

20 WOMEN CHANGING THE WORLD

IN HONOR OF OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY, MARIE CLAIRE CELEBRATES 20 MOVERS, SHAKERS, MAVERICKS, AND BADASSES WHO ARE BOLDLY, BRAVELY, AUDACIOUSLY BLAZING NEW PATHS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

INTRODUCTION BY SHERYL WUDUNN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER HAPAK

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S JOURNALISTS, Nicholas Kristof and I are always looking out for challenges the world should be aware of. When we started learning about what women and girls in developing countries face, we felt we had to tell their stories, which became *Half the Sky*, published in 2010. We've now written a book called *A Path Appears*, about how to make a difference and transform

lives. The title is based on a quote from Chinese writer Lu Xun, who compares creating hope to building a path in the woods: As more people walk—as more people devote resources at a problem—a solution appears.

Some people may be more naturally compassionate or altruistic than others, but everyone can become more altruistic—and benefit from that altruism as well. Scientists increasingly are finding out more about what happens

when we help someone in need or contribute to a cause larger than ourselves: We feel happier. Part of the benefit comes from a growing sense of connection to others. Part of it is that we derive a greater sense of purpose. There are many ways to contribute to society and a great many reasons why you should try. Helping yourself by helping others is just one of those reasons.

Sometimes we think that the world's problems are so massive and overwhelming that we can't make a difference. But each of the 20 women on the following pages forged ahead, following a calling toward social justice or addressing social ills. There is no one path, no one paramount cause. These inspiring women each chose their own unique role to play in alleviating the problems facing women and girls across the globe, in the areas of health, education, violence, economic empowerment, and political engagement. And in doing so, they have opened many pathways for the rest of us to follow.

ALICIA KEYS

COFOUNDER, KEEP A CHILD ALIVE

For standing up to an epidemic

Day Job: Singer-songwriter. **Wake-up Call:** Twelve years ago, near the end of her first world tour, Alicia Keys, now 33, found herself in a room full of South African teens. Some were infected with HIV; others had family who were affected. "I felt like I was looking at my own reflection," she recalls. "They were around my age, going through life just like me—looking for love, but wondering how they could continue. There was no way I could leave and pretend like I never saw it or act like I wasn't changed. I remember feeling like, *If I were them, I would wish someone would speak up for me about what's going on.*" **Proof Positive:** Her foundation, Keep a Child Alive, has raised about \$25 million to provide more than 300,000 people in Africa and India with access to lifesaving drugs,

nutritious food, and care. "Seeing a child who was only predicted to live to age 2, and now they're 15 ... wow," Keys says. **Affecting Moment:** At an AIDS conference in the U.S.—where infection rates remain disturbingly high, especially among black women—Keys met Kym, who had contracted the virus from her husband. He'd been too ashamed to seek medical help, or even to tell her he had the disease. "They could have still had a relationship, and he could have not exposed her," says Keys. Instead, Kym learned she'd been infected just before he died. Last year, Keys helped launch the Empowered campaign to encourage women to get tested and, if necessary, treated. Says Keys, "This is not a death sentence. We can beat this thing." **Get Involved:** keepachildalive.org —M.C.



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