

International Women's Day: The Multiplier Effects of Investing in Women

ROBERT

Good afternoon everyone. How we doing today? Awesome. So my name is Robert Kabera

KABERA:

and I have the privilege of introducing our speaker today. Our speaker for today is Mpule Kwelagobe. Mpule holds a degree in international political economy from Columbia University, in New York City. From 1999 to 2011, she served as the president and CEO of the Mpule foundation. A \$100 million fund she established in 1999, to address the HIV/AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, as CEO of Mpule Institute for Endogenous Development, she heads innovative research and public policy to advance inclusive of economic growth, and socially-responsible investments.

In 2000, Mpule was appointed the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for Youth and Health. She has testified before the UN Congress, and has addressed the United Nations General Assembly, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the World Food Price, and the World Youth Forum, to name a few.

Mpule has appeared on CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, as well as on the cover of numerous international magazines. And here is the fun part. In 1999, at the tender age of 19, Mpule became the first delegate to represent Botswana at the Miss Universe, and she won. Making history as the first African woman to be crowned Miss Universe.

And here's a fun fact about her. Her country of origin, Botswana, has issued not one, but five postage stamps in her honor. Please put your hands together, and help me give a warm welcome to our speaker today, then '99 Miss Universe, Mpule Kwelagobe.

MPULE

Well thank you so much, Robert for such a generous introduction. And Robert is one of the

KWELAGOBE:

advisers in my Institute, and is somebody that we call upon very often to give us feedback and advice on our programs. So it's a great privilege to be introduced by somebody that we look up to as an advisor, as young as he is.

It is such an honor to be here today at Washington State University. My very first trip to Washington, and being that the good folks here thought it that I should not just visit Washington but Idaho as well, I visited two states I'd never visited in one visit. So I'm very appreciative for such a unique engagement in programming that's allowed me to learn a lot about the programs here at WSU, but of course to also go to Idaho and learn about the sustainability initiatives there.

I want to, first of all, start by just saying thank you very much to everybody at Washington State University that worked very hard to bring me here, so that it could be here with you today to talk about the multiply effects off investing in women. And particularly, I would like to thank Doctor Kate Hellman, and everybody at the International Women's Day Committee, the International Programs, the Women's Center, Equity and Diversity, Global Campus, international Students Council, and the Center for Civic Engagement. Thank you all very much for your hard work. And it's a real honor to be here today.

There are three events that make it a particular honor for me to be here today. One is, of course, the upcoming International Women's Day on March 8. The other one is the Commission on the Status of Women that is starting up in New York. And I believe hundreds of gender activists are already descending on New York for important deliberations on the status of women and girls.

And of course 2015 has been declared, by the African Union, as the year old women's empowerment and development. So to be here at such an occasion where there's three major events going on that a commemorating women's contribution to development, I think is a great honor.

I would like to talk to you today about the multiply effects of investing in women. And as I continue with my talk, I will arrive at a point where I share with you all, how my own work has evolved, and how it is that I've gone from being Miss Universe to being a development economist, and why, within institute, we champion gender mainstreaming, and advocate for policy makers and investors to really look at the critical role of women in development.

But let's start with the topic for today, which is the multiply effects of investing in women. So, what are the multiplying-- what are the multiply effects of investing in women? Well research confirms that women reinvest 90% percent of their incomes and their assets in their children and families. And that putting incomes and assets in the hands of women leads to higher investments in food security, health and nutrition, education, and human development. And also this would be a great picture to really emphasize that point. This is me in Kenya, last year, filming a documentary on the critical role of African female farmers, and especially rural, small holder farmers. And we came across these women that were selling their produce on the side of a village road. And I thought it's really conveys just the impact of investing in women and the role that women play in providing food security to their children and to their families.

So these are the multiply effects of investing in women. Women put their incomes and their assets directly in their children and into human development. And this is what the Third Millennium Development goal really talks about. It talks about how gender equality and the investment in women really advances entire societies, and because women invest human development.

So as we talk about the multiply effects then, let's talk about the gender gap. Because we all obviously know that there is a gender gap. As much as we acknowledge that there are multiply effects of investing in women, the challenge remains, how do we make sure that we are actually investing in women, and there we're putting as much incomes and assets in the hands of women as in the hands of men.

