

Women Changing Africa: Barnard's Third Annual Global Symposium  
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Panel Two: Voices of the Next Generation

**Kim Hall**  
**Director, Africana Studies at Barnard**

My name is Kim Hall and I'm Director of Africana studies at Barnard College and I have the distinct honor of starting the next panel by introducing its moderator, Kathryn Kolbert, known on Barnard's campus as Kitty came to campus in fall, 2009 to become Director of the Athena Center for Leadership Studies. And since we really want to get to our next discussion I don't have time to detail her very impressive pre-Barnard career as a public interest attorney and journalist. But I'll just say that her work included serving as Vice President of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy and taking leadership on some of the most important women's rights legislation and law of the past decades. So it is my honor to introduce Kathryn and to welcome you to the second half of our program, thank you.  
(Applause)

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Well thank you so much and I have to say that I am really in awe of the panel that preceded us and it makes me feel extremely humble to try to top the panel that began. But we have an amazing group of women who are here as well that we get to hear from for the next hour and fifteen minutes, and I'd like to continue a lot of the conversation that began before us.

So let me go first by introducing our great panelists. A decade ago, dancer and choreographer Fiona Budd, became one of the founding members of the South African Ballet Theatre. She rose to senior soloist, became Director of Operations, Human Resources and Publicity and was appointed Managing Director in May of 2010.

Today Fiona is pursuing a freelance and consulting career in the arts and business world. She most recently was the winner of the inaugural Vodacom 'Change the World' program and will be working with the Sandton SPCA as marketer and fundraiser.

Our next panelist, who is also an extraordinary woman, is South African businesswoman Nomfanelo Magwentshu who served as Chief Operations Officer of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee here in South Africa. She, in her key role, saw to it that the World Cup was a smoothly run success and let me just say from the rest of the world, that was absolutely the case. Prior to the World Cup she was a senior executive at South African Airlines. Today Nomfanelo is Group Integration Executive at Absa Bank, where she supports work on the strategic program as a member of the group operating committee.

Susan Mboya, who is next to Nomfanelo, is both a business executive and an educator. After 13 years at Procter and Gamble Susan joined the Coca Cola company in September of 2008 as General Manager of the franchise at Coca Cola, South Africa. She has many times been honoured for her talents in advertising, marketing and community outreach and perhaps most relevant for today's panel. She is also the founder and president of the Zawadi Africa Educational Fund, a non-profit organization that benefits bright young women from disadvantaged backgrounds with scholarships at top colleges in the U.S.

And lastly at the end, but certainly not last, we have Ndidi Nwuneli who is the founder and managing partner of LEAP Africa, a leadership training and coaching organization which is committed to empowering, inspiring and equipping a new cadre of leaders in Africa. After receiving her education and starting her career in international development in the U.S., she returned to Nigeria in 2000 as the pioneer Executive Director of Fate Foundation, Nigeria, a non-profit organization which promotes entrepreneurial development among Nigerian youth. Ndidi was selected as a 2003 Global Leader of Tomorrow by the World Economic Forum in Davos.

So picking up on our panel from – that we just heard, it seems to me that the question of having stories of inspiration and stories of achievement are part of where we came from and where we're going. And so I'd like to ask each of you to start, give us about five minutes apiece to really help us understand what your career has meant and where we're going – and what that means for leadership, both here in South Africa and around the world. Fiona?

**Fiona Budd**

**Outgoing Managing Director, South African Ballet Theatre  
Board Member, South African Ballet Theatre**

Thank you and good afternoon everyone. It's really a great privilege and honor to be here and thank you for the opportunity. I think I need to start by saying what the arts mean to me and why I've always pursued it as a passion. I do believe that they should be registered as an essential service in any country. I think they tend to get delegated to luxury, you know, chop off when you're trying to cut back. But I believe that they are the soul of any country; they are universal; they transcend borders; they transcend boundaries.

They are not just entertainment; they teach, they nurture, they heal and I think it's the closest that we come to being creators. So when I speak, I'm going to be speaking about ballet but take it as I'm referring to arts, the art forms.

My journey in the ballet world started at a very young age, I started when I was five and it wasn't from any sort of artistic inclination apart from loving music. I got sent to ballet because I was hyperactive and bashing my brother and sister and my mom and dad needed to get me amused so I was sent off to ballet. And – but it was something that just clicked with me. It totally held my attention like nothing else ever has.

I think every child should do ballet, from the point of the coordination, the point of view of the mind-body link, the artistic expression, movements. So from an early age I knew that's what I wanted to do; I wanted to dance.

I finished my schooling, I was good in academics but I knew I wanted to dance. I was lucky enough to get a bursary to the Royal Ballet School in London and I went there for a year and then I came back and joined Park Ballet in Pretoria, the state theatre. And I was there for 7 years but then I sort of got itchy feet because I wanted to do a bit more than just dance, even though that was my passion. But again, it's not a long career. So I left and got some commercial qualifications and ended up working at a private bank for two and half years, which was very different from my previous environment but an incredible learning opportunity in the light of what was to come, which I wouldn't have been able to see at that time.

In 2000 I went and crossed America and I taught ballet at a performing arts summer camp there, which was an incredible experience and when I came back from America the State Theatre and all the associated arts companies had been closed down due to financial mismanagement. The financial director had invested the entire year's funds, government funding in a pyramid scheme which funnily enough it crashed. Strange that! And that was it, everybody was retrenched, the theatre was moth-filled. And a group of dancers came together and a private sponsor came forward and said he would fund this group of dancers during a production of 'The Nutcracker' and I had just come back and these were my friends and they said, 'Come along and join us!' and I thought, 'Fantastic, I can get back to dancing again!'

We started the performances and the private sponsor ran off with all the box office takings and nobody was paid. So then that was okay, a false start. We came back together and six of us said well it's not an option not to have a ballet company, so we're just going to make it happen so we jumped into the deep end. Four went on into the studio to get other dancers to start rehearsing Giselle, two of us went up to the office to start putting together a business plan looking at budgets, and that's how we started.

We went to the acting CEO at the time and he gave us an advance on ticket sales for the first season, he didn't run off with those this time, and that's how the South African Ballet Theatre started and we celebrated our tenth birthday in February.

For me it's been an incredible learning experience and I think the most important thing it's taught me is the importance of proper arts management. I don't think – I don't know, particularly in South Africa I think a lot of artists are able to make things happen for themselves, but they haven't always had the other side, the sort of business side training. And you are running any form of Arts Company as a business, you have to ask yourself is it going to survive? So I think what I wanted to share with you, the sort of most important points that I have learned in the last ten years with the ballet company. The previous company actually mentioned a lot of them but I will just read through my list.

First here is that you've been given your passion for a reason, don't feel that it's self-indulgent to explore it, because your development of it will bring so much to others.

Another point is that with great power comes great responsibility, which I know is a well-known saying, but it really does. I mean, running a ballet company might sound really glamorous but you are – there are so many people you are responsible to: you are responsible to your dancers;

you're responsible to the sponsors; you are responsible to the audience members who are paying to come and see you give them a good quality performance. So there is a lot riding on your shoulders.

