

SEVEN

BY PAULA CIZMAR
CATHERINE FILLOUX
GAIL KRIEGEL
CAROL K. MACK
RUTH MARGRAFF
ANNA DEAVERE SMITH
SUSAN YANKOWITZ



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

SEVEN 2013 IN NUMBERS

21 PERFORMANCES

10 COUNTRIES

7 480 IN AUDIENCE

26 271 000 PEOPLE REACHED

6 NEW LANGUAGES



RIGHT NOW.

**AFGHANISTAN. NIGERIA. NORTHERN IRELAND.
RUSSIA. GUATEMALA. PAKISTAN. CAMBODIA.**



“it’s impossible not to be inspired by so many and varying examples of courage”

THE WASHINGTON POST

SEVEN

by Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deveare-Smith and Susan Yankowitz, created in collaboration with Vital Voices Global Partnership.

SEVEN is a groundbreaking documentary play based on interviews with seven women’s rights activists from around the world. The interviews were conducted in 2007 by seven award-winning playwrights.

“The play powerfully portrays the transformative way that seven courageous women have changed their societies for the better – from peace-building, to fighting corruption to combating violence against women.”

US SECRETARY OF STATE, HILLARY CLINTON

As the tour started out in 2009, the performances received unanimous praise, more than doubling the size of expected audience that year.

At each venue a unique ensemble consisting of actors, politicians, students and activists, performs the play, and numerous local and national NGO’s collaborates to arrange panels, demonstrations, lectures and more.

Riksteatern, the Swedish National Touring Theatre, tours SEVEN as a series of staged readings in Sweden. UNDP, United Nations Development Program, was the main partner for the tour in 2009.

The project manager, Hedda Krausz Sjögren directs the collaboration with artistic partners and NGO’s, coaching hundreds of performers to date.



**“The power of
theatre to change
the world”**

ARBETAREN



SEVEN women



FARIDA AZIZI, AFGHANISTAN

Farida Azizi became an activist fighting the marginalization of women under Taliban rule in her native country. Because of threats to her life, she has gained asylum and now lives in the United States with her two children, working on women's rights and peacebuilding in Afghanistan.



INEZ MCCORMACK, NORTHERN IRELAND

Inez McCormack who grew up in a Protestant family in Belfast, did the unthinkable and married a Catholic. Since the 60's she has been an activist for women's and human rights, labour, and social justice. She is former President of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Ms. McCormack played a critical role in the 1998 Good Friday Peace Accords and continues to advocate for equal rights and fair labour practices for women and minorities.



MARINA PISKLAKOVA-PARKER, RUSSIA

In 1993, against tremendous odds, Marina Pisklakova-Parker founded the first hotline for victims of domestic violence, which has since grown into Center ANNA, part of a coalition that has provided crisis and counselling services for 100,000 Russian women.



ANNABELLA DE LEON, GUATEMALA

Annabella raised herself and her family out poverty by getting an education. A congresswoman since 1995, she has received death threats because of her fight against corruption and for the rights of the poor, particularly women and indigenous peoples.



MUKHTAR MAI, PAKISTAN

Mukhtar Mai was gang-raped by four men and forced to walk home almost naked in retribution for an alleged "honour crime," Ms. Mai and her harrowing story grabbed headlines across the world. Instead of taking the traditional women's route of committing suicide, she brought her rapists to justice, built schools to improve the condition of women, and became an advocate for education in her country.



MU SOCHUA, CAMBODIA

Mu Sochua, a former Minister of Women's Affairs in Cambodia (one of only two women in the cabinet), was co-nominated in 2005 for the Nobel Peace Prize for her work against sex trafficking in Cambodia and neighbouring Thailand. MP Mu Sochua, after door-to-door visits to 482 villages, won a seat in Parliament in July, 2008.



HAFSAT ABIOLA, NIGERIA

Hafsat Abiola, Nigeria, an advocate for human rights and democracy following the murder of her activist parents, founded the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, which provides skills-training and leadership opportunities for young women across Nigeria. She helps to build bridges between African and Chinese women, as China increases its commitment in Africa.

RIKSTEATERN

– SWEDEN'S NATIONAL TOURING THEATRE

Your arena for creativity, development and participation

In SEVEN the national movement Riksteatern connects local initiatives with global issues. Riksteatern counts over 40 000 members, organized in 230 associations which jointly are the owners of Riksteatern. In the vision of Riksteatern, voted by member representatives, a central wording reads: to create mental collisions in many languages, setting thought and emotion in motion. As a result of the associations involvement in local and global issues, Riksteatern collaborates with theatres and NGO's in Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Lebanon, Macedonia, Ghana, Turkey and Finland.

Riksteatern's involvement internationally is mirrored by collaboration with large immigrant groups in Sweden. Riksteatern offers a platform for education, creativity and engagement. In our international collaborations Riksteatern offers methods of communication and models for working locally with democracy, human rights and freedom of speech - at home and away.



Diyarbakir Arts center and Riksteatern/Turkey/
Turkish association in Sweden.



African Cinderella, collaboration with
National Theatre of Ghana.

SEVEN in NUMBERS

10 regional theatres - in collaboration with the Riksteatern Tour.

100'eds of politicians, actors, and activists having stepped on to a stage to give their voice to the women of SEVEN.

1 Oscar winning actress performing SEVEN – Meryl Streep in New York City in 2010.

1 Secretary of State giving an introductory speech – Hillary Clinton in New York City in 2010.

1 Secretary of foreign aid giving an introductory speech – Gunilla Carlsson, Stockholm, 2009.

60 + organizations and agencies involved around performances of SEVEN.

6 ministers of the Swedish cabinet performing SEVEN.

7 male politicians performing the seven women's roles in Swedish Parliament.

5 countries included in the Riksteatern tour of Seven: Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey, Belgium and Nigeria.

SEVEN is a GAUNTLET

Riksteatern continues to invite collaborations with governmental institutions, organizations, companies, universities and other theatres to bring SEVEN to a wider audience. In December 2010 seven members of the EU parliament give their voice to the women of SEVEN. Is your parliament next?

Seven Swedish parliamentarians reading Seven at political summit Almedalen 2009.



Hillary Clinton, Inez McCormack and Meryl
Streep after SEVEN performance, March 2010.



SEVEN is a **CALL OUT!**

Seven was created in collaboration with Vital Voices Global Partnership. Their mission is to identify, invest in and bring visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their communities. www.vitalvoices.org. There are many more unspoken stories the world needs to hear. SEVEN is a call out to other brave women to share their stories and realities. Will you tell us your story?

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PROJECT:

See: www.riksteatern.se/seven

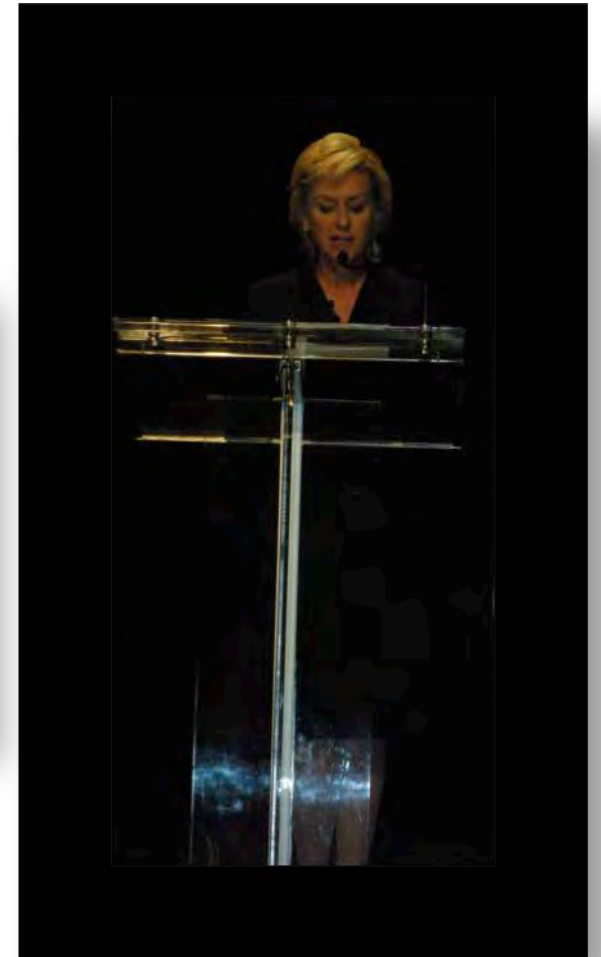
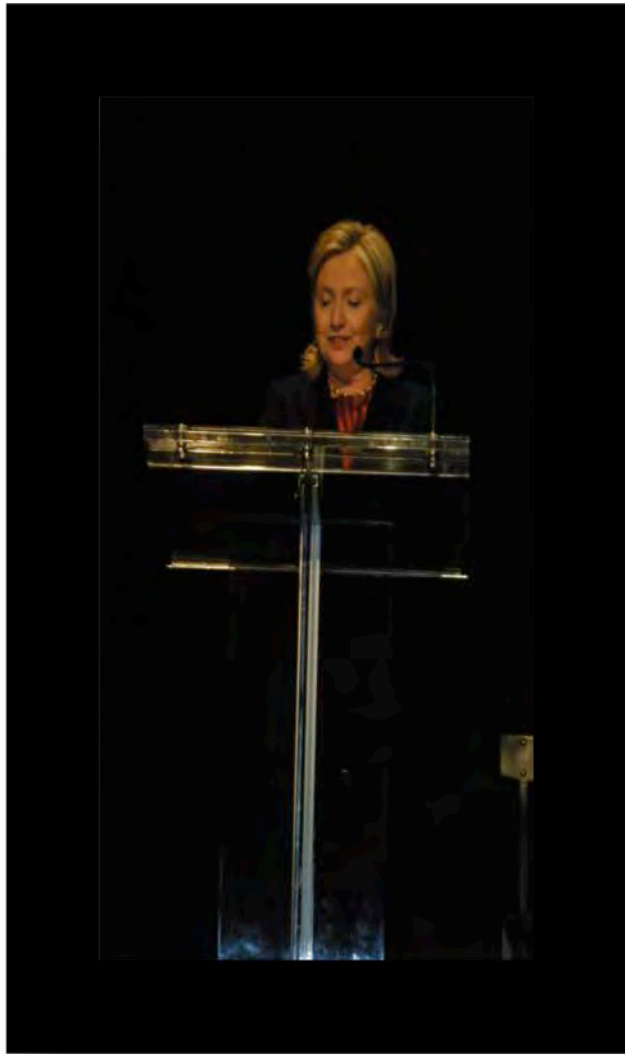
E-mail: hedda@hedda.nu

Hedda Produktion AB

delivers services within the areas of communication/rhetoric and producing. Hedda Krausz Sjögren, an actor, writer and consultant based in Stockholm, Sweden, received Riksteatern's yearly prize 2009 for her work with SEVEN including translating the play as well as initiating and running the national tour of SEVEN.

