

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 22, 2011

CONTACT: Caty Borum Chattoo
cchattoo@linktv.org

**LINK TV AND VIEWCHANGE.ORG PRESENT ONLINE AND BROADCAST PREMIERE OF
DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE STRUGGLE TO EDUCATE GIRLS AROUND THE WORLD**

***To Educate a Girl* Now Streaming on ViewChange.org,
Broadcasts Friday, June 24, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. EDT**

San Francisco, Calif. – Ten years after the launch of a United Nations global initiative to provide equal access to education for girls by 2015, filmmakers Frederick Rendina and Oren Rudavsky set out to answer the question, “What does it take to educate a girl?” in the midst of poverty and conflict in much of the developing world. Their film, *To Educate a Girl*, premiered online today on ViewChange.org, the global development platform operated by independent broadcaster Link TV; it will premiere on Link TV’s broadcast network on Friday, June 24, at 7 p.m. EDT.

The filmmakers directed and produced the film in 2010 with the support of the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). With just four years left to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015, the film examines challenges through the eyes of girls out of school, starting school and fighting the odds to stay in school. *To Educate a Girl* delves into the lives of girls living in Nepal and Uganda, both countries struck by poverty and emerging from wars, and showcases the challenges these girls face daily – from early marriage and child labor to personal sacrifice and the inherent limitations of just being born a girl.

The documentary is a character-driven feature that spotlights the stories of Manisha, a teenager in Nepal, who works in the fields to allow her three younger sisters the opportunity to go to school, and whose story is contrasted by three young listeners of a hugely popular youth-oriented radio program that has helped them deal with issues of early marriage and poverty in order to stay in school; Mercy, a six-year-old from an impoverished home in Uganda about to embark on her first day of school; and Sarah, a teenage war orphan who struggles to keep up with her studies. By the end of the film, it becomes abundantly clear that the stories of Manisha and Mercy can be the untold stories of thousands – if not millions – of other girls who struggle daily to have an opportunity to learn and make a better life for themselves and their families.

The film’s score features work from well-known world music artists, including songs by Zap Mama; original music by Anthony Tidd, producer for artists including Black-Eyed Peas, the Roots, Baaba Maal and Zap Mama; and vocals by acclaimed Ugandan-American singer Somi.

Latest estimates show that more than half of the 67 million children around the world currently out of school are girls. Growing evidence points to girls’ education as a key means to alleviating poverty and stopping the spread of HIV and AIDS in the developing world.

“It’s the untold story of how to move millions of people from poverty – it’s the secret weapon that can help defeat diseases like HIV. It’s educating girls,” said Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, in her introduction to the documentary.

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan, who is known for her tireless efforts to promote girls’ education around the world, is also the Honorary Chair of the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), the partnership of like-minded organizations that commissioned the film.

Recognized as an Official Selection of the 2010 Mill Valley Film Festival, *To Educate a Girl* becomes the centerpiece of a middle and high school curriculum in U.S. schools starting fall 2011 through UNGEI and UNICEF.

The premiere of *To Educate a Girl* is part of Link TV's ViewChange.org, a new multimedia website that brings together powerful, evidence-based videos that demonstrate progress in global development and the UN Millennium Development Goals, along with the latest news and action opportunities for users. ViewChange.org is working with non-profit organizations, film distributors and individual filmmakers to combine at one site documentaries, news reports and viewer-generated films of varying length and style. With the help of next-generation semantic Web technology, videos are linked directly with the latest news and most recent social actions so that users can search for specific topics, watch real stories from around the world, learn the latest news (from more than 12,000 news sources around the world) and take action. The site also features long-form films including the Academy Award®-winning short, *Smile Pinki*, and the feature documentary *Favela Rising*.

The documentary is available to view and download online at www.ViewChange.org, and it will broadcast on [Link TV](http://LinkTV) on Friday, June 24 (7 p.m. EDT) and again on Tuesday, June 28 (11 p.m. EDT) on DIRECTV Channel 375 and Dish Network Channel 9410. (For future broadcast dates, please see LinkTV.org's *To Educate a Girl* [program page](#).)

#

ABOUT LINK TV & LINK MEDIA

[Link Media](http://LinkMedia) uses media and the power of stories to engage, inform and inspire its audiences to participate in transformational, sustainable change on issues of global importance. Founded in 1999, Link Media operates the Link TV national network and the websites LinkTV.org and ViewChange.org. An independent and non-commercial media company, Link Media acquires, produces and delivers global news, documentaries and cultural programming over three distribution channels: broadcast, web and handheld devices. Link Media presents diverse perspectives on critical global issues that are underserved by conventional media, and gives voice to points of view that would otherwise go unheard.

