

July 2025 INAUGURAL EDITION

Friends & Alumni,
Welcome to the Vital Voices Echo Monthly Newsletter — a new way to stay connected with fellow VV Alumni, celebrate their achievements, and discover exciting opportunities across our global network.

As we grow this resource together, your feedback is not only welcome — it's essential. Let us know what you'd like to see in future issues!

Warmly,
The Global Network Team

FEATURE



Welcome to Vital Voices Echo – the Newsletter for You and The All-New Hub – Your Space for Growth and Connection!

Welcome to the first issue of the VV Echo – a monthly newsletter for the VV network of women leaders all over the world. Read on below for news, events, and resources—and let us know what else you would like to see!

We are also thrilled to unveil the **all-new Vital Voices Community Hub**, a space designed **just for you**—our incredible network of leaders and changemakers. Think of The Hub as your personal headquarters for connecting with like-minded women and accessing valuable resources to support your work.

Inside The Hub, you'll find everything you need to strengthen your leadership journey:

- **Connect with your peers** – Chat directly, join private resource groups, and learn from women who share your commitment to social impact.
- **Access valuable resources** – From fundraising strategies to wellness, discover the tools you need to thrive.
- **Expand your impact** – The Hub is your stage to share insights, seek advice, and collaborate with women leading change in every corner of the world.

In May, we launched *Live on the Hub!*—a new weekly series of workshops **by you, for you**. These sessions focus on the topics that matter most to women leaders like you: mentoring, leadership, fundraising and beyond. Our amazing network members have already hosted dynamic sessions, and there's a full calendar of events coming up.

Other new features of The Hub:

- **Offers & Asks** – where you can post questions, seek help, offer support and collaborate with fellow network members.
- **Fundraising Support** - fundraising resources such as links to grant opportunities, workshops and training.
- **Crisis Response and Readiness Page** – with resources that aim to equip women leaders with the skills to protect themselves, their organizations, and their communities in times of crisis.

And more programs on The Hub are coming soon – so be sure to visit often!

Ready to dive in? Head to The Hub, explore the upcoming sessions, and join the conversation.

- **Already part of The Hub?** Pop in [today](#) and make a post to introduce yourself or share your insights.
- Not part of The Hub yet? Join [Here](#)
- **Interested in leading a workshop or have questions?** Reach out to globalnetwork@vitalvoices.org and we can get the ball rolling.

Finally, as we re-introduce the Hub, we want to introduce the team dedicated to YOU, our valued network members. They're here to support you every step of the way—whether you're joining a session, hosting a workshop, or simply looking for new ways to engage and grow.

Meet the Global Network and Issue Advocacy Team:

- [Leah Lizarondo](#), VP, Global Network (link to leahl@vitalvoices.org)
- [Marina Pisklakova-Parker](#), VP, Issue Advocacy (link to marinas@vitalvoices.org)
- [Silene Ramirez](#), Program Manager, Climate (link to silener@vitalvoices.org)
- [Penda Sarr](#), Program Manager, Global Network (link to pendas@vitalvoices.org)
- [Julia Drake](#), Program Coordinator (link to juliad@vitalvoices.org)

Let's make this community yours. [Log in to The Hub](#) and get started!

BLAZE

Blaze will feature stories of network women blazing a path – and this month, we are highlighting stories from the Global Mentoring Walks to inspire you to lead one in your city! The Global Mentoring Walks will be celebrating its 20th year in 2027 and to date, over 142,000 women in 60 countries have participated in Vital Voices’ largest global initiative.



Ana Isabel Dorantes
Guatemala

“There’s a beautiful magic that unfolds during the walk as women openly share their experiences, embrace vulnerability, and engage in meaningful exchanges.” — Ana Isabel Dorantes

Guatemala has successfully organized their Global Mentoring Walk for many years since its inception in the country.

