

# Beyond HERizons launches inaugural cohort to tackle gender investment gap

*Within the UK investment ecosystem, there is a huge funding gap between men and women. Beyond HERizons aims to fill this gap, and the announcement of its inaugural beneficiaries is only the first step.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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*Silicon Valley Comes to the UK* has unveiled its inaugural cohort of female founders to participate in its new investment initiative. Beyond HERizons aims to tackle the funding gap that exists in the investment landscape by providing 15 female entrepreneurs with the skillset, network and confidence to scale their businesses and secure investment.

The initiative comes after Dealroom and London & Partners revealed that all-female led businesses received just £22M of the total £5.3B venture capital invested into London tech firms between January and April this year. That's less than 0.5%.

Data from Extend Ventures says that entrepreneurs from a black and minority ethnic background are at an even greater disadvantage, with 0.02% of total VC invested from 2009-2019 going to black female founders.

With the announcement of the first cohort of beneficiaries, *Beyond HERizons* wants to build an inclusive and diverse network of entrepreneurs passionate about balancing gender inequalities in the

investment ecosystem.

## Later stage investment

Female founders face barriers particularly at the later stages of investment. In 2020, 77% of VC funding rounds into London-based all-female teams were at seed stage or earlier, while just 19% were Series A investments. Series B investments accounted for only two funding rounds.

The 12-month programme will specifically target the investment gap that exists for female founders at Series A and beyond.

The 15 inaugural entrepreneurs join the programme after being selected following a competitive application process. They are each actively looking to secure Series A investment over the duration of the programme.

The full list of participants are:

- Ieva Balciute, cofounder of Aequem Limited, a simple way to shop sustainable fashion and lifestyle products
- Letizia Gionfrida, cofounder and CEO of Arthronica, a digital, AI-driven, health diagnostic platform for monitoring arthritis
- Bibi Nelson, cofounder of Bare Conductive Ltd. The creative company has created a global community around conductive paint, hardware and software
- Kike Oniwinde, founder and CEO of BYP Network, a networking platform for Black professionals
- Aowen Jin, cofounder and sales VP at Chicmi Ltd, a fashion event discovery and sample sale site. The community now includes 1.5M users across the UK and US
- Rene Perkins, founder and CEO of CityMaaS.io, which uses cutting-edge technology to help organisations grow through inclusion

- Jill Hodges, founder and CEO of Fire Tech, the UK provider of tech education for 8–17-year-olds
- Rahel Tesfai, founder and CEO of FroHub, a global community for Afro hair and beauty. The company encourages consumers to discover independent sellers and brands
- May Al-Karooni, founder and CEO of Globechain. The B2B reuse marketplace connects enterprises to charities to allow unneeded items to be redistributed
- Mikela Druckman, cofounder and CEO of Greyparrot, a provider of AI-powered computer vision software that increases automation in recycling
- Dr Ruby Pillai, cofounder and CEO of iWarranty, a platform for consumers to consolidate their product warranties, make claims and access affordable repairs
- Deirdre McGettrick, founder and CEO of ufurnish.com, an online furniture search and discovery website. The single site hosts over 130 retailers
- Zara Ransley, cofounder and co-CEO of MyPocketSkill Ltd, which aims to financially empower Gen Z by providing opportunities to earn, save and learn about money
- Ariana Alexander-Sefre, cofounder and CEO of SPOKE, the app and movement that works with world leading musicians, personalises mindfulness and self-therapy through music
- Katherine Jillings, cofounder of ToucanTech. The powerful CRM and website software allows data and comms to be managed in one easy system. The software is now used by schools, clubs and charities in 20 countries.