

Research Conference

3rd Accelerating Growth for Women Entrepreneurs Conference

Venue: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
E14 4BG, London

Date: 27-28 October 2025

Monday, October 27th

9:00 – 9:30 Registration and Coffee

9:30 – 9:45 **Opening Remarks**

Ralph De Haas, Director of Research, EBRD

Wendy Teleki, Head of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) Secretariat

9:45 – 10:30

Policy Panel

This session will feature a panel of high-level practitioners, addressing both operational and academic aspects that are or should be at the frontier of our work on this topic.

Barbara Rambousek, Director for Gender and Economic Inclusion, EBRD

Sonia Jordan-Kirwan, Director and Head of Gender & Diversity Finance, British International Investment (BII)

Elizabeth Koshy, Director of Entrepreneurship & Private Sector Development Program, Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)

Moderator: Wendy Teleki, Head of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi) Secretariat

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30

Session 1: Increasing WSME Lending through Innovation

This session will have two academic papers being presented each followed by an academic discussant, and will conclude with remarks from a policy discussant.

Chair: Patricia Yanez-Pagans, IDB Invest

“Eliciting Client Referrals to Increase Lending to Women Entrepreneurs: Evidence from Vietnam”

by Russell Toth, University of Sydney

Discussant: Alejandro Becerra, Banco de México

“Liquidity, Business Development, and Gender: Evidence from Credit Contracts”

by Selim Gulesci, Trinity College Dublin

Discussant: Miriam Bruhn, World Bank

Policy Discussant: Fiona Clark, Economic Development & Inclusive Growth, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch

13:30 – 15:00

Session 2: Strengthening the Enabling Environment

This session will have two academic papers being presented each followed by an academic discussant, and will conclude with remarks from a policy discussant.

Chair: Felicia Siegrist, We-Fi

“Generous to Men or Harsh to Women? Experimentally Unpacking Gender Bias in Lending”

by Youngjoo Jung, University of Illinois

Discussant: Silvia Prina, Northeastern University

“Rural roads, small business creation, and the gender-gap in entrepreneurship”

by Lakshmi Naaraayanan, London Business School

Discussant: Pedro Rosa-Días, Imperial College London

Policy Discussant: Tanvi Jaluka, CARE

15:00 – 15:30

Coffee Break

15:30 – 16:30

Session 3: Unlocking MSME Data for Research

This session will feature brief presentations from organizations collecting valuable MSME data for research.

Chair: Cecilia Vidal, IDB

Facundo Cuppi, Mercado Libre

Nic Rawhani, Vula (online)

Matt Mims, hiveonline

Louise Holden, VISA

16:45 – 17:45

Matchmaking Academics and Practitioners (Closed door session)

This session is to foster collaboration between academics and private-sector partners by exploring potential research partnerships, data-sharing opportunities, and project implementation ideas.

Moderator: Felicia Siegrist (We-Fi)

19:00

Dinner *(by invitation only)*

Tuesday, October 28th

9:00 – 9:30

Coffee

9:30 – 9:45

Opening of the Day and Recap from Previous Day

Patricia Yanez-Pagans, IDB Invest

9:45 – 11:15

Session 4: Improving Access to Skills

This session will have two academic papers being presented each followed by an academic discussant, and will conclude with remarks from a policy discussant.

Chair: Maria Paula Gerardino Gutierrez, IDB

“Individual vs Group Mentoring for Female Entrepreneurship: Experimental Evidence from Small Firms in Urban Peru”

by Claudia Martínez, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile

Discussant: Maddalena Ronchi, Kellogg School of Management

“Personal Initiative Skills, Gender Gaps, and Social Norms: Experimental Evidence from Microenterprises in Rural India”

by Sofia Amaral, World Bank

Discussant: Diego Ubfal, World Bank

Policy Discussant: Sebastian Edreira, ProMujer

11:15 – 11:45

Coffee Break

11:45 - 12:45

Keynote

“Gender inequality, stereotypes, and identity”

Marianne Bertrand, Chris P. Dialynas Distinguished Service Professor of Economics, Chicago Booth School of Business

Moderator: Beata Javorcik, EBRD Chief Economist

12:45 – 13:45

Lunch

13:45 – 15:15

Session 5: Accelerating High-Growth Entrepreneurship

This session will have two academic papers being presented each followed by an academic discussant, and will conclude with remarks from a policy discussant.

Chair: Francesco Loiacono, EBRD

“Financing The Next VC-Backed Startup: The Role of Gender”

by Camille Hebert, University of Toronto

Discussant: Simon Quinn, Imperial College London

“Social Image, Organisational Values and Inclusion: Evidence from a Field Experiment”

by Tom Schwantje, Bocconi University

Discussant: Karmini Sharma, Imperial College London

Policy Discussant: Rodolfo Stucchi, IDB Invest

15:15 – 15:30

Closing remarks

15:30 – 16:00

Social Coffee