See: www.hedda.nu





HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON INTRODUCING *SEVEN* AT THE HUDSON THEATER MARCH 12, 2010 (NYC);



BARBARA WALTERS (*THE VIEW*), CANDACE BERGEN (*SEX & THE CITY*) ON THE CAMERA'S RUNWAY AND DESIGNER DIANE VON FURSTENBERG BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE OF SEVEN



MERYL STREEP AS INEZ IN *SEVEN*



POPPIES ALONG THE ROAD, SHOHREH AGHDASHLOO (*HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG*) AS FARIDA







ACTRESS MERYL STREEP, INEZ, ARCHIE PANJABI (*THE GOOD WIFE*), FARIDA AZIZI AND SHOHREH AGHDASHLOO
IN POST PERFORMANCE PANEL



Powerful Women's Fate

7 OKTOBER 2010 By Jonna Ingvarson [jonna.ingvarson @ skd.se](mailto:jonna.ingvarson@skd.se)

Postadress: Box 165, 201 21 MALMÖ [SWEDEN]

ON THE SCENE. Schyman is a member of Congress from Guatemala and Ann Heberlein a minister in Cambodia. An appalling and fascinating look at the fate of women took place in the AF building. There was giggling and chatter in the AF-Guarantor Cafe on Wednesday night. But when the lights went out a grave silence settled.

On stage are seven chairs, and in each chair sat a women's liberation.

- "When we are eight years old, we know that a man can take us where he wants. It's like a vulture who always fly above our heads." Mukhtar Mai is a Pakistani woman who was subjected to gang rape in retaliation for a crime of honor. But instead of traditionally taking her life, she takes the perpetrators to justice and becomes a champion for young girls' education. - "In my country, poverty has the face of a woman. They have less money, they take the most beating" says Fi-leader Gudrun Schyman Annabella de Leon. She is a member of Congress from Guatemala living under constant death threats for her fight for women's rights.

The play "Seven" is set up by the association's legal equality and equal treatment group. The aim is to show how the power relationship between men and women is expressed in different parts of the world. - "It is important to have a standard of critical debate within the law, and we hope that it starts with you," said organizer Sara Bengtson to the audience. Immediately after the play there was a discussion with actors and audience together. - "We can say that we would do anything to improve the world. But it will take longer than ten minutes. It will take us time, it costs more than dinner, it is too expensive. These people gave their lives for something," says radio talkshow host Johanna Koljonen.

Artikel:<http://www.skanskan.se/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=%2F20101007%2FNOJE%2F710079837&Template=printart>

Arresting the fate of women in the AF-Building

Kultur & Nöje / Culture & Entertainment
6 October 2010

It is important to get a feminist perspective on all courses at the university, according to Sara Bengtsson and Ulrika Svallingson, who have invited the second party leader Gudrun Schyman and radio announcer Johanna Koljonen to come to Lund to participate in the play SEVEN.

– “It is extremely important to talk about this,” says Sara Bengtsson.

Mu Sochua, who comes from Cambodia, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her work against trafficking and sex slavery. Farida Azizi has fought against the oppression of women in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. They are two of the seven women portrayed in the play SEVEN. It is Sarah Bengtson and Ulrika Svallingson from a law student gender and equality group who have ensured that the play comes to Lund.

– “We want to see lawyers in the roles to leverage that they have to change society,” says Sara.

The Swedish National Theatre toured with the play all last year. The seven women's fates that Seven is based on are portrayed by different people each time. The play has mainly been played in Sweden, but has also visited the New York City Women in the World Summit featuring Meryl Streep. In Lund's version, party leader Gudrun Schyman and radio announcer Johanna Koljonen were cast in the roles. Sara Bengtsson got the idea after seeing the play itself.

– “We had just discussed how the law is shaped by social norms, which in turn are shaped by the beliefs we have about such gender roles,” she says. “Setting up Seven became a specific target in the work we do with equality at law school.”

Open to all: Meanwhile, Sara and Ulrika very careful to point out that they not only want to have lawyers in the audience. — “It is important to get perspective on legal education, but equally important to obtain input and participation from other professions,” says Ulrich. — “In the debate held after the play, we want to see the diversity of those in the audience involved,” Sara fills in.

Almost sold out The two law students are very pleased with the great interest that the piece has attracted as the event is almost sold out. — “It is extremely important to talk about this, so it is good to have as many people as possible watch the show,” says Sara Bengtsson.

Artikel: <http://lundagard.se/2010/10/06/gripande-kvinnooden-i-af-borgen/>

Radioinslag: (34 min video in i programmet)

<http://radio.af.lu.se/program/ordkonst/848-1210-forfattarmotivationer>

Artikel: <http://www.newsmill.se/artikel/2010/10/12/matriarkatet-och-illusionen-om-j-mst-lldheten#comments>

TODAY'S ZAMAN

September 23, 2010 Arts & Culture (ISTANBUL, TURKEY)

Seven women activists' stories told on the stage

A documentary play titled "Seven" claims to be able to change the world. However, it is not only the play that claims to change the world, it is merely the reflection of the changes realized by seven courageous women from seven different countries around the world.

Based on interviews with seven female activists and depicting their stories, "Seven" has been performed all over the world since 2007 and garnered much interest. Whereas the American version of the play was presented by Hillary Clinton and the famous Hollywood actress Meryl Streep played the role of North Irish activist Inez McCormack, it has been performed on 40 different stages by the Swedish National Tour Theatre Riksteatern since 2009.



The characters have been brought to life by 200 different individuals, among which there are ministers, actresses, parliamentarians and other prominent figures. What is more striking about the influence of the play is that it has been performed by male parliamentarians in the Swedish parliament -- highlighting the importance and the urgency of addressing the violation of women's rights.

The documentary play, presented with the subtitle "the power of changing the world," has its Turkish premiere this week through a joint effort by the Sweden Institute, the İstanbul Swedish Consulate and Riksteatern at the Muammer Karaca Theatre in Beyoğlu. Turkish artists, activists and writers taking part in tonight's Turkish premiere of "Seven" are lawyer Fethiye Çetin, who plays Inez McCormack; journalist Ece Temelkuran as Hafsat Abiola; actresses Lale Mansur, Belçim Bilgin Erdoğan and Füsün Demirel as Annabella De Leon, Muhtar Mai and Mu Sochua, respectively. Another well-known actress, Zeynep Eronat, plays Marina Pisklakova-Parker, while singer Şevval Sam plays Farida Azizi.

"It's a fact that the oppression of women is really present everywhere in any society," says Hedda Krausz Sjögren, the producer of the play, in an interview with Today's Zaman. "These women are coming from seven different countries, different cultures but in some ways, they are very similar. Even the Swedish audience was very affected because the problems are there, too, and it's not just in other countries nobody else is concerned with." So, for Sjögren this is where the message of the play lays. "The message is 'Get engaged and start looking at your society and around yourself and change something'."

"Wherever we shall be in this world, people are subjected to racist and discriminatory treatment," says Çetin, a lawyer also known for her advocacy of human and minority rights and her support of the Hrant Dink trial. "I was deeply impressed because this is a crime committed in every place of the world and what women experience is the same."

The seven female activists are connected through a network called "Vital Voices Global Partnership" where emerging female leaders that are in very difficult situations can find support. "It is through this network that these seven women were picked," explains Sjögren about the process of how the play was formed. "I was with Marina Pisklakova, one of the women that were portrayed in the play -- she was coming along with the tour -- and she would always talk with the audience afterwards saying: 'Yes, we were picked; we were picked because there are so many of us out there in the world. It's not me in

particular, but I've many sisters who are also doing the work that I've been doing.' So, in many ways they're the symbols for so many people who are doing this kind of work."

Many lessons for Turkey

"This is the fact in terms of women, but it is not only the women who are oppressed, but all human beings," says Çetin. "Especially in Turkey, minorities and people who are different in this country face the same pressures. There's not only state discrimination against individuals, but also the discrimination of individuals against each other; so that's why I saw an analogy between this play and Turkey. What we must do is to stand against all the racism, discrimination and violence."

"It is very significant that it's being performed in Turkey," says Demirel, the actress and interpreter who has translated more than 25 plays by Dario Fo and Franca Rame into Turkish. "Women's rights are still an issue that must be discussed a lot in Turkey. I wish the play could reach a broader audience. Because when we look at the newspapers everyday, we see those stories of women being abused, raped and killed. On the other hand, these issues are being presented in a very perverted way, especially by television series, and that hurts me a lot. Think about a society where infamous movie characters played by the likes of Nuri Alço or Coşkun Göğen [dubbed 'Coşkun the rapist' for his portrayals of rapists in several Turkish movies] can be considered heroes."

"It is a fact that a similar play can be written for Turkey as well," indicates Temelkuran. "I think we can do a play like this in Turkey with seven women. I'm sure there'll be thousands of women who would like to be the voice of seven women contributing to the struggle in Turkey." When such cases in Turkey, and the way such cases are being presented, are taken into consideration, the critical question comes to mind: What should the method be to convey these cases to society, especially when it's art?

"It should never be forgotten that people who have been subjected to such treatment are also human beings," says Çetin. "We should approach them with a humanitarian perspective, and let those victims speak for themselves and create an available space for them to speak. And the critical point here is to understand through a humanitarian perspective and not to forget that they are human beings as well."

"A work of art should foresee the problems of society," says Demirel, "and an artist reflects those problems in his/her artwork and guides people in this respect. Art should make people ask real questions."

"Honest language should be used, a language that is also used by women in their own lives," says Temelkuran. "If you curve and bend that language, then a weird situation results. The stories should be told in the way these women experienced them in real life. And I think this makes it more powerful, since it is real."

Sjögren's explanation as to why the play has been so influential seems to confirm these suggestions. "I think it's because it's inspiring. The stories are very tough; these women go through tough things but they've all managed to change their situation. Why do they do that? There are different reasons but when you come out the play, you feel like it's time to do something, not just stay depressed about the state of the world," she says, and adds: "For me, it's changing my life. And women here in İstanbul are already very engaged in these issues."

23.09.2010

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Seven Jordanian personalities get together to read the words of seven women activists



During the reading of SEVEN



“WHEN MEN AND WOMEN WORK TOGETHER FOR GENDER EQUALITY, THEY BENEFIT TOGETHER”

SEVEN WOMEN

FEATURE: WENDY MERDIAN

Sweden’s ambassador to Jordan, Charlotta Sparre, believes that improving women’s rights should be a priority everywhere. As such, this Autumn she was delighted to help bring the theatre production SEVEN, to Amman. The theatre presentation brings the words of women’s rights activists from Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Russia, Guatemala, Cambodia and Jordan to the stage.

