

Jhazmín, from Amazonas

Iquitos, Peru



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Original title Jhazmín, del Amazonas

Translation by Natalia Peña (Certera Comunicaciones)

Digital edition December 2021

Intellectual Property Registry Nº 2020-A-7363

ISBN: 978-956-6013-16-7

This book was created in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

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Morandé 226

Santiago de Chile

www.junji.cl

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Jhazmín, from Amazonas [printed text]

/ Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles; Marcelo Mendoza

— 1st ed. — Santiago: JUNJI, 2020.

88 p.: 21x15 cm. (Children of the World Collection).

ISBN : 978-956-6013-16-7

1. Multicultural Education
2. Migrant girls – Children's works
3. Chilean Children's Literature I. Title.

Dewey : Ch863 -- cdd 21

Cutter : M539j



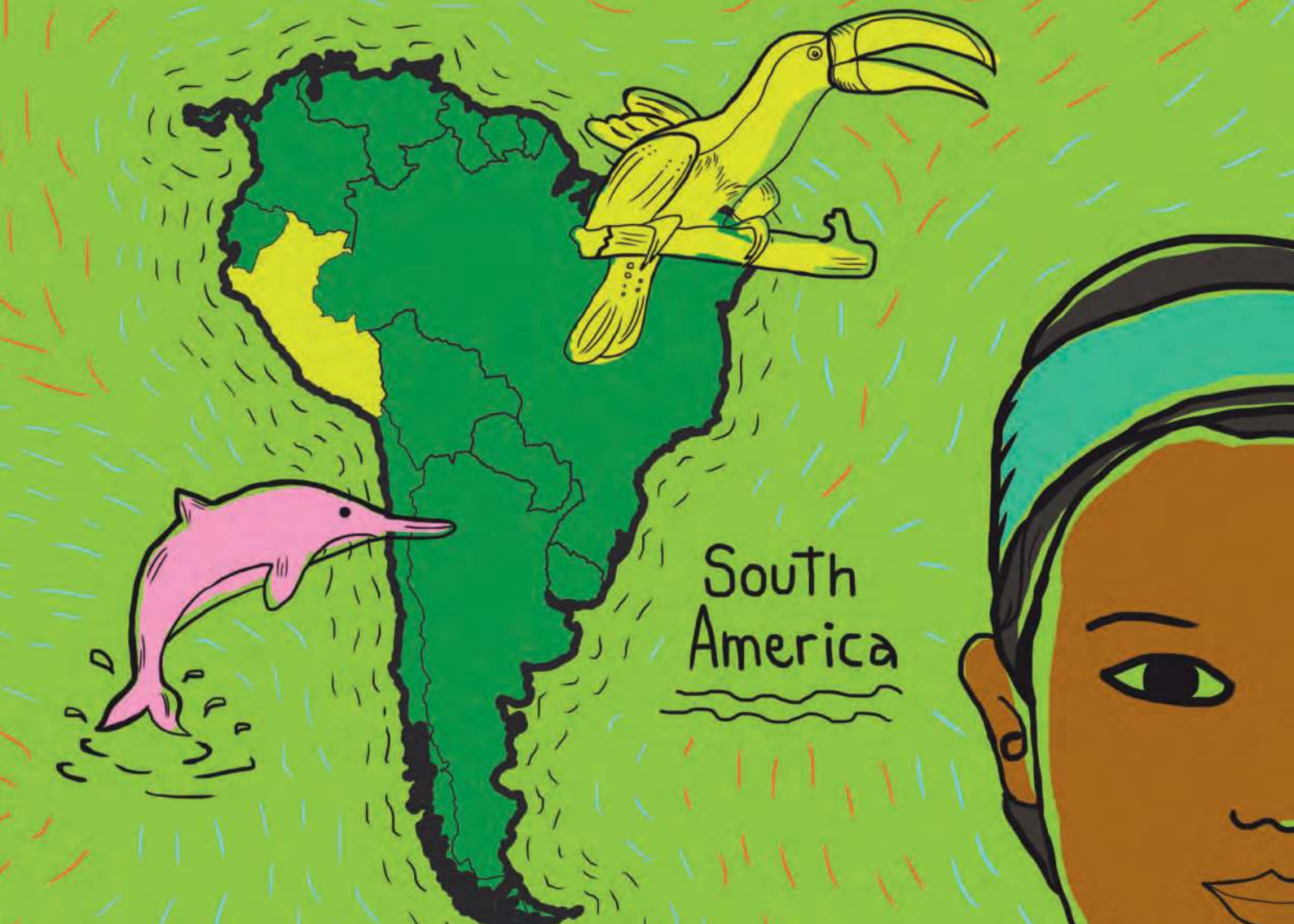
Source: Agencia Catalográfica Chilena

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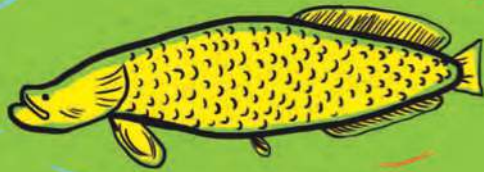
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South
America

Peru



Belén
Neighborhood





Boys and girls are always the same at every time and place: curious, playful, energetic, affectionate, enthusiastic, creative. It is the environments they are born into and grow up in that give them part of their personal identity, and allow them to share unique experiences with children from other countries.

To discover different realities and celebrate the cultural diversity expressed in traditions, environments and experiences is the goal of this book collection, created by the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (National Board of Preschools) in conjunction with the Bernard van Leer Foundation. *Children of the World* invites preschoolers, their families and their teachers to discover various ways of life and ways of being a child, through stories and a great variety of photographs from different corners of the globe.

Plentiful rivers, stilt houses, cocoa seeds, wild animals, leafy plants, joyful dances, and celestial rites, children's joys after their parents' immigration; all are part of the scenes that this collection of stories displays, seeking to enchant adults and children alike and to send the message of diversity as something to respect and share.

Adriana Gaete Somaniva

Vice presidenta Ejecutiva

National Board of Preschools (JUNJI, by its Spanish acronym)



Today's world needs stories that allow us to recognize and value the richness of diversity in all its facets. The *Children of the World* collection, by the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (National Board of Preschools), is a wonderful tool for sharing stories about children's harmonic coexistence in various contexts and cultures.

