

Sola

PR Strategy & Press Materials

International Women's Day - March 8, 2026

The information women deserve.

Prepared for internal use

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A Note on the Founding Team

Sola has four cofounders: Bokang Sibolla, Aigerim Tabazhanova, Clemence Casali, and Sergio Ruiz Moral.

For the purposes of this PR campaign, the front-facing narrative features three cofounders: Bokang, Aigerim, and Clemence. This is a deliberate editorial decision to maintain balance in the story we are telling. The campaign centres the gender data gap and the experiences of women travelers. Presenting two men and two women in the founding narrative risks shifting attention away from that focus. One man in the story adds nuance. Two changes the frame.

Sergio is a cofounder of Sola. His contributions to building this company are real and valued. This decision is about narrative strategy for a specific campaign tied to International Women's Day, not about his role in the company. Sergio's story and contributions will be featured in future communications, profiles, and press as we grow beyond this initial moment.

This page is for internal reference only and should not be shared externally.

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1. Core Thesis & Positioning

The central argument that underpins all press materials and outreach.

The Argument

The travel industry has a gender data gap. Every year, millions of women spend uncounted hours performing research that the industry should have already provided. Safety information, harassment norms, dress code navigation, solo-friendly accommodation, healthcare access, cultural rules around women's movement. This is invisible labor. It is unpaid. And it subsidises an industry that was designed around a default traveler who doesn't need any of it.

Sola reframes this gap as a systemic design failure and builds the infrastructure to close it permanently. The product was built on 400+ face-to-face conversations with solo female travelers. No surveys. No focus groups. Ethnographic-level primary research conducted over months in one of the world's busiest solo travel corridors.

Positioning by Audience

Academics / Harvard Business Review

A \$9.5 trillion industry that never designed its core information product for half its users. The economics of a gender data gap.

Tech / Startup Press

Zero funding, no engineers. Domain expertise meets democratised tools. What happens when the people who understand the problem get the ability to build the solution.

Travel Media

400 conversations in Manila. The travel product none of them had ever been offered.

Women's / Culture Publications

She was on sabbatical. She bought a laptop the next day.

LinkedIn / Viral

The travel industry collects data on everything except what women actually need to know.

2. Three-Layer Outreach Strategy

Build the wave organically, then let press amplify it.

Layer 1: Founder-Led Content (March 1-7)

Build organic momentum before press hits. Each founder publishes personal content on LinkedIn that establishes credibility, tells the human story, and creates a searchable trail for journalists doing due diligence.

March 1 --Bokang Sibolla (LinkedIn)

Long-form post: "I spent months outside Manila hostels talking to 400 solo female travelers. Here's what the travel industry is missing." Data-forward. No product mention until the last line.

March 3 --Clemence Casali (LinkedIn / Medium)

Personal essay: "I was on sabbatical. I wasn't supposed to work. Then I heard an idea I couldn't walk away from." The laptop moment. The sabbatical extension. What made her abandon rest for this.

March 5 --Aigerim Tabazhanova (LinkedIn)

"What I wish existed every time I traveled alone." Her experience as a solo female traveler from Kazakhstan navigating Southeast Asia. Raw. First-person. The daughter angle: building what she wants to exist for the next generation.

March 6 --Bokang Sibolla (LinkedIn)

The framework post: "The Gender Data Gap in Travel: An Invisible Subsidy." The intellectual anchor. Cite Caroline Criado Perez. Reference the 400 conversations. Introduce the concept of information labor. This is the post academics and journalists bookmark.

March 7 --All Three Founders

Cross-share each other's posts. Unified message: "Tomorrow, we're telling the full story."

Layer 2: Targeted Press Pitches (Embargoed, Sent March 1-3, Breaking March 8)

Each publication gets a different story. Not the same press release repackaged. Each outlet should feel they have something unique.

Tier 1: The Intellectual Heavyweights (Op-Ed / Contributed Article)

- **Harvard Business Review:** "The Gender Data Gap in Travel: How a \$9.5 Trillion Industry Overlooked Half Its Users." Bokang writes a contributed piece framing the systemic failure, the methodology, and what user-centred design actually means when you decentre the default user.
- **MIT Technology Review:** "What Happens When the People With the Problem Get the Tools to Solve It." The democratised-tools angle. No engineers, domain expertise, what this means for who gets to build the future.
- **Stanford Social Innovation Review:** "Closing Information Gaps as a Form of Economic Justice." Sola as a case study in information equity. Community-sourced knowledge networks correcting systemic data gaps.
- **Fast Company:** "World Changing Ideas" submission + feature pitch. Three people, three continents, zero funding.

