



GRANADA MARKET
taken by Elvis, 17



LAGUNA DE APOYO
taken by Indiana, 14

the kids stay in the picture

An innovative charity is teaching disadvantaged children in Nicaragua to look at their world in new ways – by becoming photographers

NICARAGUA IS A LAND of intense beauty: lush tropical rainforests, sparkling beaches, striking volcanoes, Spanish-colonial architecture in a riot of colour. The country is also, however, one of the western hemisphere's poorest nations. Fifty percent of the children don't continue schooling beyond Grade 5, severely limiting their opportunities as a result.

So when *Chatelaine* photographer Roberto Caruso and his girlfriend, Sarah Lichter, heard about Empowerment International (EI), a not-for-profit, education-focused organization that runs a program teaching street children the basic skills of photography, they were inspired to get involved. "We both share a passion for

travel, photography and working with children, so volunteering with EI seemed like the perfect fit," says Caruso.

In June, Caruso and Lichter travelled to Granada, a large city in the country's southwest. With equipment donated by friends, family and Toronto's photography community, they spent a week with 10 kids aged 12 to 18 who were at risk of dropping out of school, instructing them in composition, lighting and technique. "It became clear to us very quickly that many of the students possessed a raw talent and keen eye for photography," says Lichter. "Their natural abilities, coupled with unbridled enthusiasm, resulted in the creation of some truly beautiful images."

The couple were even more impressed by the kids' eagerness to learn. "We were humbled by the harsh reality of the poverty that the children experience, and were grateful for their willingness to allow us a look into their world," says Lichter. "Seeing first-hand the challenges that the kids face made us fully appreciate their dedication and commitment to learning. They were amazing."

The children's photos – including some shown here – will be on display during an EI fundraiser and silent auction at Toronto's Edward Day Gallery on November 14, and organizers hope to take the show on the road across North America. >Visit empowermentinternational.org.



THE PHOTOGRAPHERS
Left to right: Felix, Maria Magdalena, Juan Jose and Alexander.

EGG VENDOR
taken by Anielka, 15



LOCAL PULPERÍA
taken by Yosara, 12



“I like photography because through it I have come to know places that I didn’t know before and have learned more about myself.”

— Melki, 14



THE CATHEDRAL
taken by Juan Jose, 15



CRABS FOR SALE
taken by Juan Jose



CASA SANTA ANA
taken by Indiana

**HOSPITAL
ABANDONADO**
taken by Elvis



“I feel happy because all of the people in the street and all of my friends see me using the camera, and they realize that I can use it like a professional.”
— Alexander, 14