Another thing is to take baby steps. If we – where we were ten years ago, we could never see where we are today. So it's baby steps. And there is a story I once read about Sir Ernest Shackleton, whose ship was trapped in ice in the Antarctic. And they – he decided that the only way to rescue the crew was for him and two others to set off on a rowing boat for this tiny island called Elephant Island, where there was a whaling station because otherwise everyone was going to die. And they set off in this rowing boat, navigating by the stars. If they had been out by a fraction of a degree with the navigation, it would have gone off into the Atlantic and never been seen again. But they were exactly on course and they reached the island. But for me the thing that rings true with that is if you alter your course by your fraction to get to where you want to be, you're going to get there. Eventually you will be miles away from where you were in a good way. So that's always something that's stuck in my mind: baby steps will get you to where you need to be.

And I think another thing that's very important is to join with like minded people who have a common goal. You know it's no use battering your head against a brick wall with somebody who doesn't believe in what you're doing and there are enough people around who will believe in what you're doing. So join together with them.

Mentorship as well has been so important to me, learning from business people, learning from other artists. So I think – and again, also not to be afraid. Don't be put off by failure because that's inevitable, that's part of the journey. But just to have that determination that you keep on going and you still have your goal in mind. That's in a nutshell.

(Applause)

### **Nomfanelo Magwentshu**

#### **Former Chief Operations Officer, 2010 FIFA World Cup**

Thank you. I feel really honoured to be here this afternoon talking as a voice of the next generation. I come from humble beginnings. Until recently, I thought I was coming from a very rich family because I grew up very protected and loved. And I think that's what has kept me going and brought in me – with me – a positive self concept. Because of that positive attitude I developed in early life, I have the attitude that nothing can stop me if I want to achieve. I can do anything and I can be anything in life.

I'm a businesswoman who's been operating in a man's world, literally. I started my career early on and at some point after I got married and I had to leave another organization because they wouldn't pay me for maternity leave, I joined Railways in train operations and there were no female toilets at the time. And my driver then, at the time, was to change the environment to make sure that train operations and railways can also be accessed by females.

(Applause)

One of the highlights of my career was working in the airlines industry; I worked for South African Airways. And as I was working in one of the most important projects of the airline, joining the Star Alliance, I discovered one day when I was in Frankfurt in a meeting of the Star Alliance Management Board, that South Africa is far ahead compared to other countries as I discovered that I was the only female in that Star Alliance Management Board.

During that period when I was engaging and trying to challenge myself about my next steps in life and I was about to leave South African Airways, I was approached by a young man who was one of the employees at SAA and said a friend of mine is a recruitment agent – what are they called – search consultant and the organizing committee is looking for a Chief Operations Officer. And I said what, FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee, football what am I going to do there? And I said – actually I told this guy that I have the person that you're looking for, and that's you.

This was a very challenging discussion that I took to my friends and I said, 'Hey guys, can you believe it? Somebody thinks I can work in football and manage organizing this World Cup?' but then again I realized that actually the football men are looking for a woman to help them achieve what they are set out to do.

(Laughter)

And then I found that guy and I said, 'Actually I want to come and talk to you because I think you are looking for me.' Two Sundays after I was appointed, a certain Sunday newspaper that I won't mention by name – it's not you guys – ran a headline that read "Balls, she's got aplenty for soccer's biggest job". So I thought this guy, we spoke so well when he was interviewing me, there was no mention of balls in our discussion so where is this coming from now? But I think he was right because they wanted somebody who could actually take that organization from what it was, where there was so much skepticism in the industry and also the world – there were a lot of questions about whether South Africa would make it or not, and they actually needed a woman.

And I had an added advantage because as a black woman, people always view us as affirmative action candidates and this works to our advantage as we get the opportunity to demonstrate our capabilities and change the stereotypes. Also as women we are subjected to what I call 'female tax', that we have to work twice as hard or thrice as hard as men and now I was going to their world, that they thought they understood very well and that I knew nothing about football but I was there to organize a World Cup.

It worked to my advantage because we as women challenge status quo, we speak our world – our minds – we're also not afraid of challenging others when they're not coming to the party. So my responsibility was to challenge the host cities, was to challenge government departments, was to challenge - internally at the LOC - challenge my colleagues to ensure that we meet our deadlines. Also I had to challenge our FIFA colleagues who knew what they wanted but didn't know how it should be done.

So our – we had to challenge them that we're going to do this the South African way and the African way, which we were successful in doing.

I'm very proud today that I believe I contributed to one of the country's and the region's initiatives where I've made the greatest contribution in delivering the World Cup. President Blatter recently announced that this was the most profitable World Cup and their cash reserves are above \$3 billion now. We hosted 64 matches in 10 stadiums in 9 host cities; we recruited 18,500 volunteers that were there to support the World Cup. The organization recruited 518 employees and 50% or more of those employees were women, and women in meaningful positions; we did not recruit women—(Applause)-- Into soft positions but we recruited women that were willing to make a contribution.

I think the challenge that I have personally is, as this generation – we heard the previous panel, what their generation had to be – what they had as a challenge – as this generation, how do we pass on the lessons that we've learned in our lives to the young ones? There are initiatives out there like the take a girl child to work. I don't think we are doing enough as young women. We are exposed to a lot, we have a lot of advantages, we can't say we are struggling. We are doing well as parents, financially, but I think one of the things that we are struggling with is the work/life balance and I think that's what we need to talk to the young girls about. [18:27]

The work/life balance being a woman who is a businesswoman being a wife, being a mother. I'm married to a Xhosa family, I'm also Xhosa.

I'm challenged everyday when I go back to the rural areas to be a magoti [ph]. I'm challenged every time why I have to go back and leave the office at quarter – at early on a Friday afternoon rushing to the Eastern Cape because people don't understand that I still have to go and peel potatoes and butternut.

(Laughter)

I'm challenged where the women in the rural areas don't understand what I'm all about when I'm trying to push for a career at the same time they believe that I'm neglecting my family and my husband because I'm not always there to attend to the functions in the rural areas. I'm challenged when I talk to my friends in their careers trying to balance whether to start families and having kids and yet pursue a career at the same time.

I'm challenged when young women that I know that come to me and say, 'I'm getting married and I think we're going to start a family, but what do I do with my career?' because what happens in the workplace, a young woman goes on maternity leave, you come back, you've been overlooked for promotion. You go on maternity leave, you come back and you don't get an increase. I'm challenged everyday when I don't know how to transfer my knowledge to the young ones; where are those forums? Is this the right forum, do we need to create more, are we doing enough, are we sharing enough, are we telling our stories?

And also we also tend to rely on international media to tell our stories: we relied on international media to challenge us as South Africa that we will be ready to the World Cup. I'm challenging you, Ferial, that we need to tell our stories as South Africans because we understand the context. I'm challenging all the women here that we need to do more to tell the young women that are coming behind us and also we have to share the legacy that we'll be leaving behind for them. I'm challenging you, all of you that work together to understand whether there is actually something

called a work/life balance. As we progress in society, as we progress in our positions, as we bring up children and as we nurture our husbands, is there anything called a work/life balance or we must accept that there will be peaks and valleys in our lives where we will neglect these families, like when I had to neglect my family for 31 days during the World Cup? When I had to go to bed at 2 a.m. and wake up at 5 a.m., I didn't have time to call my husband and my kids and ask them if they are doing well. I left my home and I had to stay in a hotel here in Sandton, because I was working on a country project and I wanted to make sure that South Africa delivers, South Africa shines, and I think it did just that. Thank you.