“SEVEN reflects the lives of women currently living in different parts of the world, yet with sad similarities,” Charlotta says. “World over, they encounter discrimination, domestic violence and poverty, but somehow manage to overcome and emerge stronger, and make a positive contribution. When women are not participating, all society loses, especially in these difficult socio-economic times.”

She heard about SEVEN some years ago when it was getting a lot of media attention in Sweden. When its producer Hedda Krausz Sjögren came to Jordan for a leadership training event, she and Charlotta met with Jordanian actress and producer

Lana Nasser to talk about bringing SEVEN to Jordan for its first Arabic performance. Charlotta also participated, and was deeply moved. “The first time we read together it was hard to keep back the tears. On a personal level, it was a very powerful, humbling experience,” she says. “I used to be involved in theatre and drama, and then life got busy. SEVEN revived all kinds of wonderful memories.”

VIVMAG caught up with some of the other players involved. Film producer Nadine Toukan describes herself as a “maverick” who “wanders around finding storytellers with authentic voices”. She read the part of Nigerian human rights activist Hafsat Abiola.

“Lana and Hedda asked me to read one of the parts and I had to get out of my comfort zone for it,” Nadine says. “The reading took me out of the tight view of my own backyard to look through a wider lens.”

Nadine hopes SEVEN encourages Jordanian storytellers to share their remarkable journeys, but not just for women “I hope they include the vital role of the men in their lives. Such

stories allow us to find collective hope and ways to transform that into inspired action,” she says.

Nabila Morcos Abdel Massieh, former Jordan chapter president of the International Women’s Forum read the part of Afghan women’s rights activist Farida Azizi. Faridah is well known for defying the Taliban and organising medical assistance for women in rural areas of Afghanistan.

For Nabila, who has over 20 years of experience in human resources development and human rights-related activism, the role had a lasting impact. “SEVEN lived with me, and I could not get the voices out of my head,” she says, “The emotion that pulled me was a feeling of defiance against authoritarianism. I hope that we can take it to the governorates to raise the level of awareness.”

Al Balad Theatre employee Razan Mbaideen read the part of Cambodia’s Mo Sochua, and took over the role after another reader cancelled. Mo was co-nominated for a 2005 Nobel Peace Prize for her work against sex trafficking in Cambodia and Thailand. Razan recounted her experience: “It is a very painful, strong story. I entered it with anger at those who force children to become sex workers. We need to defend the victims.”

The lone male reader of the show’s Jordan run was blogger and frequent tweeter Fadi Zaghmout. In 2012 he published a controversial book about women in Jordan called “Aroos Amman”. In SEVEN, he took the role of Marina Parker, a Russian anti-violence activist. “It meant a lot to me, taking a woman activist role. I couldn’t feel more proud being part of such a group,” he says “The story of the young Nigerian girl who escaped her family who wanted to marry her off to a rich old Saudi man was a lot like one of the characters in my book. After two years she reconciled with her father, who had stood up for her against their society’s expectations. That is when I realised that such men need our support; other men need to be encouraged to take such stands for the ones they love.” Hedda says after working with SEVEN for over four years, she sometimes feels tired but the Jordanian production was invigorating and gave her new energy in the fight for women’s rights. “The incredible commitment of the cast, especially the youngest member, Razan, who got on stage with older, established people, and owned her story,” Hedda says, “this was deeply moving to me.”

Hedda’s next destination will be the Balkans, a region just emerging from years of conflict and a place where violence against women can be a taboo subject. Lana for her part will continue to bring SEVEN to other parts of Jordan. Following the presentation, there was an open discussion on gender equality at Al Balad Theatre and Charlotta says this proved for her what a profound impact the production had. “We spoke of how each of us has encountered inequality personally, not just as a rights issue.

One crucial message was that 30 per cent of the attendees were men. The men were all deeply taken by the stories. When men and women work together for gender equality, they benefit together,” she says. “One young man, a nurse in a hospital, came to me and said ‘You really need to do something like this with local stories. I see so many women admitted who are beaten. Seeing them leaves me with a heavy stone in my stomach.’ The men were surprised here, maybe they don’t hear the stories... theatre provides a locus for their voices.”



First on the left: Russian anti-violence activist Marina Parker

“THE EMOTION THAT PULLED ME WAS A FEELING OF DEFIANCE AGAINST AUTHORITARIANISM. I HOPE WE CAN TAKE IT TO THE GOVERNORATES TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS”



Swedish Ambassador to Jordan Charlotta Sparre and Jordanian actress and producer Lana Nasser



Cambodian activist Mu Sochua

於：ウッディシアター中目黒
2012年11月2日(金)～11月3日(土)

7人の女性リーダーと7人の女性劇作家による
**21世紀・世界を変える
7人の女性の物語**

いまこの地球上に 自らの人生を自らが選ぶ権利が
夢でしかない女性たちがいることを
あなたは知っていますか…？

作

ポーラ・シズマー PAULA CIZMAR
キャサリン・フィロウ CATHERINE FILLOUX
ゲイル・クリーゲル GAIL KRIEGEL
キャロル・K・マック CAROL K. MACK
ルース・マーグラフ RUTH MARGRAFF
アナ・ディヴィエール・スミス ANNA DEAVERE SMITH
スーザン・ヤンコヴィッツ SUSAN YANKOWITZ

訳・演出

三田地 里穂 RIHO MITACHI

キャスト(五十音順)

安黛 瑛花
長島 涼子
星 光子
槇 由紀子
丸山 真奈実
宮崎 亜友美
山科 ゆき子

スタッフ

訳・演出：三田地 里穂
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舞台監督：斎木 信太郎
宣伝美術：三田村 有希子
制作：シアター・クラシックス

シアター・クラシックス
ドラマテイツク・リーディング
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セブン

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VITAL VOICES OF
asia
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
AND TRAINING SUMMIT

September 14- September 17, 2010

New Delhi

HEADLINE	PUBLICATION	PUBLICATION PROFILE
<p>WATCH OUT THESE WOMEN MEAN BUSINESS</p> <p>AND</p> <p>SHABHANA LEADS THE TALENT POWERHOUSE THAT IS SET TO DAZZLE CITY'S STAGE</p>	MAIL TODAY	Mail Today is a daily newspaper published by the India Today Group in a joint venture with British newspaper Daily Mail (which is part of the Associated Newspapers Group). Established in 2007, the paper covers topics ranging from politics, entertainment, cinema, automobiles, and fashion and lifestyle stories.
<p>WOMEN NEED TO REACH OUT TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS SECTORS</p>	HINDU	The Hindu, is an English language Indian Daily with a circulation of 1.45 million. And is the second-largest circulated daily English Newspaper in India. According to the Indian Readership Survey, The Hindu is the third most widely read English newspaper in India with a readership of 5.2 million. It has the largest base of circulation in South India, especially in the state of Tamil Nadu.
<p>REGIONAL SUMMIT TO DICUSS WOMEN AS AN ECONOMIC FORCE</p>	THE HINDU BUSINESS LINE	The Hindu Business Line is one of India's leading business daily, published by Kasturi & Sons, the publishers of Indian daily The Hindu. Published as a broadsheet, the newspaper has a circulation of around 130,000 copies.
<p>SHABHANA DOES A MERYL STREEP</p>	THE HINDUSTAN TIMES	Hindustan Times (HT) is India's oldest English daily newspaper in the year 1924. The newspaper reported with over 1.14 million circulation. Hindustan Times is the flagship publication of HT Media Ltd. This also publishes Mint (English business daily), Hindustan (HindiDaily), Nandan (monthly children's magazine) and Kadambani (monthly literary magazine).
<p>PLAY TIME FOR AZMI</p> <p>AND</p> <p>RETIREMENT? AH!</p>	TIMES OF INDIA	The Times of India (TOI) is an English-language broadsheet newspaper that is widely read throughout India. It is owned and managed by Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. According to the Indian Readership Survey 2010, the Times of India is the most widely read English newspaper in India with

		a readership of 13.4 million. This ranks the Times of India as the top English newspaper in India by readership.
THE VITAL ROLE THAT WOMEN CAN PLAY	MINT	Mint is a business newspaper from HT Media Ltd, launched in collaboration with The Wall Street Journal. It is a premium business news publication aimed at decision makers and policy makers of the country and it is the first newspaper in India to be published in the Berliner format. The design of the Mint newspaper is geared towards presenting business and financial information in a compact format.
NEW INITIATIVES TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND TRAFFICKING	UNI	UNI is one of the largest news agencies in Asia. UNI has acquired an enviable reputation for fast and accurate coverage of all major news events in India and abroad in all areas – politics, economics, business, sports, entertainment, stock markets and so on.
INDIA HAS DONE A LOT FOR UPLIFTING WOMEN: ROEMER	PTI	Press Trust of India is the largest news agency in India. It is headquartered in Delhi and is a nonprofit cooperative among more than 450 Indian newspapers and has a staff of about 2,000 writers spread across 150 offices nationwide. It took over the Indian operations of the Associated Press and Reuters soon after India's independence on August 15, 1947. It provides news coverage and information of the region in both English and Hindi.
THREE-DAY ASIAN WOMEN'S SUMMIT OPENS IN CAPITAL	IANS	Indo Asian News Service or IANS is India's - largest private news agency. The IANS, whose main offices are located in New Dehli, has carved a niche for itself by reporting on India, South Asia and the large Indian diaspora spread across the world. IANS' USP remains the coverage of the Indian diaspora, numbering about 25 million in 110 countries.
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	FACENFACTS	FacenFacts is a unique e-portal that

<p>KEY TO COUNTRY'S PROGRESS</p> <p>AND</p> <p>VITAL VOICES ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT</p>		<p>presents the faces and the facts associated with it to its subscribers. The design gives an all encompassing feel of a newspaper, a magazine and a journal, all clubbed into one. Each issue of FacenFacts focuses on a fixed topic that makes its lead story. It endeavours to provide deeply researched and detailed account of all the articles covered in our issues. It also purports to serve as a reference material, useful for researchers, scholars, journalists, policy makers, academicians, students and anyone interested in that subject.</p>
<p>ROLE OF WOMEN IN UNORGANISED SECTOR IS SIGNIFICANT: THORAT</p>	<p>ZEE BUSINESS</p>	<p>Zee Business is India's business news channel aired in Hindi language. The channel has redefined business news by its innovative programming and path breaking strategy of making business news a 24/7 activity and not just limited to the stock market. Zee Business has won the coveted Consumer World Awards for the 'Best Business News Channel' for two years running. The channel has the most diverse programming portfolio which has positioned it as a channel of choice amongst viewers. By speaking a language of the masses, Zee Business is a preferred channel for business news in India.</p>
<p>A VITAL VOICE ON WOMEN IN INDIA</p>	<p>Wall Street Journal</p>	<p>The Wall Street Journal is an American English-language international daily newspaper published by Dow Jones & Company, a division of News Corporation, in New York City, with Asian and European editions. The Journal is the largest newspaper in the United States by circulation. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, it has a circulation of 2.1 million copies (including 400,000 online paid subscriptions) as of March 2010] compared to USA Today's 1.8 million.</p>

Regional summit to discuss women as an economic force

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Sept. 7

If companies do better with gender-diverse management teams, as some surveys suggest, then why does the 100-highest paid CEOs list in India not have a single woman?