Human beings require moments of leisure, of plenitude, of enjoyment of free time. This collection of stories is a unique opportunity to create these spaces and form magical connections between educators and children. These moments of relating through stories are crucial for personal growth, for sharing with family and friends, for strengthening our community life and enhancing our children's capabilities from an early age.

Here at the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we firmly believe that the best investment we can make is that in children under five years of age. It is for this reason we have worked all over the world for seven decades in over 50 countries, seeking to provide a better start for all children's lives. We trust that in Chile these stories will help strengthen the bonds between adults and children, and that they will help broaden the scope in regards to the lives of children in different corners of the world.

Cecilia Vaca Jones
Program Director
Bernard van Leer Foundation





“Good morning, Amazonas!”: that’s what they say on the radio when my mom wakes us up in the morning” –tells Jhazmín Navarro Yumbato, opening her big eyes–. “And I wake up happy!”.



Jhazmín has 4 years old and lives on the outskirts of Iquitos, across the Itaya River, in a stilt house in the Belén neighborhood.

Her mother is Nilsa and her father is César. She is 34 and he is 42 years old. César works on an oil platform, in Amazonas, on the border with Brazil. He comes home only 7 days a month.

“I am at the plant for three weeks as a security guard” –says César–. “I have had this stable job for eight years. I used to cross people in boats”.



The Belén neighborhood is the most Amazonian in the city, where the spirit of the jungle “lives”. There they use many words of “cocana”, a dialect that identifies the people of Belén.

The houses are stilt houses because every year the river rises: from June to December is the “dry” season, and from January to May is the rainy season, and what used to be the lower floor is flooded.

It is now November and the river has already begun to rise. There is only one month left to occupy the ground and ride a moto taxi, because soon the “canoe-taxi” will be used. The stilts of the houses have a mark that indicates how far the water reached the previous year.



Nilsa must take care of her children when César is away. To help with subsistence, she set up a small business in the palafitte, where she sells non-perishable food and things that her neighbors urgently need.



