

# Vital Voices and Bank of America Connect Women Entrepreneurs From Los Angeles and Around the World to Mentoring Expertise

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[Corporate Philanthropy](#) [In the Community](#)

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## *Global Ambassadors Program Helps Advance Women's Economic Empowerment and Leadership; Initiative Highlights a Five-Year Milestone in the Partnership's Global Impact*

Vital Voices Global Partnership and Bank of America are convening women leaders from Los Angeles and around the world for the [Global Ambassadors Program \(GAP\)](#), an initiative that advances women's economic empowerment through mentoring, networking and skill-building. The program takes place in LA from Nov. 6 to 10 as the final of three participating U.S. cities, including Charlotte, N.C. and Chicago, in 2017. This is the first year the Global Ambassadors Program (#GlobalAmbassadors) has been held in the United States as Vital Voices and Bank of America mark five years of partnership.

The Global Ambassadors Program brings together a group of diverse women leaders of small businesses, social enterprises and NGOs, matching them with established women executives from a range of sectors and organizations, including Bank of America, for a week of one-on-one mentoring, group mentoring and sessions designed to build business acumen. The LA program will pair 11 Global Ambassadors - mentors - with mentees from the greater LA area, Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay to cover a broad spectrum of topics including design, marketing, consumer goods, communications, technology, education and health care.

"The Global Ambassadors Program is an example of our company's long-standing commitment to advancing women's leadership and economic empowerment," said Anne Finucane, vice chairman, Bank of America. "It's one way we approach responsible growth, investing our capital to advance economic and social progress."

While women entrepreneurs continue to face challenges such as fewer business-oriented networks, lack of capital, and cultural obstacles, a recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report on Latin America and the Caribbean found that women entrepreneurs are at the heart of exponential growth of small businesses in the region. The report points to the entrepreneurial potential of Latin American women and their benefit to emerging Latin economies. These findings underline why the Global Ambassadors Program focuses on giving women entrepreneurs tools and resources to advance their organizations. Since 2012, the Global Ambassadors Program has been held in 15 locations around the world, reaching nearly 130 women leaders from nearly 60 countries.

"We're thrilled to mark the fifth year of our innovative partnership with Bank of America," said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO of Vital Voices. "Mentorship accelerates leadership, and we can't wait to see the impact our mentees will have in their communities and beyond, ultimately driving economic growth and social change."

In conjunction with the LA program, Bank of America will host a public forum on Nov. 9 featuring distinguished speakers who will discuss women's role in driving economic and social progress. Speakers include Tory Burch, CEO and chief creative officer of Tory Burch LLC and founder of the Tory Burch Foundation; Anne Finucane, Bank of America vice chairman; and Maria Shriver, journalist, author and activist.

The Global Ambassadors for the LA program include:

- Shelley Diamond, chief client officer, Young & Rubicam, New York
- Abigail Edgecliffe-Johnson, founder and CEO, RaceYa, New York
- April Francois, chief financial officer, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and Retirement and Personal Wealth Solutions, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Charlotte, N.C.
- Vera Futorjanski, head of Global Communications, Dubai Future Foundation, United Arab Emirates
- Claudia Herreramoro, director - Communications Latin America, Procter & Gamble, Mexico
- Marilyn Johnson, founder, MarilynSpeaks.com, Washington, D.C.
- Geraldine Laybourne, chairman and co-founder, Katapult Studios, New York
- Gabriela Leon, CEO and co-founder, Gresmex, Mexico

- Carrie McKellogg, chief program officer, The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF), Los Angeles
- Kerri Schroeder, Commercial Credit executive, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Seattle
- Maria de Lourdes “Lulu” Sobrino, founder and CEO, Lulu’s Foods, Inc., San Antonio

The mentees include:

- Nensy Bandhoe, executive director, Lobi Foundation Suriname
- Barbara Cendejas, CEO and founder, Macademy, Mexico
- Cecilia de la Paz, founder and general director, Educate Uruguay, Uruguay
- Teyra Ehlers, founder and president, Administra PTY, Panama
- Agustina Fainguersch, U.S. managing director and partner, Wolox, San Francisco
- Amy Friedman, co-founder and executive director, POPS the Club, Los Angeles
- Gizella Greene, general manager and co-founder, SuperFoods, Ecuador
- Maria Kaltschmitt, managing partner, Zen Interactive Media, Guatemala
- Veronica Soto, founding partner, GID Industries SA DE CV, Mexico
- Ariela Suster, founder and creative director, Sequence Collection, El Salvador
- Dahlia Wilde, CEO, Pretty Smart Woman Company, Los Angeles

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 184 countries and territories 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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