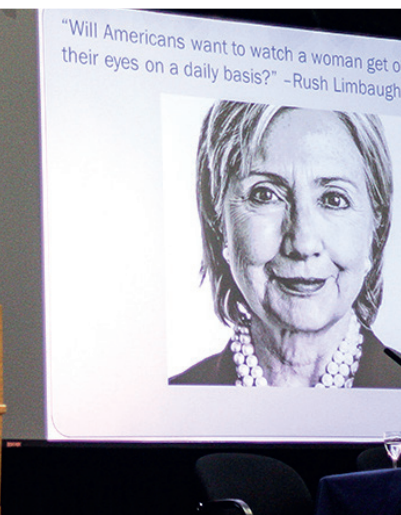


Above the Parapet Women in Public Life





“Now what is happening to those that are not as brave as me? What’s happening to them?”



“I was marked for life by the Beijing Conference. When you see a combined force of determined women, it’s impossible to be untouched.”



lse.ac.uk/abovetheparapet

ABOUT THE PROJECT

There is persistent public concern with the skewed profile of figures in public life. The evidence shows with considerable consistency that women are under-represented.

Anecdotal accounts of women who have succeeded in public life often highlight challenges faced in their journeys, difficulties in getting heard and the price paid by individuals for raising their heads **above the parapet**. What remains little explored is an understanding of the journeys taken by women in high profile public life.

**“We know numbers,
but not journeys.”**

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is exploring the experiences of high profile women in public life by asking questions about their journeys into those positions, hurdles they overcame and how the lessons learned from these experiences could benefit women who follow.

The IPA will gather rich, personal reflections which illustrate the journeys of women into senior public life. The lessons from these journeys will be shared with the women who follow and the men who want to see a more-balanced public life.

We are focusing on sectors where voices are associated with having authority or having influence in public life – politics, diplomacy, academia and civil society.

This programme is international in scope, recognising there are many parallels that women face across the world but also for a variety of circumstances to be examined.

Above the Parapet acknowledges the generous support of the LSE Annual Fund and the Alison Wetherfield Foundation.



**Annual
Fund**



**Alison Wetherfield
Foundation**



METHODS

INTERVIEWS

The Above the Parapet research will be carried out through interviews with senior women across four sectors: politics, academia, diplomacy and civil society. The project will gather valuable insights into women's journeys into public life. Some women's accounts will be captured on video and we will share the stories, perspectives and lessons as widely as possible. Interviews will be collected in a video book to be published in the second half of 2015.

FELLOWS

We will be inviting fellows to join us at the IPA where women can reflect, debate and capture:

- their journeys
- their experiences
- the impacts they feel they have made
- what they want to tell the women who follow and the men who want to make change
- how institutional arrangements impeded or enabled their journeys into public life.

Please let us know your suggestions of women in senior positions in politics, academia, diplomacy and civil society who we should invite to participate.

Contact us at ipa.parapet@lse.ac.uk

Dr Joyce Banda, former President of Malawi

Our first visiting fellow was Dr Joyce Banda, Malawi's first female President (2012-14) and Africa's second female Head of State. During Dr Banda's stay as visiting Professor of Practice at the LSE, she launched the Above the Parapet project with a public lecture highlighting her journey to becoming President, led seminars with LSE students and shared her experiences and reflections on her journey with the AtP team. Dr Banda's fellowship enabled us to gather rich information on her personal journey to the highest level of public life, providing illuminating perspective and data.





PEOPLE BEHIND THE PROJECT

ABOVE THE PARAPET ADVISORY GROUP

Above the Parapet has a strong advisory group which provides advice for the project as it develops. Our members are primarily from the four core sectors of the project, enabling their support through relevant experience. The project will learn from women's experiences across political contexts.

The advisory group is composed of:

- Bim Adewunmi: Writer and Editor
- Professor the Baroness Haleh Afshar: Professor of Politics & Women's Studies at the University of York; Crossbench Peer
- Kat Banyard: Director, UK Feminista
- Margot James MP: Conservative Member of Parliament for Stourbridge
- Tessa Jowell MP: Labour Member of Parliament for Dulwich and Norwood
- Professor Francesca Klug: Professorial Research Fellow, LSE
- Marai Larasi: Executive Director, Imkaan; Co-chair of the End Violence Against Women Coalition
- Marie-Pierre Lloyd: Seychelles Ambassador to the UK
- Sue Marsh: Campaigner
- Baroness Shirley Williams: Liberal Democrat Peer

THE ABOVE THE PARAPET TEAM

Above the Parapet is a research project of the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA). The IPA is one of the world's leading centres of public policy. We aim to debate and address some of the major issues of our time, whether international or national, through our established teaching programmes, our research and our highly innovative public-engagement initiatives.

The IPA is interested in the interconnections between how we understand the nature of the public, the meaning of public service and the actors who occupy, and influence, public life.

The project is led by Dr Purna Sen, Deputy Director of the IPA, whose work has focused on violence against women, human rights developments, social development issues and race equality. Jade Cochran is Research Assistant for Above the Parapet and Darja Schildknecht is the Graduate Intern for the project.

“It is common knowledge across all sectors of the society that the higher you go, the fewer women you see.”



Institute of
Public Affairs

GET INVOLVED

Above the Parapet wants to hear from you!

We would love to hear your thoughts and receive the suggestions on:

...WHICH WOMEN WE SHOULD INTERVIEW

For this stage of the research we are seeking women in the fields of diplomacy, politics, academia and civil society to interview about their journey into senior public life. Perhaps this is someone you know or worked with, a former colleague, a professional role model or perhaps even you!

...WITH WHOM WE SHOULD SHARE OUR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Please send your thoughts on any of the above points to ipa.parapet@lse.ac.uk or on twitter [@LSEParapet](https://twitter.com/LSEParapet)

Phone +44 (0) 207 955 6308
Email: ipa.parapet@lse.ac.uk
Twitter: [@LSEParapet](https://twitter.com/LSEParapet)
Web: [lse.ac.uk/
abovetheparapet](http://lse.ac.uk/abovetheparapet)

The London School of Economics and Political Science is a School of the University of London. It is a charity and is incorporated in England as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts (Reg No 70527).

Freedom of thought and expression is essential to the pursuit, advancement and dissemination of knowledge. LSE seeks to ensure that intellectual freedom and freedom of expression within the law is secured for all our members and those we invite to the School.