



## INSIGHTS SUMMARY

# AI AND EQUITY

GLOBAL EQUITY / FIRESIDE CHAT / 6 MAR 2024

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We would like to thank the following speakers:

**Interviewees:** **Edward Tay**, Associate Professor (Practice) in Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals, **United Nations Institute for Training and Research**, and Adjunct Associate Professor, Asian Institute of Digital Finance, **National University of Singapore**; **Kacper Łodzikowski**, Vice President, AI Capabilities, **Pearson**; **David Norman**, Managing Director, **Cooperative AI Foundation**; **Sian Hawkins**, Director of External Affairs, **Cherie Blair Foundation**

**Interviewer:** **Zahid Torres-Rahman**, CEO, **Business Fights Poverty**



***In the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (AI), the Business Fights Poverty Global Equity Summit offered a timely reflection on AI's role in fostering equity. The Fireside Chat, pulling together insights from a panel of experts, explored the complexities at the intersection of AI and equity, underlining the transformative potential of AI while also cautioning against its inherent risks. Drawing from this rich discussion, three key insights emerge, offering a roadmap towards leveraging AI as a catalyst for a more equitable future.***

### INSIGHT 1: PARTICIPATE IN COLLABORATIONS TO MANAGE AI'S IMPACTS

The call for collaboration is key for managing the opportunities and risks of AI. The significant capabilities of AI, from enhancing communication interfaces for those with speech impairments to equitable resource distribution in health care, spotlight its transformative power. However, the panel also highlighted the need for a concerted effort to mitigate AI's biases and ensure its development and application are inclusively beneficial. Edward Tay emphasised global collaboration to address AI's cultural and sensitivity gaps and to ensure diverse perspectives in AI's evolution. It is paramount that businesses, academia and policymakers join forces, fostering an ecosystem where AI serves as a universal enabler of equity.

***71% of respondents expressed a really high level of interest in starting a new business or expanding their current business operations using AI. So, clearly, that represents a great window of opportunity where demand is really high for access and training on tools and AI.***

**Sian Hawkins, Director of External Affairs,  
Cherie Blair Foundation**

***I think we are at the cusp of seeing a shift from just giving us information, which is what most of us are familiar with in terms of our chat, AI agents, through to AI systems [...] increasingly taking action within the world... This is becoming absolutely central to our society.***

**David Norman, Managing Director,  
Cooperative AI Foundation**

### **INSIGHT 2: BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT USING AI AS A LEVELER FOR EQUITY**

Sian Hawkins highlighted new research from the Cherie Blair Foundation on women entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income countries, revealing both the promise and perils of digital technologies. With 71% of surveyed women expressing keen interest in leveraging AI, the potential for AI to bridge gender disparities in economic opportunity is immense. However, the existing digital divide underscores the urgency for targeted interventions. AI must be intentionally designed and deployed to dismantle barriers and create avenues for the inclusion of underrepresented groups, especially women. Training, access and safety online emerge as critical areas where intentional actions can significantly impact equity.

### **INSIGHT 3: DEVELOP AI TO DETECT INNATE BIAS IN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR**

The nuanced understanding of AI's potential to reflect and amplify societal biases was a recurring theme. David Norman's insights into AI's transformative impact across societal systems, from education to health care, underlined the notion that AI, while a mirror to existing biases, also holds the key to their mitigation. The panel concurred on the necessity of developing AI technologies that can detect, analyse and correct biases inherent in data and human decision-making. This proactive approach in AI development not only addresses equity challenges but also propels us towards creating AI systems that enhance societal well-being by being fair, transparent and inclusive.

***One of the biggest gaps in the current composition is really that in the area of the AIs, cultural sensitivities, as well as the cultural diversities, are not properly captured... This bias will then be excavated as we actually project into the future.***

**Edward Tay, Associate Professor (Practice) in Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and Adjunct Associate Professor, Asian Institute of Digital Finance, National University of Singapore**

***What we've noticed over the past year of experimenting with implementing champion AI systems into our products [is] we noticed that it's crucial to actually... start measuring the accuracy and helpfulness of how they are being implemented.***

**Kacper Łodzikowski, Vice President,  
AI Capabilities, Pearson**

## CONCLUSION

The Business Fights Poverty Global Equity Summit's Fireside Chat on "AI & Equity" articulated a vision for AI's role in shaping a future where equity is central. As we stand on the cusp of AI-induced transformations, the path forward demands a deliberate and unified approach. By embracing collaborations that span across sectors, designing AI with the intentionality for equity, and innovating to detect and correct biases, we pave the way for an inclusive future. The insights gleaned from the discussion not only underscore the complexities at the nexus of AI and equity but also illuminate the pathways through which AI can be harnessed as a powerful ally in the quest for a fairer, more equitable world.

## RESOURCES

- Torres-Rahman, Z. and Nelson, J., 2023. Generative AI and the Social Impact Role of Business. Business Fights Poverty. <https://businessfightspoverty.org/report/generative-ai-and-social-impact-role-of-business>
- West, M., Whittaker, M. and Crawford, K., 2023. Demographic Stereotypes in AI: An Analysis of Publicly Available Datasets. Stanford University. <https://hai.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/2023-11/Demographic-Stereotypes.pdf>
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