Youth Development.



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## Conversation Overview 2023

London – Amman – Beirut – Malmö – Karachi

**O**n International Women's Day 2023, Athena40 hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conversation bringing together leading thinkers from across five countries. They participated in synchronous panel conversations about women's challenges and opportunities in the digital age. The conversations were also in tune with this year's IWD 2023 theme #EmbraceEquity, and they were streamed online reaching a global audience.

Among the speakers were the Founder of Athena40 Elizabeth H. Filippouli, Sonal R. Patel, Partner & Executive Producer of the Brunswick Group, the British Ambassador to Jordan HE Bridget Brind OBE, HE Ambassador Rt. Attiya Mahmood, the International Rescue Committee's Country Director in Jordan Nivedita Monga, the Vice-Chancellor of Malmö University Kerstin Tham and Doug Wills, Editor Emeritus of the Evening Standard.

Athena40 brings together changemaking leaders across different sectors and from different parts of the world, to get a sense of the challenges that women face in their own societies and communities and to record calls to action. The parallel Athena40 events were attended by entrepreneurs, policy makers, investors, ambassadors, media, activists, and academics in all five countries. Elizabeth H. Filippouli, Founder of Athena40, chaired the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conversation.

**"IT'S A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION WHEN GIRLS ARE ABLE TO REALISE THEIR VALUE AND ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL."**

**HE Bridget Brind OBE  
- UK Ambassador to  
Jordan**



# Innovation, Change & Education For Women In The Digital Age

“It is important to ensure that women get access to knowledge and education. We must address negative stereotypes that portray STEM as “being for boys”. This work must start with girls, and the role of parents and school teachers is critical. We also need stories of successful women, STEM pioneers who made it through many adversities, role models that will fascinate the younger generation. Today, and every day, we embrace equity.”



**Elizabeth H. Filippouli**

Founder & CEO, Athena40

**“WE MUST ALWAYS  
TAKE A CRITICAL  
APPROACH TOWARDS  
DATA AND PAY  
ATTENTION TO THE  
NUANCED SOCIAL  
NARRATIVES.”**

## What is Athena40?

Athena40 was launched by London-based nonprofit Global Thinkers Forum, at UNESCO on International Women’s Day March 8 2018, as a women-led platform promoting the work of innovative women from around the world. Athena40 developed into a family of initiatives with partnering organisations in more than twenty countries, focusing on strengthening the role of women worldwide. Athena40 helps women with access to networks, mentoring and awareness raising.

# Messages from Around the World

## HE Bridget Brind OBE

### Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Jordan

"I really believe that we and our world will be healthier, wealthier, safer, freer and greener in short, better off all around for everyone if more women and girls are able to realise their full potential. And in my time here in Jordan, one of the great pleasures of my work has been to meet some amazing and talented women in a wide range of fields including scientists, innovators, bankers, artists, parliamentarians, entrepreneurs, engineers, lawyers, and yes, diplomats. So, I know it is not the lack of female talent that is the problem, but the barriers and lack of equal opportunities holding them back. The UN theme this year, 'Digital Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality', is an opportunity to reflect on and explore, the impact of the digital gender gap on widening economic and social inequalities, as well as what more needs to be done to address this."

### FACT #1

**IT WILL TAKE AT LEAST ANOTHER 54 YEARS TO REACH UNIVERSAL PRIMARY SCHOOL COMPLETION OF GIRLS. EACH ADDITIONAL YEAR A GIRL SPENDS IN SCHOOL CAN ALSO BOOST HER EARNINGS AS AN ADULT BY UP TO 20%.**

## Deema Bibi

### CEO, INJAZ

"As the world is changing so rapidly, with energy being at the forefront of that change, we need to remember that not everyone has been able to benefit equally. Women in particular face unique challenges in the digital age. They are often underrepresented. Women also experienced stereotypes that portray them as less competent or less interested in technology. They may have limited access to technology and digital services due to various factors like poverty or social norms. We also know that global challenges including economic recession, rising unemployment rate, climate change - they all widen the gender gap as women and girls are often more severely impacted by crises. Recognising that neither technological advancements nor hardships are gender blind, we must ensure that our responses are not either our policies, strategies, solutions, programmes, or delivery methods, only to be designed developed, and delivered in a way that ensures that women not only have the same opportunities and resources but have also equal access to these opportunities and resources and can benefit equally from them."

## Nivedita Monga

### Country Director, International Rescue Committee (Jordan)

"We are here to talk about innovation, change and education for women in the digital age. We mustn't forget the purpose of this conversation is gender equality and the relevance the subject matter has for achieving Sustainable Development Goals. While digital technologies have allowed unprecedented advances on gender equality they have also created, perpetuated and deepen some patterns of gender inequality. Therefore, the new face of gender inequality in 21st century is the gender divide, the gender gap when it comes to technology that prevents women from accessing information and information is power. Knowledge is power. It allows women and men to make informed choices and change the way they respond to life and its crises. The world needs science. Science needs women because we have a shared human challenge before us - food security, climate change, clean energy, health, water sanitation - to achieve the future we all want. Women and men must assert their intentional agency over technology to close the gender gap. And we look at the digital age as one that assures new avenues of choice-making both by men and women, because we need men as equal partners in this conversation, in this shared struggle."

## Annicken R. Day

Founder & CEO, Corporate Spring

“While we continue working towards structural, systematic, and cultural changes for a more equal and women friendly society, I am a big believer in the power of self love, self respect and confidence. Girls that learn to love and respect themselves grow up to be confident and strong. They will want to educate themselves, dare to question the status quo, they will challenge old rules and the whole premise of the patriarchy, and they will not accept to be treated with less respect and dignity than their male counterparts.”

