

Anita Gurumurthy's Acceptance Speech on Receiving an Honorary Doctorate From Loughborough University

9 July 2026

Respected Chancellor and esteemed colleagues,

For someone who embraced the path of change-making in the non-profit sector, scholarly pursuit always seemed like a luxury. The field of socio-political action is often all-consuming, demanding a presence that is constant.

But an honor of this order of magnitude is a beautiful reminder – that the sphere of reflection and the instinct for action are deeply intertwined and, in fact, the warp and weft of social alchemy.

I stand here feeling many feelings – I am humbled, thrilled and vindicated. This recognition is an unequivocal affirmation of the work of IT for Change, my organization. It is a reminder that this work is essentially a product of collective perseverance and genius; shaped and shepherded by many a hand and brilliant mind.

To be acknowledged by this prestigious institution, to be told – ‘your work counts’, is a tribute to the transformative power that our work has unleashed. And in a world that is still starkly unjust, it is a resounding mandate to continue on our path towards digital justice.

I am grateful to my lovely and accomplished friends here at Loughborough whose faith and encouragement have been a gift. It is these circles of trust that keep us safe and nourished in times that are uncertain and brittle.

Personally, for me, this moment is an occasion to claim and own the care and counsel I have received from those who came before me and to celebrate the younger people whose courage and conviction give me purpose. I would not be here but for this family – of destiny and of choice.

I do miss my late father today, a man whose parental lexicon did not contain the word ‘No’.

To the graduates who begin their journeys with much hope and a wee bit of trepidation – meet the world on your terms, but remember that as genuine travellers, you will never have arrived. And do stay curious about those ungraspable ideas of truth and justice.

Once again, my heartfelt gratitude to this esteemed institution – what can be better, more joyful, than to be admitted into the glorious annals of the University?