(Applause)

**Susan Mboya**

**Executive, Coca-Cola**

**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

Thank you. I too, am very honoured to be here. I knew that I would come here and be inspired. I didn't expect though, that I was going to enjoy myself so much! It's been a fantastic day and I hope that through the stories that we tell, we'll continue to keep this energy going.

I will tell a little bit about my career, I don't think it's that interesting, so I'll talk a little bit about that and then talk also about some of the forces that shaped me. Whenever I'm asked to talk about my career I get a little embarrassed because it's somehow a series of accidents that I ended up where I am.

I grew up in Kenya, my family is originally from Kenya. For those of you who grew up in Africa you – in my age – there were three options: you could be a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer. My mother decided I was going to be a doctor, so I went to college in the U.S. You don't go straight into med school, you do pre-med. And so I got into pre-med and decided to do pharmacy and my first rotation in the hospital I fainted, so we knew that wasn't going to work. My mother though, was not prepared yet to give up, she kept pushing me and she said, 'Well can't you get a doctor title in this pharmacy thing?' so we said yes we can, if you go as far as getting a PhD. So that's what I did – that was for my mother.

(Laughter)

I never used it, as soon as I got out of college, as soon as I graduated I went to work for Procter and Gamble. I started in a technical area because that was what I had studied and had my PhD in. It took me less than a month to realize that, that was not what I wanted to do. Marketing was – I spent all my time hanging out with the marketing people and one day the president of the company came to me and said, 'you know you are misplaced,' and I said, 'yes, I am.' And so we agreed that I would move to marketing. I didn't tell my mother initially that I was doing that, until one day she heard somebody say that her daughter was working on 'Always', 'Always' pads. And she said, that's absolutely impossible--

(Laughter)--she would never – she's a doctor. And so it took a while for her to believe that there was actually a career in this marketing thing, it took a long time for her to believe there was a career in this marketing thing. It was a huge disappointment to her for many years.

I had a great career at P&G, definitely found what my calling was. Enjoyed marketing, which is actually a general management track at Procter and Gamble and I even got to get a marketing

award, which finally convinced my mother that there was actually something to this whole marketing thing.

And then about – a couple of years ago I realized that I wanted to come back home, home being Africa, and in looking at the options in Africa I decided to come to Coca Cola.

In all of my career though, I have always worked in the areas that are very much male dominated. I grew up with my brothers and I think that's always sort of driven me in terms of what I gravitate towards. But I also – as we were talking earlier today, I was thinking about what are some of the forces that may have gotten me to where I am or may have driven me to where I am? And I think they were several: one, I think for leadership there is often, not always, but there is often an element of adversity that shapes the individual.

And sometimes it's the obvious things, poverty, sometimes it's personal. I grew up in a home that was very much about politics, my father was assassinated when I was young and that really defined me for the first ten years or so of my life.

The other element I think that shaped me, was what I call 'the push' and that is having somebody behind you that is pushing you to do things that you didn't really even think you wanted to do, like medicine. My mom, in addition to having her careers mapped out for her children, also was very determined that based on the circumstances of my life, that I was not going to define myself and she was not going to allow anyone to define me as a victim. And I think because of that, really pushed all of us – my brothers and sisters and myself – to reach extremely high. Came from the old school of stiff upper lip, you don't cry when you fall down, all of that. So I'm only now learning to get in touch with my inner self.

And like I was also taught that privilege comes with responsibility and she was very big on – because of all the things you have, you have to take responsibility for others and I think that's why I ended up in taking on the Zawadi challenge.

The other piece I think that is really key, and I think we're all talking people, is what I call pull. And really having people around me who saw things in me that I didn't see; who believed in me in ways that I didn't believe and frankly, who put challenges in front of me that I would never have ever attempted if they hadn't thought to do that. One person who comes to mind and I think it's important to mention because he's a man – and we often think our inspiration only comes from women – was the CEO of Procter and Gamble who took a personal interest and his modus operandi was to put a project in front of you that was so stretching that you never thought you could achieve it but you were also too terrified to say no because you didn't want to disappoint him.

And time after time I found myself doing things that I would never have believed that I could have done. But he clearly – well, either he thought I could or he just did that for fun. (Laughter) But I think the other piece that leads to or helps you shape as a leader is having a testing ground; having circumstances that continually test you and push you. That for me started as a child. Like I said, I grew up with brothers; my brothers would love to take risks. I remember we had a big tree, I was terrified of heights but the only way I could play with them was to follow them up

that tree. And that's kind of what I've been doing my whole life: I want to play with the boys, so I follow them up the tree. And I do things, I take risks, I do things that make me uncomfortable. And I think as a leader that's one of the hallmarks. You've got to be able to do things that make you uncomfortable, take you out of your comfort zone.

But I think the biggest area of growth for me as a leader has really come in the latter years of my life and that's around finding something that you're passionate about and something that is a cause that you can believe in and for me that was the Zawadi Africa Education Fund. Something I started really as – it was going to be a one-off thing, I was going to help a couple of girls get scholarships and that was it. Enter John Pepper, the gentleman who I referenced who said to me after I had done this the first year, came back to me and said, 'so how many are we taking this year?' and did that every year and the program grew and grew and grew.

But I think my biggest life lessons and my biggest lessons as a leader have really come from my interactions with these young women. They are young women who come from very adverse backgrounds but we give them an inch, we give them an opportunity to go to school and they take it and they run. And they have really shown me another level of what leadership is just in terms of how they embrace the opportunities that are given to them. I hated going to school, these are girls who love going to school; they love – they wake up in the morning, they are thrilled to be going to class. Their capacity, their resilience in the face of the adversity that they face, their ability to forgive – I mean, I watch these girls who have come from homes where they've been abused, where they've been treated terribly going back to give to the people they left behind because that's the only family that they have and those are the people who looked after them, albeit not well. But that ability to forgive, to embrace, I think has probably been the biggest area of growth for me.

So that, in a nutshell is my story. (Applause)

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

It's really a privilege and a pleasure to be here today and I have to thank Barnard for putting this fantastic conference together. I'm going to use three quotes that I love to kind of tell my own story.

The first is by Isaac Newton "If I have seen further it's by standing on the shoulders of giants" and I'm truly privileged to have women in my life who have inspired me, some of them are sitting in this hall. And Harvard Business School's loss was Barnard's gain, because one of those giants is Deborah Spur [ph]. (Applause) She was my professor at Harvard Business School and I was only 22 and highly impressionable when I enrolled to get my MBA after two years at McKenzie. And meeting a woman like Deborah who is not only dynamic and intelligent but also a mother, proud of her femininity and a wife, really challenged me to say - you know it's possible; it's hard, but it's possible. While I was at Harvard Business School we actually started the African Business Conference, and then I was very young, impressionable, I believed that I could do everything. And so this conference, I was the chairperson, our theme was 'Reversing

the Brain Drain' so after Harvard Business School I returned to Nigeria really driven by the desire to make a difference.

