



# CHANGING THE FACE OF FINANCIAL SERVICES WITH SARAH AND CLAIRE

5TH JUNE 2023

**SARAH** [00:00:00] Nothing in this podcast is financial advice, and when investing your capital is at risk. Obu Limited is an appointed representative of Khepri Advisers Ltd, which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Investors accessing the investment platform are subject to eligibility.

(Upbeat intro music)

**SARAH** [00:00:24] Welcome to The Obu Podcast, a place for people who are changing what it means to be an angel investor. We'll be talking to business owners who have taken investment and angel investors who are putting in their capital, their wisdom and their networks to work to grow, diverse-founded businesses. The world of investment is changing and we're inviting you to learn how. Welcome to The Obu Podcast.

(Music gets louder, then ends)

**CLAIRE** [00:00:56] You'll know by now that we really value data and insights, and therefore each year when organisations like the Rose Review, Investing in Women Code, Beauhurst and the British Business Bank publish their reports, that Team Obu are going to be having a good read through. We want to understand the progress being made and where we feel we can support and accelerate change through our own work, through partnerships and collaborations. So in June this year, the Investing in Women Code published this year's report, and in today's episode, we're going to share with you what the code is – and why it exists. We'll share some of the main headlines from the report, and our take on where we feel some exciting opportunities lie ahead. As very new signatories to the code, Obu wasn't included in this year's data cut for the report, but as new signatories we're taking our commitment to the code really seriously and so we hope you enjoy this episode. And of course, if it sparks questions or ideas for you, please get in touch. We would love to hear them.

(Segment change music)

**CLAIRE** [00:01:56] So the Investing in Women Code came out of the very first Rose Review of Entrepreneurship, published in 2019. Alison Rose, now CEO of NatWest, was invited by the government to explore the barriers facing women entrepreneurs and how to overcome them. Through the report, she identified three themes under which the original set of recommendations sat. First up was increasing funding directed towards women entrepreneurs. Secondly, it was greater family care support. And third, was making entrepreneurship more accessible for women and increasing support locally.



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Positively disrupt the  
financial services sector  
by designing products for  
women inclusive to  
everyone that benefit all.

The code was one of eight recommendations made by Alison, and it's become one of the key reporting mechanisms that we look to each year when it's published to understand the progress being made and where we feel at Obu we can add additional support and accelerate change.

**SARAH** [00:02:48] So what exactly is the Investing in Women Code? The code is a commitment from those organisations who are signatories to support the advancement of women's entrepreneurship in the UK by providing access to tools, resources and finance. The shared goal of signatories is that by advancing women entrepreneurs, we make the UK one of the most attractive countries in the world to start and grow a business. So you can start to see the code is aspirational. It's forward looking. It acknowledges that there's work to be done and it invites signatories to make a commitment to this work. All signatories of the code are from within the financial services sector in the UK and have a focus on increasing the finance provided to women led businesses. And that financing can include debt finance – so loans and overdrafts – and then equity – everything from early-stage investment through to venture and growth capital. All signatories are asked to make three commitments. Firstly, you need to have a nominated member of your senior leadership team who is responsible for supporting equality in access to finance. Secondly, you have to commit to increasing transparency in your own data on the support that you provide to women entrepreneurs. And finally, you need to adopt internal practices that improve the outlook for women entrepreneurs across the UK. So as we launched the Obu angel investment platform and collective, you can see why it was so important for Obu to become signatories. Our whole purpose is to increase equality in access to finance. So it was just a bit of a no brainer. We really believe that understanding data and drawing insight from that data is such an important step in achieving equality, even when that data might make for tough reading. And it's why we always seek to understand these reports and also recognise the work that goes into creating reports like this one.

