

Vital Voices joins NowThis to host NowThis NEXT Celebrating Women Leaders Reimagining Our Future

Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Former Gubernatorial Candidate Stacey Abrams, Elaine Welteroth, Tracee Ellis Ross, Charlize Theron, Co-Hosts Seth Meyers, Bozoma Saint John, Zinhle Essamuah and Many More Discussed Democracy, Sustainability, Racial Justice and Today's Most Pressing Issues

October 18, 2020 –Vital Voices Global Partnership joined NowThis to host the inaugural NowThis NEXT – the event shined a spotlight on the critical role of women leaders in the Vital Voices network who are in creating a more equitable and just world for us all. Hosted by **Late Night's Seth Meyers and Netflix CMO Bozoma Saint John and NowThis Host and Correspondent Zinhle Essamuah**, the event highlighted Vital Voices' 2020 Global Leadership Awards Honorees, changemakers who are transforming their communities around the world by pushing for democracy and sustainability, working to end gender-based violence and addressing racial and gender bias in tech.

This year's virtual event featured **Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton, Diane von Furstenberg**, former Georgia gubernatorial candidate and Founder of Fair Fight Action, **Stacey Abrams**, Actress, Producer and CEO **Tracee Ellis Ross**, and Academy Award winning actor and producer **Charlize Theron**. Actresses **Elizabeth Banks, Kate Bosworth** and 2020 Emmy Winner and Hamilton star **Jasmine Cephas-Jones** joined the inspiring event, as did **Donna Langley**, Chairman of Universal Filmed Entertainment Group, social justice activist **Jamira Burley** and National Youth Poet Laureate **Amanda Gorman**, among many others.

Vital Voices President and CEO Alyse Nelson opened the event, highlighting the glaring need for more women leaders around the world, explaining, "Women are changing the way we think about power and leadership."

Secretary Clinton and Jamira Burley opened the event with a candid conversation about citizen activism, democracy, movement-building and the power young people have to make change. "We have to have the power to claim our rights. That power, in a democracy, starts with a vote," **said Secretary Clinton**. "You have to do more than just support from the safety of your chair. At the end of the day a democracy reflects the views of the people that vote." Jamira agreed, noting, "young people have always been at the forefront of change."

Celebrities and activists joined Vital Voices' 2020 Awardees in dynamic conversations to discuss their work and vision for change. **Actress Maite Perroni** joined Honduras' first group of feminist graffiti artists **Suam Fonseca and Mayki Graff, who make up Dolls Clan**; actress, producer and director **Elizabeth Banks** spoke with 412 Food Rescue Co-founder **Leah Lizarondo**; **New York Times Best-Selling author Elaine Welteroth** interviewed Algorithmic Justice League Founder **Joy Buolamwini**; and Fair Fight Action Founder **Stacey Abrams** had a conversation with Nigerian democratic activist **Obiageli Ezekwesili**.

“You can’t have racial justice without algorithmic justice, just as you can’t have algorithmic justice without racial justice,” Joy Buolamwini declared during her passionate conversation with Elaine Welteroth on addressing deep-rooted racial bias in tech, the real-life effects of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and the need for more representation in building AI. “If you have a face, you have a place in the conversation. If you have a voice, you have a choice.” Welteroth continued, saying, “bias and exclusion are built into the technological fabric of our system and our lives.”

Former Gubernatorial Candidate Stacey Abrams hosted a dynamic conversation with Obiageli Ezekwesili, reflecting on free and fair elections and the critical role of citizens in engaging the democratic process. “The most important thing that can fix democracy would be the citizens,” said Ezekwesili. Abrams reflected on the responsibility of candidates and elected officials to stay true to their vision, saying, “my responsibility was to never leave my values behind.”

Celebrities like Charlize Theron and Tracee Ellis Ross lent their voices to showcase ‘Vital Voices You Need to Know’ – women leaders changing the world such as Amina Swanepoel, Roots of Health Founder in the Philippines, and frontline healthcare workers like Dr. Deqo Mohamed, CEO of the Hawa Abdi Foundation who runs Hope village in Somalia.

NowThis NEXT, in partnership with Vital Voices, was made possible by presenting sponsor P&G. Additional lead partners include Bank of America, Olay, Dawn, Swiffer, Pantene, My Black Is Beautiful, Aussie, Hair Biology and more.

To see the films featuring Vital Voices 2020 Global Leadership Awards winners and their groundbreaking work, [visit here](#). To see footage from NowThis NEXT, hosted by NowThis and Vital Voices, [visit here](#).

ABOUT VITAL VOICES GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Vital Voices Global Partnership invests in women leaders who are solving the world’s greatest challenges. They are “venture catalysts,” identifying those with a daring vision for change and partnering with them to make that vision a reality. Vital Voices scales and accelerates impact through long term investments to expand skills, connections, capacity and visibility. Over the last 22 years, Vital Voices has built a network of 18,000 change makers across 182 countries who are collectively daring to reimagine a more equitable world for all. Learn more at www.vitalvoices.org.