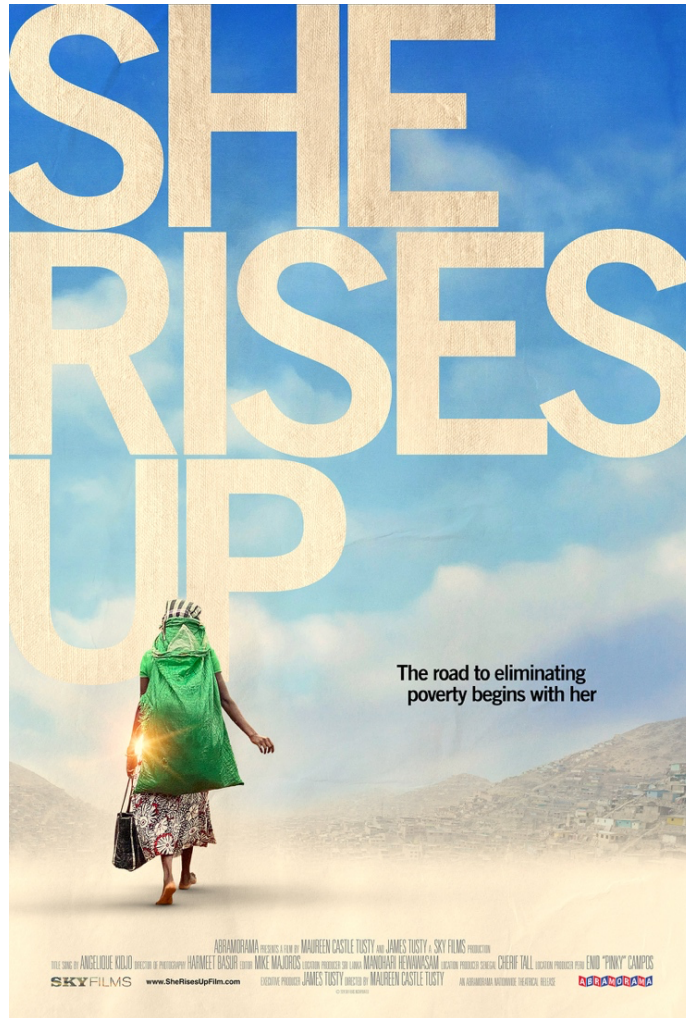


**ABRAMORAMA**

*Presents*



A film by  
Maureen Castle Tusty & James Tusty

A SKY FILMS Production

AN ABRAMORAMA  
NORTH AMERICAN THEATRICAL RELEASE

RT: 91 minutes

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

*She Rises Up* reveals the explosive implications of women's economic participation as we follow radically different women from Sri Lanka, Peru and Senegal who are fighting to build businesses that create job opportunities for women, while also contributing to the reduction of poverty in their communities.

## SYNOPSIS

*She Rises Up* chronicles the remarkable journeys of three women who are helping to lift their communities out of poverty through the local businesses they fight the odds to maintain. Gladys Yupanqui of Peru founded a mini-market and is looking to expand. Magatte Wade of Senegal is building a cosmetics manufacturing company. Selyna Peiris of Sri Lanka is expanding the textile company founded by her mother. (Quotes from these women can be found on pages 7 and 8 of this press kit.)

Nearly one-third of all countries have laws that stifle a woman's access to work. They limit access to bank accounts, property inheritance, and many types of jobs. These countries have some of the highest poverty rates in the world.

Gladys, Magatte and Selyna's stories are each unique unto themselves. Yet a common theme illustrates the critical importance of local businesses to emerging economies. These women prevail over issues that are not faced by the multinational corporations that come in. Opening a business in many countries is easier for a large foreign corporation than for local entrepreneurs.

[McKinsey & Company has calculated](#) that if women were to participate in the world economy to the same extent as men, they would add the equivalent of the *combined* economies of China and the U.S. to the world's prosperity.

*She Rises Up* reveals the role entrepreneurs and small businesses can play in women gaining financial independence, and ultimately reducing poverty for all.

## NOTE FROM THE FILMMAKERS

Since founding Sky Films, we've focused our work on documentary films that inform, uplift and inspire the human spirit.

In many cases, we met and worked with people and communities who were in the midst of rising out of poverty...inspiring individuals such as street vendors in India who fought for legal access to work and now are able to send their children to college, a North Korean refugee who has built a venture capital company in South Korea that invests in the companies of other North Korean refugees, a woman who started with a pan and a hotplate and now runs a successful catering business and culinary school in Zambia. We also came to know the local advocates who were fighting the legal and social battles to remove barriers that had prevented such people, often women, from full economic participation.