EASELL
REFRESH



“My siblings are Franz (16), Jo an (11) y Ka tia (8)” –presents Jha zmín.

“My mom take s care of me and my siblings, and she is also a
merc han t” –tells Ka tia .

“I like to play soccer and volleyball with my friends, but also spinning tops” –says Joan–. “I like school, but I prefer games. I want to be a soccer player: striker, like Paolo Guerrero.¹

We have to take advantage of the dry weather, because the river is already rising and after that we can only go out by boat”.

¹ Paolo Guerrero is an outstanding striker for the Peru's national football team.



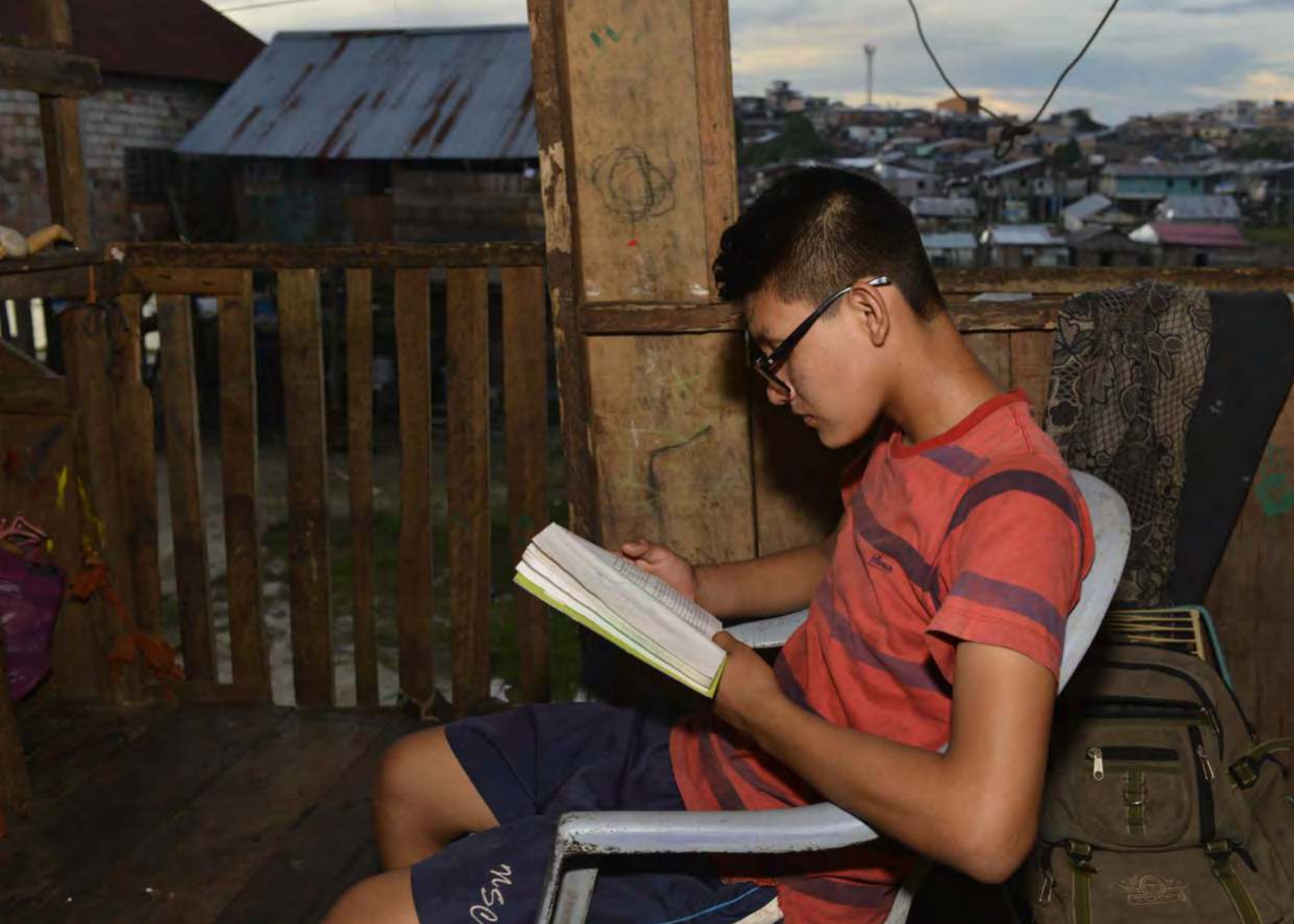
DERECHOS ECOLOGICOS
ONDULINE

SANTA

adidas

The eldest in the family is Franz. He is a senior in high school and wants to enter college. He is not only an outstanding student: he is a leader. He likes to read and is an active pro-childhood leader of the children's organization ONNSA.