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Catherine Mulumba
Uganda

“True leadership isn’t about climbing ladders—it’s about creating bridges for others to cross.” —Catherine Mulumba

Across many miles from Guatemala City to Kampala City, Uganda, Catherine Mulumba also organized a Global Mentoring Walk. While this is not the first time Flag Bearers have hosted a walk in Uganda,

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Betsy Ings
South Africa

“Together, we can be the light that guides and empowers future generations.” — Betsy Ings

Since 2008, the Vital Voices Global Mentoring Walks in South Africa have provided a platform to celebrate and advance women’s empowerment. As a Flag Bearer, Betsy Ings has played a pivotal role

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Ana Isabel Dorantes: Voces Vitales Guatemala and The Ripple Effect of Empowering

“There's a beautiful magic that unfolds during the walk as women openly share their experiences, embrace vulnerability, and engage in meaningful exchanges.” ~Ana Isabel Dorantes

Voces Vitales Guatemala has successfully organized their Global Mentoring Walk for many years since its inception in the country. Ana Isabel Dorantes is the Executive Director of Voces Vitales Guatemala, an NGO dedicated to empowering women and girls through programs that promote leadership, economic development, and life skills. 2025 was her third year organizing the walk in Guatemala City.

According to Dorantes, the cornerstones of Voces Vitales Guatemala's mentoring walks are a passion and commitment to building meaningful community connections. She credits the incredible women on their Board of Directors, such as VV Network members Karla Ruiz and Ixlem, who both serve as primary promoters of the walk.

Voces Vitales Guatemala begins each walk with a wellness activity, such as a guided meditation, followed by a keynote speech aligned with the year's theme. Each participant is then paired with a mentor and given prompted mentor/mentee information to deepen their experience. This year, 175 mentors and mentees joined the walk!

While the walks are centered around International Women's Day on March 8th, their impact ripples long after. Dorantes always recalls one participant in particular named Lilian Axpucá that participated in her first walk in Guatemala in 2021.

At 24, Lilian's mom motivated her to participate in the Global Mentoring Walk. The Walk became a transformative experience, connecting her with women who shared the same passion for making an impact as her. Unfortunately, Lilian's mom passed away during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Every year, Lilian sees the Global Mentoring Walk as a moment to honor her mom's legacy, following her leadership and commitment to helping others. In 2023, she passed this legacy on to her younger sister, Hely, who joined her first Walk. “Just as my mom ignited this passion in me,” Lilian says, “I hope to inspire Hely to become a young woman who creates meaningful change.”

Although there are countless stories such as this of the long-standing impacts of mentorship, Dorantes also always remembers Ángela Chiquin's story. Chiquin is a young Maya woman deeply connected to the textile traditions of her community.

In 2023, she joined the Global Mentoring Walk, where she met her mentor, Mayda Barrios, a successful bank director. What started as a few hours of mentorship during the Walk quickly blossomed into a profound and lasting personal connection. United by their shared passion for culture and weaving, Mayda recognized Ángela's talent and continued to mentor and support her, becoming a guiding light in her early career.

As their bond grew, Mayda visited Ángela's community to immerse herself in their traditions, sharing unforgettable moments with the women artisans. One of the most remarkable moments of their journey

was their joint trip to Switzerland. With Mayda's network connections, both women attended fashion events where Ángela's work as a weaver took center stage. Mayda's unwavering support and the opportunities provided by Vital Voices accelerated Ángela's growth exponentially, not only as an artisan but also as a leader in the community.

Ángela says, "Thanks to Vital Voices, I've learned that mentorship is more than guidance—it's about creating a ripple effect of empowerment. Mayda and I invite everyone to embrace these opportunities, illuminate the path for others, and accelerate action toward a brighter future."

As reflected in Lilian's powerful tribute to her mother each year, and Ángela and Mayda's long-lasting partnership, "The sense of giving and receiving makes the Global Mentoring Walks truly special", says Dorantes.

Catherine Mulumba: Creating Bridges for Others to Cross

Across many miles from Guatemala City to Kampala City, Uganda, Catherine Mulumba led her first Global Mentoring Walk this year. While this is not the first time Flag Bearers have hosted a walk in Uganda, this is Catherine's first time joining the planning team.

