



MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA

2016

24:36 minutes



12-year-old Edelsin Linette Mendez illuminates the consequences of climate change on the coffee market, her community's traditional source of livelihood and Nicaragua's primary agricultural product.

12-year-old Edelsin Linette Mendez lives with her siblings and parents on their small coffee farm in the beautiful highlands of Nicaragua.

The farming of coffee in Nicaragua has supported the Mendez family and thousands like them for generations, with coffee accounting for 30 percent of the country's exports. As a result of climate change, increasing temperatures and erratic rainfall now facilitate the growth of "La Roya" fungus that kills the coffee crop. In the last three years alone, the Mendez family harvest has been reduced over 50 percent by this fungus, forcing them into poverty.

Since climate change knows no borders, this phenomenon is also ravaging coffee crops beyond Nicaragua, ruining at least half of the one million acres of coffee planted in Central America. USAID estimates that Central American Coffee Production will fall by up to 40 percent in the next few years, with possible job losses as high as 500,000.

These decreases in production also mean drastically reduced incomes for these small farmers, making it prohibitively expensive for them to control this disease.

With the use of a video camera, Edelsin hopes to make vivid the serious consequences of a severely damaged coffee harvest to her own future and that of her country. Since January 2016, Edelsin began to document her family's traditional, labor intensive method of gathering coffee "cherries" and the many subsequent steps of milling, sorting and washing the beans before they were taken to be sold, by horse-back, to a coffee co-op, miles away.

During the process, she asked her family and members of the coop to speak about the drastic changes that this disease has brought in such a short time. Edelsin and her classmates are learning, first hand, about climate change and realizing they, too, will need to join other young people across the globe to forge a sustainable future. “It will take millions of kids like us to stop the disaster” she says, “but we are getting ready.”

Edelsin’s film mentor is the renowned Joyce Chopra, a pioneer of documentary cinema whose numerous titles include *That Our Children Will Not Die*, about primary health care in Nigeria, and the autobiographical *Joyce at 34*, which is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. Chopra has produced and directed a wide range of award-winning films, ranging from *Smooth Talk*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize for Best Dramatic Feature at the Sundance Film Festival, to the A&E thriller *The Lady in Question* with Gene Wilder.

By giving kids from diverse backgrounds around the world tools, skills, and guidance to make documentary films, this great organization provides an outlet for sharing personal stories, which in turn brings us closer together as an international community rooted in compassion and understanding.

Former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg

BYkids is a global educational movement, which tells stories through film to inspire cross-cultural understanding and galvanize action to further our common humanity. **BYkids** provides kids around the world with video cameras to make short documentaries about their lives. Renowned filmmakers mentor these young people and teach them the art of filmmaking enabling fresh, new voices to be heard. Millions of people are joining our movement by seeing our films, developing educational programming and supporting our work. Join us at www.BYkids.org