**CLAIRE** [00:04:46] Signatories of the code are split into a number of categories. Broadly, you have banks, angel groups, VCs, and then you have the founding signatories. Signatories can be large or small. They can be regulated or unregulated. They can be tenured in the financial services sector or, like us, innovative start-ups. And so Obu sits within the angel category alongside some really other amazing organisations. And whilst the code is voluntary to sign up to, it does demonstrate a commitment. And for us that means that anyone participating in entrepreneurship or investment should feel that they can look to the signatories and ask – so what are you doing in line with your commitment to the code? Obu became signatories of the code just a few weeks ago, and so whilst we're not included in this year's report, we felt that discussing the code on our podcast was a really great way to demonstrate our commitment to it. Sarah mentioned earlier that understanding the data is the first step in creating change, even if the data makes you feel uncomfortable. And this statement couldn't be truer than when we look at the findings of this year's report. Across both loan finance (so loans and overdrafts) and equity (which is angel investing and VC growth capital), there continues to be significant disparities. And there's been some backwards movement both in the level of funding sought and the level of funding placed.



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Knowledge is and  
I'm going to say it's  
- power.

This year's report is published against a tough economic backdrop. However, this can be a relatively easy statement to make. And whilst, yes, we agree that the broader macro environment has been tough, that shouldn't be a reason to pull back. Instead, it feels like a reason to really focus in on innovation, productivity and economic output and focusing on diverse founders and funding is one way to achieve this. We're going to point to some resources in our show notes where you can read the report in full and look at some of those stats. And we're also going to be publishing a blog which will highlight these stats and the things that we're doing at Obu to try to move them forward. We'll let you know as soon as that's published. But what we want to do today as new signatories of the code was to share the three areas where we get really excited by the potential to move the data forward. We're looking ahead now to next year's report and the great stories and the opportunities that we can tell.

**SARAH** [00:07:00] So this year's report shows that there's a really strong link between gender-balanced investment teams and investment committees, and the proportion of investment allocated to all-women-founded teams. So greater diversity creates greater diversity. Within financial services, 86% of angel investors are men. 83% of financial advisors are men, as are 94% of CEOs in the financial services sector. So here's the thing. Allyship is critical. We need men at the top of the food chain to recognise the role they can play in creating change, empowering more women into senior positions, creating space at the table, providing backing for new tables to be built, deliberately designing with women in mind. This is massively important. If you want to be a trailblazer and drive innovation and you sit within these stats, this is where you need to be focusing. Alongside this, we need more women to count themselves in – and that can feel intimidating. It's really bloody tough to be what you can't see. To build and lead businesses through a different lens and different life experience when you don't see many people like you around you. But we have to have the courage to do this. And if we, alongside our allies, can do this, then that's when we'll see the pace of change increase. Secondly, we have to design differently. Product design isn't rocket science. You start with insight, you translate that insight into ideas and you test and iterate your ideas towards impact. Great insight, though, comes from deep empathy with your audience. It's not enough to just say, Well, we have these products or services and of course they're for women. The data shows us that this approach isn't working – and it won't work. Whether you're in healthcare designing diagnostics for cardiac arrest, whether you're in the automotive sector, designing seatbelts, whether you're in financial services – it's not enough to just slap a label on it and say, of course it's for women. We can do better than that. We can design with empathy and we can design deliberately. And for us, that's another key ingredient to creating change. And finally, collaboration. So no one organisation on the list of signatories has the answer, but we are all holding a jigsaw puzzle piece. And so it's really exciting to think about how we can come together to figure out the fact that some of the data shared in this year's report is kind of depressing. I remember in the pandemic when a report was published saying that women's economic progress would be rolled back by 50 years, and us having a really visceral response to that, like, no, that's not okay. We're not prepared to accept that. And if that's a risk, we need to double down to ensure that that doesn't happen. And it's the same here. The data isn't great. So how might we as a collective come together to drive forward? And we stand with the Women Backing Women Report, the Rose Review and the signatories of the code who see this data and say, okay, you know what? Sleeves up. What are we going to do about it?



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We're not going to talk about the data anymore. We're going to crack on with designing products for this audience.

**CLAIRE** [00:10:13] We hope that today's episode has provided you with some insight into the Investing in Women Code, into why Obu have become signatories.

(Upbeat music builds again)

**CLAIRE** [00:10:21] And why, despite progress not being where so many of us want it to be, that we're still here, doubling down and rolling up our sleeves.

(Music gets louder)

**SARAH** [00:10:35] For more on how we're reimagining investment and entrepreneurship across the UK, visit [obuinvest.com](https://obuinvest.com). More real conversations with entrepreneurs and angel investors who, with their capital and their businesses are changing the world for the better.

(Music gets louder then ends)