These women and men have touched our hearts and minds and have inspired us beyond measure. But such stories rarely make the news, and it is our commitment to give their experiences and insights light. This path has led us to *She Rises Up*, with a focus on the intersection of women and poverty and the power of work.

[Over a billion people](#) coming out of extreme poverty in just 25 years is an impressive and dramatic change in our world. What has allowed so many people to drastically improve their life situations, while over 750 million people today still suffer in poverty? There remains much work to be done to create an environment that will truly bring an end to extreme poverty in our lifetime.

Our conclusions:

1. Removing the obstacles that prevent women from participating fully in the economy is not only a human rights issue, it is a powerful tool for reducing poverty.
2. [Nearly one-third of all countries](#) have laws that stifle a woman's access to work. They limit access to bank accounts, property inheritance, and many types of jobs. These countries have some of the highest poverty rates in the world.
3. Creating environments that allow for economic freedom is the most effective method for fighting poverty. Governments aren't able to produce prosperity on their own, their role is to create the safe and conducive environment for entrepreneurial growth and job creation. Citizens with the options and freedom to work can create a healthy economy.
4. It is local entrepreneurs who create meaningful and lasting jobs. While there are certain roles foreign aid and government regulation can play in fighting poverty, these approaches are overused to the point that they often end up preventing the sustainable job creation that is vital for lasting change and growth.
5. It is critical for women to have the option to work in order to have financial protection and independence.

## THE PRODUCTION

*She Rises Up* was filmed on location in 75 days over a 17-month period. Production was delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19, then further delayed due to serious civil unrest in both Peru and Sri Lanka.

These stories take us beyond the major cities of Lima, Colombo and Dakar. Each story has connections to remote areas within Peru, Sri Lanka and Senegal. The remoteness of many locations made production a very difficult effort at times. The end result is an exploration of human achievement in areas of the world that most people in the West will never see otherwise. Yet these stories represent the challenges so many who live in poverty face today, and in particular, women.

## THE TEAM

### **Maureen Castle Tusty / Director and James Tusty / Executive Producer**

Maureen Castle Tusty and James Tusty founded Sky Films Inc. in 2008 in order to produce documentary films that inform, uplift and inspire. Their first feature film, *The Singing Revolution*, was released theatrically in over 100 North American markets. The *New York Times* declared the film a coveted "Critic's Choice" and wrote "Imagine the scene in *Casablanca* in which the French patrons sing *La Marseillaise* in defiance of the Germans, then multiply its power by a factor of thousands, and you've only begun to imagine the force of *The Singing Revolution*." *The Singing Revolution* told the little-known story of how the country of Estonia played a critical role in the collapse of the Soviet Union by using singing as a weapon of resistance. Subsequent documentaries such as *India Awakes*, *To Breathe As One*, *Sweden: Lessons for America?*, *Trailblazers: The New Zealand Story*, and *Corporate Welfare: Where's the Outrage?* have all aired nationally on U.S. Public Television.

For many years prior, the Tustys specialized in international productions for some of the largest corporations in the world such as Coca-Cola, IBM, and GE. Recognized with scores of awards, that work took them to over 60 countries around the world. It is that experience that allows them to produce compelling films that take place in many remote corners of the world; sharing stories and voices that might not otherwise be heard.

### **Harmeet Basur / Director of Photography**

Based in New Delhi, India, Harmeet Basur left his job as an engineer to pursue his passion in performing and visual arts, which led to filmmaking and cinematography. Harmeet as a Director of Photography has shot feature films *Hum Saya* (Neighbors-MUBI) in Afghanistan and *Mantra* in India (Amazon Prime Video). He has been cinematographer/DP for award winning documentaries on social change, human interest, wildlife and environment, like *No Problem*, *India's Daughter*, *Looking for Sultan* and *3 Seconds Divorce* and short films like *Here and Away* and *Villari*. Harmeet has also collaborated with artists on video art, installations and experimental films. Harmeet's film, *Chasing the Light*, made during COVID lockdown, won the Gold Award at the PSBT Film Challenge 2020-21.

Harmeet has been associated with projects for BBC UK, PBS US, Discovery channel, National Geographic Channel, VH1, CNBC UK, Star TV and Channel News Asia and organizations like WWF (World Wildlife Fund), UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, TERI, Help Age and Magic Bus. *She Rises Up* is Harmeet's fourth collaboration with the Tustys.