Tier 2: Startup & Tech Press

- **Forbes:** Two angles: (1) Forbes Innovation --the bootstrapped platform story. (2) Forbes Next 1000 / Under 30 --apply for lists, use the PR moment to support the application.
- **TechCrunch:** "No funding, no engineers: how three founders built a travel platform from a Manila apartment."
- **Wired:** "The travel industry's data problem isn't about algorithms --it's about who the algorithms were built for."
- **Rest of World:** The Southeast Asia angle, the Global South perspective, Manila as a launchpad.

Tier 3: Travel & Women's Media

- **Conde Nast Traveler:** "400 solo female travelers told us what no guidebook covers."
- **Lonely Planet:** "The information gap every woman traveler knows but no platform addressed."
- **The Cut / Refinery29:** Lead with Clemence. "She was on sabbatical. She bought a laptop the next day."
- **Elle / Marie Claire:** "What solo female travel actually requires that the industry ignores."
- **Cosmopolitan:** "The app built on what 400 women wished they'd known before traveling alone."

Tier 4: Regional & African Press

- **Mail & Guardian (South Africa):** "From Lesotho to Manila: the South African building a global travel platform

with zero funding."

- **TechCabal / Disrupt Africa:** The African founder in Southeast Asia tech story.
- **Channel NewsAsia:** The Manila-based startup angle, Southeast Asia travel corridor.
- **Philippine Daily Inquirer:** Local angle: built in Manila, serving travelers coming to the Philippines.

Layer 3: The March 8 Moment

This is not a launch day. The product is already live. This is a declaration day.

- **The Founding Manifesto:** "The Information Women Deserve" --published on Sola's website. 800 words. The argument, the evidence, the mission, the invitation. This is what you link everywhere.
- **The Open Letter:** Addressed to the travel industry. Respectful but unflinching. Three unfunded founders addressing a \$9.5 trillion industry. Inherently newsworthy.
- **The Partnership Invitation:** Formal call for women's travel organizations, academic researchers, solo female travel creators, impact investors, and the industry itself to join in closing the gap.

3. The Founding Manifesto

"The Information Women Deserve" --Published on Sola's website, March 8, 2026.

The Information Women Deserve

She checks the lock twice. She screenshots the hotel address and sends it to a friend in another timezone with the message "just in case." She changes out of the dress she wanted to wear because she read somewhere that it draws attention here, though she's not sure where she read it, and there's no one reliable to ask. She budgets an extra hour before every travel day. Not for packing. For the research no one did for her.

She does this invisibly. Automatically. In every country. On every trip.

The \$9.5 trillion travel industry can tell her the optimal day to book a flight, the trending restaurants in Lisbon, the best time to see the Northern Lights. It has never once built a product that accounts for any of this.

Women are the fastest-growing segment in travel. Solo female travel is expanding at a rate the industry loves to cite in trend reports and investor decks. They celebrate the growth. They market to it. Then they hand women the same information they hand everyone else, designed around a traveler who has never had to think about any of the things she thinks about every single day.

Some have tried to address this. Communities have formed. WhatsApp groups. Reddit threads. Blog posts written at 2am by someone who wished she'd been warned. These efforts are real. But they are scattered, unsearchable, and entirely dependent on women volunteering their time for free. There is no living, structured, evolving dataset of what women actually need to know. Only the goodwill of strangers, passed from one woman to the next like an inheritance no one asked for.

That is the invisible subsidy. Women performing unpaid information labor to compensate for an industry that never considered their experience worth designing for.

We didn't set out to build a company. We set out because it was personal.

Aigerim is a solo traveler. She has been for years. She has navigated every version of this gap and found her way through it. But she has a daughter. The thought that her daughter might one day travel the world the way she has --and face the same absence, the same hours of invisible work, the same unanswered questions --was something she couldn't sit with. Not when she knew exactly what was missing.

Clemence was on sabbatical in the Philippines. She was not supposed to be working. For months she'd been

making travel guides for her mother and sister, both travelers, noting the places to stay, the things she wished they'd know before arriving. Doing it for love, the way women always have. Then she heard what we were building. She bought a laptop the next day. The sabbatical was over.

Bokang grew up with a single mother. She was a diplomat who raised two children while moving across the world. He remembers her asking them --her children --to come along when she went out, because she felt safer with someone beside her. He remembers the places she avoided. The calculations she made quietly. Years later, living in Manila near two of the city's most popular hostels, he watched hundreds of women arrive carrying the same questions his mother once carried. He spoke to over 400 of them. The gap between what they needed and what existed was not subtle.

Three people. Three continents. South Africa, France, Kazakhstan. We met in Manila with nothing in common except the certainty that this could not remain unsolved.

We built Sola with no funding, no institutional backing, and no permission.