I'm sad to see I'm the only West African on the panels today, but I'm sure that we'll correct that in future years. (Laughter)

So basically I really – I think we've talked a lot about finding what you're passionate about and what makes you angry – really decided that my passion was to create wealth in Africa and to help people become entrepreneurs. And so that led me to my second quote, which is – leaving that conference actually ended my speech, the idealistic deity that I was, by the quote “do not follow the path, go where there is no path and leave a trail” and that was an African proverb, from West Africa actually. So I went back to Nigeria and I became the pioneer executive director of the Fate Foundation, which is an organization that helps young people start businesses.

And then quickly after that got married to an old flame and had to move back to the States, and he enrolled at Harvard Business School. So you can see that you can't really map out your life so clearly and have all your dreams because Fate Foundation was what I thought I would be doing at 35, not 25.

But while I was at Harvard Business School again, as a spouse this time, I got to work with Deborah to start making markets work and there started LEAP Africa. And LEAP Africa is an organization that I've got to run for 6 years. LEAP stands for Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism. And the desire to start LEAP was that we really needed these four attributes in the lives of every African; that to really move this continent forward we needed to create a new generation of African leaders. And I was tired of going to international conferences and seeing people who they called my leaders, who were actually rulers not leaders, in those positions of authority. And I thought that we could change mindsets by changing the way people thought about leadership.

We've talked a lot about that today, that if people thought that leadership was an act, a-c-t, not a position, that we could actually see change happen.

And LEAP has worked and done a lot of pioneering things. We teach business entrepreneurs about succession and how to build the next generation of leaders in their companies, because most African companies die with their founders; we teach young people to become change agents, we work now with teachers. We are teaching our leadership, ethics and civics curriculum to teachers who now teach that to ninth grade students who then start change projects in their communities.

And while I was starting LEAP I also started an organization called NIYA, which helps young women achieve their highest potential. Because I realized from my own experience growing up in South eastern Nigeria, that many women like we've talked about today, have as their highest aspiration to graduate from university and move into their husband's home because they don't want to be dependent on anybody.

And then once they get into that home, their first goal is to get a male child. I don't know about South Africa, but in West Africa that's still a big problem because of inheritance laws: if I have a

male child I have a stake in this family and that son will inherit. Unfortunately, still many of the men in our society do not write wills and if they write wills they do not leave the inheritance to their daughters.

So Fate, LEAP Africa and NIYA were really driven by this desire to find problems in society and fix them and thinking that I could achieve my highest potential. But what I learned very quickly was that life also has its curveballs and I call it the University of Life, because in 2007 my husband was shot in the knee and it was very traumatic. So thankfully I have mentors who stand with me, so Deborah Spur [ph] and a range of other women: my sisters, my mother, really held me up.

Because he decided – you know, we can't live in Nigeria, I need a break. Nigeria is not that violent, so please don't get that impression, we really are not. But it was a fluke because there are a lot of weapons in the system when you have elections, like we have another one coming up. So we had to move to Senegal after six months of surgery and physical therapy and then my last quote, which is what I'm now living, my mantra. Which is "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go with others" and this is also an African proverb, something I hold very dear.

Because with all of these transitions, I've told you that my husband went to Harvard Business School so I had to leave Fate. But then I started LEAP and we moved back to Nigeria, and then I started NIYA and then he got shot so we had to move to Senegal. But when we were in Senegal we started a desire to really say, how can we shape the agribusiness space? And that was another inspiration. And it's really based on faith. God lays these ideas in my head, they are crazy. Indeed, agribusiness? That's tough! But 70% of our population works in Agriculture and yet we import almost everything we eat in West Africa. 90% of the processed food we eat is imported; we are net importers of food and with this issue of food security and food crisis all over the world, we cannot get out of poverty unless we process the food we eat. And we grow it, it's there. So Ace Foods is my newest startup.

It is tough working in manufacturing. It's a lot easier to teach other people how to be entrepreneurs, it's a lot easier to write about it – and I've written quite a few books about it, but doing it is hard. We also have started Sahel Capital, which is going to be doing deals in the space and then Agiwa. But with each of these opportunities and these experiences, some of the lessons that I've learned and some of the things that I'm proud of, the first one is building successors. I think the final test of a great leader is that you live in others. For each of these initiatives that I've started, I'm proud to say that there are women running them and they are still running strong. I think that's a testimony to the fact that if you start something, try to leave another capable woman behind to take it to the next level.

(Applause)

You also need to know when to leave and in my case, God has moved me out to start new things but has put capable people in place.

The second thing is that you really need to plan your life and work hard, but also walk closely with your God. For me, I realize that I can try my best but there are curveballs that have kind of

changed the courses I set for myself. And really being able to stand on my faith, and I'm a strong Christian, has been very important for me. That has really helped me to say you know what, there's a master plan and I'm going – I'm trying my best but I really don't know where I'll end up.

And then the third thing that I've learned and a lesson that I want to share with you, is the importance of being authentic and having integrity. You know, a question was raised about what to fight for, we need to fight for integrity. I think in the African context especially, we let mediocrity and we let unethical behavior run wild. And as the elite, I don't know about South Africa, but the elite accept that sometimes people have to cut corners and they see it in our government and they don't say anything about it, because many times they are beneficiaries.

And in our society in Nigeria it upsets me because some of the most celebrated people are making money because they have a monopoly or they have patronage, special relationships with the powers that be. So I think it's important that we stand for something and we can stand for integrity; let our lives be authentic and let's speak – let's walk the talk instead of just talking. And so that's what I want to leave you with, thank you. (Applause)

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Well, I'm beginning to hear a number of common themes, both from the panel before this one and all of the things that you said. Among those are being passionate about what you love and try to put that passion to work, and understanding that you can do anything, and a responsibility to give back that with opportunity comes responsibility, as well as a willingness to overcome or to jump in when challenges or adversity or just life changes happen.

And so I want to ask you, all of you, is how do you think we can instill those understandings to the next generation?

Let me just say that yesterday we all – a number of us went out to the African Leadership Academy and met with high school students from twelve schools around the area. Some of those young women are here today and they are totally inspiring. And I guess the question is, what are we as leaders want to tell them and how can we teach the lessons you've just given us to those young women?

So what would you tell them, I think is the real question? Susan, you want to start?

**Susan Mboya**  
**Executive, Coca-Cola**  
**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

Sure. Well, I mean the question obviously resonates because this is sort of what I do with the students that I work with. What I tell them, and this is very much with the African context or the African hat on, it echoes a little bit what we heard earlier today. I tell them that in today's Africa they're going to have to live in two worlds; they will have to be – and you referenced it – they're

going to have to be wives and mothers and they're going to have to give birth to a son, to maintain their place in the – they are going to have to do those things. Those things are not going to go away just because we're in 2011. But they have to also be competitive on the global stage. These are girls who are going to Harvard and Yale and Barnard and you want them to achieve their full potential. They're going to have to do more versus their counterparts in other parts of the world. And I tell them it is what it is, you have to do it. And that's why God has given you all the talents He's given you, to enable you to do all these things. I think all of us to some degree who grew up in a certain age, are what I call bicultural: you have to be able to exist in a number of different situations, you have to be adaptable, but I think you also have to be prepared to carry more of a load than your counterparts in other parts of the world and certainly more than your male counterparts.

