

TAKE ACTION GUIDE:

MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA



ABOUT THE FILM

In MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA, BYkids filmmaker Edelsin Linette Mendez showcases the effects of climate change, such as increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall, and the resulting fungal epidemic known as "la roya" on her family's generations-old coffee farm. Edelsin's family, and many more like hers, have suffered losses of up to 50% of their typical crops, and USAID estimates that Central American coffee production as a whole will fall by up to 40% in the next few years. These decreases in production mean drastically reduced incomes for these small farmers, and the unraveling of the tenuous economy of Edelsin's rural village and those surrounding it in the picturesque mountains of Nicaragua.

"I want to continue doing this work to help raise awareness, break our habits and explain through my film the risks we're facing, and through this, invite others to take action that is within our reach at a community level, like reforestation and caring for the land." –Edelsin Linette Mendez

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When thinking about the human right to an adequate living standard, consider Articles 25 and 28 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 25:

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Article 28:

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

REFLECT AND SHARE

1. Identify some major, global environmental trends. What are scientists observing on each continent? Consider markers such as documented extreme temperatures, sea level change, changes in rainfall, biodiversity, and other indicators of environmental health and stability. Explore what impact these indicators have on the human populations on each continent, in terms of economic security, housing, physical health and well-being, cultural protections, and more.

What are the relationships between the security of humankind and the health of our global environment? After doing research, how might it be argued that policies that protect the environment might actually be protecting global citizens' basic human rights as outlined in the UNDHR—such as the right to an adequate standard of living, health and well-being, food, housing, and more?

2. In this film, climate change is personal for Edelsin. It's not a political hot potato, or a far-off policy debate—it's not even a subject she learns about in school—it is something tangible and immediate, a problem that affects her daily life. Consider an issue that is tangible and immediate for you, that affects your daily life. How do you relate to this problem? How does it make you feel? What do you do to try to solve this problem, or avoid making it worse? What is your relationship to this problem?

Now imagine creating an awareness-building campaign to get young people in the US personally involved in climate change as a human rights issue. Using this reflection, how could you present global warming so American students would take it personally and make it their own? Brainstorm the beginnings of your own campaign—an ad, a poster, a tagline, and a jingle—making the issue of global warming and its impact on human rights a personal one for young people and teens in the United States.

TAKE ACTION

1. 350.org is a global network of local organizations that work to promote conservation and environmental protection. Find a group near you, or start your own, at www.350.org/get-involved.
2. Sign a petition or start one of your own to raise awareness about the ongoing effects of climate change and the importance of policies that protect the environment and promote sustainable, clean energy at: change.org.
3. Host a community or private screening of MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA to raise awareness of the challenges facing Nicaraguan coffee farmers, and how storytelling through film can deepen our understanding of global issues. Email info@bykids.org for more information.
4. Research some organizations and charities that focus specifically on Nicaragua. Below are links to a few. Note that a .org denotes a charity, while .com denotes a company. Decide on your criteria for choosing one of these or another one that you find. You might find an organization in your own community that helps support coffee growers or others in Nicaragua. Explain your reasons.

Five Charities Operating in Nicaragua - The Borgen Project

borgenproject.org/charities-operating-in-nicaragua

Gold Mountain Coffee Growers

goldmountaincoffeegrowers.com

5. Using the organization you chose in #4 above, decide how you want to take action. You might start a campaign to raise awareness, to raise donations, or to connect your school or community with people in Nicaragua.

ABOUT BYKIDS

BYkids produces real-world films for kids, by kids. Talented young storytellers from around the world are paired with seasoned filmmakers to create powerful documentaries about their lives. In partnership with public television and education innovators, we share the films and their educational resources to help make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable for millions of students. Our work serves as a catalyst for change, igniting important conversations and inspiring a new generation of social activists. To support our work, visit bykids.org/donate.

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