We received guidance from people who gave their time because they believed in what we were doing. Industry experts who sat with us for hours. Advisors who opened their networks. People who had every reason to be too busy and chose not to be. We built with what we had and the conviction that waiting for someone else was no longer an option.

Sola is live. But an information gap this large does not get closed by three people. It gets closed by a network.

This is an invitation.

To women's travel organizations: help us build the most comprehensive living resource ever created for women who travel.

To researchers and academics: the question of who information systems are designed for extends far beyond travel. We welcome the inquiry.

To solo female travelers already doing this work for free in blog posts and group chats: your knowledge has value. We built a platform that treats it that way.

To organizations that fund gender equity: information is infrastructure.

And to the travel industry: you have the reach. We have the research. The question is whether you're ready to build for the users you've been overlooking.

Sola. The information women deserve.

4. Press Release

For distribution to media outlets. Embargoed until March 8, 2026.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - MARCH 8, 2026

Three Founders From Three Continents Built the Travel Platform the \$9.5 Trillion Industry Never Did

After 400 conversations with solo female travelers, Sola launches the first living knowledge platform designed around what women actually need to know.

MANILA, PHILIPPINES -- Women are the fastest-growing segment in global travel. They are also the most underserved by the industry profiting from their growth. Sola, a travel knowledge platform built by three founders from South Africa, France, and Kazakhstan, launches its public mission today with a simple premise: the information women need to travel safely, freely, and confidently has never been systematically built. So they built it.

Founded in Manila by Bokang Sibolla, Aigerim Tabazhanova, and Clemence Casali, Sola was developed through direct conversations with over 400 solo female travelers across Southeast Asia. The research revealed a consistent and measurable gap: mainstream travel resources fail to address the safety, cultural, logistical, and health information that women require and routinely spend hours compiling on their own.

"Every woman we spoke to described the same experience," said Sibolla. "Hours of research before every trip that no guidebook, no platform, no app accounted for. Not because the information doesn't exist, but because no one thought to structure it. That's not a niche problem. It's a design failure at the centre of a \$9.5 trillion industry."

Sola addresses what the founding team describes as the "gender data gap in travel," a term inspired by Caroline Criado Perez's research on gender bias in data systems. While existing travel platforms optimise for price, convenience, and discovery, Sola focuses on the layer of information women are currently forced to assemble themselves: neighbourhood safety, cultural dress norms, solo-friendly accommodation, local harassment dynamics, healthcare and pharmacy access, and transport considerations specific to women traveling alone.

The platform was built without venture capital or institutional funding. The founding team developed Sola with the voluntary support of industry advisors, including experts from leading travel technology companies and serial entrepreneurs who contributed strategy, business guidance, and technical mentorship.

"I was on sabbatical," said Casali. "I had been making travel guides for my mother and sister for months. When I heard what Bokang and Aigerim were building, I knew it was the structured version of what I'd been doing by hand

out of love. I bought a laptop the next day."

On March 8, International Women's Day, Sola is issuing an open invitation to women's travel organizations, academic researchers, solo female travel creators, impact investors, and the travel industry itself to join in closing the gender data gap in travel.

"This is bigger than an app," said Tabazhanova. "I have a daughter. One day she'll travel the way I have. I want her to inherit better information than I had, not the same gaps."

About Sola

Sola is a travel knowledge platform built to close the gender data gap in travel. Founded in Manila in 2025 by Bokang Sibolla (South Africa), Aigerim Tabazhanova (Kazakhstan), and Clemence Casali (France), the platform was developed through primary research with over 400 solo female travelers. Sola provides women with the structured, destination-specific information the travel industry has historically failed to offer, covering safety, cultural norms, health access, solo-friendly accommodation, and local knowledge contributed by a growing community of women travelers.

Media Contact

[Name / Email / Phone]

Press Kit

[Link to downloadable assets, founder photos, product screenshots, key data points]

5. Open Letter to the Travel Industry

Published on Sola's website March 8, 2026. Shared across LinkedIn by all three founders. Sent directly to the press offices of the companies named.

An Open Letter to the Travel Industry

To the leadership of Booking.com, Airbnb, TripAdvisor, Google Travel, Lonely Planet, Hostelworld, and every platform that serves travelers at scale:

You know that women are the fastest-growing segment of your market. Your trend reports say so. Your marketing campaigns reflect it. You have built features for business travelers, budget travelers, luxury travelers, family travelers, adventure travelers, and digital nomads. You have personalised recommendations by price sensitivity, booking history, dietary preference, and accessibility needs.

We would like to ask a straightforward question: what have you built specifically for the information needs of women who travel alone?

Not marketing aimed at women. Not a "solo travel" filter that returns the same results for everyone. Not a pink landing page in March. We mean structured, maintained, destination-specific information that addresses what women actually need to know and currently spend hours assembling on their own.

