

School Guide:

MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This BYkids School Guide is designed to help teachers expand students' use of this film from passive watching to active, deeply personalized learning. Included are three sample Pathways, each driven by an essential question to challenge students. Use the Pathway questions to start discussions in small groups or with the whole class. We've also added Discussion Starters and Suggested Projects, but we encourage you and your students to follow your own pathways and create your own projects.

BYkids wants our films to be part of compelling, project-based, collaborative learning experiences that are cross-curricular, link cultures and countries by themes we all share, and spur students to develop the competencies needed to become global citizens while mastering necessary college and career readiness skills. Most of all, we want students to value their own stories while learning from the stories of others around the world. We encourage you to share the creativity and knowledge that flourish in your classroom as you and your students expand on these BYkids suggestions and create your own learning units. We'd love it if you would share your discoveries and ideas with us at **BYkids.org**!

BYkids
THEIR WORLD THEIR FILMS

Funding provided by



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ABOUT THE FILM

MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA was filmed, directed and narrated by 12-year-old **Edelsin Linette Mendez**. Edelsin 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."

MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA spotlights for us all, in an intimately personal way, the far-reaching effects of climate change and the role of education, perseverance and hope to identify solutions to its negative impact. By not planning and not educating future scientists, communicators and leaders, the future of all of us will be limited. MY BEAUTIFUL NICARAGUA is an inspiring reminder that education, planning, communication skills and leadership are more critical than ever in our world, especially for our children.

ABOUT EDELSIN'S MENTOR

Edelsin's BYkids 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 in New York City. 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.

ABOUT BYkids

BYkids is a global educational movement that uses storytelling through film to inform, engage and inspire action. BYkids provides kids around the world with both the video cameras and the mentoring to make short documentaries about their lives. Renowned filmmakers mentor these young people in the art of filmmaking. Through innovative distribution platforms, BYkids films enable fresh, new perspectives to be seen and shared by a global community.

Join us at BYkids.org

THE GUIDE

PATHWAY 1

HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT PEOPLE?

Edelsin's family, like many in Nicaragua and other parts of central America, are proud to grow coffee on their farm, and see the farm as a legacy for future generations. Climate change is making that future look as though it may not be possible. Climate change may seem to many students as something that does not have much effect on them. Edelsin's personal story reminds us that it's important to understand climate change in all parts of the world.

From the Film

"This garden suffers, you see, because we don't get a winter season any more. It affects everything, not only our own garden, but the whole world."

~ Edelsin's mother

Discussion Starters

- What are the ways that Edelsin's family is affected by climate change? How did climate change prevent Edelsin's sister from going to university? What about the other coffee farms near her town? What were Edelsin's family able to do about these changes?
- How has climate change, along with human actions, impacted your town, state or country? How can you find out? What have you observed? How can you document the changes to better understand them? How are they affecting people?
- What would you do if a fungus started growing and killing trees or plants here? How would you get help? How do you research a problem to find solutions and information that you do not know? How do you find people to help?

Suggested Projects

- The film presented a number of ways that climate change is impacting Edelsin's family and other coffee farmers. Create a poster or presentation to explain these. Include data such as the falling percentages of the coffee harvest for Edelsin's family. For your presentation, include two aspects – the facts of how Edelsin's family and the farmers are impacted, and the outcome of each fact. For example, the coffee harvest has decreased by more than 50%, so Edelsin's sister cannot afford to go to college. Use data to show that there are also very human and personal outcomes.
- Research the production of coffee and other businesses in Nicaragua – are there crops or businesses that are increasing in production? How might that change the lives of the people in Nicaragua? Research also the average educational level in Nicaragua (e.g. number of days children go to school, graduation rates. College graduates as a percentage of the population, etc.) Add research on internet access, government and university programs to help with agriculture, water, and other related issues. Create a presentation, talk show, podcast, essay, etc to present your viewpoint on how these factors could change, both positively and negatively, the lives of Edelsin's family and of

other Nicaraguan families. Be sure to include your opinion, but it must be evidence- or fact-based.

- Edelsin is using her film and storytelling skills to tell her personal story, and to show that it relates to a larger issue – climate change. Create your own story to illustrate in a more personal way how a larger issue has affected your school or town. Notice that Edelsin did not embarrass anyone (or herself) by filming extremely private moments, but that she took care to present a lot of facts about life in her town and family.
- With a small group, create a film, skit, podcast, or other form of expression to relate everyday life to a larger issue. You may want to start with a real idea and create fictional characters and situations – even science fiction or fantasy. Plan your larger issue and your story first. Share it with the class or school as a special event.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 2

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP WITH THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

Edelsin's family and the other coffee farmers in the cooperative lack the scientific education and other resources to solve the problem. Edelsin's solution is in the future – education and a lot of people working on the issues. Are there actions you can take now to help with climate change?

From the Film

"There's so much I want to learn. Especially about climate and what my friends and I can do to help. I think it will take millions of kids like us to stop the disaster."

