

Sundance Institute And The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Present Short Documentary Films To Inspire Global Community

September 8, 2010

LOS ANGELES, CA ([rushPRnews](#)) 09/08/10 — Personal Stories from Bangladesh, Congo (DRC), Haiti, India, Lesotho and United States

Illustrate Progress Toward Improving Health, Reducing Poverty, and Ensuring Access to Education

Films Centered on United Nations' Millennium Goals for Improving Conditions in Worlds' Poorest Countries to Premiere September 20 in Conjunction with TEDxChange Convened by Melinda French Gates

-- Sundance Institute today announced a special collaborative project with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation designed to harness the power of film to create communities and inspire action on issues related to global health, poverty and education. Six short documentary films commissioned by the Institute's Documentary Film Program from award-winning filmmakers Glenn Baker, Teboho Edkins, Mark Monroe, Maren Grainger-Monsen, MD, Nicole Newnham, Jonathan Stack, Ricki Stern, and Annie Sundberg, will become part of a multi-platform communications initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which plans to share the films online and at speeches and public events around the world.

For nearly three decades, Sundance Institute has promoted independent storytelling to inform and inspire across political, social, religious and cultural

differences. The Sundance Institute Documentary Fund is the pre-eminent global funder of cinematic documentary films committed to excellence in storytelling around human rights, social justice, civil liberties, the environment and other contemporary issues.

Excerpts from selected films will first premiere September 20, 2010 as part of TEDxChange, a live event convened by Melinda French Gates, to mark the 10th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals to improve social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. TEDxChange will look at what advancements have been made since the U.N. adopted its Millennium Goals, and what needs to happen to ensure success for the future. Hosted by TED Curator Chris Anderson at the Paley Center for Media in New York and simulcast in Los Angeles, the 90-minute event will stream live on TED.com and www.tedxchange.org at 11 a.m. EDT, with simultaneous satellite events planned in over 50 other communities around the world.

"As longtime admirers of the important work that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is undertaking in some of the poorest regions on earth, and the most challenging sectors here in the U.S., Sundance Institute is honored to collaborate on this important initiative," said Keri Putnam, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. "It is a privilege to partner with them in connecting global audiences with stories from the frontlines of global development, health and education," Putnam added.

Shot on location in Bangladesh, India, Haiti, Kenya, the Congo (DRC), Lesotho as well as the United States, the six commissioned films illustrate personal stories of communities leading vaccination drives; empowering the poor with safe and affordable means to manage their money, success at an urban American charter school and an intimate portrait of parenting while HIV positive.

"Documentary storytelling is incredibly effective at highlighting complex

realities by humanizing the issues," said Cara Mertes, Director, Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program. "Creating these films with independent filmmakers already exploring the issues that the Gates Foundation addresses has uncovered some extraordinary stories that will help galvanize audiences towards awareness and action."

About the Films

SMALL CHANGE = BIG IDEA, Glenn Baker, Director; Stephen Sapienza, Producer/Camera

Location: Dhaka, Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the birthplace of the Grameen bank and the global micro-credit movement, women and their families are saving for the future, now that bank systems serve the poor.

THE REVOLUTIONARY OPTIMISTS

Maren Grainger-Monsen, MD, Director/Producer;

Nicole Newnham, Director/Producer; Ranjan Palit, Producer

Location: Calcutta, India

In the slums of Calcutta, young people are serving their communities by leading vaccination drives, working together to empower themselves, and safeguard the future of their community.

YOUTH BUILD: BUILDING YOUTH

Annie Sundberg, Director/Producer; Ricki Stern, Director/Producer

Location: Philadelphia, USA

At the Youth Build Philadelphia Charter School, teens who would otherwise

fall through the education system participate in a process that encourages post-secondary education, and provides a support system that helps them navigate toward success.

MAKING MONEY MOBILE

Jonathan Stack, Director/Producer; Mara Batlin, Producer

Locations: Haiti and Kenya

Capturing the game-changing power of cellular telephones to deliver financial services to the poor in earthquake ravaged Haiti, teams are building on models developed in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. This film will highlight the potential of low-cost cellular technology to serve the poor.

DEAR MOTHERS

Mark Monroe, Director; Lisa Cole, Producer; Fisher Stevens, Producer;

Dr. Amy Lehman, Executive Producer

Location: Congo (DRC)

The extraordinary challenges and hard-won successes around maternal and newborn healthcare in Moba, a region along the shore of Lake Tanganyika, in southern Africa, form the center of this short film about the power of basic maternal health education in saving lives.

PHELA (LIFE)

Teboho Edkins, Director; Don Edkins, Producer

Location: Lesotho

Living with HIV presents daunting challenges to prospective parents. This intimate portrait of an expectant mother in Lesotho follows her brave journey as she carefully follows prevention protocols before, during and after giving birth, and goes on to teach others.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals

In September 2000, building upon a decade of major United Nations conferences and summits, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals. The eight goals are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce Child Mortality Rate; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental sustainability and (8) Develop a global partnership for development. www.un.org/millenniumgoals

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. www.gatesfoundation.org

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a global, nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to nurturing artistic expression in film and theater, and to supporting intercultural dialogue between artists and audiences. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival and its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has

nurtured such projects as Born into Brothels, Trouble the Water, An Inconvenient Truth and Angels in America. www.sundance.org.

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About the author:

Sundance Institute

Founded by Robert Redford in 1981, Sundance Institute is a not-for-profit organization that fosters the development of original storytelling in film and theatre, and presents the annual Sundance Film Festival. Internationally recognized for its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, film composers, playwrights and theatre artists, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as Angels in America, Spring Awakening, Boys Don't Cry, Sin Nombre, Born into Brothels and Trouble the Water. www.sundance.org.

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