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**Vital Voices and Bank of America Hold 2017 Global Ambassadors Program in the United States, Providing Mentoring and Skills-Building to Women Entrepreneurs From Around the World**

*Initiative Marks Five-Year Anniversary of Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership by Bringing Program to Charlotte, N.C.*

CHARLOTTE — Vital Voices Global Partnership and Bank of America are recognizing the fifth year of the [Global Ambassadors Program](#) (#GlobalAmbassadors), an initiative that advances women's economic empowerment through mentoring, by convening the program in the U.S. for the first time. The Global Ambassadors Program kicks off this week in Charlotte, N.C., with additional programs to be held this fall in Chicago, Ill. and Los Angeles, Calif.

The Global Ambassadors Program connects a group of extraordinary women entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders to a unique mentorship and skills-building opportunity – pairing them with accomplished women executives from a range of sectors and organizations, including Bank of America to enhance their business acumen at a pivotal point in their careers. Since 2012, the Global Ambassadors Program has been held in 13 locations around the world – including Haiti, South Africa, India, and Brazil – reaching more than 100 women leaders from more than 60 countries. Since 2013, more than 67 percent of mentees have reported an increase in sales and revenue growth following the program.

“The Global Ambassadors Program is part of a larger effort at Bank of America to empower women around the world and drive economic mobility,” said Andrea Smith, chief administrative officer, Bank of America. “When we invest in women and women entrepreneurs, it benefits the economy and communities where they live and work, helping everyone thrive.”

The Charlotte program will pair 12 Global Ambassadors (mentors) with mentees – women who are running small businesses and nonprofits in North Carolina, Cambodia, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe – to enhance skills in key areas including leadership, financial management, business strategy and communications.

“We’re proud to partner with Bank of America to convene the Charlotte Global Ambassadors Program, which will bring together truly inspiring women to push through barriers so they can ultimately make their mark as the next generation of leaders poised to drive economic growth and social change,” said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO of Vital Voices.

In conjunction with the Charlotte program, Bank of America and Vital Voices will host a thought leadership event, “Women Driving Economic & Social Progress” (#WomenLead), to underscore how women are driving change. Speakers include Christy Turlington Burns, Every Mother Counts founder and chief executive officer; Andrea Smith, Bank of America chief administrative officer; and Melanne Vermeer, Seneca Women co-founder and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security executive director.

The Global Ambassadors (mentors) for the Charlotte program are:

- Dr. Dawn E. Chanland, associate professor of management, Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.
- Dilek Dayinlarli, founder and managing partner, ScaleX, Istanbul, Turkey
- Nigest Haile, founder and executive director, Center for Accelerated Women’s Economic Empowerment, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Catherine Wilson Horne, president and CEO, Discovery Place, Charlotte, N.C.
- Terri McCullough, former director of No Ceilings Project; consultant, Women and Girls’ Empowerment, New York, N.Y.
- Debra Moore, system chief of staff and executive vice president, Carolinas Health Care, Charlotte, N.C.
- Michelle Moore, head of digital banking, Bank of America, Charlotte, N.C.
- Kathy Parks, senior credit review executive, Bank of America, Charlotte, N.C.
- Moira Quinn, COO, Charlotte Center City Partners, Charlotte, N.C.
- Oulimata Sarr, regional economic empowerment advisor, UN Women, Dakar, Senegal
- Karen Starns, senior vice president of global marketing, Pearson, Seattle, Wash.
- Marie L. Wieck, general manager, IBM Blockchain, Yorktown Heights, N.Y.

The mentees for the Charlotte program are:

- Ibilola Amao Ph.D., principal consultant, Lonadek Limited, Lagos, Nigeria
- Karen Bennetts, owner, Little Red Bird, Charlotte, N.C.
- Melissa Bodford, co-founder, chairman and CEO, uBack, Charlotte, N.C.
- Norm “Anak” Bunnak, director, VillageWorks Songkhem Co. Ltd., Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- Rana El Chemaitelly, founder, The Little Engineer, Beirut, Lebanon
- Valrie Grant, founder and managing director, GeoTechVision, Kingston, Jamaica
- Brenda Harris, owner/director, BPN Healthcare Concepts, LLC, Charlotte, N.C.
- Sandi Kronick, CEO, Eastern Carolina Organics, Durham, N.C.
- Apra Kuchhal, owner, Handi Restaurant, Jaipur, India

- Patience Magodo, managing consultant, Tafadzwa Ne Chiedza Development Trust, Harare, Zimbabwe
- Juna Mathema, managing director and co-founder, Bliz Media P. Ltd., Kathmandu, Nepal
- Josefina Urzaiz, co-founder, Hammock Boutique Inc., D.C. and Merida, Mexico

The Global Ambassadors Program is part of Bank of America and Vital Voices' ongoing commitment to investing in women's leadership development, a goal guided by the belief that strong leaders are important for developing healthy, vibrant communities, and advancing economic growth. Bank of America invests in helping women make meaningful contributions within the company and supports the economic empowerment of women in local communities and around the world.

For more information on the Global Ambassadors Program, visit [www.bankofamerica.com/globalambassadors](http://www.bankofamerica.com/globalambassadors). Follow [@BofA\\_News](https://twitter.com/BofA_News) and [@VitalVoices](https://twitter.com/VitalVoices) for updates via #GlobalAmbassadors.

#### Vital Voices Global Partnership

Vital Voices Global Partnership invests in women leaders who improve the world. Founded by then-first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and guided by the belief that women are essential to progress in their communities, it has partnered with leaders from more than 144 countries who advance economic opportunity, increase political and public leadership, and end violence against women. Programs in strategic planning, business, advocacy and communications build critical skills needed for creating transformational change at scale. Through its global platform, women leaders expand their connections and visibility, accelerating shared progress for all. Visit [www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org) to learn more.

#### Bank of America

At Bank of America, our focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors is critical to fulfilling our purpose of helping make people's financial lives better. Our commitment to growing our business responsibly is embedded in every aspect of our company. It is demonstrated in the inclusive and supportive workplace we create for our employees, the responsible products and services we offer our customers, and the impact we make around the world in helping local economies thrive. An important part of this work is forming strong partnerships with nonprofits and advocate groups, such as community and environmental organizations, in order to bring together our collective networks and expertise to achieve greater impact. Learn more at [www.bankofamerica.com/about](http://www.bankofamerica.com/about), and connect with us on Twitter at [@BofA\\_News](https://twitter.com/BofA_News).

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