

# Bank of America and Vital Voices Help Create a Path to Leadership and Economic Development for Women Across Brazil

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## *Global Ambassadors Program Will Highlight the Role of Women as Drivers of Innovation and Growth*

Bank of America and Vital Voices have convened a mentoring forum in Sao Paulo, Brazil, which brings together several influential women from the public and private sector who are committed to women's economic empowerment. The forum is the latest installment of the Global Ambassadors Program, a Vital Voices and Bank of America partnership, which mobilizes accomplished professionals as mentors for emerging women leaders in developing countries to help them achieve their full economic potential.

The World Bank recently praised Brazil for reducing its social and economic inequality at a faster rate than almost any other nation, finding that women currently make up approximately 44 percent of the labor force, have principal ownership in 59 percent of Brazil's firms and are now starting businesses at the same rate as men. However, Brazilian women continue to face personal and professional challenges that have micro- and macroeconomic implications. According to the World Economic Forum, women face a persistent wage gap, earning a third less than men – or approximately 64 cents for every dollar men make.

The Global Ambassadors Program will address the barriers Brazilian women face in the workforce, while exploring ways to further government initiatives and help companies support women's integration into senior levels of management. The program will also examine the role women business leaders can play as Brazil prepares to host the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics – events that represent an unprecedented opportunity to promote women's economic development at the local and national levels.

The weeklong forum, taking place June 12 to 15, brings together seven Global Ambassadors (mentors) and seven mentees from a diverse set of industries in the country. Centered on the theme of "Connecting Business Women in Brazil," the program will include one-on-one mentoring sessions and a public forum, where social and business leaders from the region will discuss women's role in advancing Brazil's social and economic growth.

"As a dynamic emerging market, Brazil is a prime location for the Global Ambassadors Program to bring together a remarkable group of women who are poised to drive economic growth across the country and the entire continent," said Candace Browning, head of global research at Bank of America Merrill Lynch and a Global Ambassador. "The mentees represent a range of burgeoning industries and organizations anticipated to grow in importance over the next decade, positioning these emerging leaders well to impact substantial change."

Brazil marks the fifth Global Ambassadors Program mentoring forum, and follows a recent forum in Singapore. When the program launched in 2012, ambassadors visited Haiti, South Africa and India, where they worked with mentees and a growing international network to create platforms that enable emerging women leaders to achieve economic, political and social change in their countries and globally. As a result of the forums that have already taken place, mentees have continued to advance on a path of leadership through government appointments, participation in high-level policy meetings, and planning their own events focused on inspiring future leaders.

"Women are drivers of business and economic growth worldwide, and it's integral that we invest in their potential and enhance their participation in the economy through mentorship, training and expanded networks to provide critical access to opportunity," said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO of Vital Voices. "We're proud to partner on this innovative global program to further our collective goals of strengthening women's economic empowerment and fostering the next generation of women leaders throughout Brazil."

The seven mentors participating in the Brazil forum are:

- Fabiola Brumley, Southeast Business Banking region executive, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.
- Rena De Sisto, Global Arts and Culture and International CSR executive, Bank of America.
- Lorena Diaz Quijano, managing director of the Argentine E-Commerce Chamber.
- Rene Jones, founding director of the United Talent Agency Foundation.
- Luz Ma de la Mora, director and founder of LMM Consulting.
- Katie Morgan, human resources executive, Bank of America.

- Lesley Seymour, editor-in-chief, MORE Magazine.

For more information on the Global Ambassadors Program, visit [www.bankofamerica.com/globalambassadors](http://www.bankofamerica.com/globalambassadors).

#### Bank of America

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#### Vital Voices

Vital Voices Global Partnership is a leading non-governmental organization that identifies, invests in and brings visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their communities. Founded by former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 1997, the organization trains and mentors women leaders as agents of transformative change in economic development, human rights and political participation. The Vital Voices Global Leadership Network includes more than 14,000 leaders representing 144 countries who have trained and mentored 500,000 additional women and girls in their communities. Visit [www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org) to learn more.

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#### **Language:**

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#### **Contact:**

Reporters May Contact:

T.J. Crawford, Bank of America, 1.646.855.3301

[tj.crawford@bankofamerica.com](mailto:tj.crawford@bankofamerica.com)

Thomas Levy, Weber Shandwick, +55.11.3027.0297

[thomas.levy@s2publicom.com.br](mailto:thomas.levy@s2publicom.com.br)

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