

DIANA INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

*Women's Entrepreneurship:
Grounded in Place, Rooted in Community*



June 26-30, 2027
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

BABSON COLLEGE
Diana International Research Institute



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Call for Papers

Diana International Research Institute Annual Conference

Submissions due: December 6, 2026, 11:59 PM EST

Submit [here](#).

We are pleased to announce that the 2027 Diana International Research Institute Annual Conference will be held at the Department of Business and Social Sciences, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from June 26-30, 2027, under the theme:

Women's Entrepreneurship: Grounded in Place, Rooted in Community

Where an entrepreneur is situated, geographically, culturally, and institutionally, shapes whether they can participate in entrepreneurship and on what terms. Entrepreneurship is not a context-free activity: it unfolds in specific places, histories, and communities (Welter, 2011; Welter & Baker, 2021). A growing body of work on entrepreneurial ecosystems further confirms that the networks, resources, and institutions enabling entrepreneurship are anchored in specific territories and cannot be understood apart from their local and social contexts (Richard, 2026; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022). While existing research has examined women's entrepreneurship in relation to necessity, poverty, and marginalization, the place-based dynamics of these experiences, and how they differ across intersecting social locations, remain less fully theorized (García-Lomas & Gabaldón, 2023).

The contributions of women entrepreneurs to economic and social development are well-documented, and the evidence shows that their reach and impact continue to grow. Across the 53 economies participating in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in 2025, several middle-income economies have now reached gender parity in early-stage entrepreneurial activity, while migrant and foreign-born entrepreneurs are adding new sources of innovation and international connectedness (GEM, 2026). At the same time, gender, place of birth, and other intersecting dimensions of identity continue to shape access to capital, networks, markets, and institutional support in ways that are cumulative and context-dependent (Collins, 2019; Collins & Bilge,

2020; Crenshaw, 1991; GEM, 2026; Romero & Valdez, 2016; Sánchez-Limón et al., 2025; Vershinina et al., 2025). Notably, the 2025/2026 GEM Global Report finds that 51% of early-stage entrepreneurs across 48 economies are motivated by the desire to make a difference in the world, and 84% always consider social and environmental impacts in their business decisions, patterns that resonate strongly with the values characteristic of women's entrepreneurship globally (GEM, 2026).

A growing body of scholarship shows that entrepreneurial ecosystems are not gender-neutral: the structural dimensions of these systems, finance, policy, networks, and culture, often reproduce rather than reduce existing inequalities (Brush et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2026). Immigrant and diaspora women face distinct institutional barriers even as they bridge communities and markets (Poggesi & Mari, 2025). Indigenous women draw on land-based knowledge and relational forms of value creation that mainstream frameworks frequently overlook (Croce, 2020), and women in rural and remote communities navigate geographic isolation alongside strong local assets and community ties that can serve as powerful entrepreneurial resources (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Roundy, 2019). Place, in short, is both a site of constraint and a source of possibility. By bringing together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, the 2027 Diana conference aims to generate evidence and dialogue that illuminates how women entrepreneurs are transforming futures across the diverse places and communities in which they live and work.

More specifically, invited topics may include but are not restricted to:

- **Place, space, and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems:** How do geographic location, urban-rural contexts, and local institutions shape women's entrepreneurial opportunities and constraints? How can ecosystem frameworks be reimaged through feminist and intersectional lenses to reflect the diversity of women's entrepreneurial realities? How are women entrepreneurs and their ventures shaping ecosystems (Kim et al., 2026; Spigel, 2017)?
- **New industries and emerging ecosystems:** As new frontiers such as the space economy emerge, where regulations are few, laws conflict, and extraordinary resources are required, how are women entrepreneurs participating in building these new ecosystems (Agi, 2022; Kim et al., 2026; Spigel, 2017; World Economic Forum & McKinsey & Company, 2024)?
- **Immigrant, diaspora, migration-linked entrepreneurship:** What drives immigrant and diaspora women's entry into entrepreneurship, and how do transnational identities, migration histories, and cross-border networks shape their strategies and outcomes? How do place-specific ecosystems enable or constrain women entrepreneurs and their ventures moving across borders and building ventures in new communities (GEM, 2026; Poggesi & Mari, 2025)?
- **Mobilities and entrepreneurial dynamics:** How do movements of people, ideas, capital, and resources across places shape women's entrepreneurial opportunities and outcomes?

How do different forms of mobility interact with place-based contexts? We welcome work drawing on mobilities theory.

- **Indigenous women's entrepreneurship and decolonial frameworks:** How do Indigenous women entrepreneurs draw on community, culture, and land-based knowledge as entrepreneurial assets? What theoretical frameworks are needed to move beyond Western-centric models and engage with Indigenous epistemologies, collective value creation, and the role of Indigenous governance in shaping economic development (Croce, 2020; Richard, 2026; Shepherd et al., 2025)?
- **Rural, remote, and peripheral place contexts:** What are the distinctive ecosystem dynamics of rural and geographically peripheral communities, and how do women entrepreneurs draw on local assets, relationships, and place-based knowledge to create and sustain enterprises? What policies and support structures are most effective across the diversity of rural contexts in the Global North and Global South (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Roundy, 2019)?

We encourage papers that explore new research ideas, adopt novel methodological approaches, and contribute to theory development to help advance the field and pave the way for an exciting future research agenda for the Diana community.

Authors are limited to authoring/co-authoring no more than two submissions and should expect to receive notification of acceptance by February 15, 2027. Full papers are due by March 31, 2027, to be considered for "Best Paper Awards".

About the Diana International Research Institute

Building on the foundation of excellence established by the Diana Project™, the Diana International Research Institute (DIRI) cultivates a vibrant international research community with an expanded reach across continents, cultures and contexts, sharing knowledge and experience through dedicated books, journal articles and conferences. The Diana Project was established in 1999 by Professors Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene and Hart in partnership with ESBRI in Stockholm to provide a platform for research and scholarship focusing on women entrepreneurs and their business growth. Each year, the Diana International Research Conference brings together more than 100 scholars worldwide, providing a forum to share global research dedicated to gender and women's entrepreneurship.

For questions about the conference, please contact us at dirc@babson.edu

2027 Conference Chairs

Candida Brush, Babson College, US

Amanda Elam, Babson College, US

Ingrid Chadwick, Concordia University, Canada

Diana Hechavarria, Babson College, US

Karen Hughes, University of Alberta, Canada

Tasha Richard, Dalhousie University, Canada

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