

TABITHA GOLDSTAUB The AI advocate

Tabitha Goldstaub wants everyone to talk to robots. 'Seriously,' she says, laughing. 'Most of us carry a virtual assistant with us already, but we're not making use of its artificial intelligence. Start seeing what it's like to ask it to turn on the music instead of doing it yourself. Get used to how the technology works, because that way it won't just "happen" to you one day.'

A tech evangelist, Goldstaub studied graphic design and advertising before working for a digital video-distribution company. While there, the CEO tasked her with automating some of the business' processes using AI, and she realised it was set to change not just this particular microcosm, but all of our worlds. She then launched the online AI-based platform CognitionX, which uses knowledge-sharing tools to guide decision-making; it was so successful that it also spawned an annual festival of ideas, CogX, which brings together government delegates, industry leaders and academics to discuss how we can harness the power of technology in sectors from health-care to the environment. 'We're looking at using AI in medicine to help diagnose patients and monitor their symptoms,' explains Goldstaub. 'And it's crucial to tackling climate change – it can do everything from separating rubbish to predicting forest fires.'

As the chair of the government's AI Council, Goldstaub is determined to help the UK stay ahead of the game. 'China and the US are putting a lot of funding into this area, but we are very well-positioned here because of the geographical proximity of talent and clients,' she says. 'Look at the British fintech sector: we've got all our start-ups on the doorsteps of our big banks and universities – that's a magic potion for innovation. But we have to be aware of the ethical considerations too, because the last generation of technology went unvetted. We should be developing the next set of structures for robust, responsible technology right now.'

Goldstaub believes in addressing fears head-on, whether by being alert to the motivations of the companies using our data or tackling in-built prejudices in AI applications. 'The good news is that the dark underbelly of this world is being exposed more quickly every day,' she says. 'For instance, when Amazon created a recruitment tool that was biased against women, it got caught before it could even be released.'

Retraining and upskilling this generation is vital to ensure no one is left behind; fortunately, many traditionally female skills – teamwork, empathy, creative thinking – are integral to the development of AI. 'The voice of the user is so important – that's why we want women who are writers, historians or designers to get involved, not just tech people,' says Goldstaub. 'We need to decide what kind of society we want *before* we design the technology to build it – and that's a role for everyone.' FH



NOËLLA COURSARIS MUSUNKA The entrepreneurial educator

'It's not about helping or aiding; it's about encouraging independence,' says the model and philanthropist Noëlla Coursaris Musunka, who founded the non-profit organisation Malaika in 2007 to progress the development of her home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Malaika was inspired by Noëlla's mother, who was forced to send her five-year-old daughter away after the sudden death of her husband left her without the financial resources to raise a child alone. Noëlla went to live with one of her aunts in Belgium, and later with another in Switzerland; when she returned to the Congo at the age of 18, she was shocked by the poor conditions her mother was living in. 'All of her hopes were laid on me,' she says.

Noëlla studied for a degree in business management, and soon afterwards, a friend entered her into a modelling competition where she was chosen as the face of Agent Provocateur, going on to front campaigns for Max Factor and La Mer. Determined to make her mother proud and to give back to her country, she used this international platform to help launch Malaika; her first mission was to build a well to enable the construction of a school in the Congolese village of Kalebuka, which at the time had no water or electricity. Since then, the charity has overseen the creation of 19 wells, serving 35,000 people, as well as opening a community centre in Kalebuka, where adults can gain literacy, farming and sewing skills.

The Malaika school now educates 346 girls between the ages of five and 18, providing a free curriculum that includes music, sport, art, computing and leadership lessons, as well as supplying food and uniforms. Such opportunity for education is scarce in the Congo, especially for girls. 'They are very shy and unconfident, entering an amazing environment where they are nurtured. Their lives change,' says Noëlla. By raising their aspirations, she aims to empower the girls and safeguard them from the risk of early pregnancy, instead offering them the chance to pursue careers and, in turn, give back to their own communities. 'They're going to dream of being a scientist, a pilot, an engineer, a designer – of everything they want in life.' BROOKE THEIS