And by the way, when you look at the statistic that 90% of that women reinvest 90% of their incomes in children, the same research said that men only return 40% of their incomes to their families. And for the gentleman that are in the audience, this is not male bashing. This is just research that's been proven that, whereas women put their incomes and assets in children, men are much more likely to try and put their incomes in the accumulation of more assets. And so they'll invest their money in buying that new car, or that new tractor if they're farmers, whereas women are more concerned with education and health and the nutrition of their children.

So what is the gender gap? Well, the gender gap are the differences between women and men, especially as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural, or economic attainments, or attitudes. When economists speak of the gender gap, they are usually referring to the systemic differences in the outcomes that men and women achieve in the labor market. These differences are seen in the percentage of men and women in the labor force, the types of occupations they choose, in their relative incomes, or hourly wages.

So why we need to focus on closing the gender gap, is that poverty is gendered. Gender inequality, in access to and control of, a wide range of human, economic, and social assets and other social, economic, political, and cultural constraints, presents enormous challenges for women to achieve economic empowerment. And it constitutes a key dimension of human poverty that results in deprivation, in education, health, and nutrition.

And if you look at the slide show, the one that talks about the fact that women are more likely to be living below the poverty line than men, that's actually in reference to the US. So this is

not even Africa. So poverty is gendered across the world. More than one in seven women live in poverty in the US. And as you see from the one in the corner, the woman is holding a sign that says, "Poverty has a woman's face." Because what we're seeing from the fact that poverty is gendered, we're seeing a rise in the feminization of poverty. And the feminization of poverty means that women and the poor are often one and the same across the world, but especially in Africa.

The feminization of poverty describes a phenomenon in which women represent a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor. This trend is not only a consequence of lack of income, but also of lack of opportunities due to gender biases and fixed gender roles in some societies. I thought this particular slideshow is very important, again because the references the US. This is coming from a 2010 US census, that was done by the National Women's Law Center, that says that for the first time in 17 years, in 2010, there were more women in the US living in poverty.

So those 17.2 million women in the US that were living in poverty, and this was the highest levels that they'd seen in 17 years. So there were 800,000 more women that were in poverty. And of course some of this could be attributed to the 2008 and 2009 financial crisis. But what we also see of course, is that when women are in poverty, that immediately means the children themselves are in poverty. So when you look at children that are suffering from hunger and nutrition, and just children are living in poverty, most of them are in households where the mothers are themselves living in poverty.

But looking specifically at the African case of why we're seeing a feminization of poverty, and why women are the face of poverty, is that a lot of it has to do with time poverty. 79% of rural women in Africa work over 16 hours a day. And the bulk of their time is absorbed in the responsibilities of gathering firewood and collecting water for their families. These two tasks alone can occupy up to six hours a day. And African woman's average workday lasts 50% longer than that of a man, and she sure does the burden of unpaid activities, often linked to low access to clean water and energy, as these women are showing.

So this time poverty hampers women's opportunities to maximize their potential. And so part of how we can solve women's time poverty, to unlock their economic productivity in Africa, will be that we'd have to invest in labor saving technologies, including easier access to clean water and fuel efficient cooking stoves, which are imperative to free up their time, while also improving their health.

So rural women's primary asset is in fact the only labor. But if their time is spent on activities that are not being compensated for, and are not even registering within the GDP of those countries, then it means that women are losing out on economic opportunities.

But what we also understand is that poverty of women just not just remain with women. It also then somehow, the triple effects of it is that it, also now impacts girls. So the effects of gender inequality, girls make up 60% of the world's children not in school. And why is that? Well because as women are facing a lot of unpaid activities, their pulling the female children out of school. So their pulling girls out of school so they can divide some of these responsibilities, with their girl children. And so you'll find that the woman might go off to look for firewood, while she sends her daughters to go and fetch water for the family.

At least 2/3 of illiterate adults in the world a women. So again, these are the effects of gender inequality. Women account for 60% of the working poor, earning less than \$1 a day. Women are more likely than men to work in the lowest-paid informal, or nonstandard wage employment.

Countries where women lack rights to own land have on average 60% more malnourished children. And where women lack any access to credit, the number of malnourished children is 85% above average.

So gender inequality hurts, and there's a desperate need for us to close the gender gap. This is an incredible quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who says, "If we are going to see you real development in the world, then out best investment is in women."

But obviously that is not the case, because as we see how the gender gap hurts women, it results in lower incomes, and an inability to secure formal employment, in difficulty accessing formal financial services, in poor access to health services and education, and then of course, the heavy household burdens that are not compensated.

