



PRESS RELEASE – EMBARGOED TILL 12pm WEDNESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2023

HSBC and WeAreTheCity announce Thrive20 – A celebration of female entrepreneurs leading with purpose

[WeAreTheCity](#), in partnership with HSBC, is delighted to announce this year's Thrive20.

The Thrive20 list is an annual event that acknowledges the exceptional achievements of female entrepreneurs who have successfully blended business acumen with a clear and compelling purpose. By celebrating individuals who have taken the road less travelled in their entrepreneurial journey, the Thrive20 list hopes to support a culture of innovation and change.

Today, female entrepreneurs are not just breaking through the glass ceiling - they are shattering it with purpose, determination, and a commitment to making a positive impact on society. However, as a group, they are still hugely underfunded. A recent report stated that in the UK, just 2% of venture capital funding goes towards female and minority ethnic-founded businesses. In another report, one-third of women say access to funding is the biggest barrier to starting a business, compared to just 20% of men, and a similar proportion cite funding as a barrier to scaling up an existing business. If VCs and private equity firms increased the levels of funding for female-led businesses an additional £250 billion* of value could be added to the UK economy.

Thrive20 was created to shine a spotlight on entrepreneurs whose businesses go beyond profits. The leaders featured on the list prioritise making a positive impact on society, the environment, and in their communities. As businesses evolve and consumers demand more from the brands they support, it is imperative that we recognise and celebrate those who lead purpose-driven enterprises.

All of the entrepreneurs featured play a significant role in promoting gender equity and diversity in the business world. They have overcome significant challenges, funded their businesses and have become powerful voices in their respective fields. By recognising these individuals, the Thrive20 list reinforces the message that success in business should not be bound by gender.

Thrive20 is more than just a celebration of female entrepreneurship and social impact; it is a testament to the power of purpose in the world of business. The entrepreneurs who are receiving this recognition demonstrate that they can excel in their fields while making a meaningful difference in the world. By acknowledging their achievements, we encourage others across the business ecosystem to follow in their footsteps, fostering equity, diversity and innovation.

Sam Cooper-Gray, Head of Market Strategy and Engagement, HSBC Global Business Banking said “Congratulations to the inspirational entrepreneurs recognised by Thrive20 – they represent the growing number of female business owners in the UK who are making a real difference in their fields by driving innovation and inspiring growth. Entrepreneurialism plays a vital role in the UK economy and it’s important that we celebrate the significant contribution female-led businesses make towards its growth.”

Vanessa Valley OBE, WeAreTheCity, Founder & CEO said “Empowering female entrepreneurs with purpose-led businesses is not just about breaking glass ceilings; it's about shattering expectations and building a world where passion and profit co-exist in harmony. These women are all excelling in their respective businesses whilst creating much needed change in society. I am truly grateful WeAreTheCity and our partners at HSBC are able to shine a spotlight on their success and inspire others with their stories.”

The Thrive20 community will be celebrated at an event at HSBC’s London headquarters in Canary Wharf in January 2024.

ENDS.

Editors’ note:

We would love to put you in touch with any of the women who feature in the list for interviews or features. There is a full list in the editor’s note, with a brief description of their achievements. Please email me (vanessa.valley@wearethecity.com) with any requests.

For more details visit our website here - <https://wearethecity.com/>

Winners include

Anna	Brailsford	CEO, Code First Girls
Claudine	Adeyemi	Founder, CEO, Earlybird
Elena	Brook-Hart Rodriguez	Founder, Handmade Stories
Erika	Brodnock MBE	Co-Founder, CEO of Kinhub
Heather	Glover	Co-Founder, Skarlette
Indie Love	Gordon	Founder, Halo
Julia	Elliott Brown	Founder, CEO, Enter The Arena

Nicky	Bentham	Founder, Producer, Neon Films
Kike Oniwinde	Agoro	Founder, CEO, BYP Network
Lyndsay	Watterson	Designer, Owner, Neo Walk
Martha	Silcott	Inventor, CEO, FabLittleBag™
Pamela	Aculey	Founder, CEO, Just Like Me & MIXD Reality
Ruby	Raut	Co-Founder, CEO, Wuka
Sam	White	Founder, CEO, Stella Insurance
Sarah	King	Co-Founder, CEO, Obu
Shalom	Lloyd	Founder, Naturally Tiwa Skincare & Co-Founder eMQT
Stephanie	Leung	Co-Founder, CEO, Karehero
Tania	Boler	Founder, President, Elvie
Victoria	Jenkins	Founder, CEO, Unhidden
Wai Foong	Ng	Founder, CEO, Matchable