



LONDON
INTERCULTURAL
CENTRE

Voices of Impact: Leading the Future Future and Shaping Change

Global Virtual Panel Discussion · International Women's Day 2026

EVENT REPORT

IWD 2026

About the Event

A Global Conversation for a Changing World

In celebration of International Women's Day, a global virtual panel brought together distinguished experts, researchers, investors, and leadership practitioners under the theme "Voices of Impact: Leading the Future and Shaping Change."

The event created a space for deep reflection and dialogue on the evolving nature of leadership in a world defined by rapid transformation, technological acceleration, and increasing societal complexity.

Participants from different regions engaged in a rich conversation that went beyond professional excellence to explore the deeply human dimensions of leadership — including resilience, ethical responsibility, and wellbeing.

Global Reach

Multi-regional speakers
and participants

Key Themes

Innovation, resilience,
equity, impact

OPENING KEYNOTES



Setting the Stage: Five Voices, Five Five Perspectives

The event was moderated and masterfully facilitated by **Nicole Irene Farid**, who served as the event's Moderator and Master of Ceremony. Through her structured guidance and engaging moderation, she ensured a dynamic dialogue between speakers and participants while maintaining a coherent flow throughout the program

KEYNOTE 01

Confidence Under Pressure



Bianca Errigo

Bianca Errigo opened the session with an exploration of **resilience and psychological balance** as foundations of effective leadership. Her keynote challenged the notion that high performance requires sacrifice, arguing instead that sustainable leadership depends on the ability to **manage pressure without compromising wellbeing**.

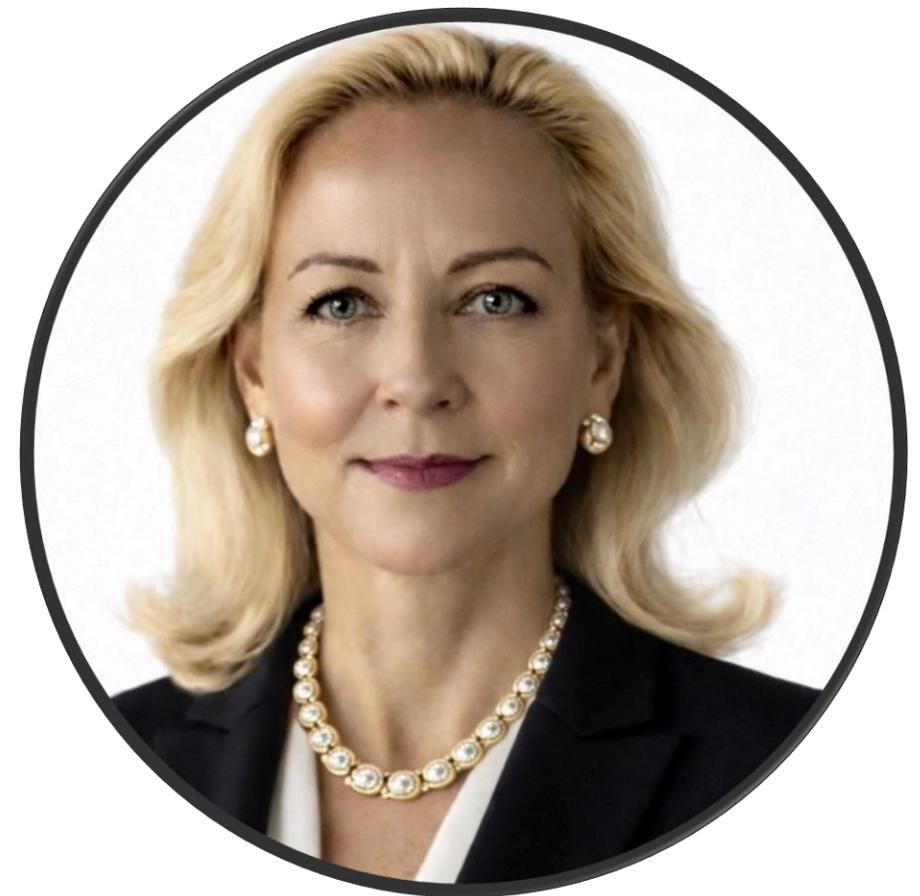
She introduced frameworks for building inner stability — emphasising that confidence under pressure is a skill that can be cultivated, not merely an innate trait. Leaders who invest in their own psychological health are better equipped to guide their teams through uncertainty.

KEYNOTE 02

Women Investors & Founders in Deep Tech Diplomacy

Prof. Dr Ingrid Vasiliu-Feltes examined the intersection of emerging technologies and international collaboration, exploring how women leaders are uniquely positioned to influence responsible innovation and shape global technological ecosystems.

She argued that **deep tech diplomacy** — the use of technology to bridge geopolitical divides and foster collaborative problem-solving — requires precisely the kind of empathetic, systems-thinking leadership that women are increasingly bringing to the field. Her remarks underscored the strategic importance of increasing women's representation in deep tech investment and governance.



Institutional Gaslighting? Workplace Harassment & Accountability



Dr. Enya Doyle

Dr. Doyle addressed one of the most challenging dimensions of workplace culture — the gap between stated harassment policies and lived institutional reality. She coined the concept of **institutional gaslighting** to describe environments where formal frameworks exist but fail to protect or validate women's experiences.