So we need to close the gender gap if we are actually if we are to achieve sustainable development. And to realize the Millennium Development Goals, and of course the sustainable development goals, that are going to follow at the end of 2015.

So closing the gender gap in development would put more resources in the hands of women, which is proven to strengthen their voice within households. So if we're talking in fact even about a domestic violence in gender-based violence, and violence within families, what you're

going to actually realize is that when women economically empowered, it actually strengthens the voice within the household. And you see less domestic violence against women, and less oppression, especially in those societies and cultures where women are being oppressed, we see less oppression as women become economically empowered, and their voice is strengthened within the family.

So strengthening women's voice within the households by empowering them economically, is also a proven strategy for enhancing food security, nutrition, education, and health of children.

So what are some of the initiatives that are currently out there that are all about sensitizing the world to the need to close the gender gap? And what are some of the frameworks that are guiding these initiatives? This is just a collage of some of the initiatives that are currently out there. The first framework that we really see, and which is a framework that is uniting women right now in New York at their commission for the status of women, is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was ratified in 1979.

And for those students in the audience that I'm looking at gender policy, or would like to, at least, be in a field with an influence in policy, I would say that these are some of the important instruments and frameworks to begin to study.

And the next one that we see is the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, the Dakar Platform for Action of 1994, the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security of 2000. In Africa, we have the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, which is ratified in 2003. And then of course, the United Nations, just in 2010, launched the very first agency that is dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.

So some of this is relatively new, in really getting the message across to all stakeholders around the world, that promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and ending violence against women, is essential to human development, to poverty eradication, and to economic growth.

And some of these US some of these initiatives are absolutely brilliant. Of course, we have Sheryl Sandberg that tells us that we need to lean in. Meanwhile, Time magazine says that we should not hate her, because she's successful. So we'll try as much as possible not to.

And Milala, of course, her quote is very powerful. She says, "we cannot succeed when half of us are held back." And she's, of course, championing the right of girls to have access to

education, which is a very important tool for empowering women and girls.

So the framework that we're looking at, that is about advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, really looks at four pillars of empowerment. The first one is the social pillar. So many policymakers, institutions, and development experts have acknowledged that the empowerment of women through education, health care, and access to microcredit, as a core development strategy to uplift the world's poor, especially women.

And the role of education is absolutely critical. Because here's what we learned in Africa. That limited education opportunities for women in Africa, have reduced the annual per capita growth by 0.8%. Had this growth taken place, Africa's economies would have doubled over the past 30 years. So not investing in women is actually hurting African countries at a national level. So the big issues around the social empowerment of women really looks at education and looks at health.

Another big area, of course, is the economic empowerment of women. Women make up 40% of the world's workforce. Many of the sectors that are critical for economic growth in some of the poorest countries, rely heavily on women. Small- and medium-sized enterprises, with female ownership, represent 30% to 37% of all small- and medium-sized enterprises. So those are 8 million to 10 million women-owned firms around the world. And this is in emerging markets, by the way.

These businesses that are owned by women, have unmet financial needs of between \$260 billion and \$320 billion a year. This is the biggest barrier to growth and development, and we're getting this quote from the World Bank. So the fact that women lack access to formal financial services, again not only hurts the opportunities for women to create employment opportunities for other people, but again it's hurting overall economic growth for African countries and for countries within the emerging markets in the developing world.

So, an example of how this is hurting in economic ways. A recent analysis shows that closing the gender gap in employment in the BRIC countries, so Brazil, Russia, India and China, and in the so-called N11 countries, that's Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Turkey, and Vietnam, could push per capita incomes 14% higher than current projections by 2020, and 20% higher by 2030.

The second example that is particular to the work we do within our institute, where we champion agricultural development and agricultural investment, is that eliminating the gaps

between men and women in access to agricultural resources and inputs, would raise yields on women's farms up to 30%, it would increase agricultural productivity in developing countries by nearly 4%, which would reduce the number of undernourished people in the world, almost 17%, which is 150 million people.

So if we put more income and assets. So in agriculture, these would be imports. These would be seeds and fertilizers. It would be access to loans, where women can develop their land. It would be access to collateral, so that women can buy some type of machinery, because still in Africa, despite the fact that 50% off all the farmers are women, who have growing 80% of the food in Africa, they're still doing this largely using traditional implements and method.

So African agriculture, the image that we associate, is that woman, with the baby on her back, and a hoe in her hand. And yet these women, in spite of all these constraints, are still growing 80% of the food in Africa. But imagine then, if we're shifting some of the resources into women, that we could actually cut down the number of people that are hungry by 150 million. And I think that's pretty significant.