## Sayed Sana Shah

Program Manager, National Incubation Center Karachi

“As a woman, heading programme in the one of largest Tech incubators in Pakistan, I believe that innovation, change, and education are crucial for women to thrive in the digital age. This Women's Day, let's join hands and empower women to lead the digital revolution with confidence and courage. Our voices matter, our ideas matter, and we are the future of innovation. Let's motivate each other to be unafraid and create a better world for all.”

## Joslin Faith Kehdy

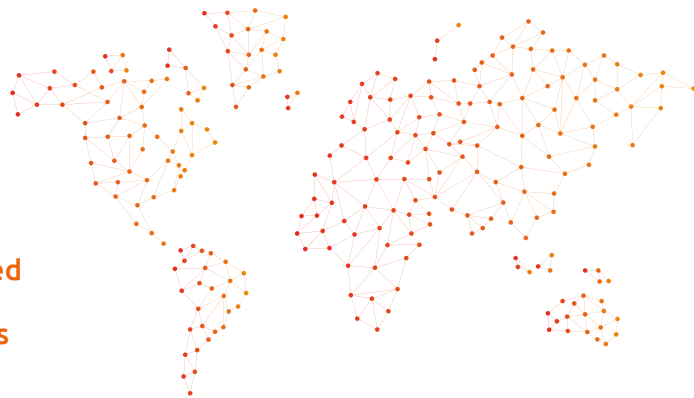
Founder & Director, Recycle Lebanon

“Gender equality and women's empowerment are critical components of a just and regenerative future. Innovation, technology, and education can play a crucial role in achieving these goals. Programmes such as the Regenerate Hub, EcoSouk, and TerraPods can contribute to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls through innovation, technology, and education. We can offer a safe and inclusive hands-on and experiential learning space for women and girls to explore innovation and technology while promoting sustainable consumption and can address the gender gap in STEM education and careers.”

**“THE HIGHER YOU GET ON THE LADDER, THE FEWER WOMEN YOU FIND.  
WE MUST FIGHT THE IMPOSTER SYNDROME AND BELIEVE THAT WE  
CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING.”**

**Dr Chen Mao Davies  
– Founder & CEO, Anya**

# Global Approach - Local Insights



The synchronised global conversation about women's challenges and opportunities in the digital age included panels in Malmö, Karachi, Beirut and Amman where leading experts and activists discussed women's issues locally. We are delighted to share the main findings:

## London UK The Conduit Club

**"GENDER-DIVERSE  
BUSINESSES  
ARE MORE PROFITABLE."**

- Lack of female role models and mentors is an issue to get more women into STEM.
- We must address negative stereotypes that portray STEM as "being for boys". Studies show that these stereotypes happen in education as early as secondary school.
- Women need access to networks and to create partnerships.
- Even when women enter STEM roles, there are many barriers preventing them from staying, including lack of pay equity and misogyny. Although 80% of women in science and tech-related roles say they love their job, 56% leave their organisations 20 years later at mid-career level – and only 5% make it to leadership positions.
- There is internalised misogyny - women need to support each other, male allyship is crucial too.

## London UK The Evening Standard Panel

**"EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL  
FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS  
WORLDWIDE."**

- Education for all women and girls worldwide is a key factor that affects all fields such as social, financial, etc.
- Media equality: things have changed dramatically over the years for women - they can work on the frontline of a war zone using their own equipment and technology is part of that. There is still the stereotype of specialist journalists, particularly in sports.
- Statistics show that there is so much more to be done in the areas of STEM and AI for women to be reinforced.
- In climate change, particularly young girls are more likely to take the learning back to their communities and it's an area that women have already come through successfully. We must showcase their outstanding work and we need to make the most of that opportunity.

- Key to women's career advancement is continuous training, knowledge and networking.

## Malmö, Sweden

**"MEN AND WOMEN MUST  
WORK TOGETHER."**

- In Sweden, only 27% of the workforce are women in the tech industry. The industry has a bad reputation making women not apply while men also like to keep it like this.
- In an increasingly digital world, we can leverage communication to educate both men and women in gender equality.
- Digital innovation and corporate strategy can mitigate the gender gap in divorces as traditional family structures evolve and divorce rates rise. With women taking the lead in divorce and facing financial strains, corporations must take responsibility for their employees in untraditional family arrangements.
- Sweden is a pioneer in implementing sexual education worldwide and is currently revamping it by renaming it "sexuality consent and relationships" to promote inclusivity and address structural views on sexuality through norms and behaviour. This is particularly crucial in a world where digital dating is a growing trend.
- We need to seek perspectives and new ways of working and thinking.

### FACT #2

**MORE WOMEN ARE NOW BEING ELECTED TO LEGISLATURES  
ACROSS THE WORLD: WOMEN HOLD 25,2% OF PARLIAMENTARY  
LOWER-HOUSE SEATS AND 21,2% OF MINISTERIAL POSITIONS, COMPARED TO  
24,1% AND 19% RESPECTIVELY YEAR 2019.**

## Amman, Jordan

**"WE NEED TO CREATE SAFE AND COMFORTABLE WORKSPACES FOR WOMEN."**

- Gender inequality within the tech industry has resulted in the exclusion of women.
- The digital divide occurs when access to technology is limited, resulting in unequal access to information.
- Discrimination and bullying against women persist in the workplace.
- Encountering misbehaviour and discrimination is crucial to women's success in the tech industry.
- To attract more women to the labour market, we need to create safe and comfortable workspaces, including work-from-home options, addressing childcare and transportation obstacles.
- We need to encourage more women to occupy senior positions and provide them with access to capital.
- Social media reinforces gender stereotypes. Normalizing women's online participation requires increasing the number of female content creators in the tech industry.
- Innovative solutions are needed to change the societal constraints on

women's use of technology and INJAZ's financial literacy programme provides women with greater access to financial and tech information in an attempt to equip women to be changemakers in the society.

