



**The Dorothy Hodgkin Project:
A letter of support from Alice Prochaska**

The Dorothy Hodgkin Project is a unique and ambitious initiative that Somerville is spearheading to address the critical shortage of women in science. This is not only an issue of opportunities denied to women, but of science being denied the full range of talent and innovation required to solve the problems the world faces today.

There has been progress worldwide in encouraging talented women to pursue science in education; for example in Chemistry in the UK, 44% of those who gain PhDs are women. This drops to 39% at post-doctorate level and plummets further as seniority increases. Only 8% of Chemistry professors are women. The 'leaky pipeline' of women in science is the subject of extensive research and one key cause cited in numerous reports is not yet being addressed adequately.

The critical transition in a young scientist's career is the bridge between a post-doctoral and a permanent position. Today the average age at which a scientist secures a permanent position is 34. This timing puts significant pressure on women to make important life decisions such as starting a family later in their career, and causes many of them to believe that a future in science research is simply not viable. It is still the case that women with children are 35% less likely to pursue research careers than men with children.

The problem is exacerbated by the prevalence of fixed short-term contracts; indeed many early academic positions are temporary, some lasting for as little as six months. In the fast-paced and collaborative environment of scientific research, even taking a short break can affect progression and, critically, the scientist's ability to return to research and secure a position.

Somerville has a proud history of opening doors that were firmly shut to women. We supported and nurtured the career of Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin, the only British woman ever to have been awarded a Nobel Prize in science. As well as supporting Hodgkin as an undergraduate, Somerville funded her final year at Cambridge and created a new position for her here at the College. For many years her fellowship at Somerville was her only salaried position.

Hodgkin was also the first woman at Oxford to receive a form of maternity pay; she went on to fight for similar support for women in her lab. Furthermore, Hodgkin saw a clear need for childcare within the College, and gave part of her Nobel Prize winnings to Somerville to help set up the College's nursery. Today, we continue to be one of only a handful of colleges to offer this provision.

Somerville College, together with the Chemistry Department, want to help make science careers more viable for women. Our plan is to create a five-year Career Development Fellowship, in the name of Dorothy Hodgkin, for an outstanding scientist who is returning to work after taking a career break. The Fellowship is modelled on the Royal Society's successful programme of post-career break fellowships. These are hugely oversubscribed, and similar opportunities are rare and difficult to find.

Ultimately our goal is to endow this post, in order to build a pipeline of women returning to science in perpetuity. We are approaching trusts who may be able to help with this aim, but in order to strengthen our case and make an immediate impact we need widespread support now. Getting a

from THE PRINCIPAL

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scientist in post as soon as possible will be a powerful demonstration of what this project can achieve and whom it will help.

The first step is to fund a five-year research post, including lab costs, as well as a Stipendiary Lecturer (a second individual to cover teaching and so free the Fellow to concentrate on research). Our ambitious goal is to raise £500,000 by the end of June. To achieve this, I am delighted to announce that we have launched a crowdfunding project this May, and we would be extremely appreciative of your support. Somerville's pioneering crowdfunding platform has empowered students and promoted wonderful projects; we are building on our successes to become the first higher education institution to launch a crowdfunding project of this scale in the UK.

By making a gift today of £13.33 per month for at least five years, once Gift Aid has been reclaimed, you could bring us £1,000 closer to our aim securing a five-year Dorothy Hodgkin Career Development Fellowship. If you would like to make a gift of any size, please visit www.dorothyhodgkinproject.com, and you can also make a regular gift online at www.some.ox.ac.uk/donate.

The Dorothy Hodgkin Project is close to my heart, and enjoys the support of the whole college, signalling our commitment to diversity and inclusion in higher education. It would be wonderful if you were able to support this project, by making a donation at a level comfortable for you and by spreading awareness of our project to your friends and colleagues. By signing up as an ambassador at www.dorothyhodgkinproject.com you can receive email updates and some brief messages that you can use to help us promote this important cause on social media, or simply by sending a few quick emails on our behalf. We hope this will be an enjoyable and engaging way to get involved and stay updated on our progress.

We have already received support from a group of generous members of the Somerville community, who together have created a Matched Fund worth over £196,500. The Fund will be used to match all donations up to this amount, making each donation go even further.

We would be most grateful for your help and support. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Brett de Gaynesford at dorothyhodgkinproject@some.ox.ac.uk, or on +44 1865 280 626. She would be happy to speak with you further.

With warmest wishes, and thanks,

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Principal