Which neighbourhoods are safe after dark. How harassment presents in a specific city and what the local response looks like. Whether a hostel is genuinely solo-friendly or simply affordable. Where to find a pharmacy that stocks what she needs. What the dress expectations are, not in a guidebook generalisation, but street by street, context by context. How to get from the airport at midnight without worry.

We spent months in Manila speaking to over 400 solo female travelers from dozens of countries. We did not survey them. We sat with them. We asked what they looked for before every trip, where they found it, where they didn't, and what they learned the hard way.

Not one of them described a single mainstream travel platform that addressed these needs.

Four hundred women. Zero platforms.

You have the data infrastructure. You have the engineering teams. You have the distribution. You have been collecting behavioral data on hundreds of millions of travelers for years. The question was never whether you had the capability. The question is why you never prioritised it.

We are not writing this letter as competitors. We are three people who built a platform from Manila with no funding

because we couldn't wait for you to do it. We are writing this because closing the gender data gap in travel is not a job for three people. It requires the industry itself to recognise that "comprehensive" travel information has never been comprehensive for half the people using it.

We have the research. We have the framework. We have a product that works. We would welcome the conversation about how to do this at the scale your platforms make possible.

Women should not have to subsidise your information gaps with their time.

Bokang Sibolla, Aigerim Tabazhanova, Clemence Casali

Founders, Sola

Manila, Philippines

March 8, 2026

6. Tactical Outreach Playbook

The week-by-week execution plan and outreach mechanics.

Week of February 17-21: Preparation

- Finalise all three written pieces (manifesto, press release, open letter)
- Prepare press kit: founder photos, product screenshots, key statistics, one-page fact sheet
- Create a dedicated press page on the Sola website
- Draft all three founders' LinkedIn posts for March 1-7
- Build media list: identify specific journalists at each target publication
- Research HBR, SSIR, and Fast Company contributed article submission processes

Week of February 24-28: Pre-Outreach

- Submit HBR contributed article draft (long lead time --submit early)
- Submit Fast Company World Changing Ideas application
- Begin warm outreach to journalists --follow them, engage with their work, build familiarity
- Connect with women's travel organizations and academic contacts for March 8 partnership announcement
- Set up email sequences for press pitches

Week of March 1-7: Content Launch + Embargoed Pitches

- March 1: Bokang's LinkedIn post goes live. Embargoed press pitches sent to Tier 1 and Tier 2 outlets.
- March 3: Clemence's LinkedIn/Medium essay goes live.
- March 5: Aigerim's LinkedIn post goes live.
- March 6: Bokang's framework post ("The Gender Data Gap in Travel") goes live.
- March 7: All three founders cross-share. "Tomorrow, we tell the full story."
- March 7: Final check-in with embargoed journalists. Confirm publication timing.

March 8: Declaration Day

- Publish the manifesto on Sola's website
- Publish the open letter on Sola's website and LinkedIn
- Embargo lifts: press coverage goes live
- All three founders share manifesto and open letter across all channels
- Engage with every comment, share, and mention throughout the day
- Send the open letter directly to press offices of named companies

Week of March 9-14: Amplification

- Pitch Tier 3 and Tier 4 outlets with links to existing coverage
- Follow up with academic contacts and women's organizations
- Pitch podcast appearances (travel podcasts, women in business podcasts, tech podcasts)
- Monitor and engage with all social media conversation
- Compile coverage and momentum metrics for potential investor conversations

Email Pitch Structure

Every pitch email should follow this structure:

- **Subject line:** Specific to the outlet's angle. Never generic. Example for Forbes: "400 women. Zero travel platforms built for them. A bootstrapped team in Manila changed that."
- **Opening line:** One sentence that hooks. Personalised to the journalist's beat. Reference something they've written.
- **The story in three sentences:** The problem. The 400 conversations. The product that exists.
- **Why now:** International Women's Day. Fastest-growing travel segment. The tools to build now exist.
- **Why them:** Specific reason this story belongs in their publication.
- **The ask:** "Would you be interested in an embargoed look at the full story?"
- **Attached:** Press release. Link to press kit. Founder availability for interview.

Key Contacts to Research

Identify the specific journalist at each publication who covers the relevant beat:

- HBR: Gender/workplace equity editors and contributors
- Forbes: Innovation section editors, Women @ Forbes contributors

- TechCrunch: Southeast Asia / bootstrapped startup reporters
- Conde Nast Traveler: Solo travel and women's travel editors
- Fast Company: World Changing Ideas editorial team
- Rest of World: Southeast Asia technology correspondents
- The Cut / Refinery29: Personal essay and women's issues editors
- Mail & Guardian: Technology and diaspora correspondents