## Karachi, Pakistan

**"WE MUST ENSURE EQUAL REPRESENTATION TO WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF SOCIETY."**

- One of the major challenges highlighted was the lack of access to basic education for women in Pakistan.
- There is a lack of female representation in journalism and this leads to a domination of newsrooms by men.
- With almost 52% of the population being women, there is a need to provide more opportunities and equal representation to them in all fields, including government, education, and leadership.
- To achieve equal representation of women and men, the government must incentivize organisations that have a higher gender diversity ratio and introduce quotas in organisations.
- There is a need for greater efforts to empower women in Pakistan and

ensure equal opportunities and representation in all spheres of society.

## Beirut, Lebanon

**"THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS TO INCREASE YOUNG GIRLS' SELF-CONFIDENCE."**

- Girls tend to lose interest in STEM during school, due to several factors such as: the peer pressure and parents' lack of encouragement to follow this field, the delivery of courses which might hinder the enjoyment of sciences, lack of women role models.
- Women face a huge problem in accessing job opportunities. Despite the high number of women in STEM seeking higher education, these numbers are not reflected in the work field.
- Throughout history, most women in STEM majors were not given credit for their innovations.
- It is critical to help increase young girls' self-confidence. Families and schools have a huge role to play and teachers should particularly engage young women in STEM.
- We should promote the success stories of women in STEM to encourage the younger generations to get involved.

## About Global Thinkers Forum

The Global Thinkers Forum network comprises pioneering minds and values-driven thought leaders who are passionate about creating a better world.

Our work has introduced an arena of open-mindedness, inspiration, collaboration and accountable leadership. Women have an influential role in this ecosystem, shaping a new reality for social progress and excellence. Our world needs women forerunners who can understand that collaboration is key for progress and sustainable development and will seek partnerships with unanticipated stakeholders.

GTF invites like-minded individuals and organisations to partner and create Global Thinkers Forum events that advance and expand its initiatives, three-fold mission and nurture positive change in the world.



# Global Snapshots 2022

## 1 NO POVERTY



Globally, over 380 million women and girls are in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day. If current trends continue, in subSaharan Africa, more women and girls will live in extreme poverty by 2030.

## 2 ZERO HUNGER



Globally, nearly 1 in 3 women experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021. Rising food prices are likely to exacerbate hunger.

## 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Unsafe abortion is a leading but preventable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity. In 2022, over 1.2 billion women and girls of reproductive age live in countries and areas with some restrictions on access to safe abortion. 102 million live in places where abortion is prohibited altogether.

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Protracted conflicts, wars and renewed efforts to keep girls out of school perpetuate gender gaps in access to school and learning. 54% of girls who are not in formal education worldwide live in crisis-affected countries.

## 5 GENDER EQUALITY



At the current rate of progress, it may take another 286 years to remove discriminatory laws and close prevailing gaps in legal protections for women and girls. Globally, more than 1 in every 10 women and girls aged 15-49 were subjected to sexual and/or physical violence

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



The lack of clean water claims the lives of more than 800,000 women and girls every year.

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Affordable and clean energy, key to lifesaving care and productivity, remains out of reach for millions of women and girls in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Rising energy prices are making matters worse.

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Women's labour force participation in 2022 is projected to remain below prepandemic levels in 169 countries.

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Women hold only 2 in every 10 science, engineering and information and communication technology jobs globally. They comprise only 16.5% of inventors associated with a patent.

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



By the end of 2021, some 44 million women and girls had been forced to flee their homes due to climate change, war, conflict and human rights violations.

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



The majority of the world's women live in cities. 49% of women in urban areas report feeling less safe walking alone at night since COVID-19 began.

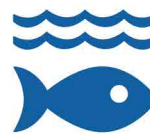
## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



## 15 LIFE ON LAND



On average, one disaster resulting in 115 deaths and losses of \$202 million was recorded daily during 1970-2019. Women, especially from poor and marginalized communities, are disproportionately affected.

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



Strong institutions that support just and peaceful societies are not possible without women, but women globally hold only 42% of judicial positions and make up a tiny share of police forces - a mere 16%.

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Funding for gender equality is not keeping pace with the increasing severity of global challenges and backlash against women's rights. Just 4.6% of bilateral allocable Official Development Assistance (ODA) goes to programmes where gender equality is the main objective.

Sources: UN Women: Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, The Gender Snapshot 2022

**“TECHNOLOGY HAS PROVIDED UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO EDUCATION. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR WOMEN.”**

**Dr Owais Hassan Shaikh –  
Partner, Hassan Shaikh & Company**

# Gender Gap

## Unemployment Rates 2022



### Sweden



7.9%  
Women



7.1%  
Men



### Lebanon\*



18.64%  
Women



13,14%  
Men



### Jordan\*



27,23%  
Women



17,56%  
Men



### Pakistan\*



5.16% Women



4.15% Men



### UK



3.6% Women



3.8% Men

"THE DIGITAL AGE IS RAPIDLY TAKING FORM, IT IS OUR TIME TO EITHER USE IT FOR GOOD AND EQUALITY LEST IT DEEPENS EXISTING INJUSTICE. WE NEED TO ACT NOW AND CREATE THE FUTURE WE WANT TO SEE."

Mary Nazzal  
Founder, 17 Ventures & Landmark & MVMNT

#### Sources:

<https://countryeconomy.com/unemployment>  
<https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/>

\* Latest numbers from 2021

# Inspirational Stories



## Reem AlSmeirat

**Founder & Design Director,  
Concepts 4 Automotive  
Design (C A D) - Founder  
WOMOTIVE & Phoenix**

Reem AlSmeirat is the first female car designer in the Middle East and a pioneer in transportation design in the MENA region.

Reem is best known for her conceptual e-city car design Phoenix 2014, that was recognized on a national scale and was nominated top finalist innovative design at the Arab Innovation Network 2015. In 2021 Reem took on a leap of faith by starting her startup Concepts 4 Automotive Design -C A D- a transportation design studio that offers urban mobility solutions and car/bike body kit customization and fabrication.