**Nomfanelo Magwentshu**

**Former Chief Operations Officer, 2010 FIFA World Cup**

I would say what's important for me is that people need to understand what drives them in life and what is your anchor, your campus in life or what I call a touchstone, that will help you to face any challenges that you have in life. Because if you know what life you're living and what is your purpose in life and what is your touchstone, what keeps your wheels from turning, then you know how to deal with all the issues in life. I think that is important and the basis of that is knowing yourself: know yourself, know what drives you and keep going back to your touchstone and understand when there are conflicts in your life, how to challenge and how to get answers.

**Fiona Budd**

**Outgoing Managing Director, South African Ballet Theatre  
Board Member, South African Ballet Theatre**

I think you have to realize that it's going to be very hard work unless you wish to accept mediocrity, so - but it's an exhilarating ride. And with the South Africa Ballet Theatre, the last 10 years have been like being on a rollercoaster with huge highs and very low lows. But the learning experience from that and what we've been able to achieve because of that, it's worth more than you can put into words. So don't expect an easy ride if you want to succeed.

**Ndidi Nwuneli**

**Founder, LEAP Africa**

I would actually tell them, or tell the young people here, what one wise South African woman told me many, many years ago. She said you should have three people in your life: a mentor, a champion and a critic. And for me that's really important, especially the champion and the critic. You need someone in your life who can always tell you the truth, regardless of how bitter it is and who can hold you accountable. You need a champion or a cheerleader, who when you want to give up says to you, you can do it; keep on going. And then you also obviously need mentors. And often times young people come up to many people here and they'll say, I want you to be my mentor. I think mentorship is a very special relationship that grows over time. And many of us have people in our lives who we've taken for granted, not realizing that they could be our mentors and vice versa.

And then the second thing I would challenge young people to do, and this is picking up from the earlier panel, is to learn about history, to learn about history. You know, as a child, on my blackboard every morning in high school we devoted a section of our blackboard to: Apartheid is a crime against humanity, don't practice it. I lived in West Africa, in Nigeria, we had -- (Applause) -- we sang about apartheid, we marched, and when I was at Penn we organized mock ballots in 1994. So often times I get very emotional when I come to South Africa and see the reception or the image that Nigerians have here because South Africa is very important to the whole continent. And you might not realize it, so I think it's very important, especially to South Africans to learn the history; to learn how we're so united, what we have in common and how women especially can bridge the gap and work across the continent. Thank you. (Applause)

**Kathryn Kolbert**

**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

I'd like to open this up for questions in a second, but I do want to ask one other question. And Nomfanelo you raised the issue of family and the balance between work and family, Ndididi you did as well, and how life has many changes and family puts you in many different directions. And I guess my question is as we -- in all of our lifetimes and this is true on different continents, the changing role of women and their relationship to men has really been a moving target that is -- we've all seen extraordinary changes in that regard. And I guess my question is what would you -- I've heard what you wanted to tell to young people, what would you like to tell to the men in the world and in your lives about the changes that are necessary? I know I'm putting you on the spot, but...

**Nomfanelo Magwentshu**

**Former Chief Operations Officer, 2010 FIFA World Cup**

I think it's important at home and at work not to threaten the men in life. To challenge, but without threatening; not to undermine, but to make them understand where you come from in every debate or discussion that you have. and I think if they have the understanding of where you're coming from with your points of view, then it makes it much easier. It is difficult, it is sometimes confrontational, but I think we need to be mature about it. We need them in our lives -- I think, that's what I believe and if you decide to pursue a family and a career, you need to understand that there will be difficulties and you need to be mature about it and face that challenge upfront. And make sure that the person -- your man in your life and the men in your life at work, understand your views and your objectives. (Applause)

**Susan Mboya**

**Executive, Coca-Cola**

**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

I think -- and when you said the man in your life I think there are several for many of us who work. What I would say is something that I do say to my husband, just remind him from time to time that I work. I think he tends to forget, which I take as a compliment that things are moving smoothly enough that he forgets that I work. But sometimes when he'll see me at home if I decide I'm going to work from home in the afternoon, he thinks oh great, can you go get the

laundry and you know? And for the men, my male colleagues, it would be that I have a family that I have to look after. And I fully expect you to hold me to the same standard as everybody else, but if you don't get as hung up on how I deliver it, it will get done.

(Applause)

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

I think the biggest challenge is not actually men, it's society. Sometimes it's actually the women that are the biggest challenge. Let me explain. Oftentimes when my husband drops off our kids at school, it's the women who say, 'but where is your wife?' or it's the women who come up to him and say, 'you're such a great man for letting your wife do the things she does!' so that makes him feel unusual, maybe there's something wrong with him? So I think that for us, we have to encourage our sons, starting with our sons, to believe that they are – women and men are equal and women and men share both roles. And it's tough, as a mother who has a boy and a girl, making sure that I have the same standards for both of them and I don't get them into gender roles more easily.

But beyond that I think that African men – and this is a generalization, have a tremendous burden on them. And so I think I have a very mature sister here: your response was right on and I should come for coaching lessons with you, because she has unique insights. The more we help our men achieve their highest potential, the more they will feel excited to see us achieve our highest potential. But if they feel overshadowed, that's when you have problems. So I don't know, I don't have the answers. I'm going to come for coaching, thank you.

(Laughter)

**Fiona Budd**  
**Outgoing Managing Director, South African Ballet Theatre**  
**Board Member, South African Ballet Theatre**

Two points: I think on the work/life balance, I think I definitely haven't got that right, so I'm an example of a failure in that. So that's been a learning curve for me because everything has gone into the company, morning, noon and night sort of seven days a week. And while I don't regret anything that I've done in the past ten years, I know it's been to the detriment of other areas of my life. But I've been so fortunate in terms of the men I've had in my life in the ballet company, who've been incredibly supportive. And one of my mentors is here this afternoon, he's vice chairman of our board and he's been incredible. I've learned so much from him, James Campbell.

(Applause)

My co-director in the company, Ian McDonald has also been incredible. He is the artistic director and in fact he started referring to me as his ballet wife because we spent so much time together, even though he's got a real wife. And then the head of the theatre where we've been based, also another incredible man, Bernard J. So, I have been so fortunate in the last ten years in the men who've been in my life in that way. So I just want to acknowledge them and thank them for that.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

All right, so let's try to get some questions from all of you. I know there's a number of people walking around with microphones, let's start over on this side.

**Audience Member**

First, on behalf of all the youth here – sorry, I'm Julia, I'm a student from the African Leadership Academy and on behalf of all the youth that you spoke to, thank you Miss Colbert for asking the questions to the panelists and thank you to the panelists for giving us some direct advice that I think is really going to help us in the years to come. My question, you mentioned the image of Africa and how it's really formed by outsiders. One of the first big projects that we do when we arrive at the African Leadership Academy is a project that really breaks down the idea and the image of Africa: where it comes from, who forms it, who we need to reach to change it and what it should in fact be. And what came out of that for a lot of us was that we knew that we needed to identify the youth as a major player in changing this image. I'm wondering what you all have to say about the role of the youth and more specifically the female youth, in changing the idea and image of Africa. Thank you.