“I want to study Communication Sciences” –he says–. “I hope to get a scholarship for college. I already had a scholarship and was able to study English”.



As a child, Franz used to participate, just like Jhazmín, in the activities promoted by Infant, an organization that seeks to make children and teenagers protagonists and leaders in the defense of their rights. Franz stood out so much in actions in defense of children that, at the age of 13, he was nominated for the Children's Peace Prize for having organized his community to demand that his neighborhood be a space free of violence and pollution. For his leadership he was invited to activities in the United States, Switzerland and Brazil.



“I play with my friends to the dolls” –tells Jhazmín–. “This is Helia, the one over there, Mariana. The other one is Elena. I also help my mom in her business”.

Children take advantage of the “dry” season to play “kiwi”, a typical Peruvian game that consists of knocking down a tower made of soda cans with a ball.







“Blue, blue, blue ... What color is it?” They play quiz games, make rounds and other activities prepared for them by Lisandro, Richard and other Infant youth. They meet in stilt houses located in the different sectors of Belén. There are posters reminding them that childhood should mean tenderness, affection, respect, protection, environmental care and prominence. About twenty children from 3 to 10 years of age meet three times a week.



Infant

POR UNA
INFANCIA
SIN
VIOLENCIA

Lisandro and Richard were like Jhazmín: children who grew up with these same activities and now work sharing what they once did with them. Joy and empowerment are part of their maxims.

Everyone is barefoot: it's the norm to start taking action together



“¿ What do we learn here when we get together?”

–asks Lisa nd ro .

“I learn to create” –says Ele na .

“I learn my rights as a child and how to share with others” –says
Ka tia

“I can take everything I learn here to my school” –says
Le o na rdo .

“So how are we doing?” –shouts Lisa nd ro singing .

“Great!” –the children answer, in joyful shouting .



“Jhazmín is the spoiled of the house” –says dad César;
after leaving her asleep in bed.

The whole family sleeps in two beds, which are in the upper part of the stilt house, because during the flood period the water covers the entire lower floor. So, family life takes place on the second floor.



It's dusk in Belén and Iquitos turns pink. The Amazon sky seems to speak. A few boats can be seen like ghosts on the river. There is no noise. The last sounds of birds are heard. All is peace.





It is dark and a group of neighbors It is dark and a group of neighbors are gathered around a table, a few meters from Jhazmín's house. It is November 1, the Day of the Dead. They make a dinner of noodles, surrounded by white candles. It is an offering to remember all the family and friends who are no longer here. A shaman² has come to lead this moment of common reflection.

² Shamans are ancestral in Peru and throughout the South American region. All rituals for good weather, good harvests and even life advice are performed by them. They are spiritual leaders who live far away from the cities, in contact with nature and maintain ancient traditions.

It's another day. A special one.

Katia and Jhazmín are going to the city and have to get ready. They leave Muchina, their pet cat, at home. Mom Nilsa washes their hair and combs their hair. There they will eat ice cream, walk along the boardwalk, go to the playground: they will swing and go on the slide.



The people of Iquitos are cheerful and hard working. This Peruvian city is a unique place. Located on the banks of the Amazon River, the largest in the world, the colors, movement and non-stop noise of the motorcycle cabs flood the streets.

Jhazmín loves to cross the Itaya River by boat with her parents and have fun in the city. And now they do.



Jhazmín likes fruits. Pineapple, guava and passion fruit. With aguaje and lagujina they make tasty juices, which she has only tasted for special occasions. She also likes fish, noodles and rice with chicken.

