

VOICES OF CHANGE 2021

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

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WOMEN'S FORUM LEAD

Imagine an ideal world where HE – SHE – WE come together, to work together, to collaborate to grow profitable organisations, thriving economies, and exponential wealth.

In this world, a 1% increase in the rate of gender equality, results in approximately 3% increase in sales revenue. In this world, companies that embrace and implement gender equality, achieve 15% more financial returns – more than their competitors!

You see in this very same world, Thomas, Busisiwe and Julie are hired at the same level - just so happen to have the same amount of work experience and are treated equally. All three of them are excellent at their jobs – all three truly deliver magic.... And guess what; in this world – all three of them earn the same salary and are rewarded equally for their performance – despite differences in gender, age, race and social standing.

In my ideal world – where Thomas, Busisiwe and Julie work together – THEIR work culture respects, promotes and implements equality for

both men and women - black and white. In turn, this culture of equality then leads to increased volumes of innovation, productivity and profitability. In my ideal collaborative world where HE and SHE become WE, Thomas, Busisiwe and Julie don't experience and view their jobs as a mere way to earn a pay cheque. In this world, they have passion. They are excited and fulfilled about working for their organisation. Their environment allows them to lead with purpose. The work they do has meaning. AND in return, THEY have become loyal employees, because in this ideal world, they are able to thrive, laugh, love, smile, grow, fail, succeed, collaborate and bring their full authentic self to work - every single day!

In my ideal world, organisations THAT embrace equality AND have men and women around their decision-making tables, are indeed the organisations that can attract and retain the top talent.

I want so much to cling onto my ideal world. You know why? Because in this world, I have watched how Thomas, Busisiwe and Julie are happy. This has resulted in their families, children, husbands and wives being happy too. Having happy, equal and content homes is truly a gift that we should NOT only imagine, but that we should live and strive for.



Mark Jennings:

Ultimately, for me, it's about creating a public sector that is resilient, that can adapt. And that really helps me.

Chris Hayman:

It's that ability to try things, to experiment, to re-imagine citizens services, to unlock the data that's been stored away for many years, ultimately improve citizens lives

Good morning and welcome to our 2021 virtual Voices of Change movement.

Now, stepping out of my imagined ideal world and facing current realities.

In the real world, I am expected to accept that women still only earn 77 cents for each dollar our male counterparts earn for the same work. This needs to change!

Women are still significantly under-represented in the workplace. In 2020 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found that 74% of men participated in the labour force and women only represented 47% of the formally employed in both developed and developing nations. This needs to change!

Women are still poorly represented at leadership levels or not represented at all. In 2020 Fortune found that across the world's Fortune 500 companies only 7.4% of the CEOs were female. This needs to change!

UNICEF estimates, around the world, 132million girls are out of school. 34.3million of them are at a primary school age, 30million of lower-secondary school age, and 67.4million could be attending upper-secondary school. This needs to change! We need to improve access to education and mitigate drop-out rates because education is key to empowerment and diversity.

There are those who say THAT AT THE CURRENT RATE - none of us will see gender parity in our lifetime. The WEF predicts that THE overall gender gap will only close in 99.5 years if we continue the same trajectory. Thus, ladies and gentlemen, we need to work together. We must hurry up to make things change!

In Africa and South Africa, the need is as urgent as elsewhere. Things need to change on our continent. We need to improve the unemployment numbers amongst women. STATS SA found that unemployment of women exceeds that of men by more than 4%. The WEF prediction IS THAT only in 217 years from now, we will be all on equal pay. Our women more often fall more victim to retrenchment with 2 out of 3 recently retrenched workers in South Africa being female during the time of COVID according to a UCT study.

My name is Ntombizodwa Mhangwani. I raise my Voice for Change! I am a product but also a champion of change. It has been a long and interesting journey from humble township beginnings to a leadership position where I can enable and drive change.

ALMOST like Louis Armstrong, I want to sing of a beautiful world that awaits. However, in my song we are ALL standing shoulder to shoulder as equals, building this better world.

I was fortunate. I had opportunities to grasp. I worked hard to rise and bring change to the world that has helped shape me. Inspiring women as well as leading men shaped my skill and my character along the way. More importantly though, I have been able to empower others as I rose, strengthening deserving women and men in the organisations that I have been privileged to be part of.



I see a beautiful world where we can all thrive and contribute – as equals.

Voices of Change is far more than an annual event where women talk to other women about women, once a year. In 2017 the idea was born when the importance of gender change in business was recognised as a priority. In 2018, 200 women came together at our inaugural event in Johannesburg. Today we are more than 5000 women and men in this virtual Voices of Change Summit. We have an illustrious list of partners enabling change, including Accenture, AECI, AngloGold Ashanti, Aspen, Astron Energy, Business Engage, FNB, Imperial, Life Healthcare, Nedbank, Pfizer, Refinitiv, RMB, Vodacom and Wesbank.

However, Voices of Change is not merely an annual event but rather a continuous drive for change equality in the workplace. It is a true movement of change with ongoing involved change beyond gender, colour or other segregating lines.

May today serve as an energiser for us all to continue to drive the change as our movement gains even more momentum in our organisations! Let us fuel the wave of change and unlock the many business benefits of gender equality beyond philosophy or rhetoric. Beyond the sentiment - gender equality makes good business sense and directly leads to financial growth.

Today is not about women talking with women about women in work. Today is about the power of 'WE'. We must include men to help find the diversity solutions for the challenges and advocating its importance.

We are more powerful when we stand together. It is only when we all join forces, that we can truly reap the sweet fruits of an equal labour. Let us build a brighter future on equal collaboration.

Let us speak up for change! Let us all foster empowering organisations where we trust our employees, respect all individuals and offer all our people the freedom to be creative, train and work flexibly.

We can live in an ideal beautiful and equal business world. Let us be the change we want to see. Let us be the voice of the world we want to live in.

May today add value to your world and may you too be a Voice of Change!

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