(Applause)

**Nomfanelo Magwentshu**  
**Former Chief Operations Officer, 2010 FIFA World Cup**

I think as women what we had to do in the workplace first was to change the perception that we were soft and weak and we cannot do things. So I think that's the approach that we should take as Africa and the African countries to do and also show the world that we can do. Secondly, we need to tell the story, a positive story based on what we know and not allow the international media to tell our story. I refer back to this international media story because I remember last year when we were preparing for the World Cup, in February we had a team workshop at Sun City and we had the England journalists coming to South Africa and they went to the hotel that was going to be the team base camp for England. The hotel was completed, we went there the previous day we saw that everything was done. The only area that was not finished was the dressing room and part of the training ground. They went and took pictures of the training ground that was incomplete and posted those pictures on the website and said "South Africa will not be ready" whereas we knew that – the reality was that it would be ready.

Well before the break – the lunch break when we had to give a press conference, we sent one of our media guys to go and take pictures of the hotel, the actual hotel and they came back, we showed those pictures during the media briefing to show the world that it is not true. People write and portray this perception and image that South Africa would not be ready and Africa would not be ready to host this event.

I think that's what we need to do; we need to do and do more and continuously improve to show that we can. We cannot allow people to always challenge us and say we're not doing good. I think then there are bigger issues around integrity, there are bigger issues around how we run politics or politics in Africa and South Africa. So we need to change the status quo and we also need as women and professional women to get involved in these projects in the country and in

the region and support and make sure that we can make a contribution, a positive contribution and we change the status quo. We can only demonstrate to the world that we are and we can do by doing.

(Applause)

**Susan Mboya**  
**Executive, Coca-Cola**  
**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

I think maybe I just want to tell you a little funny story that happened to me here in Sandton during the World Cup. We were sitting next to a couple from – I think they were from the U.S. with their friends and the one set of – and one of the couples had just arrived and they were marveling at the mall and how beautiful it was and they couldn't believe that this was in Africa and one of them said, 'yeah, they built it for the World Cup! They built all these stadiums and everything for the World Cup!' so you get a lot of credit for—(Laughter) --all the infrastructure.

In terms of what I would say, I think it's going to be more important what the youth do than what they say in terms of how Africa will be perceived going forward. If you look at the events that are happening in the Middle East right now, I think that is changing the perception of what this part of the world is; how much control people have of their lives and how far they're willing to go to protect their freedoms.

So I think we can talk, and we have, but I think the actions of the youth are going to speak much louder than anything that we can say.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Okay, let's take another question.

**Audience Member**

Good afternoon and thank you for the inspiring stories that you have shared with us. I'm directing my question to Ndidi and Susan, am I right? I'm not sure. My name is Josephine, by the way, and I come from Waterford Kamplaba School [ph], it's a United World College. And I'm highly interested in how the two of you had the inspiration, after studying away from home, to actually come back to make a difference.

Because the United World Colleges we have scholarships for our students in about 79 universities in the U.S. where our students can go after their International Baccalaureate. And one of the major problems for students who come from Africa is brain drain. How do we get them back to the continent to contribute? Because the whole idea is that they go out there and they get all of these degrees and they just want to stay because back home is not great and they think that they won't get the kind of job that they want. And if you could just share, for example, how you got that motivation to be back and not just to make a difference but to do it yourself and to inspire others to stay in the things that you have done? Thank you.

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

Thanks for that question. I would say that the first port of inspiration is really what your parents do and how they – or the family you left back home. My mother is a very wise woman, so she sends newspaper clippings every week, cutout annual reports from companies that she couldn't understand herself, they are financials, just to get me to stay in touch with what was going on at home. But also the whole concept of service was something that was instilled in us from a very young age; the desire that you have to make a difference in your community, and I think that was very, very critical from my childhood. But in terms of what strategies you can use, I would say that it's very important to have the – before your students leave, you have to make sure that they really have a strong connection and even if they don't have it, that they establish it while they are at the United world colleges. And I think that's the great thing that Fred and his team have done with ALA.

This whole concept of: who am I as an African, what do I have to be proud of, and what can I do to change my continent? And whose responsibility is it? It's mine! It's my generation's responsibility, no one is going to do it for us, we have to do it. That mindset shift is really critical. At LEAP we have a session on patriotism and social responsibility because people never really think about what it means – you know, America does a great job of building patriotism in its citizens. What can we do in our continent to do that same job on the mindset? And I think that's critical.

And then the third thing is I'll say, celebrate what is good about Africa. Right now Nigerian companies are paying equivalent to what Wall Street pays. There are great opportunities. And for the first time last year, Harvard Business School came to Nigeria to meet with me and it wasn't Admissions, it was Career Services. And they said, you know what, non-Nigerians want to move to Nigeria. We have – we had 30 summer interns last year in Lagos alone. There is something going on in Africa, it's the last frontier and people recognize it. And if you get in early, you can actually make some money and make a difference.

And so celebrating those success stories and sharing the news is very important and I think that will really get more people to come back.  
Do you have anything to add?

**Susan Mboya**  
**Executive, Coca-Cola**  
**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

No, I think you've pretty much said to all. I think for me the key is maintaining those links. But for me also ensuring that from a professional standpoint, it's all very well to send kids overseas to go and study, but if you don't have a strong plan for reentry for them, because you're going to be competing with the Wall Streets and these kids are going to have opportunities, not just in the U.S. but they'll have opportunities all over the world. It's a global economy now. The good news is that to your point, there is a lot of opportunity in Africa and as long as that is understood I

don't think – I think we're going to start seeing a reversal of that brain drain because the opportunities are here.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Okay, let's take another question, how about right here?

**Audience Member**

Hi, I'm Gail Robinson from New York City. This has been just fantastic the whole day and 6,000 miles apart and when I hear about South Africa, it's sort of emotional because it's so much the story of African Americans in America.

One thing we are grappling with and you're a generation below me and how do we deal with the generation below you in dealing with health issues? For black people, black women in America we are dealing with obesity, diabetes, hypertension and we're now disproportionately HIV positive. How do we provide leadership to younger women to help them deal with all of – I think the first lady is doing a great job when it comes to diet. So in South Africa and in Africa in general, how do we provide leadership?

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Anyone want to take a stab at that?

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

Well at LEAP Africa we have a curriculum called 'our bodies ourselves'. I think a lot of the health issues we face both in the African American community and here deals with self esteem. We've talked about it a lot. HIV/AIDS is still – the prevalence rate is still growing in Nigeria, not because people don't know that HIV/AIDS exists but because of self esteem issues and because of economic issues.

And unless we get to the root cause of those problems, we'll continue to have a lot of the same challenges that we have in our society. So as part of our leadership course we teach about health, because you can't be an effective leader unless you take care of your body. But these root causes have been neglected and we need to build up our women to believe that they can be the best they can be and that they don't need anybody to fill them up. And we need to give them alternative sources of income.

And that's why I really believe in entrepreneurship education as a critical option in every educational arena. That's my response.

**Fiona Budd**

**Outgoing Managing Director, South African Ballet Theatre  
Board Member, South African Ballet Theatre**

I agree. The youth has to be given a focus, that's why I think the artists are important as well. If that could be established as a viable career, because there is so much talent in this country but at the moment you can't have a sort of stable career in the arts. We have outreach programs which we've been operating since we started in townships; we've set up development schools. And you can't believe the talent that you see there but again, it's to have the funding that you can develop it and take it to its natural conclusion. We had one project as well which was in Soweto, which was working with children who were either infected or affected by AIDS. And just – you could see the difference it made to the children, it lifted their spirits. But it also was terribly hard in terms of there would be weeks where next – the following week suddenly one of the children wouldn't be back again because – you know. So I do think it's kind of a long term thing but again it's getting their focus onto things that build their spirits.