C A D has a CSR mission WOMOTIVE an initiative that supports women in the automotive sector by providing working and training opportunities which quickly scaled to become a training and service provider center in automotive detailing powered and operated by women under the name of PHOENIX; Today C A D is seen as one of the 20 Innovators to watch in the MENA region and South Africa according to Arabian Gulf Business Insight 2022.



## Maha Bahou

**CEO, JoPACC**

Ms. Maha serves as CEO of JoPACC since June 2018. The Company is mandated with enhancing and promoting digital payments in Jordan and is the operator of several payment systems in the country.

Before JoPACC, Ms. Maha worked at the Central Bank of Jordan for 30 years, where she was most recently the Executive Manager of the Payment Systems, Domestic Banking Operations and Financial Inclusion Department for 7 years. She has done consulting work in Libya and has experience as a lecturer at the University of Jordan and as a trainer in cooperation with Philadelphia Consulting, the Institute of Banking Studies, the Central Bank of Jordan, and different NGOs.

Ms. Maha holds a master's degree in Banking and Finance, a bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Administration, in addition to a Leadership and Strategic Management certificate from The Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst. She has been honored by King Abdullah II with the Distinguished Government Leader Award for the year 2016. Ms. Maha has been appointed a member of Jordanian Senate in 2022.



## Judith Diment MBE

**PR & Marketing Consultant**

Judith started an independent award-winning Thames Valley public relations consultancy in 1988 and has held senior positions in marketing and communications for over 30 years including Head of PR at the Natural History Museum, London.

Judith has worked for more than 20 years on polio advocacy work with donor governments for Rotary International to secure funding for Polio. Her work has taken her all over the world, participating in immunisation campaigns, high-level meetings, and working closely with partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

### FACT #3

**WHILE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES ARE ON THE RISE, WOMEN STILL MAKE UP LESS THAN 10% OF NATIONAL LEADERS WORLDWIDE AND FEWER THAN 7% OF FORTUNE 500 COMPANY CEOs.**





## Dr Tamara Elzein

**Journalist & Secretary General, National Council for Scientific Research Producer**

Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research of Lebanon. Scientist in the field of material sciences. Laureate of the "L'OREAL-UNESCO for Women in Science" prize (Levant-Egypt region 2016), in addition to the distinction of "Lebanese women pioneers" by the "National Initiative of the Centenary of Greater Lebanon".

In 2017, she received the "International Rising Talent" award from the "L'OREAL-UNESCO for Women in Science" program. In October 2020, she has been named, by the French Republic, Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Knight in the Order of the Academic Palms).

She is co-president of the French-Lebanese committee of the PHC CEDRE program. She is also Vice-President of the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO. She served as advisor for scientific research and Francophone affairs to the current Minister of Education and Higher Education. In addition, between 2016 and 2022 she had been a member of the AUF's international scientific board. Between 2014 and 2019,

she had been a designated expert for the European Commission CBRN Centers of Excellence (EU-CBRN CoE). In 2019, with the support of UNESCO, she founded the national observatory for women in research "DAWReK'n-نك رود", of which she is the president.



## Bella Evidente

**Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Affairs & International Development**

Bella is a seasoned advocate for the Sustainable Development Agenda, with a particular focus on gender equality, climate action and sustainable cities and communities. She has over three decades of diverse international experience in global humanitarian and development contexts in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and the Middle East.

She comes from a long history of service with the United Nations system and spent most of her career in senior management roles where she led UN country offices in extremely challenging and difficult settings, delivered emergency relief, humanitarian and early recovery support to millions of people affected by disasters, conflict and protracted crises and instituted a series of

reforms to the environmental, economic and social inclusion programmes of host governments and stakeholders.

Known for her leadership qualities in cultivating capabilities, curating knowledge and connecting people, she recently co-authored a study on 'Disaster Protection for All: A Gender Responsive and Disability Inclusive Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction' with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). She also serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees of refugeeEd which provides displaced populations, refugees and migrants, particularly women and children, living in camps and host communities in Greece with access to good education and skills development.

**“CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER. IT'S MY FIRM BELIEF THAT NO ONE CAN 'FIX' THE WORLD, BUT EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE.”**

**Joséphine Edwall Björklund  
- Senior Advisor & Communications Expert, Essity**



## Paola Diana

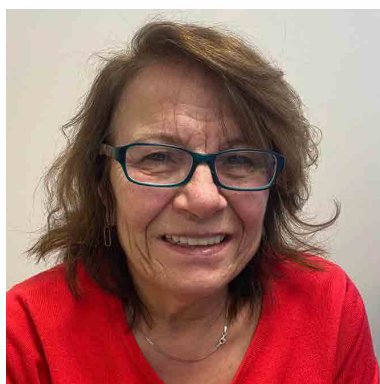
**Founder & CEO, Artemide Recruitment, Serial Entrepreneur & Author, Member of the House of Lords**

Paola Diana is a British/Italian entrepreneur, author and podcast host, living in London. Paola's bestselling book 'Saving the World. Women: the XXI's Century Factor for Change' – published by Quartet Books – combines the theories of sociology and history to show us how misogyny permeates society and where it comes from. Paola is a lauded gender critical, women's rights activist. She achieved a BA in Political Science and an MA in Institutional Relations from the University of Bologna, Italy, before probing into the world of Italian politics. Since the day that she embarked on a career directing the Think Tank in support of former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi's political campaign, Paola has never been one to adhere to gender stereotypes – challenging the ideologies of male supremacists at every opportunity.

Paola is the Founder & CEO of Artemide Recruitment, a leading global recruitment firm in the private and corporate support staff sector. Paola has also proven herself to be an extremely multifaceted success story, she is now executive producer and host of the highly inspiring YouTube show and Spotify/Apple Podcast: 'Unleashed. The Game Changers'.