Mulumba is no stranger to the power of mentorship. In fact, a large portion of her career has been dedicated to amplifying the incredible impact of mentorship for young leaders. She founded the BeAMentor Community (BEAM) which aims to connect young minds in STEM with inspirational stories, people and opportunities. As Mulumba says, (BEAM) is more than just a community, "it is a beacon, casting light on the shadows that may have dimmed the aspirations of the next generation."

Mulumba's participation in the Vital Voices Visionaries Program has completely transformed her view of how she understands mentorship, storytelling, and the incredible potential of women in STEM. The Vital Voices Leadership Journey reinforced for her one fundamental truth: our stories are powerful.

Another key impact of the Global Mentoring Walks is creating a legacy of Paying It Forward — one of the pillars of the Vital Voices Leadership Model taught in the VV Visionaries program. As leaders, it is imperative that we invest our wisdom and skills back into our communities as our individual growth is also dependent on our collective growth.

In Mulumba's first Global Mentoring Walk, she amplified this pillar for all of the mentors and mentees. She says, "I have mentored over 170 women and girls, especially in STEM, however, less than 10 have paid it forward due to time constraints. GMW will achieve two goals in one for me; It will show people that you can mentor while having fun and that mentorship can take many different forms. True leadership isn't about climbing ladders—it's about creating bridges for others to cross."

Betsy Ings: Champion of Women's Empowerment and Entrepreneurship

"Together, we can be the light that guides and empowers future generations." — Betsy Ings

Since 2008, the Vital Voices Global Mentoring Walks in South Africa have provided a platform to celebrate and advance women's empowerment. As a Flag Bearer, Betsy Ings has played a pivotal role in

organizing and leading these impactful walks that foster mentorship, collaboration, and personal growth in her local community in Gqeberha, South Africa.

A distinguished entrepreneur and social advocate, Betsy Ings wears many hats. She is the Managing Member at Mass Hire, a company in the construction industry that serves Port Elizabeth and surrounding areas. She is also the Founder of e-Watchdog, an enterprise committed to fostering sustainable economic development in Africa by supporting small businesses, and the Siyaloba Training Academy, a social organization dedicated to improving individual livelihoods and uplifting South Africa's coastal and fishing communities.

In 2021, Betsy participated in the Vital Voices GROW Fellowship, seeking to enhance her leadership skills and expand her professional network.

As the organizer of the Global Mentoring Walks in Gqeberha, Betsy is deeply committed to advancing women's leadership and empowerment. She sees each walk as a unique space for reflection, renewal, and reinvention—where meaningful conversations spark personal and professional growth. Her inclusive approach to mentorship transcends gender, exemplified by participant Marco Human, a male entrepreneur who credits his experience walking alongside women leaders with sharpening his strategic thinking, enhancing his leadership skills, and building greater business resilience. His journey affirms a powerful truth: when women lead, they lead differently—and everyone benefits.

The Vital Voices Global Mentoring Walks in Gqeberha are powerful testaments to the transformative impact of mentorship.

BOUNTY



We know how important funding is in order to do mission-driven work and create the impact we want. We have created a repository that will continuously be updated for our VV Network to stay informed and crowd-source information. Visit our [Funding Resources](#) section on The Hub – make sure you check back often!

July Deadlines

1. US Chamber of Commerce Small Business Grant (Deadline: July 7th)

- This annual grant from the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) is open to all small-business owners. To be eligible, your business must have been in operation for at least one year, you must have fewer than 250 employees, and your gross revenue for the previous two fiscal years must have been below \$20 million. One grand-prize winner will receive a \$25,000 grant, and 10 additional businesses will receive \$2,000 grants. Applications are now open through July 7.

<https://www.uschamber.com/co/co-100>.