On the political level, there's also a lot to that needs to be done to make sure that as we're all working to empower women, from the bottom up and from the top down, that there are policies in place. That governments are adopting policies in place that ensure that any type of strategy or policy that the government is implementing, or even that private business are implementing, that there's an enabling environment within these countries that's encouraging everybody to look at gender mainstreaming and how to ensure that women are being empowered. So political empowerment of women is very key, because we need women in leadership positions to champion on behalf of all women, including women at the grassroots.

So from the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are still restricted. Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, the private sector, or even academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance. And this is research that comes out of UN Women.

So promoting gender equality has to be done through a rights-based approach. First and foremost, we must look at women's human rights, because women's human rights are-- women's rights are human rights. So that achievement in gender equality and empowerment, should be assessed within the framework of four interrelated areas, which is economic, social,

political, and women's human rights. Gender inequality, then, would denote women having equal access to social, economic, political, and cultural opportunities as men.

And when we talk about human rights, it varies from country to country, right? In some countries, for example, they feel that female circumcision or female genital mutilation, by itself, is a violation of girls and women's human rights. But we'll also look at things, of course, like domestic violence and gender-based violence. There's a statistic that says that one in every four woman in her lifetime will experience some type of gender-based violence, whether it's rape or just violence at the hands of her partner. So we must do all of this through a rights-based approach, where first and foremost, we emphasize women's human rights, and then we're also looking at empowering women socially, economically, and politically.

So having given you sort of the background of the research that we do, and how we look at the gender gap, and how we can close the gender gap, including the different instruments that are out there. the initiatives and the agencies such as the UN Women, where we engage extensively, I wanted to share with you a little bit about how I arrived, at this point, in my journey where there's a very strong focus, within the work that I do, to be an advocate for women and for gender equality.

So as Robert had kindly said in his introduction, about 15 years ago, almost 16 years this May, I of course, had the wonderful opportunity of winning the Miss Universe Pageant. And to be honest with you, when I won the Miss Universe Pageant, my biggest dream was to become a Victoria's Secret supermodel. So it's a very big shock that I'm standing here right now, doing the work that I do and talking about gender equality and women's empowerment.

But I was very fortunate to be mentored by two very dynamic women in Botswana, the governor of the Bank of Botswana, her name is Linah Mohohlo, and she still is the governor of the Botswana 15 years later, and also the Ministry of Health in Botswana, who both convinced me to establish my own foundation, and to also go to school and study economics. And this is what, over the years, has allowed me to transform from just being Miss Universe to being a development economist, is that I really had very strong female mentorship in my life.

And when I was appointed a UN Goodwill ambassador in 2000, I was placed under their leadership of Dr. Nafis Sadik, who at that time, was the very first Pakistani woman to ever be selected to head up a UN agency, and to be Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, and she was head of the UN Population Fund, UNFPA.

And so, with all these women that were encouraging my own growth, and who saw more potential in me than I could have seen in myself, this is why I've been become such a champion for investment in women. Because I believe that I myself am a living testimony on what happens when women invest in women.

So a lot of the research that I do today is to advocate. So we do research, but through the research we advocate for stakeholders to engage in gender analysis, in order to identify, understand, and redress inequities between women and men, girls and boys, based on gender roles and gender relations, and to review existing policies and strategies, and ensure greater and better participation by women, and produce gender disaggregated data that reveals the impact of policies and programming on women and girls. Because that's one of the things that we're still not seeing, is we're not seeing enough data they can really back up a lot of the work that we're trying to do.

So, because of these women really investing their time and making sure that they're building my capacity, when I launched my foundation, when I launched the Mpule Foundation officially in 2000, in November, 2000, I was very fortunate and blessed to have Nelson Mandela come to Botswana to launch my foundation.

So one of the things is that, it's not just about women's leadership. We also need men's leadership, and we need to engage men and boys in the quest for achieving gender equality. Because otherwise, we are speaking in a vacuum. As I always tell women, when I'm addressing women, and we're talking about gender equality and women's empowerment, I tell them that, we know we're fabulous as women, we know we're talented, we know what bright, we know that we can equally do well in science and technology and engineering and mathematics. So we know that. But what we need to encourage is gender engagement. So we need to get more men and boys engaged, and get them to become champions for gender equality and women's empowerment. And in this regard I feel very blessed to have a leader of the stature of Nelson Mandela come to Botswana and really, then, put his stamp of authority on the work that I do.