**“GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ARE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A JUST AND REGENERATIVE FUTURE. INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND EDUCATION CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ACHIEVING THESE GOALS.”**

**Joslin Faith Kehdy  
- Founder & Director,  
Recycle Lebanon**



## Dr Samira Korfali

**Retiree/Chair of the Natural Science Department & Professor, Lebanese American University**

Dr. Samira I. Korfali is an associate professor retiree of Chemistry and was the chairperson of Natural Science Department at the Lebanese American University in Beirut (2006-2011).

She joined LAU as a part-time faculty member in 1977, and became a full-time faculty member in 1988. She has received her B.S. degree in Chemistry from Beirut College for Women (Lebanese American University), her M.S. degree in Physical Chemistry from American University of Beirut and her PhD. in Environmental Geochemistry from Bradford University, UK.

Her research work has been exposed in conference presentations and in international journal publications and has been acknowledged internationally. She has reviewed many manuscripts for publication in international scientific journals; she has received many times research grants from Lebanese Council of Scientific Research (CNRS).

She was selected from a large group and invited as global scientist to attend the World Economic Forum on Science and Technology, Dead Sea, 2009, and acted as a discussion leader for the Role Model Scientist. Also, recipient of the Said Akl Award, for creative research (2001). She is a member in European branch of the Society of Environmental Geochemistry and Health (SEGH), European Water Resource Association (EWRA); International Medical Geology Association (IMGA); Lebanese Association for the Advancement of Science and Society for the Advancement of Science and Technology in the Arab World (SASTA).



## Charlotta Löfgren

**Professor, field of Sexology & Sexuality Studies, Malmö University**

Dr Charlotta (Lotta) Löfgren has a PhD in social work and is authorized as a clinical sexologist by Nordic Association of Clinical Sexology. Currently, she is a full professor of Health and Society, in the field of Sexology and Sexuality Studies, at the Department of Social Work, Malmö University.

Her research interests lie within the areas of sexuality and disability, sex education, online dating, global sexual and reproductive health and rights, and sexual harassment within Academia. She is a researcher leader within sexual harassment and of global health at Malmö University, and a group leader of the interdisciplinary COST European Sexual Medicine Network.

Furthermore, Löfgren is a member of WHO Guideline Development Group of Brief Sexuality-Related Communication for a public health approach, and a former executive board member of the World Association of Sexual Health.

She was the first Program Director of the Master program of Sexology, as well as of the Research Centre of Sexology at Malmö University.

**“THE DIVIDE IN THE DIGITAL AGE IS NO LONGER GENDER-BASED BUT GENERATIONAL AS WOMEN ARE NOW TAKING UP TECHNICAL ROLES.”**

**Ros Russell - Editor, Evening Standard**



## Sonal R. Patel

**Partner & Executive Producer, Brunswick Group**

Sonal is an award-winning Executive Producer and Partner at the critical issues firm, Brunswick. Brunswick advises the world’s leading companies on how to navigate the critical issues they face, helping leaders of the world’s great value-creating organisations operate successfully across the

increasingly complex and fast-changing arenas of finance, politics and society at large.

Sonal leads Brunswick’s Film team and is an advocate for powerful storytelling and creativity in business and investor communications.

Sonal is a Board member of EVCOM, the Event and Visual Communication Association, focused on accelerating the success of Britain’s creative industries. As a former broadcast journalist, she has been writing, producing, presenting and directing for 20 years. Sonal began her career in New York as a Producer, on-air presenter and writer for WNBC, Court TV, WNET and New York 1.

Sonal’s expertise encompasses executive interviews, deal work, investor documentaries, corporate films, social video campaigns and advising on performance and executive visibility. She plays a key role in Brunswick’s Women’s Leadership Network and is

**“STRONG, CONFIDENT WOMEN WHO LOVE AND RESPECT THEMSELVES ARE NOT WAITING FOR A SEAT BY THE TABLE IN THE OLD PATRIARCHY. THEY CREATE THEIR OWN TABLES INSTEAD.”**

**Annicken R. Day - Founder & CEO, Corporate Spring**



## Shamim Rajani

COO, Genetech Solutions

Shamim Rajani is the Managing Director and COO at Genetech Solutions, an award-winning technology company dedicated to providing End to End proprietary and open-source IT solutions and services to its Global audience while ensuring an Agile mindset across the organization. Genetech currently has a presence in Detroit, Karachi, and Jamshoro.

Shamim is also the founder of CODEGIRLS, a tech training bootcamp for girls to improve financial inclusion and gender disparity in the Technology domain.

In line with her immense interest in upskilling the youth and women of Pakistan in the tech domain, Shamim recently served as Chairperson of the Skills Committee at the Pakistan Software Houses Association, P@SHA, and sits on the Industry Advisory Board for a few Universities. She speaks internationally and locally on topics around Upskilling, Agile Ecosystems, and Diversity & Inclusion. She is passionate about projects related to Women Empowerment and some of her initiatives worth mentioning are CodeGirls, WomenInTechPK, and Prowomen.

### FACT #4

**GENDER PARITY IS NOT RECOVERING, ACCORDING TO THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2022. IT WILL TAKE ANOTHER 132 YEARS TO CLOSE THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP. AS CRISES ARE COMPOUNDING, WOMEN'S WORKFORCE OUTCOMES ARE SUFFERING AND THE RISK OF GLOBAL GENDER PARITY BACKSLIDING FURTHER INTENSIFIES.**



## Amber Shamsi

Director, Centre for Excellence in Journalism, IBA University

Amber Rahim Shamsi is Director, Centre for Excellence in Journalism (CEJ) at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA). Ms. Shamsi is an award-winning multi-media journalist and free speech advocate, with wide-ranging experience in television, radio, online and the print media. She is also an International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) and an International Centre for Excellence in Journalism (ICFJ) Digital fellow. Ms. Shamsi has participated thrice in the Jinnah Institute's India-Pakistan Track II

Chaophraya Dialogue as an Emerging Leader.