### **Mike Majoros / Editor**

Mike has spent the last 30 years making feature-length documentaries about a broad range of subjects: Maasai warriors from Kenya marketing their culture in the US, homeless men surviving on the streets, veterans protesting to raise awareness about the futility of the Vietnam War, and people who use wheelchairs confronting an inadequate healthcare system. His work has received dozens of awards and has been screened internationally at festivals including Sundance and Berlin, as well as on PBS. In 1985, he received his graduate degree from the MIT Media Lab, and later he taught thesis level film production at the Rhode Island School of Design for 15 years.

### **Enid "Pinky" Campos / Location Producer - Peru**

Pinky is a Peruvian film producer with an extensive CV. Since 2002 she has been producing feature films and short films of the "new" Peruvian cinema, and has produced many of these films thanks to international co-productions with Colombia, Argentina, Spain, France, Germany, Norway and the U.S. Her films have premiered at festivals such as Venice, Berlin, Cannes, Locarno, San Sebastian, Warsaw, Sundance, and Tribeca. She has produced several TV series for Netflix, Movistar and Amazon, including being one of the producers of the series *Tijuana*. In 2019, Movistar hired her to produce the first two premium series in Peru: *Un día eres joven* and *El día de mi suerte*, and also a series in Colombia: *Ruido Capital*.

### **Cherif Tall / Location Producer – Senegal**

Cherif is a production manager, filmmaker, screenwriter, and photographer in Dakar, Senegal. Cherif is founder of the production company House of Jovence, and previously founded The Hub Dakar a Culture Club and Art Gallery in the heart of Dakar. *Bunt Ban*, Cherif's latest short film project, has been selected for the prestigious Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 as part of the Guests from the Future.

### **Manohari Hewawasam / Location Producer – Sri Lanka**

Manohari is an established director, writer and producer in Sri Lanka. She is the director of numerous documentaries for Sirasa TV, National Television on topics such as women rights, sexual harassment, child abuse, AIDS, breast cancer, domestic violence, and prostitution. Manohari's film *Sath Paththini* was a featured Teledrama broadcast on ITN, and her work also includes episodes for the ITN Children Tele Series.

## **Chandran Rutnam / Location Services – Sri Lanka**

Chandran Rutnam has hosted numerous Hollywood films for their location shoots in Sri Lanka and Malaysia. He was the Line Producer/Production Supervisor on several international productions including the Sri Lankan location shoot of Paramount Pictures' *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) and *Indochine* (1992). His directorial credits include *The Road from Elephant Pass* and *A Common Man*. He is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Asian Film Location Services which hosts numerous foreign films to be shot in South East Asia.

## **Angelique Kidjo / Original Title Song**

Five-time Grammy Award winner Angélique Kidjo is one of the greatest artists in international music today, a creative force with sixteen albums to her name. Time Magazine has called her "Africa's premier diva" and named her one of the most influential people in the world for 2021; The BBC, Forbes Magazine, and The Guardian have all highlighted her importance to the people of the African continent. She is the recipient of the 2015 Crystal Award given by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the 2016 Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award, the 2018 German Sustainability Award, the 2023 Vilcek Prize in Music, and the 2023 Polar Music Prize.

As a performer, her striking voice, stage presence and fluency in multiple cultures and languages have won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. Kidjo has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk, and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

Angelique also advocates on behalf of children as a UNICEF and OXFAM Ambassador. She created her own charitable foundation, Batonga, dedicated to support the education of young girls in Africa.

## QUOTES FROM THE FILM



Gladys



Selyna



Magatte

### Magatte Wade (Senegal)

- *"I want to create jobs in the places that don't have jobs. So people have a choice to stay in their communities and live good lives."*
- *"To have a heart for the poor, that's easy. To have a mind for the poor, that's the challenge."*
- *"When it comes to addressing poverty and the poor, prosperity almost seems like a dirty word. Yet, that's the only solution to poverty. It's prosperity building."*

### Selyna Peiris (Sri Lanka)

- *"I think a lot of people see this just as a textile business. And to them, I say I see the potential of this to really, really uplift our communities."*
- *"We have to as women have the right to decide on how we want our futures to be, we have to have the choice."*
- *"How do I balance people, planet, profit? It's not impossible. A younger generation is out there that's telling the world through example, that we owe it to the world to make better decisions."*

### Gladys Yupanqui (Peru)

- *"I think there is poverty in our country, starting with the men in charge. They come into power, I think, with the intention not to work for the people as they promise, but rather to take advantage of things for themselves."*
- *"And those of us who come from villages, from the bottom who are poor, need to change our way of thinking as well. I always think that we're making ourselves victims, complaining, 'Why did this happen to me? I'm poor and I'll stay poor.'"*
- *"One can break the chains, even if they are made of iron, they can be broken. That's what happened in my life."*