**Kathryn Kolbert**

**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Okay, how about in the back of the room, we haven't gotten a question from there?

**Audience Member**

Hi, my name is Serena Patel. I'm both South African and American and I work with youth in both countries to tell true stories about their lives and their experiences. In my work I, like everybody here I think, have often tried to inspire and push them with this idea that with hard work anything is possible. But just the other day I was sitting with a young woman that I know from Khayelitsha in Cape Town, who's gotten through those basic things that we try to do with young people: build up their self esteem; do they have access to education; do they have money to get to school, just basic logistics to even get the education that they need.

She was quite emotional as she told me the difficulty that she had through school, photocopying books when she couldn't afford text books, getting in trouble in university when it was found out that she did that, but ultimately getting her diploma and now she's looking for a job. And now that she's looking for a job she's told 'well you don't have enough experience' and she's in this place where she's like – you know? And it's difficult to keep inspiring somebody when it's so many years and so many struggles. That you've done what you're supposed to do, you've put in the hard work and I think in South Africa in particular we have these wonderful stories of success where we've overcome everything to change this country, to change the future, by doing that; by believing and fighting. But I think sometimes because that other part isn't there, it feels like there's a part of that inspiration that maybe isn't really true; that maybe there's something – there's a real opportunity gap. And we also have to speak about that.

I know we talked about being the light and so I think there are different ways that people can be mentors. But for those who are in the workplace, I mean, are people really trying to give maybe under-experienced women, not the kind of women that are in this room, the opportunity to get in

the door, the opportunity to show that they also can be here with us? So I would like to hear some of your thoughts about that.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Okay, so how do you overcome that adversity and help the women who are tired? Which is what I'm hearing some of you say you each had to go through?

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

I'll try again. You know, I've started a lot of non-profits, but I decided that I hadn't really changed the world with my non-profits, so I decided to start a full-profit for the main reason of creating jobs. And Ace Foods is now hiring people who have no education as contract staff. And I think that we need to create more businesses in the continent to absorb the huge numbers of unemployed people.

In West Africa something like 70% of our university graduates are unemployed. Not to talk about unskilled and semi-skilled labor. There are huge issues of unemployed people all over this continent and we – the government can't absorb them. We don't need bigger governments, we need smaller governments and more efficient governments. What we need are companies that can employ massive amounts of people. So I'm challenging some of you in the audience to think about starting a business. It's not easy, but you can create jobs for people across the spectrum.

**Susan Mboya**  
**Executive, Coca-Cola**  
**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

I think the other piece – and I say this to young people a lot – is particularly when you're still living at home, is how can you build the experience? That is two things, the experience that's going to differentiate you but also how do you package yourself? And that's something that we can help with. I think in terms of barriers, you've got hoards and hoards of young people who don't have jobs but also don't really have the skills to be able to start something on their own or even to just be able to distinguish themselves when they go and present themselves for an interview. I found that for many of the young women that I have in my program, if they don't get something right away I'll tell them, well would a volunteer opportunity be a place to start? Because if they like you, there's a good chance that when something does open up you'll get it and if it doesn't at least you'll have something to say in terms of what you've been able to do.

I think it is sad because what you're seeing in Nigeria is very similar to what you're seeing in Africa. But I've also seen a lot of young people who have said you know what, I may have a degree but I'm not above anything. So, if you give me a job as a driver, you give me a job as whatever, something that I'm gainfully employed and I'm doing something and I'm learning, and they're okay with that as an interim, I think that's another piece of advice that I would give.

Yes, you have a degree, but you need to be open to a number of different opportunities just given the state of the lack of employment.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Okay, let's take two more questions, how about one right here?

**Audience Member**

Okay, judging by the chilling silence of many of the male species, I thought I might just ask a few questions. (Laughter) So my name is Ntokumaziano [ph] from the African Leadership Academy. I would just like to touch or explore one thing that you brought into the conversation, which was culture or cultural intervention. Miss Magwentshu you talked about the fact that how women should be relating to men and how that should be done in a very strategic way. And Miss Nwuneli also spoke about inheritance laws and how giving birth to a firstborn son was something that was very culturally important. My question then, is how do we emancipate women into equality without undermining or destroying that fundamental dignities and understandings, more especially concerned with cultures which have a strong sense of patriarchy in our community, especially in the African context? (Laughter)

**Nomfanelo Magwentshu**  
**Former Chief Operations Officer, 2010 FIFA World Cup**

I think we should be careful also not to hide behind culture and be oppressed by men in the process and by the communities that we live in. I think what is important is for us also to challenge ourselves, that you have made this choice to be married to this family or to be this mother and wife, so you need to adapt and change, moving from one – from the boardroom and going home and understanding that the man in the house is not the chairman of that board meeting that you attended but he is your partner and someone that wants to spend life with you. So you need to have that and also challenge yourself all the time. But again we also need to educate our communities and our families in the rural areas that we have other challenges in our work life and in our personal space that we need to address and that they need to understand. So that's my – my view is that we need to educate, challenge, at the same time challenge yourself and also adapt in the different situations that you find yourself in.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

We have time for one more question. That side of the room seems very busy, is there anyone from anywhere else? Okay, all the way over on this side.

**Audience Member**

Thank you. I feel very privileged and honored to be here. My name is Nonkunle Nondlovu [ph] and I'm a filmmaker; my sister and I are filmmakers. We are very passionate about re-branding

Africa by Africans, through positive African images. My one concern which is going to turn into a question is that, I'm very inspired by everything I heard today and we keep looking at each other, my sister and I, because we are like 'where are these stories? Where are these stories?' We consume so much of negative media about Africa, about Nigeria, about Zimbabwe, about Rwanda. And literally, is somebody documenting this good news? Is somebody documenting what you've been through and the successes that you have? We cannot rely on the media for that. I've actually stopped listening to the news completely and I take sections that I want to consume, because I'm very jealous about the space and what I hear, because it affects us. So I want to know, is anybody documenting your success stories for Africa, for our children, for positive African stories by Africans, through Africans? And if not, can we have the rights to those stories? I'm a businesswoman after all. (Applause)

**Susan Mboya**  
**Executive, Coca-Cola**  
**Founder, Zawadi Africa Educational Fund**

I can refer you to at least one person who is. There is a woman in Kenya by the name of Susan Githuku who has just published a book on exactly that. She interviewed a number of women leaders and she's basically just captured their stories. And this book is going to be distributed in the school system and the whole idea is to expose young girls to some of the older women – I'm putting myself in that category. And so they understand not just the successes, but also the struggles and the barriers that they've faced and I think that we need to do more of that. The book, when I read it, just really sort of sent shivers down my spine and I gave it to every niece, every young person that I know.