She has hosted three news and current affairs shows on mainstream Pakistani news channels and writes opinion pieces for local and international media platforms. Previously she was a bilingual reporter for the BBC World Service, where her work largely focused on human rights. She has also written four research reports and training manuals on women in the media, gender and conflict reporting. She is a certified e-trainer and has conducted numerous media trainings through the CEJ-IBA platform and is on the advisory boards of Lok Sujaag, an alternative media platform, and the Pakistan Press Foundation, a media development organisation.

**“JOURNALISM IS A CRITICAL PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY, AND WOMEN'S VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE MEDIA LANDSCAPE. WE NEED TO WORK TOWARDS CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE NEWSROOM CULTURE THAT ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS WOMEN JOURNALISTS.”**

**Amber Rahim Shamsi  
- Director, Centre  
for Excellence in  
Journalism IBA University**





## Maria Tibblin

**Founder & Director, MARIA TIBBLIN LTD**

Maria is the Founder & Director of MARIA TIBBLIN LTD, a Medical & Health promoting Interior Design Firm. Maria Tibblin is an advocate about the pivotal link between wellbeing & holistic design, and how environments impact our health. Maria has spent her life and work supporting behaviours which help determine our sustainable health. She advises various sector industry leaders about how well-designed environments promote general wellbeing.

Maria has a long international career in both the Healthcare & Design industry. She has co-authored numerous research studies within preventative health and health economics. She has held several global positions within medical marketing, clinical research phase FIH-IV, HIV & AIDS prevention strategies, public & medical health communications, treatment & strategies trends for Neurological diseases.

Maria was born and raised in Sweden but has lived and worked globally most of her adult life, she resides in London with her two daughters.

### FACT #5

**IN CLOUD COMPUTING, JUST 12% OF PROFESSIONALS ARE WOMEN; IN ENGINEERING AND DATA AND AI, THE NUMBERS ARE 15% AND 26% RESPECTIVELY. UNLESS THE SECTOR CAN BALANCE THE LEDGER BY MAKING ROLES ATTRACTIVE TO WOMEN, THEN WE RISK MISSING OUT ON THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.**

Working to adequately train and provide guide dogs through the Guide Dog Association is a major part of these efforts. In her role as President of this Association, she also works to advance the legal status and standard of living for the visually impaired in this country, providing them with employment and improved education opportunities. Her own visual impairment began at 10 years old, which makes this mission of empowering all members of the community personal to her. Nurdeniz is also a member of the British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey and has graduated from Common Purpose Leadership Programme. In 2017, the Sabanci Foundation selected her as a Change Maker.



## Nurdeniz Tunçer

**President, Guide Dogs Association**

After graduating from the Law Faculty at Istanbul University in 2001, Nurdeniz started a law office which focused on business and contract law. Given this experience, she has devoted an increasing amount of her time and energy to disability rights in Turkey.

**“IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMOVE BARRIERS THAT HINDER WOMEN'S POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT OR CAREER ASCENT. WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL FOR OUR SOCIETIES.”**

**Nurdeniz Tunçer  
– President,  
Guide Dogs Association**

# Cities and Panellists

## Opening Speakers

### Deema Bibi

CEO, INJAZ (Amman, Jordan)

### HE Bridget Brind OBE

Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Jordan (Amman, Jordan)

### Elizabeth H. Filippouli

Founder & CEO, Global Thinkers Forum & Athena40 (London, UK)

### Rebecka Lettevall

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement & Human Rights, Malmö University (Malmö, Sweden)

### Attiya Mahmood

Former Diplomat & Ambassador of Pakistan (Karachi, Pakistan)

### Nivedita Monga

Country Director, International Rescue Committee (Amman, Jordan)

### Syed Muaz Shah

Director Centre for Human Rights, Ziauddin University (Karachi, Pakistan)

### Kerstin Tham

Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University (Malmö, Sweden)

### Maria Vidakovic

Fundraising Director, Malmö University (Malmö, Sweden)

### Doug Wills

Editor Emeritus, London Evening Standard & The Independent (London, UK)



## London, The Conduit

### Elizabeth H. Filippouli

Founder & CEO, Global Thinkers Forum & Athena40 (Global Chair)

### Paola Diana

Founder & CEO, Artemide Recruitment (Moderator)

### Dr Chen Mao Davies

Founder & CEO, Anya

### Sonal R. Patel

Partner & Executive Producer, Brunswick Group

### Liz Perkins

Night News Editor, Daily Express

## London, Evening Standard (Press Panel)

### Dawn Alford

Executive Director,  
Society of Editors  
**(Moderator)**

### Judith Diment MBE

PR & Marketing  
Consultants

### Caroline Gammell

Assistant Editor,  
The Independent

### Ros Russell

Editor,  
Evening Standard

### Bella Evidente

Senior Advisor,  
Humanitarian Affairs  
& International  
Development

## Amman, INJAZ & MySTARTUP

### Mary Nazzal

Founder, 17 Ventures /  
Landmark/ MVMNT  
**(Moderator)**

### Maha Bahou

CEO, JoPACC

### Zeena Majali

Co-Founder, Crystel

### Dana Suyyagh

CEO, AlMamlaka TV

### Reem AlSmeirat

Founder & Design  
Director, Concepts 4  
Automotive Design  
(CAD)/Founder,  
WOMOTIVE & Phoenix