~ Edelsin

Discussion Starters

- Climate change is not just affecting Nicaragua – it affects everyone. What questions do you think we need to answer to start understanding the science of climate change in Nicaragua? How can we get answers to our questions from scientists and experts?
- Kids demonstrate that they can change political, governmental, and policy issues every day. What are some ways that kids have brought pressure on governments to take action? What groups have kids worked with or formed to do this? How could this help with climate change?
- If climate change such as the warmer weather and more erratic rain in Nicaragua cannot be reversed, what are some other ways to help the people? What about new jobs? Education? What role can science and research play? What role can publicity play? What role can the arts play?

Suggested Projects

- With a group or your class, create a communications campaign to educate your school about climate change in Nicaragua. Make your campaign continue for days or months, not just as a single event or incident. You may want to design an ad campaign of emails, posters, very brief videos, etc. Decide on your audience – is it just your friends, or will you reach wider to parents, people in your town, your local government, your state and national elected officials? Decide also on how to craft your message so that your audience understands your concerns that the problems need to be solved rather than disregarded as beliefs or political rhetoric. Be sure to include a teacher or adult in your plans.
- Create a "My Beautiful Nicaragua" event at your school. Show the film and present your class's and school's projects about climate change. Extend the event to ways that people attending can help Nicaragua. To do this, you will need to identify and partner with a few organizations that can accept donations. Research organizations and talk with them before you plan the event to ensure that you consider them to be representative of good research on climate change for Nicaragua, or on coffee fungi, etc. Your teachers will be a great help here.

- Create your group's or class's communications campaign to educate people about the impact of climate change and human impact on the environment in your town. Research the economics, weather, use of chemicals, population centers, educational opportunities, etc as they have changed over the last 20-50 years. If you prefer, write and perform a skit, film, musical, "TV" show or other creative expression to point out the changes. You may want to use comedy and humor to make your point.
- With a group, create a plan for stabilizing or growing Nicaragua's (or other) economies if global warming cannot be stopped or reversed quickly. What should be done so that, for instance, Edelsin's family does not have to rely 100% on coffee for a living? You might want to limit your plan to Nicaragua or make your plan very broad. For example, what solutions could retraining for other jobs provide? What would be needed to have the time to retrain people? To help them find new jobs they want? To help their families? Craft your group's plan with your solutions and reasons. Then have a debate among the groups and decide as a class or school on the best sets of solutions from each plan. Present these respectfully to elected officials of your choice and share their responses.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 3

HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE ROUGH TIMES WHEN TIMES SEEM VERY NEGATIVE?

Even though the present is hard and the future does not look good for the coffee farmers in Nicaragua, Edelsin's family and the town have not stopped working or given up.

From the Film

"We hope that by planting trees and protecting the water source we would leave behind a better future for our children. We are going to keep fighting so that our families can keep moving forward."

~ Edelsin's father

Discussion Starters

- The school vacation is scheduled around the coffee harvest so that everyone, kids too, can help with the harvest. Everyone is working hard, but there is much to enjoy and be proud of. What is Edelsin's family proud of? What is Edelsin proud of? What does Edelsin enjoy showing you in her room?
- The coffee farmers formed a cooperative. What is a cooperative? How does that help? How does forming a group help in other situations?
- How do the arts – music, art, etc. – help people to come together and handle tough situations? What other ways are the people in Edelsin's town finding ways to have fun and handle the challenges?
- How does the festival, its fun and the community coming together for a day help people to cope?

Suggested Projects

- Create a festival day in your class or school to have fun, get exercise, and relieve stress. Write and perform your own music, dances, skits, and you're your own videos, posters, and other creative expressions. Focus your festival day on a theme – "Solutions for Tough Problems," or a theme of your choosing. Make it a festival of coming together as a community.
- Music and art have often been used to protest or to describe a bad situation such as the global warming effects in Nicaragua. Write and perform or record your own music, create art, dance, or another creative expression to highlight something you feel needs to change – global warming or another issue.
- Form a club or group to identify and update your school on how science is learning about global warming or another issue that concerns you. Connect with research groups such as NASA, NOAA, CDC, or museums and universities with research groups (e.g. the Smithsonian Institution, Natural History museums) to update your group. Write a blog, vlog, or newsletter to spread the solutions and progress. As you connect with these groups, you may want to join in the Citizen Science movement (where citizens collect data and send it to scientists) or to focus your club or group around one organization.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Dear Educator,

You and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway and Project, will implement many different standards not limited to any one content area but focused on critical and rigorous, evidence-based thinking. Following are provided some College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards, Common Core ELA and Math standards, and Next Gen Science Standards, but you and your students will go beyond those limited standards. We hope you will share your experiences and ideas at BYkids.org.

PATHWAY 1

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess and credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCRA.W.10 Write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES

SEP 1 Ask questions and define problems

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data.

SEP 5 Use mathematics and computational thinking.

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

PATHWAY 2**CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards**

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess and credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice

MP1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

MP7 Look for and make use of structure.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES

SEP 1 Ask questions and define problems

SEP 2 Develop and use models

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data.

SEP 7 Engage in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

PATHWAY 3

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W. 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

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