**Ndidi Nwuneli**  
**Founder, LEAP Africa**

Yes, there is also a Nigerian woman, Zina Saro-Wiwa who is doing – who has done a couple of documentaries that have been very, very successful and I'm sure you can Google her and find out. But I would like to add that one really exciting thing about Nigeria is that our music and our fashion and our movies are trans – are making us famous. And young people are driving those industries. And when I go to New York and I hear Nigerian musicians on the radio, I am so proud. And those young people have, against all odds, have succeeded to be on the international stage because of their talent. So like you, I'm passionate about the arts being a way for us, Africa's arts and culture are such a great asset that we can build on to really change mindsets. And my young people are doing it and they're doing it with excellence. And I think we need to celebrate that and we need to see more of that.

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Alright well I hope you'll join me in giving a big round of applause to our panelists here. (Applause)

So to conclude this wonderful day, and frankly it's been beyond all of our expectations and I hope we've shattered a few of yours as well, I'm honored to introduce Elsie McCabe Thompson,

who is also a Barnard alum from the class of 1981 and is the president of the Museum for African Art in New York. We are pleased to have Elsie make the closing remarks and talk about a future collaboration. (Applause)

**Elsie McCabe Thompson '81**  
**President, Museum for African Art, New York City**

Oh, I am honored to be with this company and this company. There are so many amazing women of all ages, there's a couple of men too, (Laughter)--who are doing wonderful things. Let me add to my own introduction and tell you something about my background because it relates to Barnard very centrally and then tell you about the museum and some of what I'm hoping you will take away from this today.

I'm the middle of three Barnard graduates; I'm the middle of three sisters. Those of you who know about families know that the middle sister is often the most challenged or challenging, I was both. My older sister truly deserved to be accepted to Barnard: she was an amazing student, she's an amazing person, as is my younger sister. I was the challenge.

For me it wasn't just racial challenges, it was learning disabilities, which in the United States are – you think and process information differently. I'm dysgraphic, what that means is I literally cannot write scripts. Even today, I can't sign my name it's sort of a scribble, but a printed scribble. I'm also ADHD, which means it's an attention deficit disorder, among other things. I'm a complex mess, mix, mess of things. But Barnard had faith in me because with many kids with learning disabilities, you only start learning how to cope with them as you get older. You don't grow out of them, you just start learning how to cope with them.

And it was probably the middle of high school that I started to master my studies and Barnard took a real leap of faith in me and accepted me, perhaps hoping that I would be like my older sister one day. But there wasn't much evidence to support it when they took me and I've never had a chance to really publicly thank Barnard and so I'll thank Deborah on behalf of a remarkable institution. (Applause)

Thank you. But what Barnard did with me they do with young women every day. So if I can urge you all, the young women – and men – among us, think about single sex education. If there is that opportunity in your community – if not coming to Barnard - in part because you're thrust into leadership? Many times you don't have – you think leaders are born, no they are made; they are thrust into positions of authority, where you don't have opportunities except to take up this mantle of leadership, and Barnard does that regularly, so do many single-sex institutions where women have no choice but to become leaders among their peers and their communities.

Let me also tell you a tiny bit about the museum. I'm a repent [ph] and bankruptcy lawyer. So right out of Barnard I went to Harvard, yeah. But as soon as I paid off my student loans I wanted to go into public service because for me public service is in fact a calling, and I hope each of you find yours. It took me many years to find mine, first I had to pay off my student loans, among other things. But I used a lot of the skills I learned while at Barnard. Chief among them was fearlessness. Not fearlessness with a big 'F', no, but fearlessness in that I was willing to try new

things. I was willing, as our entire panel here and earlier talked about, to challenge myself to do things that I had never done before and to do things, perhaps importantly, that everyone was certain was impossible.

But I did it with – as – which of our panelists this morning underscored again and again, the need for careful planning and research – not with eyes closed, but having done the homework but knowing that certain things that had to be done. So I've been running the museum for almost 14 years now and even though I knew absolutely nothing about art, absolutely nothing about museums, I knew something about my people. I'm an African American woman and being black in America means that you're a mixture of all sorts of things, it also is sort of a tough love family; they make you proud and they also embarrass you at will, but they're still – they're family.

And I wanted – I saw the opportunity to change how we – in a small way to change how we think about our history, our culture. Fiona, I believe, earlier mentioned that most people think of culture as a luxury. In fact most people do, but it isn't. Culture is an imperative, it's a cultural imperative and it's a global imperative, which is one of the reasons why the museum, in addition to doing insane things like building a new building on Fifth Avenue, which is known as sort of the legendary museum mile in New York. And it's the place where Africa deserves to be, and I say Africa because we are fully embracing the continent in partnership with a lot of other institutions. Which is also a skill I learned at Barnard, synergy, we don't need to do it all ourselves but we're bringing a lot of other groups in. So Miss filmmaker, come talk to me at the end. And we're telling a lot of stories because that's how we learn, as people and as communities.

And one of the exciting things we're doing with Barnard is about four years ago I reached out to the Nelson Mandela Foundation and we decided that we were going to create a Mandela Centre at the Museum for African Art in our new building. What the Centre will embrace is giving Madiba's legacy context. He doesn't want "Deification," he's bigger than that, which is so wonderful. He wants the issues that he held dearly to be remembered and to resonate in our daily lives. And the museum has always placed real emphasis on contextualization, because African art isn't just art for art's sake; most if not all of it is art because it has a message, it has something it wants to say. And foreign affair is the next frontier in contextualization for us. And we are doing that in partnership with Barnard and the Mandela Foundation.

So we'll be exploring, whether it's AIDS issues, women's issues. So as we look at an exhibition, for instance about the middle passage, which I all urge you to come and see, it's a masterful rewriting – pun intended – of the African contribution to the building of the American south and we tell it through basketry. But we look at the middle passage and we'll look at slavery programmatically. But then there is modern day slavery, trafficking in women and children, that happens every day.

These are issues that reframe how we look at the art. Culture is not only not a luxury but it's when I talk about a global imperative, it should be something that we know about and effect in our daily life. The difference, for instance, between a Sunni and a Shiite, and a Serb and a Croat; these are not niceties, they are not luxuries, these are part of the global imperative to know

something about the passions that move other people. This is what art really is, it's a way of understanding people that may not look like you but are nevertheless part of the human community that occupy an increasingly small blue planet.

We're up to some pretty exciting things, I hope you'll come and join us as the museum reopens later this year. We're on 110<sup>th</sup> Street on Fifth Avenue. And if I can sort of sum up, if there is nothing else you take away from this amazing day of activities and talks, it's not only what women can do, but what you can do; what you must do without fear, with careful planning and preparation and with determined resolution that you must effect change. You decide which, which sector of your community must be changed and pursue it with vigor. And yes you can balance family--women have been balancing family and multitasking for millennia, it's nothing new. And we'll be doing it for millennia to come. But indeed we must do it because if not us, then who?

With this period of sharing in mind, I am pleased to tell you that I'm delighted to work with each and every one of you and consider Barnard as your career paths develop and join us again in -- where's our next -- Mumbai? Wow! I'm gone! Deborah, I don't know if I was invited, but I'm going. Consider joining us in Mumbai because this is an important dialogue: it's an important discussion that I hope each of you will take back and internalize as we go forward and incorporate its lessons and the important lessons learned from our panelists into each act of your daily life in the future.

Thank you so much. (Applause)

**Kathryn Kolbert**  
**Director, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard**

Thank you so much for coming, we're done for the day.