Her keynote called for **transparent institutional frameworks, genuine leadership commitment**, and systemic accountability mechanisms that move beyond compliance towards authentic cultural transformation. She challenged leaders to examine not just what their organisations say — but what they actually do when confronted with uncomfortable truths.

“Path to a Resilient Future.”



Prof. Dr. Anabel Ternès von Hattburg

Prof. Hattburg emphasized the growing importance of sustainable leadership in addressing global challenges and shaping responsible innovation. Drawing on her experience as Professor of International Business at SRH Berlin University and Managing Director of the Institute for Innovation and Sustainability Management, she highlighted the need for leaders to integrate economic progress with social and environmental responsibility .

As an entrepreneur, investor, and member of the Club of Rome, she stressed that the future of leadership will depend on the ability to align innovation with long-term sustainability, health, and societal wellbeing

PANEL DISCUSSION

From Inner Coherence to Global Influence

The central panel brought together four leaders whose expertise spans wellbeing, neuroscience, intercultural communication, and global impact investment — exploring how leadership that begins within the self ultimately radiates outward to reshape organisations, communities, and the world.

Sustainable Vitality as a Leadership Asset



Allison Liu

Allison Liu challenged the persistent cultural assumption that exhaustion is a badge of leadership. Her contribution to the panel reframed **sleep, energy management, and cognitive clarity as strategic leadership assets** — not personal lifestyle preferences.

As professional lives grow longer and more cognitively demanding, Liu argued that maintaining long-term mental and physical vitality is no longer a self-care indulgence but a **professional imperative**. Leaders who neglect their own physiological health are ultimately limiting their capacity for clear decision-making, empathy, and sustained impact.

Heart–Brain Coherence: The Neuroscience of Resilient Leadership

Dr. Britta Simon · Resilience Expert & Founder, KohaerenzCoach

Drawing on neuroscience and heart rate variability research, Dr. Britta Simon demonstrated how leaders can actively regulate stress responses and improve decision-making quality through physiological awareness.

Her concept of **heart–brain coherence** describes a measurable state of physiological alignment in which the nervous system operates with reduced stress activation — enabling clearer thinking, greater emotional regulation, and more effective leadership presence. She presented structured resilience practices that participants could integrate into daily professional routines.



Intercultural Intelligence & Ethical Leadership



Agnieszka Rachwał-Mueller, an expert in intercultural communication, focused her contribution on the growing importance of **cultural intelligence as a core leadership competency**. In an increasingly fragmented world, leaders must be capable of navigating deep cultural differences with curiosity, humility, and ethical rigour.

She noted that polarisation — whether political, cultural, or generational — poses one of the most significant leadership challenges of our era. Effective intercultural leadership is not about erasing difference but about creating the conditions for genuine dialogue and shared purpose across it.

Inclusive Innovation: Neurodiversity as a Strategic Advantage



Hazleen Ahmad · Global Impact Investor & Neurodiversity Advocate

Hazleen Ahmad brought a compelling investment and innovation perspective to the discussion, arguing that **diversity** — including **neurodiversity** — is a **powerful driver of creativity and sustainable economic growth**, not simply a social responsibility obligation.

She presented evidence that teams with diverse cognitive styles consistently outperform homogeneous groups in problem-solving and innovation. For investors and organisations alike, building genuinely inclusive environments is increasingly a **strategic and financial imperative**, not merely an ethical one.

Key Themes That Emerged

Across both the keynote and panel segments, five interconnected themes crystallised as defining insights from the event.

1

Multidimensional Leadership

Today's leadership demands the integration of professional competence with emotional intelligence, physiological awareness, and ethical clarity.

2

Wellbeing & Cognitive Longevity

Sustainable vitality — sleep, energy, and mental clarity — is emerging as a critical factor in long-term leadership effectiveness.

3

Intercultural Intelligence

Navigating global complexity requires cultural fluency and ethical awareness as core leadership skills for building bridges across divided societies.

4

Inclusive Innovation

Diversity — in all its forms — is a strategic catalyst for creativity, innovation, and systemic positive change.

5

Financial Literacy & Access

Financial knowledge and access to investment remain fundamental pillars of women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurial agency.

Closing Reflection

"Women are playing a pivotal role in redefining leadership — not as dominance or hierarchy, but as **purpose-driven influence grounded in resilience, responsibility, and collaboration.**"

The panel concluded with a powerful shared vision: that the leaders best equipped to navigate tomorrow's complexity will be those who have cultivated coherence within themselves, embraced the richness of human diversity, and committed to building institutions worthy of the challenges ahead.



Thank You for Being Part of the Conversation

International Women's Day 2026

Voices of Impact: Leading the Future and Shaping Change

This event report captures the highlights, insights, and shared vision from a landmark gathering of global women leaders. We hope the ideas shared continue to inspire action, dialogue, and transformation long after the event itself.

<https://londoninterculturalcenter.co.uk/>

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Continue the Conversation

- Share these insights with your network and leadership communities
- Explore the themes of wellbeing, equity, and inclusive innovation in your own organisation
- Champion financial literacy and access to investment for women entrepreneurs
- Join us again for future events and conversations on women's leadership