So through the foundation and the different mentorship that I had, from female leadership, I was able to partner with over 20 international organization and national organizations, to launch intervention programs in Botswana to address the HIV/AIDS crisis. By 2006, we had raised about \$100 million. Our intervention programs impacted about 500,000 people, which is one in every four people in Botswana, came across our programs, and I do attribute that to the

very strong female leadership that I had in my life.

And of course my mother as well, has been a very strong role model in my life. And I'm very thankful that she's continued to show tremendous faith in me as a young woman and as a young leader. So how we-- and some of these pictures, just again, just to show the evolution of our work, when I was appointed as the UN Goodwill ambassador, and as we delved deeper and deeper into isolated areas in Botswana and in parts of Africa where we wanted to launch intervention programs-- one of the things that became very frustrating for me, and that led to the current evolution of my work was, as we're engaging with women, and we're engaging with girls in talking about HIV/AIDS, I begin to realize that HIV/AIDS in fact is an economic issue. and it was a very frustrating thing for me to come back to my donors and partners and say, you know what, we're not really addressing the real issue. Absolutely we're giving women information, and we're helping to set up health centers where women and boys and girls can have access to family planning information, but I really felt that we were not addressing the issue because in some of the villages that we went to, a lot of the girls will tell us about the prevalence of sugar daddies.

Now I don't know how many people here know about sugar daddies, but sugar daddies are older men that prey on young women. And so in communities where, rural communities where families living in abject poverty, you would find situations where there's a girl that is relatively attractive, and she's about 15, 16, 17 years old, and there's a man in the village, maybe who might be in his 40s or 50s, who likes the girl and wants to date and have her as his girlfriend or lover or mistress, and the young girl, because of the poverty within the family, would end up getting into this relationship with this man, because he also gives her money. And what became shocking to us, as we were doing this work was, in some instances the families who actually condoning these relationships because some of these men were, you know, became the provider for the entire family. So the parents know, that at the end of the month, the sugar daddy buys groceries and food for the whole family, he becomes accepted into the family. And the girl is encouraged to maintain the relationship because now everybody in the family is depending on that.

And so, as we're talking with girls, and we're telling them, OK, well if that's the arrangement, because we don't know, we can't explicitly say, well end the relationship. Because unless we're providing some form of economic empowerment, we obviously don't understand the reality of this girl's life and her family's life. So we would say to the girl, at the very least, use some

protection. Because if he's able to give you money and take care of you, nothing says that he might not have three or four other girlfriends in the village that you don't know about.

But that's the thing is that, when a young girl is dependent on a man for money, that means that she cannot negotiate for safe sex, right? So he actually gets to dictate the terms of the relationship, including how they're going to be intimate. So even if she has access to this information, the very fact that he takes care of her and takes care for family, and that her parents are encouraging her to maintain this relationship, means that she will actually not try and even negotiate for safer sex.

So I became very, very frustrated about all of this, because I felt that, no matter what we do, and we're giving out condoms and we're giving out a lot of literature about how to be responsible, that we're not really addressing the real issue, the fundamental structural issue, which is economic empowerment of women and girls.

So this is what led to the establishment of the Institute three years ago. We really wanted to look at research. How do we advance inclusive growth and economic empowerment. How do we really convince policymakers, or investors, or businesses. How to be convince them to really invest in women? What types of programs are we going to create? And so in the beginning, we began to look at things of course like, microfinance, and the role of microfinance in uplifting women from poverty.

But today, we're looking at even bigger programs, such as trying to get more women into venture capital and private equity, trying to invest in female entrepreneurs. But first we really wanted to make sure that whatever programs we're developing, are research-driven and evidence-based. And so this is where the institute has come from.

So our institute engages in research and advocacy and public policy on inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa. And we look at the role of gender equality, youth empowerment, rural development, agriculture, and food security. And the reason why we focus so much on agriculture and food security is because 50% of Africa's farmers are women, and they grow 80% of the food, and yet they get 10% of all incomes, and own less than 1% of assets. And that is a shocking statistic, to encounter the fact that women do all this work, and yet they get very little of their rewards for the work that they do.

And in the research that we do, it also shows that women tend to just very intuitively know what crops to go into. But as soon as the sector that they've developed now becomes

profitable, the men begin to edge them out. So, for example, if you look historically, in Ethiopia, coffee used to be a woman sector. But as it became a cash crop, women were edged out of the coffee sector, and now it's become predominantly a man's sector, because it's a cash crop.