This and many other issues related to women as an economic force, in political leadership and public life and her human rights are slated to be hammered out in a regional summit next week.

Organised by Vital Voices, an NGO, the regional leadership and training summit is a collaborative effort between Confederation of Indian Industry, the US Government and a slew of private sector companies including Standard Chartered Bank, Goldman Sachs, Exxon Mobil, Tata Group, Abbott, Boeing, Coca-Cola, Thomson Reuters, DLA Piper/New Perimeters, Wal-Mart and Eranda Foundation among others. Asia Foundation, Global Fund for Women, and UNIFEM are also involved in the effort.

"As we will explore over the course of this summit, challenges once marginalised as

'women's issues' are moving into the global mainstream, especially with the world's attention focused on economic recovery and development.

"In societies where women's equitable share in political, social and economic opportunity is both possible and likely, prosperity is increased for all. Increasing opportunities for women in Asia will contribute greatly to the region's development overall. It's not that women need our help. We need theirs," Ms Alyse Nelson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Vital Voices Global Partnership, said.

"The reality is simple – women's progress means global progress."

The summit, to be held in New Delhi from September 14-17, endeavours to bring people together from the Asian region to build and strengthen a powerful network of regional women leaders across sectors, cultures and generations to help advance the regions of South Asia and East Asia-Pacific socially, politically, and economically.



The Vital Voices initiative was launched in 1997 by the then US secretary of state Madeleine Albright and Hillary Clinton (right) when she was First Lady

WATCH OUT THESE WOMEN MEAN BUSINESS

TIRED OF hearing about the Commonwealth Games? Well, the National Capital will play host to an event of a different kind — one that will see a number of prominent women converging on Delhi. Vital Voices Global Partnership, an NGO that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders globally, will have its Asia Summit in New Delhi from September 15-17. Based in Washington D.C., Vital Voices was part of a US government initiative established in 1997 by the

then First Lady, Hillary Clinton, and US secretary of state Madeleine Albright to promote the advancement of women as a US foreign policy goal.

The Summit which is supported by a partnership between the US government, Humanity United and several multinationals, including Standard Chartered Bank, Goldman Sachs, 10,000 Women, Avon Foundation for Women and Paul Singer Family Foundation, will see delegates from 24 countries discussing women as an economic force and in political leadership, besides human rights issues. Adding some glamour to the event will be actors Urmila Matondkar, Shabana Azmi, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Tanvi Azmi and Mahabano Mody Kotwal.

Alyse Nelson, CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership, explains that the Summit will conclude with the official launch of the Vital Voices Asia Women's Leadership Initiative. "It aims to build and strengthen a powerful network of women leaders across sectors, cultures and generations to help advance the regions of South Asia and East Asia Pacific socially, politically, and economically," says Nelson.

She feels that throughout Asia, particularly in India, an impressive number of accomplished woman leaders

Actors like Urmila Matondkar will add a touch of glamour to the event



CEO Alyse Nelson

spearhead efforts to broaden rights and increase opportunities in their home countries. "Through the Summit we aim to recognise the critical role these women can and must play in moving the region forward socially, politically, and economically," she says.

Nelson points out that India is recognised the world over for considerable progress made towards achieving gender equality — especially regarding women's leadership role in local governments and rural villages. "We see the women of India as having great potential to contribute to the advancement of their country," she points out.

And Delhi, being India's capital makes it an ideal setting because it is a multicultural city and a major centre of commerce, politics and civil society.

— Sobha Menon



SHABANA DOES A MERYL STREEP

The veteran actress takes on a part that was formally essayed by the Hollywood diva



Roshmila Bhattacharya
roshmila.Bhattacharya@hindustantimes.com

September 17, *SEVEN* will bring the curtains down on the four-day regional women's leadership and training summit in Delhi. Sponsored by the Avon Foundation for Women, it is a collaboration by seven playwrights. The documentary play is based on interviews with seven emerging women leaders in the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network who have triumphed over personal trials to bring about sweeping changes in their home countries.

The New York-based organisation that works with feminist issues and women's rights, has found a pro-active partner in actor-activist **Shabana Azmi** (above centre) for its India premiere.

Azmi will recreate the story of Inez McCormack who was raised as a

I'M ENTHUSED BY THE POSITIVE ENERGY AMONGST MY CO-ACTORS. I SEE THE PLAY AS A FEMINIST TOOL AND AM DOING IT FOR FREE.

-Shabana Azmi

Protestant in Northern Ireland, married a Catholic and became a longtime activist for women's human rights, labour and social justice. She's also a supporter of the Good Friday Peace Accords.

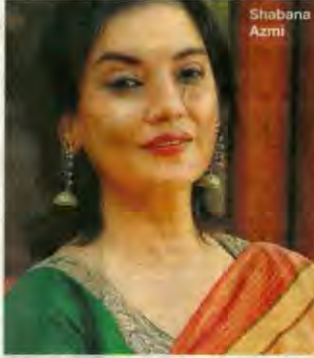
"The role was earlier performed by **Meryl Streep** (right) in the New York performance. I remember reading about it and wondering why I hadn't been approached. And as the thought flitted through my mind, the phone rang with this offer," says Azmi, who has often

been referred to as the Indian Meryl Streep. She has got five other actors on board, including Urmila Matondkar, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Tanvi Azmi, Jayanti Bhatia and Mahabanoo Mody Kotwal. "Only Mahira Kakkar, who plays Mukhtar Mai from Pakistan at every performance will be coming down from New York with the director. As we wait for them, we've already had a couple of rehearsals and I'm enthused by the positive energy amongst my co-actors. I see the play as a feminist tool and am doing it for free," she informs.

Azmi admits that *Seven* is not an entertaining play but is a deeply moving one. "You'll hear the voices of seven extraordinary, very real women. Every single word we speak is theirs and has empowered many among the over 1 billion women in the world whose lives are restricted, threatened and too often lost to violence."

WHILE SHABANA IS ALL SET TO PLAY MERYL STREEP, LUSHIN IS FLYING TO USA TO SCREEN HER PLAY. TAKE A READ...

PLAY TIME FOR AZMI



Jyothi Prabhakar | TNN

A few days ago, Shabana Azmi was in Delhi, just passing through, as she put it. She was going to Mijwan, which she explained, "is a tiny town in UP." What she doesn't make much noise about is that just a few hours ago, she'd landed in Delhi from Bhutan where she'd gone as a SAARC ambassador. "It was the third time I met the Queen Mother of Bhutan," she said. "I'd met her once when I was the UNFPA ambassador, and then when I was in Melbourne. I met her again and then, now," she added. After which she comes back to Mijwan, "We run the Mijwan Welfare Society there - it was something started by my father, Kaifi Azmi, and now, we're doing a lot of policy based and livelihood generating programmes there. You know, we have a school there, and the girls of that school were encouraged to leave their village for the first time ever - and they participated in a state level

competition and won the first place. It is so exciting," said she, and this is a word - exciting - that she often uses to tell us all that she's currently doing. "The most exciting thing is that the girls later said that they now have a sense of self worth, and that when they get back to their parents, they will urge them not to get them married off when they are 12 - 13, which is a custom in that part of India, and let them pursue their talents and dreams. How much more empowering can this get?" she asks.

Empower is a word one has often associated with the lady herself. She's been seen over the years as - to use the phrase women love to use - a woman of substance. This brings on a laugh, as she said, "You know, this Bhutan visit - their prime minister is a very young man, but he is so passionate about certain things. For instance, he's so careful about maintaining the environment, and about the health of the people. It is very heartening to see someone so dedicated."

And when we interjected to ask her what else she is doing - as in cinema, theatre, et al - she said, "I am touring with 'Broken Images', the play directed by Alyque Padamsee and written by Girish Karnad. And then, I'm also part of the play being done by an American Group, Vital Voices, which is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that identifies, trains, and empowers emerging women leaders. The play is called 'Seven', and has been put together using real interviews of women. And you know, I am essaying the same role Meryl Streep played in the original, when the play was shown in the US," said Shabana. "I am really excited. We've roped in Urmila, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Tanvi Azmi and Mahabanoo Kotwal. It's an exciting format, and the real women whose interviews will be used are from across the globe - from Ireland, Pakistan, Korea, Afghanistan. It should be really exciting," said Shabana.

But when does she rehearse for her plays, do her bit in Bollywood and then do all this? She laughed again. "I know I'm doing 200 things all together, but I love it that way."

Q&A | ALYSE NELSON

The vital role that women can play

Women are proven catalysts of progress—socially, politically and economically, says the president and CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership

BY SEEMA CHOWDHRY
seema.c@livemint.com

Vital Voices Global Partnership, a non-governmental organization that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders around the globe, will host Vital Voices of Asia, a regional leadership and training summit, in New Delhi starting Tuesday. The summit's aim is to recognize the critical role that women in South Asia and East Asia Pacific can and must play and includes speakers such as Kiran Bedi, retired Indian Police Service officer; Bharti Gupta Ramola, executive director, PricewaterhouseCoopers and co-founder Basix; and Usha Thorat, deputy governor, Reserve Bank of India.

The closing evening will also feature a performance of the documentary play *Seven*, with well-known actors such as Shabana Azmi (playing Inez McCormack).

In an email interview, Alyse Nelson, president and CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership, tells us about some of the key steps that she believes can bring more women into boardrooms. Edited excerpts:

Why are there such few women in board-level positions?

I think it's an unfortunate reality that women have often been overlooked for board-level positions within corporations, not only in a particular region, but around the world. While unwarranted biases certainly play a role in women's traditional exclusion from these senior-level positions, I do think we're starting to see a marked shift in perceptions, as new research comes to the fore that illustrates a strong connection between women's increased participation on boards and higher returns for companies.

A 2007 Catalyst report, *The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation on Boards*, shows that companies with more female board members outperform those with the least. Boards with more than three women on them have an 83% higher return to shareholder value than boards without women. Not to mention, higher returns across the board: Return on equity is 53% higher, return on sales is 42% higher and return on invested capital is 66% higher.

I think it's clear to see that when we increase women's access to opportunity, and increase women's participation at the board level, whole companies stand to prosper.

We're excited to contribute to expanding research in this field through a new partnership with *The Economist Intelligence Unit's Women's Economic Opportunity* report, an innovative study launched earlier this year to analyse policies and attitudes that affect women in the economy.

