

# Vital Voices and Bank of America Bring Women Entrepreneurs From New York and Around the World Together to Build Skills to Advance Their Businesses

**Release Date:**

Monday, March 19, 2018 9:00 am EDT

**Terms:**

[Corporate Philanthropy](#) [In the Community](#) [Small Business Banking](#)

**Dateline City:**

New York City

## *Global Ambassadors Program Uses Power of Mentoring to Help Accelerate Women's Leadership, Economic Empowerment Globally*

Vital Voices Global Partnership and Bank of America are connecting women entrepreneurs from the New York area and around the world through the [Global Ambassadors Program \(GAP\)](#), an initiative that advances women's economic empowerment through mentoring, skill-building and a broader peer network. The program takes place in New York City March 19-23, and marks the fourth U.S.-based Global Ambassadors Program (#GlobalAmbassadors).

Launched in 2012 by Vital Voices and Bank of America, the highly competitive program connects women leaders of small and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises to mentoring and workshops focused on building organizational management, financial acumen and leadership skills. Global Ambassadors are high-profile, distinguished women executives from a range of organizations, including Bank of America, who serve as mentors and are each paired with a mentee to build critical business skills and strategies needed to grow and advance her organization. The New York program will pair 10 Global Ambassadors (mentors) with mentees from the larger New York area, Miami, San Francisco, Argentina, Swaziland, Hungary, Nigeria and Ukraine, who operate in a wide range of sectors including fashion, food manufacture, biotechnology, media, renewable energies, technology, insurance and risk management.

"Women are a driving force for economic, political and social change. Connecting women entrepreneurs to skill-building and a network of expertise through the Global Ambassadors Program is part of our broader commitment to advance sustainable economies," said Anne Finucane, vice chairman, Bank of America.

The New York program marks the 17<sup>th</sup> Global Ambassadors Program held since the initiative's inception in 2012, with more than 140 women from 65 countries participating. The program also connects women mentees to Bank of America Business Banking volunteer financial mentors to provide additional expertise on financial management for long-term growth. Mentees from 2014 through 2016 reported the following results:

- An average increase of 61 percent in sales and revenue growth.
- 14 percent growth in the number of full-time employees.
- 106 percent growth in the number of clients served.

"Providing women from around the world critical training and mentorship opportunities through an innovative partnership with Bank of America is a tremendous achievement," said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO of Vital Voices. "Our work is rooted in a shared history of investing in leadership development, guided by a belief that strong women leaders are necessary for healthy, vibrant communities and core to creating economic growth."

The Global Ambassadors (mentors) for the New York program include:

- Ruba AbdelHadi, director of Marketing and Business Development, Silver Coast Holding, United Arab Emirates
- Jessica Abrahams, chair of Government Contracts Practice, Drinker Biddle & Reath, United States
- Anjali Besley, Enterprise Independent Testing executive in Global Risk Management, Bank of America, United States
- Susan Danziger, founder, Ziggeo, United States
- Nancy Fahmy, managing director, GWIM Alternative Investments, Merrill Lynch, United States
- Mine Ozturk, general manager, Baxter International, Turkey
- Heba Ramzy, Global Citizenship senior director, Avanade, United States
- Jo Russell, senior vice president of Corporate Communications and Investor Relations, Pearson, United Kingdom
- Judith Batty, board of trustees chair, Arena Stage, United States

- Lorie Jackson, board treasurer, Community Healing Network; former Government Relations manager, Mid-Atlantic Region, ExxonMobil, United States

The mentees include:

- Stephanie Howell, designer and founder, Stevie Howell LLC, United States
- Pamela Pecs Cytron, founder and CEO, Pendo Systems Inc., United States
- Donna Childs, founder and CEO, Prisere LLC, United States
- Nina Farran, founder and CEO, FashionKind, United States
- Amanda Hearst, co-founder, Maison de Mode LLC, United States
- Claudia Castellanos Roques, founder and managing director, Black Mamba Foods, Swaziland
- Johanna Symmons, co-founder and CEO, SCICONS, Hungary
- María Laura García, founder and president, GlobalNews Group, Argentina
- Habiba Ali, CEO, Sosai Renewable Energies, Nigeria
- Iryna Rubis, CEO, Ekonomika+, Ukraine

In conjunction with the New York program, Bank of America will host a global forum on March 21 featuring distinguished speakers who will discuss women's roles in driving economic 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; Janice Bryant Howroyd, founder and CEO of ActOne Group; Ambassador Melanne Vermeer, co-founder of Seneca Women and executive director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security; and Suzy Welch, best-selling author, television commentator and business journalist.

Bank of America invests in women through many channels and lines of business, including its Small Business Banking and Global Wealth and Investment Management businesses. A recent [U.S. Trust white paper](#) profiling the journey of eight women entrepreneurs found five common attributes that contributed to their success: people and culture, education and experience, resilience and optimism, women's leadership, and access to capital. In addition to global initiatives like its partnership with Vital Voices, Bank of America partners with many other national and local organizations that work to improve the lives of women and advance thriving economies. Working to reflect the communities where its employees live and work, the company has strong representation of women at all levels of the organization and supports women through career development programs, progressive policies and practices, and industry-leading benefits including 16 weeks of paid parental leave, maternity and infertility support, flexible work arrangements, back-up child care and adult care services.

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

#### Vital Voices Global Partnership

Vital Voices Global Partnership invests in women leaders who improve the world. Guided by the belief that women are essential to progress in their communities, it has partnered with leaders from more than 181 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](#).

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#### Reporters May Contact:

Fiona Hill, Bank of America, 1.980.387.8687  
[fiona.a.hill@bankofamerica.com](mailto:fiona.a.hill@bankofamerica.com)

Kathy O'Hearn, Vital Voices, 1.917.885.4489  
[kathyohearn@vitalvoices.org](mailto:kathyohearn@vitalvoices.org)

#### Language:

English

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**Source URL:** <http://newsroom.bankofamerica.com/press-releases/corporate-philanthropy/vital-voices-and-bank-america-bring-women-entrepreneurs-new-yo>