## Beirut, The Arab Institute for Women (AiW)

### Myriam Sfeir

Director, The Arab Institute  
for Women (AiW)  
**(Moderator)**

### Dr Tamara Elzein

Secretary General,  
National Council for  
Scientific Research

### Dr Nancy Fayad

Research Fellow,  
Lebanese American  
University

### Joslin Faith Kehdy

Founder & Director,  
Recycle Lebanon

### Dr Samira Korfali

Retiree/Chair of Natural  
Science Department  
& Professor, Lebanese  
American University

## Karachi, National Incubation Center & Ziauddin University

### Dr Owais H. Shaikh

Partner, Hassan Shaikh &  
Company **(Moderator)**

### Ziana Sakhia

CEO & Co-founder,  
Bechlo.pk

### Shamim Rajani

COO, Genetech Solutions

### Sayed Sana Shah

Program Manager,  
National Incubation  
Center Karachi

### Amber Rahim Shamsi

Producer, BBC Urdu  
Service Pakistan

### Hira Wajahat Malik

Director, Stimulus

# Malmö, Malmö University

**Maria Tibblin**  
Founder & Director,  
MARIA TIBBLIN LTD  
(Moderator)

**Charlotte Ljung**  
CEO & Founder,  
Endbright

**Annicken R. Day**  
Founder & CEO,  
Corporate Spring

**Charlotta Löfgren**  
Professor, field of Sexology  
& Sexuality Studies,  
Malmö University

**Joséphine Edwall  
Björklund**  
Senior Advisor &  
Communications  
Expert, Essity



The 5th Global Conversation - Amman, Jordan - March 8, 2023











Karachi, Pakistan



Malmö, Sweden



Beirut, Lebanon





# Engagement

**THE JORDAN TIMES**

WEATHER, AMMAN 🌊


Today, May 18, 2023  
23 c° / haze

Home » Local » Panel session analyses role of technology in promoting gender equality

## Panel session analyses role of technology in promoting gender equality

By Rayya Al Muheisen - Mar 10, 2023 - Last updated at Mar 10, 2023

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in Share 1 Email 0 whatsapp 1



Josephine Edwall Björklund · 2nd

I will be joining this international panel at the 5th Athena40 Global Conversation on International Women's Day 2023. Registration link in post below! #wd2023

British-Swedish Chamber of Commerce

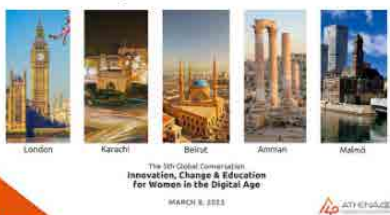
In partnership with Global Thinkers Forum and Athena40 - A Platform for Visionary Leadership we are delighted to invite members to the 5th Athena40 Global Conversation 'Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age'.

On Wednesday 8 March, Athena40 will connect live with panels in London, Malmö, Amman, Karachi and Beirut to discuss accountable leadership, innovation, health, education and more.

The panel connecting from Malmö will be moderated by Maria Tibblin and includes: Rebecka Lettevall, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Global Engagement and Human Rights at Malmö University, Charlotta Löfgren, Professor at Malmö University, Annickien R. Day, Global Culture Coach and CEO, Charlotte Ljung, CEO at the DUJIANA and Josephine Edwall Björklund, Chief Communications Officer & Senior Vice President Corporate Communications at Essity.

#athena40globalconversation #WD2023 Elizabeth H. Filippouli

Click the link below to register:



Liz Perkins @lizperkinsmedia · 8 Mar

Here's a chance to listen to me speaking at the 5th #Athena40 Global Conversation at #TheConduit in London this afternoon #InternationalWomensDay #IWD2023

linkedin.com  
Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age | LinkedIn

The Arab Institute for Women (AIW), LAU @Ai4Women · 8 Mar

The panel on "Innovation, Change, and Education for #Women in the Digital Age" is happening now! @LebAmUniv #WomenEmpowerment



1 1 7 474

Syed Muaz Shah, Esq. @smuezshah · 8 Mar

2 hours left until #Athena40 kicks off for #IWD2023 - come join us @Athena40 online at 6PM PK time or @NIC\_Karachi where we will connect w/ leading women on Innovation, Change & Education for Women in a Digital Age

Proud to join Amb. Attiya Mehmood to help represent #Pakistan



THE 5TH ATHENA40 GLOBAL CONVERSATION  
MARCH 8, 2023  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY  
LONDON | AMMAN | BEIRUT | KARACHI | MALMÖ

LAU @LebAmUniv · 8 Mar

Athena40 will discuss how we can promote and enable women's inclusion in the digital era, and how we can capitalize on the development of new technologies and the opportunities these offer to achieve full and equal access for women, putting an end to the gender digital divide.



0:14

The Arab Institute for Women (AIW), LAU

3 4 363

Diplomatic Observer #WearAMask @DplntoObserver

LAWYER NURDENIZ TUNÇER WAS AT THE WOMEN'S PANEL IN LONDON

Local issues around women's issues were brought up in the synchronized global conversation, hosted by London-based initiative Athena40, with participants from 5 different countries.



Charlotte Ellis @ellispr1 · 10 Mar

In absolute awe of Deniz Tuncer who flew all the way from Turkey with her guide dog, to join the @Athena40 conference on #IWD2023. Deniz is the inspirational founder of the Guide Dogs Association in Turkey that changes the lives of the visually impaired #WomenEmpowerment



40

dipomaticobserver · Follow

Dipomatic Observer

LAWYER NURDENIZ TUNÇER WAS AT THE WOMEN'S PANEL IN LONDON. Local issues around women's issues were brought up in the synchronized global conversation, hosted by London-based initiative Athena40, with participants from 5 different countries. The importance of women and men finding a space for themselves in the communication industry was emphasized. Participants in London: Paris