And you're seeing the same thing for example, in things like organic foods, fair trade, you're beginning to see women being edged out by men, because once they realize that all this type of resources are coming into the picture, something that was really designed for women, such as fair trade and an organic produce, men begin to edge women out. So these are some of the things we look at.

Something that has been very important to my work, that I mentioned before, is mentorship. So I realize that as much as I'm doing, and I'm running the Institute, and we're engaging at a global level, I myself personally wanted to pay forward, the mentorship that I'd gotten from the women in my life.

So this is just a slide on inclusive growth and sustainable development. And these are just some of the pictures of me out in the field, doing work, and engaging with female farmers. That's Jaqueline, who is a farmer in Kenya. And I found her very inspirational because she exports her produce to markets in the Middle East and in Europe. And so we used Jaqueline as an example. I interviewed her in Cameroon. There's a documentary that is out right now, in which I engage with Jaqueline at her farm and gets to tell her story of how she got into farming.

But one of the things that I also realized in, as a very fundamental part of closing the gender gap, is there's a very strong need to invest in the next generation of women. We need more young women to really be interested in gender equality and women's empowerment. We need more young women to not really shy away from the word feminist, right? And for them to really embrace it and to realize that there's still a very big wage gap between men and women, including here in the US, by the way, where, I think, women earn, what is it, \$0.79 for every dollar that a man earns. So, you know, if you're seeing in America, I mean, and you're seeing there's an under-representation of women on the boards of Fortune 500 companies, then obviously, in Africa, we're seeing an even more persistent challenge. And so we really want to, on a personal level, I really you want to empower the next generation of young women in Africa that they too, can pick up the work that I'm doing, and embed it within the work they're doing.

So in 2012, I was invited by the Clinton Global Initiative, to be onstage with President Clinton to announce a commitment that I was making to Africa, and to young women in Africa, and I launched an initiative called the New Africa Leadership Program, which is the network of women investing in Africa leadership program. And it is a multi-disciplinary initiative to mobilize the next generation of African female leaders, who are under the age of 35, and who are committed to championing social issues and dedicated to creating innovative, integrated solutions to address challenges that span agriculture, health, education, water, energy, infrastructure, and technology.

So far we've had about 300 young women, representing about 10 countries in Africa, that have come into our program. And the framework that we have, which looks at the four pillars, it looks at women's human rights, so it's a rights-based approach, and also looks at social development, economic development, and then of course, political empowerment of women, it's a framework that empowers young women to become gender equality and women's empowerment champions, who advocate for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls. To promote women's rights to own and inherit property. And that's a very big issue that we're facing in Africa, where in some instances, some culture say that women cannot inherit land.

So a very big part of what we're dealing, what we champion for the young women in our program, is that they have to look at land inheritance rights in their countries, and to promote for women to own and inherit property. And also for women to have equal access to productive assets and resources, and to ensure the girls and women have access to critical social services, such as education and reproductive health services, and to increase women's political participation and access to decision making.

So these are some of the young women that have come through our program. And they're all very dynamic, and very committed, to creating change within their village. Vivienne, who is in the first picture with me, it was the very first young woman in her village, she comes from Kenya, and sure is the very first young woman in her village to go to college, and she graduated from Carthage College in Wisconsin, and is now a very big champion for girls' education, and actually has her own blog on *The Huffington Post*, where she writes about girls' empowerment and girls' education. And in addition, she is the ambassador for Half the Sky Movement, which was started by Nicholas Kristof, who's a *New York Times* columnist, and Sheryl WuDunn.

So we have very dynamic young woman that come into a program, and we give them the framework, and for those that are social entrepreneurs, that are still students, we really help to create a unique curricula, or focus for each one of them, so that they can better understand the impact that they can have in promoting and championing girls' education, women's empowerment through their own work.

So closing the gender gap, and investing in women, result in empowered women, and empowered women results in resilient nations. Because as we know, when you educate a woman, you're educating a nation. But I'd say the same thing for investing. If you're investing in women, you're actually invest in nations. And I wanted to just leave you with something that we can all think about that, also comes from Sheryl Sandberg, in her book *Lean In*, and she says, "I believe that if more women lean in, we can change the power structure of our world and expand opportunities for all."