They have gone to the Belén Market, a magical place where the whole Amazon is offered: vegetables such as the bija leaf (in which the juane, a typical dish, is wrapped), fruits such as camu-camu, cocona, papaya, taperiba or unguruhui. Also fish, such as paiche (the largest in the world) or piranhas. Caimans, a worm called suri, bearded maparate s... In the kitchens they eat hard-boiled turtle eggs.



Continuing their journey, they go up the Nanay River, which joins the Amazon, to rescue animals injured by hunters. When they are recovered, they return them to the jungle.

There are sloths (the “pelejos”), howler monkeys, toucans (they are called “pinchas”), boas and anacondas. There is also a jaguar. And an anteater, which is called “chigüi”.

The “pelejos” move sooooo slowly and hug children and adults “because they are the most tender”—says Jhazmín.

A man puts the anaconda around his neck. There is a boa (they call it “mantoña”), which is tame and some people keep it as a pet. It gives me the jitters. But nothing happens. Everything is normal.







Navigating along the Momón River you reach the Bora and Yahua communities, where children like Jhazmín live. There is a school. And a shaman, the Apo, who is the wise man and healer. The communities speak their own language. “Yayá” means “I go with you for a walk”. “Macandí” is “earth”.



The Yahuas use plants to cure illnesses. Jovita, an old woman, says that today they live here, but that the community is from much further south, from Putumayo, and that they were moved because a company moved into their ancestral site. She says this with sorrow and longing.

Walking through the jungle you can see marmoset monkeys, which jump very fast from one tree to another.

Children are swimming in a stream.







Dad César was born in Iquitos, mother Nilsa in Nauta (north of the Marañón River), and they came to live in palafittes in 2006. They are the children of banana and yucca traders. Nilsa's parents and siblings are neighbors in Belén.

“I am sleepy” –says Jhazmín to her dad.

Dad César takes her in his arms and walks down the path and Jhazmín falls asleep in no time at all.



Near Iquitos there are sawmills, along the river. They bring large logs from the jungle down the Amazon and the Itaya, in boats called “chatas”. They buy the cut trees from the Amazonian communities. They cut and saw cedar and other quality wood. That is why in the jungle there are sectors where there are no trees left.



Kilometers from the city is the Quistacocha Zoo. Jhazmín's favorite thing to do is to pet the pink dolphin, a specimen of this beautiful animal that was rescued before it was hunted.

“His name is Huayrurín and he is very intelligent” –say Katia and Jhazmín in chorus– because he jumps, sings and does everything they tell him to do.