How can companies work on their diversity programmes to include more women in higher or more prominent positions?

I think the adoption of equal opportunity

employment policies is a necessary step in safeguarding fair access for all, while ensuring that companies enjoy the proven benefit of diversity. Professional development seminars and training are also great opportunities for growth and advancement.

Who are the key players in an organization who can boost the number of women promoted to key positions?

I think that leadership on this issue must come from the top, but an entire organization has a role to play in adopting fair policies and creating an environment that enables women to advance as equally as men. I think if companies promote a culture of equal opportunity, inclusiveness and merit-based promotions, women will have a fair chance to ascend the corporate ladder and take on leadership roles within their companies, showing the great value and contribution they have to offer in this sector.

Companies are usually resistant to concessions (as in flexi time, working from home) and that often leads to a large number of women quitting the workforce at some point. Should companies make such concessions to keep women in the workforce?

Certainly, I think companies need to adopt fair, non-discriminatory policies for all employees. Working or expectant mothers

should not feel that they are excluded or limited from ascending to the highest levels of corporate governance. Women around the world not only balance the demands of their personal and professional lives, but thrive in their work and go on to rise to top positions. As corporations increasingly come to realize the tremendous value that women have in the business world, I think we will see that companies stand to prosper if they adopt policies and working cultures that are amenable to women and their role in business.

Women candidates at most business schools seldom get the same job offers or positions as their male counterparts. How can this be remedied?

I think increasing awareness of newly released studies on women's value as drivers of economic growth would contribute greatly to promoting women's equal access to opportunity. If we ensure that research is widely disseminated and, indeed, if we commit further resources to this critical kind of research, we can tear down barriers that would seek to limit women's full participation or consideration for employment.

One of the central messages we're looking to impart in our work at Vital Voices, and particularly through our regional summit here in Delhi, is that women are proven catalysts of progress—socially, politically and economically. It's not that the world's women need our help—we need theirs. When women have increased access to opportunity, companies, governments and civil societies, all stand to benefit.



Boardroom-speaker Alyse Nelson.



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Buzz

Asia Women's Leadership meet from Sep 14; 24 nations to attend

PTI | 01:08 PM, Sep 12, 2010

New Delhi, Sep 12 (PTI) Delegates from 24 countries including India, the US, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan will participate in Asia Women's Leadership Regional Summit here from September 14 to examine critical issues in role of women in economy, leadership and their human rights. The four-day Summit, co-sponsored by Vital Voices, an NGO and the US State Department, aims to recognise the critical role that women in South Asia and East Asia Pacific can and must play in moving the region forward socially, politically, and economically. The meet will bring together government and political leaders, community and

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/asia-womens-leadership-meet-from-sep-14-24-nations-to-attend/315115.html>

Tuesday, September 21, 2010 As of 5:07 PM rd

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SEPTEMBER 13, 2010, 4:07 PM IST

A 'Vital Voice' on Women in India

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By Paul Beckett



Alyse Nelson has heard a lot about the role of women in society.

As the president of Vital Voices, a Washington-based non-governmental organization that seeks to foster women's leadership and entrepreneurship worldwide, she sees India having a unique equation when it comes to the issues her outfit cares about — similar in many respects to other countries.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2010/09/13/a-vital-voice-on-women-in-india/>

'Women need to reach out to form partnerships across sectors'

Interview with Alyse Nelson, CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership.

Organised by the Vital Voices Global Partnership, a non-governmental organisation that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders around the globe, the Vital Voices of Asia summit is to take place at New Delhi from September 15-17. Announced by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Vital Voices of Asia is supported by a partnership between the U.S. government, Humanity United, and several multinationals. Excerpts from an e-mail interview with Alyse Nelson, CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership, New York, by Visa Ravindran.

"The power of female leadership" is one of the themes of the summit. Is female leadership distinctly different from male leadership? How? Has any comparative study been done between the two?

Women who lead are often driven to do so because they see a problem in their community that disadvantages those around them, and so when they search for a solution, they choose to engage those around them, thereby finding a sustainable solution that is relevant to all in the community – this method is sometimes called a "transformative" kind of leadership because it is centred around creating lasting change, rather than a one-time solution.

As an economic force they are formidable. How do we manage equal



ALYSE NELSON: *'When a woman leader succeeds, she carries whole communities with her.'*

access to opportunities for women? In all fields [science is an area where they are under-represented for instance]?

I think the key to making equal access to opportunities possible lies in a shared endeavour – we can't secure equal opportunities for women and girls if we

limit ourselves to working within the women's empowerment silo. I think we can accelerate the momentum that's already starting to materialise by engaging new partners in the business world, government, the NGO community, media, academia and others.

We've seen the proof time and again: in societies where women have equal access to education, political representation and economic opportunities, governments are more open and free, and younger generations are healthier and better educated. When a woman leader succeeds, she carries whole communities forward with her.

What are the tried and tested means of safeguarding women's rights? Could we use new technology in innovative ways to fight violence against women and children?

In the past few decades, women around the world have been remarkable advocates for not only their own rights, but human rights for all. Advocating for change, working with policy makers to adopt legislation, and ensuring the effective implementation of legislation are all key components to protecting and preserving women's rights.

What difference do you see between Indian women and American women in status / in the ways they use to get out of their difficulties?

I see some great similarities among American and Indian women, characteristics that I feel are representative of many women around the world. I admire the remarkable progress that Indian women have made as self-made entrepreneurs, community organisers, and political advocates

I think women across cultures are, on the whole, united by a strong desire to create better futures for their communities; they are persistent, creative, and collaborative as leaders. Women tend to adopt an inclusive approach to solving challenges, and I think this takes them and the solutions they propose very far.

What is your message to all women, everywhere on the eve of this crucial summit?

When women are given the opportunity – social, political and economic – they advance progress that's shared in by whole families, communities, countries, regions, and our world. My message to women from around the world, and especially those we'll soon be joining with in Asia, is that we need to support one another and reach out to form partnerships across sectors. We're not alone in this work, and in building strong networks of regional women leaders, like those we are convening at the Vital Voices of Asia Summit, we can accelerate the progress we're trying to achieve as individuals.



The play Seven brings together stories of seven remarkable women from across the globe

Shabana leads the talent powerhouse that is set to dazzle city's stage

IT ISN'T everyday that powerhouse women from the world of theatre and allied arts get together for a performance. Then again, it probably takes a good cause to bring diverse talents together. This weekend, the Capital plays host to the documentary play, Seven, which features an all-star cast including Shabana Azmi and her

sister-in-law Tarvi, Urmila Matondkar, Mahabanoo Moody-Kozwal and others. It is being staged on the sidelines of Vital Voices of Asia Women's Leadership and Training Summit, and brings together the stories of seven remarkable women across the globe. This year, the summit takes place in India, after having been held in Africa and Latin America.

by **Karanjeet Kaur**

Vital Voices Global Partnership says that women in India are excellent role models for their global counterparts. "The summit is designed to bring together 250 women leaders all of whom have been carefully selected; women who

are bound to have a tremendous impact on their respective countries in the next 10 years," she says. Nelson explains that the play has been in the making for nearly four years, when Vital Voices was approached by women playwrights such as Anna Deavere Smith and Susan Yankowitz, who wanted to use their voices as a platform to showcase the lives of seven women of "extraordinary resili-

ence". Based on that, the organisers chose the artists, because they are "committed to the Vital Voices core leadership model". The play unfolds in the form of personal interviews with the women, a bit like the much-lauded Eve Ensler play, The vagina Monologues, except here, the stories are intertwined. For instance, Shabana Azmi plays the role of Mex-

McCormack, a human rights activist from Northern Ireland, who helped fight for the provisions of the Good Friday Peace Accord. Azmi steps into the formidable shoes of Mary Sevier who portrayed the activist in a New York City performance. Urmila Matondkar essays the role of Farida Azid, a women's rights leader from Afghanistan and a founding member of the Cooperation for Peace and Unity, devoted to world peace.

Mahabanoo Moody Kozwal, the force behind The Virginia Menologues' success, plays Anabella de Leon, a Congresswoman from Guatemala. She says that she was recommended by Shabana Azmi and was drawn to the role because "this is reality, at its best," she consulted YouTube and the web to research her character.

Other actors in the play include Tanishtha Chatterjee, who plays the role of Nigerian leader Hafsat Abibola. Closer home, the most recognizable story is that of Mukti-Ormai from Pakistan, who was gang raped over an alleged honour crime, but chose to spearhead a campaign to educate women.

Seven will be staged at the Tag Palace Hotel, Sept 17, 7 p.m.

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Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital

New Delhi, Sep 15, (IANS):

Pledging commitment to transforming the lives of women and helping them become self-sustainable in their communities, a three-day women's training and leadership summit opened in the capital on Wednesday.

The summit, "Vital Voices of Asia: Women's Leadership and Training Summit" organised by Vital Voices Global Partnership, a non-profit organisation, has brought together power women like retired Indian super cop Kiran Bedi, Usha Thorat, vice-president of the Reserve Bank of India, Bharti Gupta Ramola, executive director of PricewaterhouseCoopers; and Fernanda Borges, leader of the National Unity Party, among others.

The conference opened at the Taj Palace hotel with an address by American ambassador to India Timothy J. Romer, Melanne Verveer, ambassador at large for Global Women's Issues and a recorded message from US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, the founder of Vital Voices.

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/96674/three-day-asian-womens-summit.html>

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Shabana To Play Meryl Streep's Role, Urmila Matondkar To Go On Stage For The First Time With Shabana

When I worked with Urmila in Masoom she wasn't a child like the other kids in the film, She was a STAR - Shabana

by Subhash K Jha / Sampurn Media



Always known as the Meryl Streep Of India, Shabana is now set to go on stage in a role that Streep has played in the US. And joining Shabana on 'Meryl Street' is her good friend, Urmila Matondkar.

For those who have been wondering where Urmila is these days here's the news. She is all set to go on stage for the first time and that too with the formidable Shabana Azmi as her co-star. The play entitled Seven has been performed internationally as part of the creative endeavours of a global organization known as Vital Voices. The play Seven now comes to Delhi on August 17th as a culmination of the 2-day Vital Voices Asia Summit in Delhi.

Meryl Streep has played the role in an earlier staging of the play in the US.

Apparently, it was Shabana who coaxed Urmila Matondkar to step into

http://www.desiclub.com/bollywood/bollywood_features/bolly_article.cfm?id=1747

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US Ambassador praises Sheila Dikshit

Published: Wednesday, Sep 15, 2010, 17:50 IST

Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit today got an unexpected praise from US ambassador Timothy Roemer at a time when she is facing criticism for the mess in city ahead of the Commonwealth Games.

Roemer, addressing a conference in New Delhi, complimented Dikshit while referring to Indian women occupying high offices in the country.

