



YEWANDE SADIKU, 2010 NIGERIA

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On her fellowship in 2010, Sadiku studied the role of the financial sector in supporting the development and growth of the media and entertainment industry in the U.S. During this time, she became inspired by the use of film to allow inner city communities to tell their stories. She said, "Eisenhower Fellowships has given me the platform for exploring a dream that I have had for about 18 months. EF allowed me to see the U.S. through fresh eyes and to properly engage it professionally for the first time in my life. I have made many personal and professional friendships with Fellows and with professional contacts that I expect to continue long after the fellowship period. I have met with people who have enriched my life and who have opened my mind to possibilities."



In May 2012, filming began for *Half of a Yellow Sun*, with Sadiku acting as an executive producer. Leveraging her experience as an Eisenhower Fellow, she raised about £3m for the production of the film from Nigerian investors, which was about 70% of the total budget. The film is based on the book by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and tells the story of the effect of the Nigerian-Biafran War (1967-1970) through the dynamic relationships between two sisters and their lovers, and will star Thandie Newton, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Onyeka Onwenu. Sadiku sees the film as a "bridge between Nigerian cinema and the international film community. Most of the local crew members, who make up roughly 60% of the production, are getting their first chance to work on a film with a high level of technical detail, acquiring skills that will help the local industry moving forward."

This is the first capital campaign of this magnitude in Nigeria for a film. Sadiku believes that the success of this film will improve the comfort of Nigerian investors with film investments and allow Nigerian filmmakers to raise formal financing in the future beyond their circle of family and friends. The score for the film was recorded in October and a trailer for the film was shown at the recent African Leadership Network event held in Accra, Ghana. The production quality and values of this film have also raised the bar to indicate what is possible from a production shot in Nigeria. The wide international distribution of the film should also ensure that a "made in Nigeria" film achieves worldwide distribution on a scale that has never been achieved with a "made in Nigeria" film before. Looking towards the future, Sadiku hopes that this success will serve as a basis for developing formal structures for film financing, and that it will unlock the economic potential that the Nigerian film industry holds.

Of this accomplishment, Sadiku said "This was the dream that led me to Eisenhower Fellowships and I tried to bring everything that I learned on the fellowship to bear in structuring the fund raising. The fellowship was the cornerstone of my journey to the film, and I want to thank the EF team for the great work that you are unconsciously doing for people (dreamers) like me around the world!"

Leaders bettering the world around them.