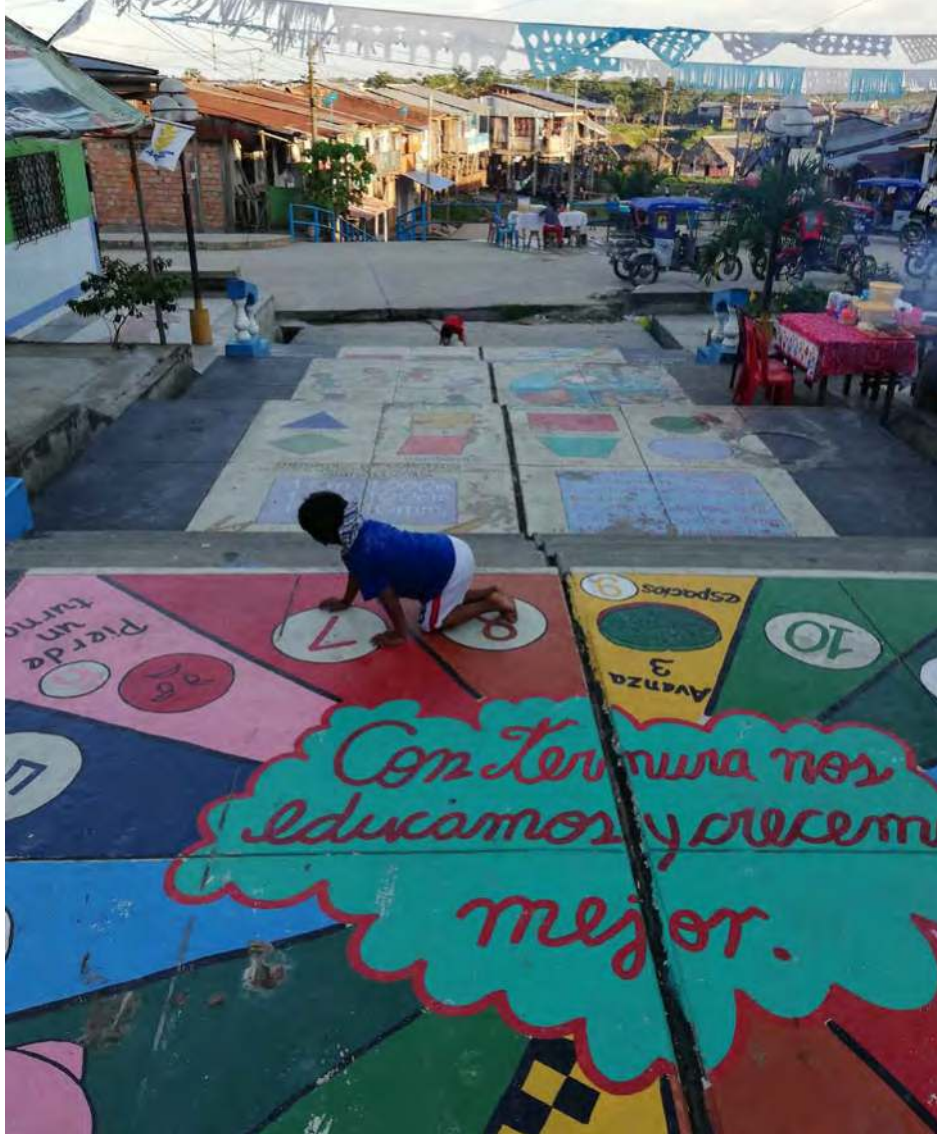


The people who live in palafittes in Belén wash themselves and their clothes in the river, which is polluted. There is no drinking water or sewage. The people who work with Lisandro and Richard are developing a project to install ponds that accumulate water from rainfall, so that they have clean water to wash themselves and drink.



Be fore c rossing to the palafittes there is the “Escalinata Puerto Santa Rosa”, all painted with children’s motives and proclamations. Once a month the “Fair of the game” takes place, gathering there to do what children know how to do: play.

“There is a lot of imagination here” –says Franz.



Nadia, 9-year-old, is a caregiver for her 2-year-old sister. There are many girls who are “caregivers” here: they wash their baby siblings, dress them and entertain them. When parents go out to work, they stay with their siblings, taking care of them as adults.



VAMOS
PERU



SI SE
PUEDE

“All of them are my friends. And we like to be in the picture together” –says Jhazmín laughing.

And this is the way it portrays a common moment in their life.

The rainy season is approaching. The ground will be flooded, it will be necessary to stay in the stilt house. And this instant must be saved. That's what Jhazmín thinks.



TO KNOW AND TELL

The black Cirilo (folk song)

The blackman Cirilo

leaves very calmly

he goes to The Amazon

riding his alligator

He carries a pair of scissors

and needle with thread

and a basket

full of bread crumbs.

Where Cirilo goes

Blackman Cirilo

where Cirilo goes

riding his alligator

He goes to the Amazon

knows how to dance
samba

with a little black girl

from Paranaçuá.

Upon reaching the river

the alligator gets cold

he does not want to
cross it

and starts to shiver

The Blackman Cirilo

sews him a dress

and makes him a boat

with bread crumbs.





IQUITOS

Founded at the end of the 18th century by Jesuit missionaries, its name means “Multitude separated by the waters”, because it is between the Itaya, Nanay and Amazon rivers. It is the Peruvian capital of the Amazon and has 500,000 inhabitants. At the beginning of the 20th century, it experienced the “Rubber Fever”.

It has four districts, one of them is Belén, where Jhazmín lives. The native ethnic groups are the Napeanos and Iquitos. It is one of the most remote cities in the world, because it can only be reached by river or plane. It has been called “the Amazonian Venice”.

The main means of transportation are motor cycle cabs, which move with their characteristic buzzing sound day and night.

