

## **Bank of America and Vital Voices Promote Economic Growth in India Through Global Ambassadors Program**

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### *Mentoring Forum Will Underscore Role Women in India Can Play in Driving Innovation*

Today, Bank of America and Vital Voices convened a mentoring forum in India, which will bring participants to both New Delhi and Mumbai to explore the critical function that women can play in moving the nation forward economically, politically and socially. The effort is part of the Global Ambassadors Program, a Vital Voices and Bank of America partnership, which mobilizes accomplished professionals, including Bank of America executives and other leaders from the private and public sectors, as mentors for emerging women leaders in developing countries.

The forum, taking place October 15 to 21, brings six Global Ambassadors (mentors), six mentees and more than 50 international and Indian women leaders together to advance the dialogue on the value of women's leadership and explore both the barriers and opportunities faced by women in a variety of private sector industries in India. Centered on the theme of "Women's Advancement in India's Growing Economy," women entrepreneurs, advocates, and influencers will participate in interactive sessions to address topics such as business and economic challenges that inhibit the potential of women-owned businesses in India, corporate social responsibility and the role of women, and the relationship between mentoring, leadership development and career growth.

Representing a wide range of industry and expertise, the six mentors participating in the program include:

- M. Susan Chambers, executive vice president, People Division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Geraldine B. Laybourne, founder and former chairman and CEO of Oxygen Media.
- Candace Browning, head of global research at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.
- Julie Fasone Holder, founder and principle at JFH Insights.
- Donna Orender, CEO of Orender Unlimited.
- Janie Wanless, managing director and head of corporate banking, country manager at Bank of America.

The events in India build on mentoring forums that were held earlier this year in South Africa and Haiti, during which Global Ambassadors worked with mentees and a growing network of women leaders from around the world to develop platforms on the role of women in driving progress in each respective country and on a global scale.

"Women can be powerful drivers of economic development, improving lives for individuals, families and communities," said Candace Browning, head of global research at Bank of America Merrill Lynch and a Global Ambassador in India. "There is a strong correlation between gender equality and a country's GDP per capita as well as its level of competitiveness. Ultimately, empowering women results in a more efficient use of a country's human capital."

In order to extend the value of one-to-one mentoring fostered by the program, mentees will have a unique opportunity to share their perspective with additional women through participation in the fifth annual Mentoring Walk on October 20. The event is shaped around the powerful connections that can be established as women leaders and mentees walk together and discuss their professional challenges and successes.

The Global Ambassadors Program is part of Bank of America's and Vital Voices' ongoing commitment to investing in leadership development, a goal guided by the belief that strong leaders are vital to healthy, vibrant communities and help advance economic growth. Over time, mentors and their mentees build critical communications, advocacy and business skills and develop strategies for emerging leaders to advance their work. Since the Haiti and South Africa programs earlier this year, mentees have continued to advance on a path of leadership through government appointments, participation in high-level policy meetings, and

developing project proposals to strengthen the voice of women in obtaining economic and social development.

"In today's ever-changing world, in which new opportunities and challenges present themselves on a daily basis, the need for mentorship of emerging women leaders has never been so critical," said Alyse Nelson, president and CEO of Vital Voices. "Through the Global Ambassadors Program, we are striving to address economic disparities and create a more prosperous, secure world by enhancing women's leadership through mentorship and providing women with decision-making influence in their respective countries. As India accelerates its relative economic power, these mentoring forums will help to prepare women to play a central role in driving progress and social change across sectors."

Building on the success of forums held this year in Haiti and South Africa, several 2013 Global Ambassadors Program mentoring forums are planned in additional locations.

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

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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 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 12,000 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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