



The Forgotten Faces of Central America's Street Kids

CHILDREN ^{IN A} JAR

A DOCUMENTARY BY ANDREA CAMPBELL

SYNOPSIS

For the children living on the streets of Central American cities, the reality of their daily struggle to survive has them continually searching for a way out. In fact, most Central American urban areas contain subcultures of street kids fighting to survive and escaping only temporarily by using cheap drugs. Glue huffing has become epidemic among the legions of discarded children in societies ill-equipped to care for the numbers.

Throughout Central America poverty, corruption, and violence fill the streets of cities like Tegucigalpa, Honduras and Managua, Nicaragua with thousands of homeless children. Poverty forces children as young as five years old to work on the streets to help support their families and themselves.

Children in a Jar is a dramatic snapshot of how these children survive each day, featuring poignant tellings of how they came to be on the street. These young boys and girls relate how they steal and beg for food and money to buy glue, how they have been raped and witnesses to murders. The touching interviews with the children in this documentary reveal a sadness at their lost innocence and the realization that they could be killed at any moment and no one would care.

Children in a Jar clearly illustrates a cold reality – the unfortunate street children of Central America are symptomatic of the bigger problems of government corruption, widespread poverty and a culture of violence. You'll also see how even these forgotten faces can be saved from the street.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Maria José, 13, Managua, Nicaragua

Maria ran away from home when she was ten years old to escape an abusive, alcoholic father. After only a few months of living on the streets she began sniffing glue, she says, so she wouldn't be hungry or afraid. She became addicted shortly thereafter.

Maria José can be witty and charming, with a lively, engaging personality. She can also be listless, unpredictable and violent, behavior induced from glue use. She lives with fifteen other children in an abandoned building surrounded by rotting garbage. They survive by begging, stealing and prostituting themselves. There is a good chance that Maria José will be dead before she turns 16.

Donaldo, 18, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Donaldo is an affectionate, good-natured young man-child, who elicits sympathy with his palsied pitiful appearance and sincere demeanor. He has been living on the streets since he was eight years old and the effects of sniffing glue for twelve years are severe. He originally left his family because there was no food at home.



Donaldo trembles constantly and there are days when he cannot even walk. He has been raped and suffers regular beatings from street gangs and police.

Jorge, 18, Managua, Nicaragua

A young man with promise, Jorge is studying to become a mechanic. Neighbors know him as a conscientious, hard working individual, but this is the new Jorge.

When he was fifteen, Jorge's father was murdered - not an uncommon occurrence in

Managua where sixty percent unemployment fuels alcoholism and violence. Depressed and confused, Jorge ran away and began living on the streets. After three long years on the street, Jorge met a "street educator" entered a shelter, and overcame his addiction to glue.

Ana Lara, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Ana is a passionate, caring, social psychologist from Spain now working with the street children in Honduras. In *Children in a Jar* she introduces us to the children who were not saved with touching stories and poignant photographs. She also provides expert analysis of why these Central American street kids are continually abused by a vicious cycle that is difficult to break.

Ana has a first hand connection to the people and culture in Honduras, but brings an outsiders sensibilities to the scenario. Ana provides an engaging narrative thread between the character's day-to-day issues and the root causes of this sad global problem.



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