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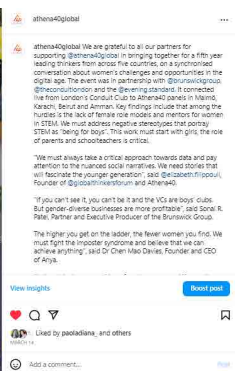
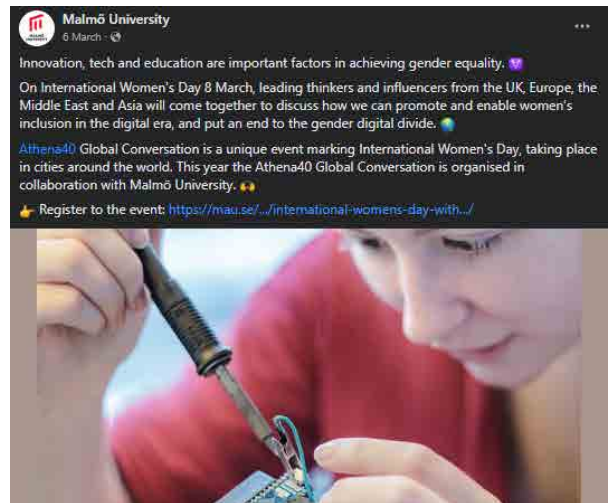
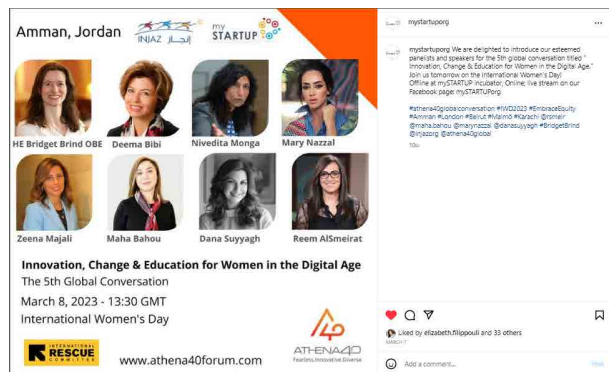
LAU @LebAmUniv · 8 Mar

5th Athena40 Global Conversation: 'Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age' @Ai4Women



1 2 3 564





NEWS LONDON

# Needs of women must be recognised to advance global gender equality, international forum told

Evening Standard joins global discussion on International Women's Day

VIEW 1 COMMENTS



## The 5th Athena40 Global Conversation engages high-impact women on IWD

March 7, 2023



March 8, 2023 – Athena40, a global initiative focused on empowering women leaders, launched the annual Athena40 Global Conversation in 2019. This unique event takes place in different cities around the world, engaging ambitious and dynamic women of all ages that represent other countries, cultures, and backgrounds.

**Tamara Elzein**  
7 March

Non stop for the #IWD23 celebrations!  
Join us for the 5th Global Conversation on "Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age" on March 8, 2023.  
On the occasion of the International Women's Day #IWD23, the **The Arab Institute for Women - AIW, LAU** would like to invite you ... See more

Beirut, Lebanon



Myriam Sfeir



Dr Samira Korfalli



Dr Nancy Fayad



Dr Tamara Elzein



Joslin Kehdy

**Innovation, Change & Education for Women in the Digital Age**  
The 5th Global Conversation  
March 8, 2023 - 13:30 GMT  
International Women's Day

www.athena40forum.com



**mySTARTUPorg**  
22 March

Thanks to everyone who joined us in our fifth Global conversation in corporation with **Athena40** and a special thanks to **Mary Nazzal-Batayneh Dana Suyyagh Maha Bahou Reem AL-Smeirat @Zeena majali** for their empowering words

The 5th Global Conversation - Amman, Jordan - March 8, 2023

The 5th Global Conversation  
Amman, Jordan  
March 8, 2023

## Needs of women must be recognised to advance global gender equality, international forum told

**Shumaila Iftikhar**  
8 March 2023, 3 min read



Needs of women must be recognised to advance global gender equality, International Forum told

Stereotypes and a lack of financial support are holding women back from reaching an equal footing with men in the workplace, a global discussion on International Women's Day was told.

Female participation in academia, media, politics and business in the digital age is changing but the needs of women need to be recognised to enable gender equality, the panellists urged in the Innovation, Change and Education debate.

- TRENDING**
- 1 Bank of England rates again rise
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  - 3 How to play no shares a catch
  - 4 FTSE 100 no choice for long
  - 5 10 buy 44,000 stocks, for 61%

**Athena40**  
Published by Katerina Chatzimatzoglou · 14 March

We are grateful to all our partners for supporting **Athena40** in bringing together for a fifth year leading thinkers from across five countries, on a synchronised conversation about women's challenges and opportunities in the digital age. The event was in partnership with **Brunswick Group**, **The Conduit London** and the **London Evening Standard**. It connected live from London's Conduit Club to Athena40 panels in Malmö, Karachi, Beirut and Amman. Key findings include that among the hur... See more

**Thank You!!**  
40+ speakers  
3 countries  
10 Partners  
500 attendees  
01 March 8, 2023  
5th Athena40 Global Conversation  
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**The Conduit**  
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**Amman** – Safa Hijazeen, Dina Quitaishat, Ali Hawwari, Rawan Fouad, Hiba Masoud, Hussein Ghabboun

**Beirut** – Carol Khater, Miguel Mendelek

**Karachi** – Ahmad Junaid, Tooba Khan, Syeda Amna Zafar Maqdi, Urooj Zia

**London Evening Standard** - Niahm Okeeffe, Radhika Aligh

**London Conduit** – Rosie Fletcher, Eddie Howell, Katerina Chatzi, Elizabeth Winder, Cristina Lago

**Malmö** – Tara Tibblin, Charlotte Widen

### Sources:

UN Women: Turning Promises into Action, Equal Measures 2030 Report

<https://countryeconomy.com/unemployment>  
<https://www.ilo.org>, <https://www.cas.gov.lb>

<https://data.worldbank.org>  
<https://arabstates.unwomen.org>



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