

Barbara Moller

President and Founder of Paper to Pearls



When I started Paper to Pearls, I knew I had found my “goose bump” issue. We all need that flint to light a spark in our hearts and souls for the work we are meant to do, and helping women who are survivors of war and poverty, and even personal violence, move from instability and dependence to a place of skilled, entrepreneurial independence feeds that fire in me.

With a diverse career history spanning nearly three and a half decades, Barbara Moller’s professional life is marked by the recurring themes of entrepreneurialism and a commitment to helping others. From her early days as an independent writer and producer to her current role as the president and founder of Paper to Pearls, Barbara has focused her life and her career on the need for global efforts to tell relevant, personal stories.

Barbara launched Moller Communications in 1988, and for 15 years managed the award-winning full-service communications company, providing a wide range of nuanced video, audio, and print products for multicultural audiences, national and international associations, federal agencies, and large and small corporations. During this time, she was selected by Simon and Schuster, one of the country's leading publishers, to produce its first-ever Spanish language book on tape – *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, by Steven Covey.

For the next five years, until 2008, Barbara served as Vice-President for Communications at Transnational Public Policy Advisors, LLC. There, she focused on administration/operations, strategic planning, new business development, and proposal preparation, with emphasis on the role that communications and media relations play in project design and implementation in the public policy field. In her first year, Barbara chaired the Women in Government and Politics Study Committee, which examined women and political or governmental participation from a global perspective.

During this tenure, Barbara co-founded Voices for Global Change (*Voices*) in 2004, a not-for-profit that supports and gives guidance to women, youth, or any group that has been marginalized from full participation in the economic, political, and social life of their communities and countries. The organization provides education, training, and mentoring programs, and works with citizen groups to develop skills needed to participate more fully in civic life. It was Barbara’s work through *Voices* for the U.S. State Department in Uganda that led her, in 2005, to co-develop the initiative that would become Paper to Pearls. Through this micro-enterprise project, *Voices* sells recycled paper bead jewelry made by women from the northern Ugandan refugee camps. In addition to supporting the women on a daily basis, the majority of net revenue is returned to the camps as education, training and entrepreneurship development.

Barbara holds a B.A. in Latin American Studies from the University of the Americas in Mexico City, and a Masters in Spanish Language and Literature from Arizona State University. She has lived and worked in Latin America, specifically Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela, and is fluent in Spanish. A frequently requested speaker on media and communications topics, Barbara served as the Regional Vice President and President of the Washington, DC Chapter of The International Television Association. She has been published in national trade journals and is a sought after speaker on the importance of micro-enterprise in developing countries and its connection to macro-economic issues and civil society development. Barbara resides in Alexandria, Virginia.