

MÚSICA CON VIDA -MUSIC FOR SURVIVAL-



The schoolgirls and schoolboys of „Musicians Without Borders“

„After graduating from high school, I wanted to do something important and beneficial to people.“ says Magdalena Abrams. „It was clear to me, that this music school project would not be easy.“ Without a budget, without musical instruments or proper facilities, it actually seemed virtually impossible, but she persevered. The first music lesson was held on the roof of a partially built house right in the center of the slum. They used self-made musical instruments, such as drums made of waste and plastic bottles filled with rice. News of the project spread quickly and before long attendance at the small school exceeded 20 students - not surprising given the lack of recreational activities in that area. 40 % of the kids cannot go to school because their parents are very poor. 60 % of the population in Guasmo Sur are unemployed and cannot read and write. Many of the kids belong to criminal street-gangs with major crime and drug problems. But this actually offers the ideal environment for creative educational projects. The young people motivate themselves

Is it possible to fight drugs, violence and destitution with guitars and drums? Yes, said Magdalena Abrams (21) from Hamburg (Germany). During her one year stay in the slums of „Guasmo Sur“ (Ecuador), she succeeded in building a little music-school for beggarly kids. Fifteen music-students from north Germany shared her opinion, created the socially active group „Musicians Without Borders“ and became part of the music school established by Magdalena by continuing the kid’s music education in her honor.

very quickly, once they find something that interests them.

Not long after starting, the educational efforts had resulted in the formation of three bands covering multiple age groups, and thanks to some donations they were able to purchase authentic musical instruments, amplifiers and a real drum set.



Magdalena Abrams

Magdalena Abrams returned to Germany one year later, and although the music school continued in her absence, they desperately needed funding for the employment of a full time music teacher, which spawned the idea of „Musicians Without Borders“. In the summer of 2007, this group of music students from Germany went to Ecuador for the first time. They taught music in the slum for one month and produced some concerts in Guayaquil (Ecuador). One of the participants was Jana Truskiewicz, a trainee in media-design at „Cube-Tec International“ in Bremen, Germany. „The plan really fit. Local families provided housing, so we lived under

the same conditions as our Ecuadorian pupils. Those five weeks in what for me was a very strange world was one of the most important experiences of my life. Of course, our experience included negative aspects such as robberies and gun fights in the streets, but helping to prevent that by offering alternatives on the young people is really why we were there. Through music education we offered them a tempting alternative to a life of crime and violence. At least to some extent, we were able to replace criminal gangs (Spanish: „la banda“) with musical bands (which in Spanish is also „la banda“). It is for this reason that I want to encourage others to contribute to this wonderful project. It is important that it be allowed to continue and grow, because it has the potential of offering these young people a brighter future and especially acceptance and self-confidence, because that's what they need to survive in this poor quarter!“



Jana Truskiewicz teaches little Genesis in playing bass-guitar.



The slum-quarter „Guasmo Sur“



EXCERPTS OF PUPILS

“Gracias por acordarme que estoy vivo.” (Thanks for remembering me, that I'm still alive.)

“Antes de haber conocido la música, no sabía para qué me levanto en las mañanas.” (Before I knew the music I had no reason to get up in the morning.)

„Antes yo perteneco para una banda criminal. Pero ahora la única banda estoy fiel es `Nirvana`.“ (Formerly I belonged to a criminal gang. But today the only gang I'm loyal to is `Nirvana`.“

LET'S HELP TOGETHER...

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