So I believe that a very big part of reaping the multiply effects of investing in women, is that, we need to see more women investing in women in different capacities. We need more women to head up private equity funds. we need more women to head up venture capital funds and hedge funds. We need more women to invest and champion female entrepreneurship, into investing female entrepreneurs. We need to invest in women at every single level, because the multiply effects make sense for societies, they make sense for communities, they make sense for childhood development.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization reminds us that healthy, educated, and productive women are more likely to have children who are better nourished, better educated, and healthier. So the multiply effects of investing in women means that we enable women to develop marketable skills that women have safe, affordable access to primary, as well as secondary and tertiary education. That women have the ability to acquire vocational, technical, and entrepreneurial skills. That women have opportunities to develop life, financial literacy, family, and household management. That we help women find and retain employment. That women have access to employment opportunities, free of discrimination, and harassment, and violence. That women have access to capital and credit, and other resources that they need to start enterprises. That women have ability to travel to and from work safely. That women have access to quality child care. That women have support for career and leadership development. That we support women in obtaining equal, social, and economic rights, and achieving leadership position. That women have access to equal legal, social, and economic rights in the

workplace, property, and land ownership and inheritance. That women have the ability to manage and control their incomes. That women have opportunities to advance within organizations, and to serve in leadership positions, in corporate management, on management boards. Those are the multiply effects of investing in women. Because investing in women is smart economics. Thank you very much.

I believe that we have some time for any questions and comments. I would be very happy to take them.

Somebody has to break the ice, so I'm going to pick on Kate, that she has to ask the first question or make out a comment or remark.

KATE: What message would you give to students-- thank you-- Thank you. What message would you give to students who might feel that whatever they have to give or do might be small?

MPULE
KWELAGOBE: I mean, I still grapple with this myself, right? Am I really having an impact? It's something that I struggle with all the time as well, because you really feel that as one person, what can you do to really change things that are structural and then a much bigger than you? But this is where I always turn to that very powerful quote by Mahatma Gandhi that, "be the change that you wish to see in the world."

So all of us, we have to do our small part. And the idea is that, if we're all like-minded and like-hearted, that there is a collective movement to address the inequities that we're seeing in the world. If all of us are really feeling the need for social justice and for the empowerment of impoverished people, then every little bit counts. But I think sometimes, if you sit down and sit in a corner by yourself and think well I'm on the only one that sees this, I'm the only one that's trying to improve the world, there are millions of people, that every single day, are working really hard.

But what I also want to say is that, I think it's also very important to know that, sometimes just paying it forward to one person is enough. Some years ago, I received an email on Facebook, from a young woman from Botswana who was doing a master's degree in Japan. And she said, oh when you were Miss Universe, or shortly thereafter, you came to my village. And she said, when I was standing off to the side, feeling very small, she said, I was about 10 years old when you came to my village, and you were standing, you know, a little bit off the side, and she said, I don't know what it is, but for some reason you just walked right up to me, and you

took my hands in your hands, and you just talk to me for about five minutes. It seemed like you ignored everybody and you talk to me. And she said, that stayed with me all these years. And that's why I've then pursued higher education and I'm now in Japan doing my master's degree, and I wanted to say thank you.

And I remember her, because what I often do when I go, especially to villages in Africa, I always look for the girl that's looking at me most intensely. Because I feel there's something in intensity, in eye contact. There's something about a child, even if they're six or seven or eight years old, if they're looking at you in a very intense way, as if they really trying to just get the essence of who you are, I feel then they need that I have to step off the podium, or if I'm working with some officials, I have to just step out of line a little bit, and just go to her and say, you know what, you're going to be a change agent. And so this is what this young woman said to me. And just that alone, lets me know that, as small as I am, if that one woman can see that she's in Japan because I inspired her then, I think it's worth it. So, it's worthwhile to pay it forward even to just one person.

Any other questions? Yes.

SPEAKER 1:

Because I'm a professor, here at WSU, Washington State University, I want to, I want to be able to tell the undergrads, the undergraduates, that this is important, that they should, that though we may think that we live, that the men are the top, the definition of what is masculine, that I, in my undergrad courses, I teach them about masculinities, because I think it's important for us to have the women join us, that we can be equal to them, and that we can actually even be better than we are currently, but we need to have the two of us, both the men and the women, together, to make that goal.

MPULE

KWELAGOBE:

Yeah, I mean, that's why from the very beginning, I talked about the fact that as fabulous as we all know we are as women, that we really need to encourage gender equity. We need to encourage gender engagement. That we can't have these conversations about gender equality and women's empowerment in silos as women, because then we're not really advancing much. Part of what we need to do is that we need to have girls and boys sit together and talk about girls empowerment. And how boys be champion for girls, but we also need to do the same thing for gender equality, is to really have men as champion for women.