A pioneer in news and current affairs programming, **Link TV** has been recognized for its original news programs including the Peabody Award-winning daily broadcast *Mosaic: News from the Middle East*, which monitors and airs unedited selections of news reports from more than 43 Middle-Eastern broadcasters. **Link TV** also offers original, innovative participatory programs promoting national and global citizen action. Much of Link's programming is not available anywhere else on American television.

Link TV is available as basic service on DIRECTV channel 375 and DISH Network channel 9410, reaching more than 33 million U.S. households. Select **Link TV** programming also airs on 220 cable outlets, including in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, reaching an additional 20 million homes. **Link** also streams much of its content online at LinkTV.org. For complete background information, program schedule, and Internet streaming, go to LinkTV.org.

Follow on Twitter [@viewchange](https://twitter.com/viewchange) and [@linktv](https://twitter.com/linktv), and on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/LinkTV and www.Facebook.com/ViewChange.

ABOUT UNGEI

The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) is a partnership of organizations committed to narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education; UNICEF is the lead agency in the UNGEI partnership. UNGEI also seeks to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to free, quality education. UNGEI was launched in April 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, by then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in response to a troubling reality: Of the millions of children worldwide who were not in school, more than half were girls – a reality that continues today. **Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan** accepted the position of Honorary Global Chair of UNGEI in July 2009.

UNGEI's work is driven by two primary Millennium Development Goals – MDG 2: "Achieve universal primary education with the target to ensure that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling," and MDG 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women with the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and at all levels by 2015." Understanding that achieving these and the Education for All (EFA) goals and that a special focus on girls would require a concerted effort by all partners, UNGEI became the EFA flagship for girls' education. Follow UNGEI on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/UNGEI and on Twitter [@UNGEI](https://twitter.com/UNGEI).

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Frederick Rendina Producer/Director

Prior to collaborating on *To Educate a Girl*, Frederick Rendina produced and directed for A&E, the Biography Channel, the Travel Channel, PBS's *Wide Angle* series and *National Geographic On Assignment*, and while based in Dakar, Senegal, field-produced for Associated Press Television News (APTN). His documentary and narrative films have also appeared on PBS, RAI-TV-Italy, NHK-TV Japan, and on Northwest Airlines as part of the Independent Feature Project's Independents-in-Flight series. For A&E's international division, he produced and edited new material for its Biography and Investigate Reports series, covering subjects from Anne Frank to Vladimir Lenin and from counterfeiting to human trafficking. Films include: *Turning the Tide: Tsunami Volunteers*, *Let Good the Good Times Roll Again*, *Utopia*, *A Gang for Good* (narrated by Academy Award-winner F. Murray Abraham and featuring Jerry Stiller), *After the Gun*, *Kabi* and *Secrets of the Soul*. With a background in dramatic arts, he began his career in the Literary Department of Joseph Papp's Public Theater (New York Shakespeare Festival) where he evaluated playwriting, directing and acting talent. He went on to become Story Editor and Associate Producer for actress/director Lee Grant's Academy and Emmy Award-winning production company, Joseph Feury Productions. Among others, Rendina has received the following Grants and Awards: National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Tony Cox Screenwriting Award (as winner of the Nantucket Film Festival screenwriting competition, sponsored by the Showtime Network), Panavision New Filmmaker, Experimental Television Center, Audience Award (Film Fest New Haven), Independent Images Award (WHYY-TV), Bronze Apple Award (National Educational Film & Video Festival).

Oren Rudavsky Producer/Director

Oren Rudavsky is the recent recipient of a production grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for *The Zionist Idea*. He is the producer of media for the Russian Jewish Museum and

Tolerance Center being built in Moscow. Rudavsky just finished producing a series of profile documentaries for the Bloomberg television series, *Risk Takers*. His profiles include portraits of Mike Burry and Michelle Rhee. In 2009 he was Producer/Writer of the two part series *Time for School 3*, a twelve-year longitudinal study of seven children's education in the developing world for the PBS series *Wide Angle*. He was the recipient in 2008 of a Guggenheim Fellowship. He has received two National Endowment for the Arts filmmaker awards, three National Endowment for the Humanities grants, several New York State Council for the Arts awards, and many other awards and commendations. His film *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America* was short-listed for the Academy Awards and his film *Hiding and Seeking* was nominated for an Independent Spirit award. He completed his first fiction feature as Producer/Writer/Director on *The Treatment*, starring Chris Eigeman, Ian Holm and Famke Janssen in 2006. The film premiered at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival and was awarded Best Film, Made in New York. Oren's producing career stretches back to stints on *Saturday Night Live*, *The Real World* and *Tales from the Darkside*.