Dikshit "performed a hat-trick by winning three successive state assembly elections. Her leadership

here in the city is helping transform the capital," Roemer said at Asia

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_us-ambassador-praises-sheila-dikshit_1438369

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Women's empowerment key to country's progress

Priti Prakash, Sep 15, 2010, 18:13 pm IST



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Wednesday, September 15, 2010 (14:13:05)

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Three-day Asian women's summit opens in Delhi

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The conference opened at the Taj Palace hotel with an address by American ambassador to India Timothy J. Romer, Melanne Verveer, ambassador at large for Global Women's Issues, and a recorded message from US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, the founder of Vital Voices.

The summit will discuss issues like "Leadership Potential of Women: Tapping the Extraordinary Potential of Women", "Investing in Women as Sustained Economic Growth", "Women's Marketplace in Asia" and "A Roundtable To Commemorate the 15th anniversary of the 4th UN Conference On Women".

<http://headlinesindia.mapsofindia.com/state-news/delhi/threeday-asian-womens-summit-opens-in-delhi-63295.html>

You Are Here Home » News » National » **Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital**

Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital

By **Indo Asian News Service** | Wednesday, September 15, 2010 | 2:07:00 PM IST (+05:30 GMT) 0 Comment

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<http://www.india-forums.com/news/national/276939-three-day-asian-women-summit-opens-in-capital.htm>



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India has done a lot for uplifting women: Roemer



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Express News Service

Tags : women empowerment, delhi

Posted: Thu Sep 16 2010, 03:50 hrs

New Delhi:

Lauding India's efforts for women's empowerment as some of the top positions, including that of the President, Speaker of Lok Sabha and chief of Congress party, are held by women, the US ambassador Timoth Roemer on Wednesday called upon for equal access to opportunities for everyone.

"Let us strive to make sure that everyone in society, especially women, have equal access to

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/india-has-done-a-lot-for-uplifting-women-roemer/682154/>

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By Express News Service, 16/09/2010

India has done a lot for uplifting women: Roemer

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"Let us strive to make sure that everyone in society, especially women, have equal access to opportunities so that each of us can fulfill our potential and achieve our dreams," Roemer said, while quoting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's famous remark "talent is universal, opportunity is not."

Praising Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, Roemer said her leadership is helping transform the Capital. He was speaking at a conference by Vital Voices Global Partnership, a leading US-based non-governmental organization that identifies, trains, and empowers emerging women leaders around the globe. The two-day regional leadership and training summit in New Delhi brings together 250 women leaders from 23 countries.

The goal of the summit, according to Alyse Nelson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Vital

<http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4387165>

New Delhi | 6 days ago

Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital

Wednesday, 15 September 2010 | <http://www.nerve.in/news:253500339339> | channel: India

ACOUSTIC NERVE

"We enable women to become change agents in their governments, advocates for social justice and supporters of democracy against women and girls. We equip women with management, business development, marketing and communications skills to expand their enterprises, help provide for their families and create jobs in their communities," a spokesperson for the organisation said."

New Delhi, Sep 15 – Pledging commitment to transforming the lives of women and helping them become self-sustainable in their communities, a three-day women's training and leadership summit opened in the capital Wednesday.

The summit, 'Vital Voices of Asia: Women's Leadership and Training Summit' organised by Vital Voices Global Partnership, a non-profit organisation, has brought together power women like retired Indian super cop Kiran Bedi, Usha Thorat, vice-president of the Reserve Bank of India; Bharti Gupta Ramola, executive director of PricewaterhouseCoopers; and Fernanda Borges, leader of the National Unity Party, among others.

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The summit will discuss issues like 'Leadership Potential of Women: Tapping the Extraordinary Potential of Women', 'Investing in Women as Sustained Economic Growth', 'Women's Marketplace in Asia' and 'A Roundtable To Commemorate the 15th anniversary of the 4th UN Conference On Women'.

A play 'Seven', to be staged Friday, will present stories of women's courage from across the world.

Vital Voices Global Partnership is at the forefront of international coalitions to combat human trafficking and other forms of violence against women and girls.

<http://www.nerve.in/news:253500339339>

US Ambassador Praises Dikshit

NEW DELHI | SEP 15, 2010

PRINT SHARE



COMMENTS

Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit today got an unexpected praise from US Ambassador Timothy Roemer at a time when she is facing criticism for the mess in city ahead of the Commonwealth Games.

Roemer, addressing a conference here, complimented Dikshit while referring to Indian women occupying high offices in the country.

Dikshit "performed a hat-trick by winning three successive state assembly elections. Her leadership here in the city is helping transform the capital," Roemer said at Asia Women's Leadership Regional Summit participated by delegates from 24 countries.

Roemer also hailed achievements of Indian women in diverse fields and said they have demonstrated their courage and skill both within the country and abroad.

Dikshit has been under attack from various quarters for the city's tardy preparations for the Games beginning October 3.

<http://news.outlookindia.com/item.aspx?693564>



Wednesday, September 15th, 2010 | 2, Nickole Smith

Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital

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<http://topinews.com/mainstream/2010/09/15/three-day-asian-womens-summit-opens-in-capital/34117/>

India has done a lot for uplifting women: Roemer

Thu, Sep 16 06:08 AM

Lauding India's efforts for women's empowerment as some of the top positions, including that of the President, Speaker of Lok Sabha and chief of Congress party, are held by women, the US ambassador Timothy Roemer on Wednesday called upon for equal access to opportunities for everyone.

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http://in.news.yahoo.com/48/20100916/804/tnl-india-has-done-a-lot-for-uplifting-w_1.html

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India

Three-day Asian women's summit opens in capital

New Delhi | Wednesday, 2010 3:05:06 PM IST

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<http://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20100915/1587746.html>

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Role of women in unorganized sector is significant: Tharot

Updated on Thursday, September 16, 2010, 16:57

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Zeebiz Bureau

New Delhi: The second day of the three-day women's training and leadership summit, hosted by Vital Voices Global Partnership, opened in the capital with its focus on the issue of 'Women as an economic force in Asia'.

The Women's leadership and Training Summit on Thursday was followed by a panel discussion attended by veterans in the field of Finance and Economy.

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Fair enough!

PHOTOS: MANOJ VERMA



COP-ING WITH IT: Kiran Bedi



HAPPY ME: Carol Kurzig



YO, YO: Tannishtha Chatterjee



NE(C)K KAAM: Jayati Bhatia



REGAL RAP:
Urmila Matondkar



HAND-IN-HAND: Bina Ramani with Mu Sochua

Delhi has always done its bit to to acknowledge girl power. The closing ceremony of Vital Voices of Asia, a Leadership and Training Summit organised for women by Vital Voices and Avon Foundation, saw a documentary-cum-theatrical performance by some of Bollywood's leading ladies, such as Shabana Azmi and Urmila Matondkar.

The act was followed by a discussion with all the

actors and Mu Sochua, an activist and politician from Cambodia, whose life and experience formed one of the characters of the play, *Seven*.

But all that serious talk gave way to a relaxed celebration, with women delegations from around the world and guests like supercop Kiran Bedi, actors Jayati Bhatia, Mahira Kakkar, and Tannishtha Chatterjee, seen enjoying at The Taj Palace hotel that evening.

AAKRITI SAWHNEY



LOOK AT YOU: Mhabanoo Mody Kotwal with Tanvi Azmi



GIVE HER SOME WAY: Shabana Azmi with hubby Javed Akhtar

MEN NOT ALLOWED!

Photo: Parvathi Deygale and Divya Bhatt



Seven, it is said, is one of the most magical and lucky numbers. So what happens when seven women — Shabana Azmi, Urmila Matondkar, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Tanvi Azmi, Mahabanoo Mody Kotwal, Jayati Bhatia and US-based Mahira Kakkar — come to the city — double the magic, eh? The play "Seven", which has travelled all over the world and has been essayed by many actors in different countries, made its Asia premiere in Delhi. The actors narrated, in the documentary style, the life stories of seven real women leaders from different countries.

The play was staged to conclude the four-day Vital Voices of Asia: Leadership and Training Summit. The play had Shabana play Northern Ireland's civil rights pioneer Ibo McCormack, a role previously essayed by Meryl Streep in New York. Urmila played Afghan human rights lawyer Farida Azizi, Bengali actress Tannishtha Chatterjee played the role of Hafsat Abiola, democracy activist and daughter of an assassinated Nigerian president, while Mahira Kakkar played the *gujjar* peasant woman from Pakistan, Mukhtaran Mai, who was an honour victim of her village council's order to four men to gang rape her as a form of dishing out 'justice'. Theatre actor Mahabanoo Modi Kotwal played Anabella de Leon, a Guatemalan member of Parliament, and TV and theatre actor Tanvi Azmi, who also happens to be Shabana's sister-in-law, played

SPOTED:
Javed Akhtar,
Kiran Bedi,
Sina Khanji

**AFGHAN
SHAHAN:** Urmila
Matondkar

Russian domestic violence activist Pisklakova Parker, and TV actor Jayati Bhatia played Cambodian MP and child trafficking activist Mu Sochua.

The play received a standing ovation from a visibly emotional audience. Mu Sochua, who came from Cambodia, was given a loud welcome on stage. Shabana, while addressing the audience, said, "This is a tribute to all those women in the world who are fighting against violence."



Anushi Nigam and Diksha Karra

Shabana Azmi

Mahira Kakkar

Jayati Bhatia

Tannishtha Chatterjee

Mahabanoo Mody Kotwal with Tanvi Azmi

Vital Voices of India: Women's Leadership and Training Summit

Posted by IANS-CT in Business



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New Delhi, Sep 19 (Calcutta Tube) When **Revathi Siddhartha Roy** ferried her first passenger from the international airport in Mumbai in 2007, she unleashed a gender revolution on the streets, powering the only cab service by women and for women in India. But three years later she is struggling to keep it on the roads as both banks and micro-credit institutions have refused her loans.

Starting out as the lone woman at the wheel of a **commercial taxi** - she got the idea from similar services in many world cities - Revathi turned entrepreneur with the unique *Forsche dial-a-cab* service that operates in Mumbai and Delhi. But now she's finding it tough to go ahead with expansion plans.

'The banks have refused me loans on the premise that girls who aspire to become taxi drivers are not economically viable. They cannot offer collateral because all of them are from below the

<http://humanitariannews.org/20100917/seven-staged-delhi-closing-day-vital-voices-asia-summit>



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Vital Voices announces new initiatives for women empowerment

Priti Prakash , Sep 18, 2010, 13:00 pm IST

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New Delhi: Vital Voices of Asia, a regional leadership and training three day summit concluded in New Delhi on September 17th with the announcement of several new initiatives that will further strengthen a powerful network of regional women

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SEVEN Staged in Delhi on the Closing Day of Vital Voices of Asia Summit

September 17, 2010 - 25:00

We were so thrilled this evening to bring an incredible three-day summit to a close with the staging of our documentary play, SEVEN, featuring seven acclaimed Indian actresses. Shabana Azmi, celebrated actress and women's advocate, championed our Delhi production, taking it upon herself to engage fellow actresses in the staging after being moved by the [...]