2. Nobel Women's Initiative (Deadline: July 18th)

- Applications are now open for the 2025 [Nobel Women's Initiative](#) Sister-to-Sister Young Feminist Leadership Program. Women, especially from the frontline, youth, Indigenous, and Global Majority communities, are leading climate solutions, yet are too often shut out of decision-making spaces. This program is here to change that. If you're a young feminist leader (18–35) committed to peace, justice, and environmental transformation, please apply.

Apply here: <https://www.nobelwomensinitiative.org/sister-to-sister-applications-2025>

3. Candid's Foundation Directory

- Candid gives you access to the information you need to be smart and strategic with your funding requests – many public libraries in the US offer free access! See more here:

https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/?_gl=1*sjfd3c*_gcl_au*MTc0MDQwMjMTE1OTY3.

4. Truist Foundation - Building Career Pathways to Economic Mobility (Deadline: July 31st)

- The Truist Foundation supports their communities by investing in innovative nonprofits that work with adults and align with their key areas of focus: building career pathways to economic mobility and strengthening small businesses. They support needs that are sustainable and don't commit funds to recurring expenditures. Examples include funding for a new program launch, a curriculum to expand or strengthen a program, equipment to deliver a program, and capital needs: <https://www.truist.com/purpose/truist-foundation/grant-application>.

5. The Giving Joy (Deadline: July 31st)

- The Giving Joy is seeking applications for its grant opportunity to women-led initiatives—giving women entrepreneurs critical resources to start businesses, acquire skills, sustain operations or improve their ideas worldwide. Grants will range from US\$250 to US\$500 and are awarded in installments upon completion of specific deliverables. The award amount will be determined by Giving Joy based on proposed activities and availability of funding. For more information, visit:

<https://givingjoygrants.org/grant-application>.

6. HerRise Microgrants (Deadline: Rolling)

- HerRise Microgrants are offered by the Yva Jourdan Foundation, the nonprofit arm of HerSuiteSpot, an organization that provides business coaching and training to under-resourced women entrepreneurs, including women of color. Applications are accepted on a monthly basis and \$1,000 grants are awarded each month. To be eligible, your business must be at least 51% woman owned and you must have less than \$1 million in gross revenue:

<https://www.hersuitespot.com/herrise/>.

August Deadlines

1. Clif Family Foundation (Deadline: August 1st)

- The grants from the Clif Family Foundation support general operating cost or specific projects and applicants must be registered as (or fiscally sponsored by) a 501(c)3 organization. The Foundation reviews applications twice a year; the deadlines are March 1 and August 1. Grant announcements occur approximately four months after the deadline. Typical grants range from \$5,000 - \$50,000. <https://cliffamilyfoundation.org/grants-program>

2. Global Change Program – (Deadline: August 1st)

- Incite Institute's Global Change Program (GCP) supports activists, scholars, organizers, artists, and others working with communities. Through the Global Change Program, Incite provides grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 to leaders of projects, initiatives, or campaigns that tackle some of the world's most pressing problems. <https://incite.columbia.edu/funding-opportunities/global-change-program>.

3. Assembling Voices Fellowship – (Deadline: August 15th)

- Launched in 2020, Assembling Voices is a year-long fellowship that supports activists, artists, scholars, workers, and others with ideas for public initiatives that bring people together to address community-identified issues in novel ways. During the program year, fellows receive \$25,000 in income, initiative, and travel support, as well as intellectual, administrative, and professional support from Incite Institute and their vast network: <https://incite.columbia.edu/funding-opportunities/assembling-voices>.

4. Reckitt Catalyst – (Deadline: Rolling for US applications; August 10th for Africa, Asia, or Latin America applications)

- Reckitt Catalyst is an initiative to scale access to health and hygiene across the world. By providing funding, mentorship, and expertise to female and underrepresented founders, Reckitt is ensuring that world-changing ideas don't just emerge, they thrive. They believe innovation and entrepreneurship are critical to fast-track systemic change. Are you an entrepreneur improving access to healthcare, water, sanitation, or hygiene in the U.S., Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mexico, or Brazil? Then apply now: https://www.reckitt.com/our-impact/fairer-society/social-impact/?utm_source=LinkedIn+++&utm_medium=Serena+Social&utm_campaign=Catalyst+.