So you're absolutely right. I think, they are now, you're beginning to see some campaigns that are really just about engaging men and boys as champions for gender equality. It's very

important that we have men involved, absolutely. Robert.

ROBERT

So I think I'll ask your last question. On your last comment, can you give us some examples, one or two good examples, you're aware of, where men have been tremendous champions for this thing you're speaking about, gender equality. My particular reason is that, most of my best professors in undergrad, hands down, were all women. And naturally, I feel like I owe them to support other women, but can you give us some other examples you've seen from your life, where men have done a good job of supporting women.

MPULE

Well I'm going to start with something that was a little bit troubling when I first heard of it. I might have a great admirer of Women For Women International, that was funded by Zainab Salbi to empower women in conflict, or areas that are coming out of conflict, or areas that have just recently gone through war. And so I was sitting in a meeting with some of her team, and they're telling us about some of the work that we're doing in the Congo.

KWELAGOBÉ:

And one of the things that you're seeing in places like Kivu in the Congo, of course, is women getting gang raped by militia. And what Women For Women International realized in their work in the Congo was, trying to get militia and rebels to stop raping women by just saying, listen it's wrong, you have to protect women's human rights. The rebels just didn't, they seemed, they do not understand that language. For them, rape is a weapon of war. It's just honestly horrific that war often plays out a women's bodies, and then on children as well.

And this is what I think is so sad, most of the time, to see in areas of conflict, is to really see the impact this has on women and on children. But, so Women for Women International, they said OK, it just seems no matter how much we talk to the rebels and to the militia about trying to sensitize them to women's human rights, that it's against what they believe. For them, rape is a weapon of war. And they're at war with different tribes, and so there will utilize it.

So they began to actually use HIV/AIDS as a way to stop militia from gang raping women. They began to talk to the generals and say, listen, you're going to lose men. A lot of your men are going to die, and you won't have any soldiers. Because if they're going around gang raping women, then they're going to get HIV/AIDS, and then they're going to die.

So some of the militia rebels actually begin to sign these contracts that Women for Women International had drawn up, they said that they would not rape women. Not because for them, it was about protecting women's human rights, but because they just don't want to die from HIV/AIDS.

So I use that because I think sometimes, especially in the most brutal places, where some of these conflicts are going on, organizations just have to find very creative ways of trying to just achieve the same end goal. Right, for Women for Women International, the goal was, we just need to get men to stop raping women. But, in places of war, it's a different language, and so they had to then utilize something that was available to them to really then get the rebels and the militia to listen.

So I thought that those one very extreme way of being able to show how we can, of an organization that used a very innovative way of addressing something that I think is just very challenging and very complex, and absolutely despicable, what is being done to women.

But, I wish I could say that I have a lot of examples. I mean I know that there is one organization called Man Up, that's headed by Jimmie Briggs, who by the way is the one that told us this story. It was a man that was a champion for Women for Women International, and he started his own campaign called Man Up, where he would go into the DRC to actually be the one to talk to the rebels about not treating women. So he was the one that was telling us this story about his experience in Kivu.

So, he actually goes into the areas where Women for Women International does work, and he engages men and boys. So I thought that that was a very powerful thing. That we have a man that has its own organization called Man Up, and he partners with an organization that's focused on the empowerment of women and girls in conflict areas, and he goes in there, with them, and he specifically talks to men, and tries to bridge the work that is being done by Women for Women International and translated for men.

But, it would be wonderful to see it happening on a higher level. I think a lot of times people look to Rwanda, for example, when it comes to political representation, right, Rwanda has the most female parliamentarians of any country in the world, at over, I think, what, over 52%, or about 52%, of all the members of parliament in Rwanda are women.

So those are the types of representation that we need, is we need to see more women as members of parliament and I believe that the US is keeping its fingers crossed that in the next couple of years it might see its first female president. All those go a long way, I think, in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. But I hope that you will be a champion for this and that, in a few years, I'll be saying well Robert is doing this amazing initiative where he runs a venture capital that only invests in women. That would be wonderful.

But thank you all very much. This has been truly wonderful. Kate, thank you so much. Thank you to all of you at Washington State University. And happy International Women's Day, and let's keep on being champions for women, because there are multiply effects in investing in women. Thank you.