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MEDIA	JOURNALIST	SPOKESPERSON
Financial Times	Special Correspondent Anjali Raval	Fixed interaction with Kiran Bedi / Beth Brooke. However, the journalist is not filing the story. Missed Opportunity
Times of India	Senior Asst.Editor Nandita Sengupta	Ambassador Melanee Verveer / Charm Tong / Ivy Josiah/ Pacita Juan / Mary Shnack
Women's Features Service	Special Correspondent Swapna Majumdar	Charm Tong / Ivy Josiah/ Pacita Juan / Mary Shnack
Pioneer	Sub Editor cum Reporter Ila Sankrityayan	Zain Verjee
Entrepreneur	Senior Feature Writer Pran Borpujari	Bharti Gupta Ramola/ Alyse Nelson / Noa Meyer
Hindustan Times	Senior Associate Editor Lalita Panicker	Ambassador Melanee Verveer
Hindu Business Line	Senior Business Journalist Chitra Narayan	Maria Pena
Business Today	Associate Editor Shalini Dagar	Alyse Nelson / Bharti Gupta Ramola / Tara Thiagarajan / Mu Sochua / Pacita Juan
Network1 Media News Agency	Consulting Editor Arnab Banerjee	Shabhana Azmi and all other actors / producer, director / Carol Kurzig Avon / Alyse Nelson Vital Voices

MEDIA WHO ATTENDED THE ROUND TABLE ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2010

PUBLICATION	JOURNALIST
Entrepreneur	Tanzoon Ahmed
UNI	Sangeeta Taurus
Indian Age	Santhosh Mehta
Associated Press TV	Vineeta Deepak
The Hindu Business Line	Chitra Narayan
Indian Express	Shubhrajit Roy
Mail Today	Haimanthi Mukerjee
MINT	Seema Chowdhury
Society	Meeta Misra
Sunday Tribune	Sonia Bakshi

MEDIA WHO ATTENDED THE SUMMIT AND SEVEN

SEPTEMBER 15 - SEPTEMBER 17, 2010

PUBLICATION	JOURNALIST
MAINLINES AND FINANCIALS	
Pioneer	Ila Sankrityayan
Financial Times	Anjali Raval
Women's Feature Service	Swapna Majumdar
Times of India	Nandita Sengupt
The Hindu	Arati Dhar
HT City	Akrushi
The Hindu Business Line	Chitra Narayan
MINT	Seema Chowdhury
Delhi Times	Diksha Komra
Indian Express	Shubhra Gupta
WIRES	
PTI	Umesh Singh
	Bijay Patel
	Manoj
	Mansh
	Pranjal Bhuyan
Reuters	C J Kuncrusia
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Newswire 18	Neha Arora

IANS	Madhu
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Bloomberg	Unni Krishnan
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NDTV Profit	Faizan Khan
Zee Business	Reema Sharma
Focus TV	Kitty Behel
ZEE News	Rijo Jacob
MAGAZINES	
Entrepreneur	Tanzoon Ahmed
	Pran Bhozpujari
	Shaimak Banerjee
Ever Times	Kalpana Yuvraj
India Today- Good House Keeping	Mohini
India Today	Kruthika Rao

Queridos Amigos,

Avon y Avon Foundation for Women se enorgullecen de asociarse con Vital Voices Global Partnership para presentarles esta noche una obra teatral de carácter documental, SIETE (Seven, en su título original). Esta obra teatral innovadora - que cuenta la historia de siete mujeres que han superado obstáculos tremendos para lograr cambios en sus países - es la más reciente colaboración entre Avon y Vital Voices para empoderar a más de mil millones de mujeres en todo el mundo, cuyas vidas están limitadas, amenazadas y, muy a menudo, libradas a la violencia.

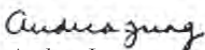
En marzo de 2010, Avon Foundation for Women, Vital Voices y el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos crearon la Alianza Global para Poner Fin a la Violencia contra las Mujeres (The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Women). En una cumbre de tres días celebrada en Washington, DC., se reunieron 15 delegaciones de países compuestas por líderes de diversos sectores para compartir impresiones, prestar colaboración y buscar maneras de superar las desafiantes realidades culturales que han sido barreras para el progreso.

La determinación de Avon de formar parte de la solución para poner fin a la violencia contra las mujeres surge a partir de su compromiso fundador hace casi 125 años de ofrecer a las mujeres la oportunidad de generar un ingreso independiente - 34 años antes, habían ganado el derecho de votar en los Estados Unidos. Nuestra historia en el empoderamiento de mujeres se refleja en nuestra dedicación filantrópica para apoyar las causas que más preocupan a las mujeres. Desde 1955, Avon y la Avon Foundation for Women ha otorgado más de 725 millones de dólares en más de 50 países, lo que hace que seamos la mayor compañía afiliada a la acción social, dedicada enteramente a las causas de las mujeres en el mundo. Con una larga historia de apoyo en la investigación del cáncer de mamas y acceso al cuidado, lanzamos el programa Alza la Voz contra la Violencia Doméstica (Speak Out Against Domestic Violence) en 2004 para enfrentar esta alarmante epidemia. Desde entonces nuestro programa se ha extendido a más de 50 países en donde tenemos presencia, y hemos destinado más de 30 millones de dólares a esta causa. Los líderes de Avon en América Latina han sido pioneros de este programa, incluyendo los innovadores esfuerzos de prevención y concientización en Argentina y Colombia, un exitoso concurso de cortos sobre violencia doméstica en México, y el apoyo en la implementación del Acta Maria da Penha en Brasil.

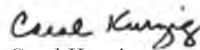
Nos enorgullece colaborar otra vez esta noche con Vital Voices para incrementar la conciencia respecto de los desafíos que enfrentan las mujeres en todo el mundo que son víctimas de la violencia. Juntos, debemos trabajar para asegurar un mañana mejor y más seguro para las mujeres y sus familias en todo el mundo.

El espectáculo de esta noche, SIETE, es un paso en ese viaje.

Atentamente,



Andrea Jung
Presidente y
Avon Products, Inc



Carol Kurzig
CEO Presidente
Avon Foundation for Women

El año 2010 marca el 15º aniversario de la Cuarta Conferencia Mundial de Naciones Unidas sobre la Mujer, que tuvo lugar en Beijing. Desde 1995, se han realizado muchos avances en el área de los derechos de la mujer y el empoderamiento económico; no obstante, las mujeres en todo el mundo aún continúan su lucha por la paz y la seguridad en sus hogares y comunidades.

Con el objetivo de crear nuevas estrategias para poner fin a esta epidemia arraigada, Vital Voices Global Partnership y Avon Foundation for Women crearon la Alianza Global para Poner Fin a la Violencia contra la Mujer (**The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Women**), una asociación público-privada entre Avon Foundation for Women, Vital Voices Global Partnership y el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos.

La **Alianza Global para Poner Fin a la Violencia Contra la Mujer** fue lanzada el Día Internacional de la Mujer, en Marzo de 2010, con una cumbre mundial en Washington, DC. La cumbre reunió delegaciones de expertos de 15 países, con representantes de las áreas de negocios, gubernamental, justicia y ONGs. En la actualidad, estos líderes continúan desarrollando soluciones innovadoras para tratar el creciente desafío global de la violencia contra la mujer, incluyendo los tres delitos más perversos cometidos contra ella – violencia doméstica, ataque sexual (que incluye la violación como arma de guerra) y la trata de personas.

Para tomar las ideas tratadas en la cumbre y ponerlas en acción en todo el mundo, Vital Voices y Avon Foundation for Women están desarrollando campañas de procuración que serán lanzadas en India y Argentina. La presentación de la extraordinaria obra documental, SIETE, basada en la vida de siete valientes mujeres que son parte de la red de Vital Voices Global Partnership lanzará las campañas y servirá como un foro de discusión sobre los temas principales que se destacan en la obra, tales como la violencia doméstica y la violencia contra la mujer.

El poder transformador del teatro y las atractivas historias descritas en SIETE servirán de punto de partida para inspirar energía renovada y dar impulso para ayudar a poner fin a la violencia contra la mujer.

Al realizar una inversión significativa en la capacidad de 15 países críticos, esta alianza innovadora busca revertir la ola de violencia que se ha incrementado constantemente durante los últimos 15 años y crear un mundo más seguro para nuestras madres, hijas, hermanas y amigas.





THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
TO END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN



VITAL VOICES
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

AVON
Foundation
for Women

Presenta

siete

(Título Original: "SEVEN")

de Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol Mack,
Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith y Susan Yankowitz

en versión de Fernando Masllorens y Federico González del Pino

Con una introducción realizada por Carol Kurzig,
Presidente, Avon Foundation for Women

HAFSAT ABIOLA, Nigeria... María Socas
Por Anna Deavere Smith

FARIDA AZIZI, Afganistán... Muriel Santa Ana
Por Ruth Margraff

ANABELLA DE LEON, Guatemala... Hilda Bernard
Por Gail Kriegel

INEZ McCORMACK, Irlanda del Norte... Verónica Llinás
Por Carol Mack

MUKHTARAN MAI, Pakistán... Silvana Sosto
Por Susan Yankowitz

MU SOCHUA, Cambodia... Graciela Dufau
Por Catherine Filloux

MARINA PISKLAKOVA – PARKER, Rusia... Carola Reyna
Por Paula Cizmar

Con la participación de Cecilia Massa

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Fabián Zitta

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La Fundación Avon, tiene como misión constituir un espacio institucional de excelencia que promueva efectivas posibilidades de realización personal y profesional para todas las mujeres.

Trabaja para defender los derechos de la mujer y cuidar su integridad física, emocional y social a través del programa Alza la voz contra la violencia doméstica. Genera acciones de concientización y promoción de la salud, a través de la Cruzada por la Lucha contra el Cáncer de Mama. Reconoce y premia a las mujeres que lideran proyectos sociales y solidarios en todo el país y propone espacios de crecimiento laboral a través de la capacitación y formación profesional.

En 11 años, más de 200.000 mujeres en todo el país, han sido parte de las acciones que lleva adelante la Fundación Avon en Argentina, permitiendo hacer realidad el proyecto original, de crear un espacio de desarrollo para la mujer en todos sus ámbitos, favoreciendo su promoción, participación e inclusión social y mejorando su calidad de vida.

www.fundacionavon.org.ar



VOCES VITALES
ARGENTINA

Bajo la misión de fortalecer el liderazgo de las mujeres en nuestro país, Voces Vitales Argentina realiza desde 2009 actividades inspiradas en los programas internacionales de Vital Voices Global Partnership.