BRAND



In this section, we connect you directly to media and visibility opportunities—including awards, competitions, and spotlights—because raising awareness is essential to advancing your work and amplifying our collective impact.

Media

1. Empowered Magazine - Open Submissions

- Empowered Magazine is a quarterly publication dedicated to celebrating the remarkable achievements and contributions of women who are driving positive change across the globe. In a world where gender equality remains a pressing issue, Empowered Magazine serves as a beacon of inspiration and empowerment. It spotlights the stories of trailblazing women from various fields, offering a platform for their voices to be heard and their journeys to be acknowledged. Apply here: <https://empoweredmagazine.com/get-featured/>

2. Women Thrive Magazine - Open Submissions

- Women Thrive Magazine amplifies value-driven, thought-leadership content that empowers women in business and life. If you're an expert passionate about sharing insights, they welcome your contribution to articles in the following areas:
 - Business & Leadership: Strategies, growth tips, and leadership development.
 - Marketing & Social Media: Practical advice for visibility and engagement.
 - Finance & Sales: Insights into financial management and sales growth.
 - Personal Development & Mindset: Empowering stories, mindset shifts, and self-growth.

- Relationships & Healing: Perspectives on trauma recovery and fostering strong relationships.
 - Health & Well-being: Holistic practices, self-care routines, and wellness strategies.
 - Diversity & Inclusion: Celebrating unique voices and promoting equality.
 - Apply Here: <https://womenthrivemagazine.com/submission-guidelines/>
3. **Women Across Frontiers - Open Submissions**
- Do you have a great idea for a story on women's rights and women's empowerment? Please send a 150-200 word pitch with your name, short bio, email address and/or phone number, a writing sample to editor@wafmag.org or submit here: <https://womenthrivemagazine.com/submission-guidelines/>
4. **Forbes 30 Under 30 - 2026** - U.S. and Canada list must be 29 or younger as of December 31, 2025. Deadline for 2026 U.S. and Canada nominations will be September 1, 2025.
- More than a decade ago, Forbes set out to create the inaugural 30 Under 30 list. Now, it's now the definitive list of young people changing the world. Do you know someone creating the next Instagram, Stripe or Spotify? Nominate them (or yourself!) today here: <https://www.forbes.com/30-under-30-nominations/>

Awards

1. **Global Dialogues Challenge: AI - Deadline July 11th**
- The Collective Intelligence Project has launched Global Dialogues - a platform to bring the world's voices into the development and governance of AI. They've built a global infrastructure to collect, process, and amplify diverse public input, and their dataset will always be open-source for anyone to build on. Apply Here: <https://www.cip.org/challenge>
2. **Defender Service Awards: Deadline July 25th**
- 2025 is the fifth year of recognizing extraordinary nonprofits -- awarding six customized Defender 130 vehicles to six charitable organizations across the US, Puerto Rico and Canada who are supporting their communities every day. Each category finalist will be given a \$5,000 USD cash prize to aid in their services, while the winners in each category will receive \$30,000 USD. Apply Here: <https://www.landroverusa.com/experiences/events-and-sponsorships/defender-service-awards/index.html>
3. **5th Annual Anthem Awards: Deadline August 1st**
- The Anthem Awards honors the purpose & mission-driven work of people, companies and organizations worldwide. By amplifying the voices that spark global change, they're defining a new benchmark for social impact work that inspires others to take action in their own community. Learn more and submit your work. Apply Here: <https://www.anthemawards.com/>

STAGE



This section highlights opportunities for panels, speaking engagements, and other platforms designed to amplify your voice and expand your reach.