THE AMAZON

The great Amazon runs through Peru, Colombia and Brazil. It is the longest and largest river in the world. And its jungle is a lung of oxygen for children all over the planet to breathe. It is home to millions of species of insects, thousands of plants, birds and mammals, such as the jaguar, the tapir, several species of deer, reptiles such as caimans, snakes and turtles; beautiful butterflies, many species of monkeys, sloths and countless fish and large river mammals such as the manatee and the pink dolphin.

Communities live in the jungle, some of them still primitive and without contact with civilization. Jhazmín and the children of Iquito are concerned about the preservation of this place of life.





YAHJAE
RIE
MEMIN

A

LEGEND OF THE PINK DOLPHIN

The Amazon has “yacurina”, an animal god that rules the river and the jungle. The Yahua, Cocama and Ticuna communities believe so. They also believe in the legend of the pink dolphin, which lives in its waters. It is said that this beautiful animal turns into a man to make a woman fall in love with him.

Legend tells that a young girl named Diana went every day to see the pink dolphins and that one of them gave her fish. She had been left alone, since her parents had gone out, and she did not understand why that beautiful dolphin was giving her fish. One night the young girl had a dream where she saw the dolphin turned into a man who made her fall in love with him.

It is said that when an albino baby is born, it is because it is the child of the pink dolphin.

THE CONCH SHELL AND PAIJOJO (folk tale)

Once upon a time there was a musician from the Aguaruna community named Paijojo, who played the quena like no one else in the Peruvian Amazon. His friend Bisuna played the drum. But one morning Paijojo's music sounded different and he was losing his gift. He asked the shaman:

“Shaman Yankush, I lost the gift of music. For several moons my quena has been emitting sounds that displease everyone”.

The Shaman asked him:

“Tell me, Paijojo, what inspires you to play?”.



“No one. I imagine the sounds. I invent them”.

“And what do people say about your music?”.

“I don’t know. They bother me with their noises.
And they prevent me from working in silence”.

Yankush told him:

“Paijojo, if you don’t understand why nobody likes
your music, take this conch shell and listen to it”.

Paijojo went away sad. He thought he would give
him healing herbs and not a silly conch shell. He
thought of throwing it into the river.. but he decided
to listen to it.

And he was amazed! He heard the swell of the sea and saw that the conch shell was powerful. Then he heard the sounds of the jungle, the song of the toucan, the screeching of the monkey, and the slithering of the snakes.

He admired the sound of the wind, the noise on the ground, the rain in the Amazon, the voice of his people.... Then he went to the river with his quena, sat on a rock and played to reproduce the sounds he had perceived. He realized that everyone around him was listening happily and understood that when he became interested in others, he recovered his gift. The secret of the conch shell was “antut a nentáí” (“listening with the heart”).

FOR COOKING

FRIED PAICHE WITH CHONTA

Ingredients

- Fried Paiche (the second largest freshwater fish in the world, weighing up to 300 kilos and measuring 2.5 meters long)
- Chonta (Amazonian palm bark)
- Cassava
- Banana
- Tomato
- Lemon sauce
- Pepper, cumin, salt and chili pepper

Preparación

While the paiche is frying, marinated with pepper, cumin, salt and ají, the chonta is prepared. Fry the cassava. Fry the banana. And the tomato is sliced. Squeeze the lemons and prepare a sauce with them, adding a little flour and breadcrumbs.

Once the fish is fried, put the fried yucca and banana and the tomato on the plate. And add the lemon sauce on top.

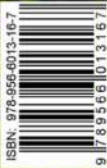


This book was edited by **Ediciones de la JUNJI**.

The Century Gothic typeface family was used for titles and text. 130 g coated paper was used for the interior, printed in 4-color processing. 350 g coated paper was used for the cover, printed in 4-color processing.



Ediciones de la JUNJI is the result of the National Board of Preschools commitment to generate knowledge, creativity and innovation in education and childhood, and thus promote new means for learning and constructive debate.



The **CHILDREN OF THE WORLD** collection reflects the diversity and similarities of childhood all around the world and gives an account, with their own face and voice, of each of their lives.

These stories and photographs show what was before unseen: boys and girls in their everyday lives, cultures and territories, allowing them to be shared in homes, kindergartens and schools, with children and families everywhere on Earth.