### Zenobia Yupanqui (Peru)

- *"The Lord has given me so many blessings. The greatest blessing He gave me was my daughter. I am proud. I say this with pride because my daughter was strong. Thank God that He gave her the gifts of strength and courage, so that she could make it this far."*

### Dilakshini "Madhusha" Shivakumar (Sri Lanka)

- *"My grandmother says girls must stay at home and do housework, that they should be obedient to the boys. But we shouldn't be like that, we should be equal to boys, we must also work. We all have to come out and see, the world outside has changed."*

### Salimata Diakhate (Senegal)

- *"The Senegalese people have grown accustomed to the notion that women should stay at home. Women only recently revolted against these ideas and started working. Working allows us to help our families and, more importantly, ourselves. Because your income supports first you, as well as your family."*

### Sandra Wanduragala (Sri Lanka)

- *"From my childhood, I always believed that we could do something more. And first my idea was to become a politician. And then I discovered that you can do so much good with a private initiative like ours."*



Madhusha



Sandra



Zenobia & granddaughter, Talia



Salimata



## **ABOUT SKY FILMS**

Sky Films Inc. was founded by James Tusty and Maureen (Mo) Castle Tusty with the release of their first documentary feature *The Singing Revolution* (distributed by Abramorama). They previously owned a communications production company, Mountain View Group, which served some of the largest international corporations such as Coca-Cola, GE and IBM. In 2008 they sold Mountain View to two longtime employees and started Sky Films with a focus on documentaries. Sky Films has produced many inspirational stories from around the globe that reflect the triumph of the human spirit.

For more information, visit [skyfilmsinc.com](http://skyfilmsinc.com).

## **ABOUT ABRAMORAMA**

Abramorama is a preeminent global distribution, marketing and sales partner for nonfiction and music films. An innovator in creating and implementing personalized worldwide distribution, marketing, and live and event cinema, Abramorama provides customized strategic services to filmmakers, networks, record labels, artists, and IP owners, across all platforms and in all territories. In its over 20+ years of operation, Abramorama has collaborated with many of the most respected global brands in entertainment, including The Beatles, Dolly Parton, Led Zeppelin, Metallica, Pearl Jam, Neil Young, Melanie Martinez, Laurie Anderson, Jimi Hendrix, Green Day, National Geographic, AARP, Apple, Amazon, HBO, Hulu, Universal Music Group, Atlantic Records, Warner Music Group, and Sony, among others. Through a powerful global network of cinemas, digital media outlets, and affinity marketing partners, Abramorama strategically implements a unified distribution and audience activation plan for each title. Abramorama is expert at maximizing reach, engagement, marketing spends, and Impact ROI for films created for target audiences.

For more information, visit [abramorama.com](http://abramorama.com).

## **ABOUT ROCO FILMS**

Founded in 2000, ROCO Films is a leading global documentary film distribution agency. With an educational division aimed at bringing these compelling films to schools, libraries, corporations, and other semi-theatrical environments, ROCO broadens the impact and influence of these films by mobilizing communities to host, organize and execute their own screening events. In addition to being a premiere distribution partner, ROCO offers a range of impact services for select titles to enhance engagement.

Over two decades, ROCO has distributed exceptional documentaries to the global and educational markets including many Oscar-nominated feature documentaries and festival award-winners such as *Born Into Brothels*, *Hoop Dreams*, *Jesus Camp*, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, *Street Fight*, *How to Survive a Plague*, *Chasing Ice*, *Miss Representation*, *A place at the Table*, *The Invisible War*, *Particle Fever*, *After Tiller*, *The Internet's Own Boy*, *Inequality for All*, *Girl Rising*, *Cartel Land*, *The Hunting Ground*, *Life Animated*, *Trapped*, *DOLORES*, *Human Flow*, *An Inconvenient Sequel*, *The Fourth Estate*, *Human Nature*, *RBG*, *The Fight*, *Picture a Scientist*, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, *Kiss The Ground*, *The Biggest Little Farm*, *Flee*, *On The Record*, *The First Wave*, and *Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America*.

Find out more at [rocofilms.com](http://rocofilms.com).

## CREDITS

a SKY FILMS Production

Director

Maureen Castle Tusty

Executive Producer

James Tusty

Editor

Mike Majoros

Director of Photography

Harmeet Basur

Location Producer - Peru

Enid "Pinky" Campos

Location Producer – Sri Lanka

Manohari Hewawasam

Location Services – Sri Lanka

Chandran Rutnam

Asian Film Location Services

Location Producer - Senegal

Cherif Tall

Writers

Mike Majoros

Maureen Castle Tusty

James Tusty

Sound Recordist

Bhawesh Kumar

Original Title Song by Angelique Kidjo

An Abramorama Nationwide Theatrical Release

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