1. **Climate Leadership Conference - (Deadline: Rolling)**

- The Climate Leadership Conference provides sustainability professionals a platform to learn from and engage with thought leaders and decision-makers working to address climate change through policy, innovation and business solutions. With the race to net zero well underway, this year's program will focus on how we are getting there. What does implementation look like across industries and sectors? Where are the synergies, what challenges remain? How does regional mitigation and adaptation vary? What can we learn from each other? If you or your organization is working to answer these questions, they want to hear from you! The deadline to submit speaker and topic nominations has passed, however they will still be accepting nominations on a rolling basis and will review them as needed. Please submit them as soon as possible to be considered as they build their program. See here for details and to access the submission form:

<https://climateleadershipconference.org/nominate-speaker/>.

2. **Innovation Women (No Deadline)**

- Innovation Women is a self-service database designed to provide speaking opportunities for women. Instead of calling it a speaker bureau, they call it a visibility bureau. It connects speakers and experts to all kinds of visibility opportunities, including speaking and media opportunities. These opportunities help build brands, grow businesses and advance careers. Event managers, conference organizers and journalists get a free account on the site so they can search the database and connect directly with the speakers: <https://innovationwomen.com/about-speaking-opportunities-for-women/>

3. **The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) - (Rolling Deadline)**

- WBENC is a leading national non-profit organization dedicated to helping women-owned and small businesses thrive. WBENC accepts speaker/instructor proposals on a rolling basis. If you have the experience and subject matter expertise to help women entrepreneurs or the supplier diversity community, we encourage you to apply: <https://www.wbenc.org/events/speaking-opportunities/>

4. **The SheIsMe Conference**

- A conference designed for women by women and is a transformational experience that celebrates the power of community, authenticity, and shared stories. Over the course of six impactful days, attendees explore leadership, empowerment, and self-discovery through dynamic panels, workshops, and keynote speeches. This year's theme, **"Together We Rise,"** highlights the importance of collaboration and connection in building a brighter future. The conference brings together global leaders, change-makers, and visionaries to inspire growth, foster resilience, and create lasting impact. From leadership training sessions to immersive retreats, every moment is designed to equip attendees with tools to break free from limiting beliefs and step into their full potential. Call For Speakers started on June 1, 2025 and is still open: <https://sheismeconference.com/>.

5. **The UN Environment Programme and UN Women Asia and the Pacific (Deadline: July 27)**

- a. The UNEP is inviting submissions for successful climate initiatives to be featured at their side event during the APenvMF6. Do you have a proven and scalable climate, digital, or low-carbon technology solution that is making a difference on the ground? Share your successful initiative for a potential opportunity to present its impact at the EmPower Phase II Programme's side event during the 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in Nadi, Fiji. The most compelling solutions will be featured in a compendium shared with countries across the Asia Pacific. Your proven approach could be the next impactful climate solution adopted widely in the region. Submit your solution by July 27, 2025. Here is the form: https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=2zWeD09UYE-9zF6kFubccODmY_vO4v5EnhcZJDnvYiZUMzFBOUVNT0hDS1NVNjJFVlpHNjE2Wk9NRy4u&route=shorturl

RIPPLES



A place for all upcoming events and general announcements!

Network Happy Hour July 7th:

- Join us at VVHQ for a Network Happy Hour on Monday, July 7th from 4:00 - 6:00 pm! RSVP by emailing juliad@vitalvoices.org if you will be in town and able to join.

Vital Voices Global & Regional Events Calendar July + August

- See full calendar in comments below

Save the Date NY Climate Week 9/23 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM:

- Save the Date: Vital Voices in collaboration with Daughters For Earth - RSVP at events@vitalvoices.org - limited seating so RSVP ASAP!

The Future of Work Series: 7/9 and 8/13 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM RSVP [Here!](#)

Collective Wednesdays - Join us for coworking at VVHQ every Wednesday! Register [Here](#)

Live on the Hub July Schedule:

- 7/10 at 9:30 AM: Write YOUR Book Panel (Fariba Parsa, Jaki Mathaga, Gabriela Hoch)
- 7/16 at 10:00 AM: Wellness for Warriors (Faida Fuller)
- 7/23 at 9:30 AM: Mastermind Momentum (Zoe Dean-Smith)

Have a story for the newsletter? An update that you want to share? Let us know [Here!](#)
