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***SOLAR MAMAS TO PREMIERE ON THE NEW SEASON OF INDEPENDENT LENS,
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2012***

— Series Moves to Mondays at 10 PM on PBS —

(San Francisco, CA) — Welcome to India's Barefoot College, where rural, poor, and often illiterate women from around the world are offered the rare opportunity to receive an education that teaches them how to make their communities self-reliant and sustainable. Rafea, a beautiful, strong-willed 32-year-old Jordanian mother of four, is traveling outside of her village for the first time ever to attend Barefoot's solar engineering program. Once there, she will join women from Guatemala, Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Colombia in a life-changing, six-month job training program that will transform her into a solar engineer — and change her life. *Solar Mamas* will premiere on *Independent Lens* on Monday, November 5, 2012 at 10 PM on PBS (check local listings).

As the world's only college built by and for the poor, Barefoot's groundbreaking program addresses the needs of rural communities for both jobs and sustainable energy by teaching women the skills they need to create solar energy and then earn a living by practicing the trade and teaching it to others. In addition to an education, the college experience provides new friendships and an eye-opening adventure for women who have never before been on their own. But Rafea's adventure is soured by her husband's threat to divorce her and take their children if she does not return home.

With no real choice in the matter, Rafea goes back to her village and sets out to persuade her husband and other family members that her studies in India will benefit everyone.



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In her journeys to India, back home, and then back to India, Rafea goes through a profound transformation, returning to Jordan stronger and more confident, with the skills to earn an income and help her community in ways never done before.

Solar Mamas is part of the international [WHY POVERTY?](#) Project, a groundbreaking, cross-media event reaching more than 500 million people around the world via over 60 international television broadcasters as well as radio, internet, and live events in November 2012. A second WHY POVERTY? Film, Alex Gibney's [Park Avenue: Money, Power and the American Dream](#), will premiere on *Independent Lens* on Monday, November 19, 2012. For more information on the WHY POVERTY? Project, visit www.whypoverty.net.

To learn more about *Solar Mamas*, visit the companion website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/solar-mamas. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmakers, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

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About the Filmmakers

Mona Eldaief (Co-director) was born in Cairo and raised in the United States. A graduate of New York University with a degree in political science and photography, she works as a director, director of photography and editor on documentary film and television projects around the world. Her documentary feature credits include *Control Room*, *Startup.Com*, *A Wedding in Ramallah*, and *Her Name Is Zelda*. Television credits include programs for *Frontline World*, Discovery Channel, ABC News, and MTV News and Docs. Eldaief also implemented a video diary exchange program between Israelis and Palestinians; this program allowed young people in Israel and the West Bank to create video diaries that were then shared to initiate an ongoing dialogue about the conflict. She continued documenting global stories through video exchange for the international film event Pangea Day. For this live broadcast, Mona sent camera phones to NGOs and UNHCR refugee camps around the world and produced and edited their first-person film narratives.

Jehane Noujaim (Co-director) was raised in Cairo and began her career as a photographer. After obtaining a B.A. in film and philosophy at Harvard, she directed *Mokattam* (1998). Noujaim went on to produce and direct *Startup.com* (2001) and *Control Room* (2004). She was co-director on *Shayfeen.com: We Are Watching You*. Noujaim has also worked as a cinematographer on *Born Rich* (2003), *Only the Strong Survive* (2002), and *Down from the Mountain* (2002). She served as executive producer on *Encounter Point* (2006) and *Budrus* (2011).

Mette Heide (Producer) is an award-winning producer and owner of +plus pictures ApS. She has worked as an executive producer for the past 16 years. Among the films she's produced are *Last White Man Standing* (2010), *The Invention of Dr. Nakamats* (2009), *Honestly, Mum and Dad* (2009), and *Liberace of Baghdad*, winner of the Special Prize at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.

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About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information is at www.pbs.org/independentlens. Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.

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