A través de actividades de mentoreo y capacitación, fortalece a la nueva generación de líderes, a fin de impulsar el desarrollo conjunto, y genera espacios de conexión con mujeres líderes de todos los ámbitos a fin de promover el intercambio de información y experiencias, crear oportunidades, e impulsar el rol de la mujer como agente de cambio.

<http://vocesvitalesarentina.bligoo.com/>



La Fundación Arte Vivo es una organización sin fines de lucro que fue creada por Teresa Costantini en 1997. Desde entonces trabaja en la Argentina con la misión de alentar y potenciar el desarrollo de la investigación y difusión de diversas expresiones artísticas, culturales y educativas, con un acento en el lenguaje audiovisual, el cine y el teatro. Sus principales objetivos son la integración cultural, la formación, la cooperación interinstitucional y la promoción artística.

www.artevivo.org.ar



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Laura Florencia Moreno
Make-up

Sebastián Fernandez
Estilista



March 1, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Malik Gillani, Executive Director

Silk Road Theatre Project (312) 857-1234 ext. 202 malik@srtp.org

Silk Road Theatre Project's Al Kasida Staged Reading Series Presents SEVEN, a documentary play written by Ruth Margraff, Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Anna Deveare-Smith and Susan Yankowitz. Directed by Kimberly Senior and featuring Adrienne Curry, Ilana Faust, Barbara Figgins, Cheryl Hamada, Mildred Langford, Mouzam Makkar, and Amira Sabbagh

WHEN: Friday, April 1 at 8:00pm

WHERE: Silk Road Theatre Project at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St., Pierce Hall, Chicago www.srtp.org

RESERVATIONS are SOLD OUT. With this invitation we will provide one complimentary ticket reserved in your name as a VIP for this special invitation as our invited guest.

SEVEN is a groundbreaking documentary play based on interviews with seven women's rights activists from seven countries around the world – Afghanistan, Cambodia, Guatemala, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, and Russia. The interviews were conducted by seven award-winning women playwrights – Ruth Margraff, Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Anna Deveare-Smith and Susan Yankowitz. SEVEN was created in collaboration with Vital Voices Global Partnership. See: <http://www.seventheplay.com>

"The play powerfully portrays the transformative way that seven courageous women have changed their societies for the better – from peace-building, to fighting corruption to combating violence against women." ~US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton~

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

SEVEN opened in New York City at the 92nd Street Y on January 21, 2008. It has been performed all over the world including performances in Aspen, Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC (USA) and international performances in ABUJA (NIGERIA), BRUSSELS (BELGIUM), BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA), DEAUVILLE (FRANCE), ISTANBUL (TURKEY), LONDON (UK), NEW DELHI (INDIA), GENEVA (SWITZERLAND), and several Swedish national tours including THE HAGUE, STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN). In March 2010 SEVEN opened the Women in the World Conference in New York City at the Hudson Theater sponsored by Tina Brown (The Daily Beast) and Vital Voices and introduced by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. SEVEN is currently touring to VÄNERSBORG, ULRICEHAMN, STOCKHOLM, KINDA, GOTHENBURG (SWEDEN), DURHAM, LEEDS (UK), HELSINKI (FINLAND), ANKARA (TURKEY), etc. <http://www.sevenwomen.se/en/uppsattningen/turneplan>

SRTP will present a second enhanced staged reading of SEVEN on **April 2, 2011 at 8:00pm at the Gene Siskel Film Center** as part of The 16th Annual Chicago Asian American Showcase presented by The Foundation for Asian American Independent Media and The Gene Siskel Film Center. For more information visit: www.faaim.org

London's National theaters, offered a fierce portrayal of Irish activist Inez McCormack. All the distinctive performers bristled with purpose, even Mahira Kakkar as Mukhtaran Mai, the reserved Pakistani woman who challenged the brutal traditions of rape as social punishment.

Mai's experience is the emotional heart of the show, which is full of eye-opening facts -- how rampant the battering of women is in Russia, for instance, and how children get addicted to opium early in Afghanistan.

The script is based on interviews, with each playwright matched to a particular subject: Smith, for instance, wrote of Hafsat Abiola, daughter of Nigeria's assassinated president, and Catherine Filloux -- who has dealt with Cambodia in previous projects -- was matched with that country's Mu Sochua, now a parliamentarian who has been fighting rampant sexual exploitation.

That these experiences, delivered in accents from around the globe, are rendered as interlinked rather than as sequential stand-alone tales is certainly much of the point (solidarity!). It is also the show's dramatic challenge. The piece moves fast and jump-cuts abruptly at times; a more fully realized visual production might help sharpen the arc and focus of each woman's saga.

As is, director Evan Yionoulis kept the staging dynamic, as the performers sometimes took roles in each other's accounts, and the activist aesthetic made the evening personable but pointed.

"Seven" was persuasive in its twin convictions: that there is much work yet to be done on what Clinton's letter termed "true gender equity" -- and that ardent, informative drama can do its part.

Seven, by Anna Deavere Smith, Ruth Margraff, Gail Kriegel, Susan Yankowitz, Carol K. Mack, Paula Cizmar and Catherine Filloux. Directed by Evan Yionoulis. With Betsy Aidem, Mercedes Herrero, Rachael Holmes and Mia Katigbak.

By: **Marcia G. Yerman**

World Premiere of *Seven* Brings Vital Voices to New York City

Posted January 29, 2008 | 10:27 PM (EST)

Breaking Entertainment News

On January 21st, art and activism shared the stage at the 92nd Street Y Unterberg Poetry Center's premiere of *Seven*, a documentary theatre presentation. The result was riveting, explosive, and inspiring drama.

The brainchild of playwright Carol K. Mack, the concept for the project evolved after Mack sat in on a meeting of the Connecticut Chapter of Vital Voices Global Partnership. The organization is a non-profit that focuses on empowering women around the globe by supporting the advancement of leadership. Mack was viscerally impacted by hearing the struggles and ultimate triumphs of women who resolved, "not to go the route that had been chosen for them." She envisioned bringing individual stories to the public through the performance medium.

Mack began by assembling a team of playwrights (Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith, Susan Yankowitz) with award-winning resumes, to join her in conducting conversations with seven women from different parts of the world. Monologues were shaped using verbatim transcripts of interviews. Through workshop development, the structure evolved to an interweaving of the different accounts in a point-counterpoint methodology. Commonality was the thread.

We are introduced to Marina Pisklakova-Parker from Russia, where 14,000 women a year are killed by relationship partners. In a culture where a popular 16th Century maxim, "He beats you, therefore he loves you" sets the tone, Pisklakova-Parker forged ahead to establish the nation's first domestic violence hotline in 1993. Despite menacing calls from irate husbands, she fielded 700 requests for help in the first year. Pisklakova-Parker is still haunted by the woman who told her, "Before you get to me...I will be dead."

Annabella De León also knows first-hand the price of being outspoken. "Those who fight corruption, don't have too many friends," she observes. Elected to Guatemala's Congress in 1995, she has consistently championed the rights of women and indigenous people in her homeland,

despite the risk.

In Cambodia, the office of Minister of Veterans and Women's Affairs was always held by a man, until Mu Sochua was appointed to the post in 1998. As a leading exponent for the fight against human trafficking in a nation that is a center of activity, she has publicly addressed the subject of how governmental corruption impacts anti-trafficking endeavors. In 2005, she was a co-nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The family history of Hafsat Abiola, which is intertwined with the politics of Nigeria, reveals how she endured the deaths of both her parents in the fight for democracy. Her personal losses were an impetus, as she moved forward to found an NGO that offers skills-training and leadership programs to young women.

The words of Farida Azizi were captured by Ruth Margraff, who explained how their discussions enabled her to "highlight the poetry of Azizi's words." Shaping the oral history of Azizi's fight against the Taliban hierarchy and the suppression of women in Afghanistan, was described by Margraff as a "transformative experience." Reflecting upon the relationship, Margraff reveals, "She changed my life."

The moment in which Inez McCormack connected to the path of activism is underscored in her account. As a young Protestant girl in Northern Ireland who never met a Catholic until her late teens, her insight into the discrimination and inequity that was devouring her country came in a shocking moment. As a witness to the fallout of the Burntollet Bridge Ambush (where Catholic marchers were attacked by Unionists), her life course was altered.

Perhaps the most starkly emotive narrative of the set is Mukhtaran Mai's story of survival and redemption. She was gang-raped by four men as retribution for an "honor crime" supposedly committed by her twelve year old brother (allegedly he held hands with a girl from a higher-caste tribe). A male tribunal from her village in Pakistan instituted the sentence. After her physical ordeal, she was forced to walk home in ripped clothing that rendered her virtually naked. Defying the tradition of committing suicide to restore honor to her family, she instead challenged the Pakistani legal system to punish her assailants. She was rewarded with a damages payment, which she used to build a school for girls. Susan Yankowitz, who worked with Mukhtaran Mai said, "It's a very different process to put yourself in service to someone else's voice." They met in person three times, in a situation where neither woman spoke the other's language.

Yankowitz elucidated Mukhtaran Mai's experience emphasizing, "She transcended the fate of women in her society to become a major force...and she did it in isolation and solitude, out of her own suffering."

After the performance, there was a panel and "talk-back" session. Melanne Verveer, Co-Founder and Chair of Vital Voices, introduced the segment with the comment, "How fitting that this is being premiered on Martin Luther King's birthday." The audience got a brief primer on the mission of Vital Voices, which is to invest in women around the world that need support. (Last year they trained 700 women in thirty-five countries.) Since many of these women are both alone and marginalized, the connection helps to enhance their credibility. Several high profile celebrities have become involved, including Sally Fields and Renee Zellweger. Diane Von Furstenberg's words, "When you invest in women, you change the world" became the basis for the Vital Voices tag line.

For the three of the profiled women who were present, it was a moving experience to see themselves depicted. When asked how she felt, Pisklakova-Parker replied, "First, it was very emotional. These are my sisters." McCormick commented on "what has been made out of our lives by the actresses and playwrights." She continued, "Women, as we step forward, should pull someone into our space. We know the loneliness of speaking out." Azizi added, "We learn from each other. The approaches are different, but we are fighting for the rights of women."

When the microphone was opened to the public, it was inevitable that the question was posed, "Would having a United States woman president change things?" McCormick was quick to point out that "Every woman in power is not necessarily a sister." She referenced her experiences with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. However, she immediately made clear that Hillary Clinton had stood besides her before she was a person of importance, with an international stature. McCormick asserted, "It's not just about being a woman, it's about being human."

I was able to speak with McCormick after the reading, albeit briefly. She gave me a clear and concise maxim. "Saying no to what is wrong, creates hope of what is right." From the women who challenged the status quo of the power structure and the interpreters of their words, I felt reaffirmed in the belief that one person could indeed make a difference.