

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
CONTACT:**

**Anna Mirza 415.356.8383 x442 anna\_mirza@itvs.org**

**BITTER SEEDS Premieres on Public Television April 2013**

A film by Micha X. Pele

Every 30 minutes a farmer in India kills himself because he can no longer provide for his family. *Bitter Seeds* is a vivid, rich, and deep documentary that takes us to an Indian village at the center of the suicide crisis to explore what's behind the shocking statistics.

18-year-old Manjusha Amberwar hopes to get her first article published in the local paper. Taking her first step as a journalist is not easy for an Indian village girl, whose family objects to her ambition. Manjusha wants to tell the world about the farmers' crisis all around her: her father was one of the many Indian cotton farmers who committed suicide. Hoping to bring an end to this epidemic, she begins to investigate its root causes. She discovers that the farmers switched to genetically modified seeds produced by the U.S. based company, Monsanto, which are both more expensive and require more water for cultivation. Since most farmers are rain-dependent, they rarely benefit from the promised large harvest, and find themselves going bankrupt. Manjusha's neighbor, Ram Krishna, is one of the farmers fighting to hold on to his small plot of land. *Bitter Seeds* raises critical questions about the human cost of genetically modified agriculture and how we will grow things in the future.

*Bitter Seeds*, the third film in Micha Peled's globalization trilogy (*Store Wars*, *China Blue*), explores the controversy surrounding genetically modified (GM) seeds, focusing on a region in India where an epidemic of farmer suicides has claimed over a quarter million lives.

The subject of *Bitter Seeds* is timely for the U.S., where states including California, Colorado, Iowa, Maryland, and Washington are currently debating and voting on initiatives requiring the labeling of GMOs in our food. The film continues to have a tremendous impact in India, having been translated to three local languages and screened in 175 villages.

*Bitter Seeds* was recently awarded the 2013 Cinema for Peace International Green Award. The award, founded by Leonardo DiCaprio in 2010, is presented during the Berlin International Film Festival. Among the finalists were Gus Van Sant and Matt Dillon's *Promised Land* and Jeremy Iron's *Trashed*. The film had its world premiere at the Telluride Film Festival and has won numerous awards including the Oxfam Global Justice Award, the IDFA Green Competition Award, and the Jury Award at the Seoul Green Film Festival (South Korea).

**About ITVS**

Independent Television Service funds, presents, and promotes 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 Monday nights at 10 p.m. on PBS. Mandated by Congress in 1988 and funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, ITVS has brought more than 1,000 independently produced programs to American audiences to date. For more information about ITVS, visit [itvs.org](http://itvs.org).