



TELEVISION'S INDEPENDENT VOICE.

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ITVS ANNOUNCES FUNDING AND PRODUCTION OF *HALF THE SKY* FOR PRIMETIME PBS BROADCAST

Based On The Bestselling Book By Nicholas Kristof And Sheryl WuDunn

Production In Six Countries With Star Power From, America Ferrera, Diane Lane, Lucy Liu, Marisa Tomei and more

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—(May 17, 2011)—[ITVS \(Independent Television Service\)](#) announced today that it, along with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, has made a significant investment in *Half the Sky*, a primetime television special and transmedia project based on *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's widely acclaimed book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*. The two-part, four-hour broadcast will premier as a special presentation of the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series [Independent Lens](#) in fall 2012 as a cornerstone of [Women and Girls Lead](#), a multi-year engagement campaign led by ITVS to leverage the power of documentary storytelling to increase the leadership and development of women and girls worldwide.

“This is a project that means the world to Sheryl and me, and represents 20 years of travel, research and writing. We are proud to partner with public television to bring awareness to what we see as the greatest moral challenge of our time,” said Nicholas Kristof, *New York Times* columnist and Pulitzer-prize winning author.

“More girls have been killed in the last 50 years, precisely because they were girls, then men were killed in all the battles of the twentieth century – we hope *Half the Sky* will be a call to conscience for anyone who reads the book, watches the documentaries, or engages with the online content or social media,” said Pulitzer-prize winning author Sheryl WuDunn.

Half the Sky's television and online life will build on the success of the best-selling book, which has been through 37 printings with more than 430,000 copies sold (not including e-books) and translated into over 14 languages. The four-hour special broadcast will be accompanied by a groundbreaking game hosted by Facebook and mobile games for India and Africa created in partnership with [Games for Change](#) to harness the power of gaming for social change and bringing new audiences together. The U.S. and international broadcast will be amplified by social media, interactive tools, and community engagement on the ground in 100 U.S. markets and selected cities worldwide. Additionally, more than 40 educational short films are being created in partnership with 54+ NGOs for wide-reaching use among targeted communities across the global south and the U.S. [Fenton](#), led by chief strategy officer Lisa Witter, is providing overall strategy and coordination of the social action and communications elements of the project.



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"Viewers turn to PBS for programs that enlarge their world and deepen their understanding," said Sally Jo Fifer, President and CEO of ITVS. "Half the Sky tells the extraordinary stories of women and girls on the front lines of the fight against poverty and gender inequality across the global south and here in the U.S. who have risen above these circumstances to better our world. It is a perfect match for the engagement-driven goals of public media."

Some of today's finest actresses and spokespeople have been tapped to engage with the subjects on the ground and broaden the understanding for viewers of the issues at hand, including Diane Lane, who recently traveled to Somaliland, America Ferrera who will soon travel to India and in scheduling talks are — Nicole Kidman, among others.

Each actor will accompany the production team and Kristof or WuDunn on location to one of six countries in the global south — and WuDunn will spearhead the production of stories surrounding these issues here in the U.S. Acclaimed actor and humanitarian George Clooney will provide narration for the series. Marisa Tomei and Lucy Liu have directed short films based on women profiled in *Half the Sky*, which will be part of a large online content strategy to be released over the course of the campaign.

"I am so deeply moved and inspired by the work that Nick and Sheryl do on behalf of women all over the world," said actress America Ferrera. "ITVS and PBS are sure to save and inspire many lives by bringing these incredible stories to their audience. I'm honored to be a part of it."

"I feel a sense of honor and excitement to be part of a program that will bring these critical human rights issues to a larger television audience," said acclaimed actress Diane Lane. "Traveling with Nick was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I could not pass up. My experience with Edna Adan in Somaliland has been eye opening and awe-inspiring. In order to fully understand these issues, it is crucial to see them firsthand."

The multi-platform project is [A Show of Force](#) production with Fugitive Films. Show of Force is the company behind the recent PBS mini-series event *Circus*. *Half the Sky* is executive produced by Maro Chermayeff, Mikaela Beardsley, and Jamie Gordon. The storytelling is immersive and immediate as the subjects tackle some of the most startling human right violations around the world and right here in the U.S. on their route to empowerment.

In addition to ITVS and Corporation for Public Broadcasting, additional supporters of Half the Sky to date include: IKEA Foundation, Ford Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Nike Foundation, NoVo Foundation, and USAID. Pro-bono support has been provided by Waggener Edstrom and the United Nations Foundation.

About The Independent Television Service (ITVS)

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new-media projects on the web, and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series Independent Lens on Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM on PBS. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and serve underserved audiences. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting www.itvs.org.

About Show of Force

Founded in 2006, Show of Force represents a long and fruitful collaboration between veteran television

producers, Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre — a team with nearly 40 years of producing experience between them. Dedicated to creating feature documentaries and event television series of the highest caliber, Show of Force is known for high-impact, dynamic storytelling that consistently engages, entertains, and inspires. At once timeless and utterly keyed to the moment, the work has garnered awards, immense audiences, and significant critical acclaim, and has established their reputation as proven innovators in film and television production. Recent work includes: *Circus* (PBS). Maro Chermayeff and Jeff Dupre, have previously been involved as key creatives with numerous other projects, including the Emmy Award winning PBS pop out series, *Carrier*. Currently they are set to release two feature docs for HBO, *Mann v. Ford* (July 2011) and *Marina Abramovic, The Artist is Present* (2012) as well as several ongoing series in development for cable networks. For more on the company visit www.showofforce.com

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