

Josefina Condori



Dionisia was ten years old, tired and alone in the dark when Josefina Condori met her for the first time outside one of the evening schools in the city of Cusco. The family whose house Dionisia had worked in had thrown her out. She had nowhere to go.

Josefina made a snap decision. She would give girls like Dionisia a home, love, and the knowledge to be able to fight for their rights.

Josefina and her colleagues meet a lot of children in the villages in the Andes. Yanapanakusun works with the village schools to raise awareness about the situation for domestic workers in Cusco.

Josefina started the organisation Yanapanakusun in 1994 to help girls and women who work as maids in the city of Cusco in Peru. Josefina herself worked for a family in the daytime. In the evenings she went around the city's evening schools, along with Vittoria and Ronald who helped her start the organisation. They told people that all domestic workers have the right to a decent wage, the right to a day off every Sunday and the right to always be treated with respect.

It was on one of these evenings that Josefina met

Dionisia. That very night, when Dionisia had fallen asleep in a corner of their one-room apartment, Josefina said to Vittoria and Ronald,

“We must do more to help these girls. In the future I want to build a house, where all girls who need help can come. Until then, they must live here with us.”

Dreams of Lima

Josefina's own story begins when she is seven years old and lives with her family in a village in southern Peru. She is sitting in her favourite spot, perched on a rock that looks like a horse crying. Her dad is dead.

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WHY HAS JOSEFINA BEEN NOMINATED?

Josefina Condori has been nominated for the 2008 WCPRC for her long struggle for girls who work as maids in Peru, often in slave-like conditions. Many of the hundreds of thousands of domestic workers face abuse in the homes in which they work. Josefina, who has been a maid herself, has been fighting for the rights of domestic workers since she was a teenager. In 1994 she founded Yanapanakusun, an organisation that runs a home for vulnerable girls and a centre for domestic workers. Josefina and Yanapanakusun run courses and do preventive work in 30 villages in the Andes mountain range around Cusco. They also broadcast five radio shows and run a hotel, a farm and a school for girls and boys who work. 500 girls have lived in the home. Tens of thousands have received support and help from the drop-in centre. Josefina gives the girls food, clothes, shoes, healthcare, a home, the chance to go to school, security and love. More than anything else, however, she works to ensure that child workers know their rights and are able to demand respect for those rights.





The invisible girls

At least five percent of all girls in Peru – 560,000 girls – work as maids. They clean, do laundry, cook food, care for children or carry out other household tasks. It's well known that life is difficult for boys who live on the street, but girls suffer behind closed doors and few people are aware of their problems.

“Don't be so grateful!”

“Do I have to say thank you for being allowed to breathe? No, of course not!” says Josefina. She explains that many of the child workers have had to learn to be grateful for everything. They don't expect to be treated well.

“Of course it's important to be polite and say thank you, but I try to teach the girls that good treatment, respect, being able to see your parents and time to play and rest are not a gift. They are the rights of the child!”



Welcome to the Inca city

All over Cusco, the rainbow flag is flying. The rainbow was a symbol for the kingdom of the Incas that stretched along the length of the Andes mountain range until the Spanish invaded the area in the 16th century. Cusco was the capital of the Inca empire, and now the rainbow flag is the city's own symbol.



Hi friend!

There are many ways to greet new friends in the villages in the Andes. If Edwin, 12, sees someone with whom he wants to make friends, he picks up a little pebble and throws it. Here he is throwing a stone to Clorinda, 14. When she notices the stone that has landed by her feet, they can start talking to each other.





Josefina and the girls eat together every evening.

Without her dad to take care of their farm in the jungle, the family soon grow poorer. Before long they can afford neither food nor clothes.

“And there’s no point in harping on about going to school,” Josefina’s mother tells her. “You have to help out at home, school is for boys.”

Her whole life feels empty since her father died.

Josefina starts to dream of moving to the capital city, Lima. She knows that many girls from her area have moved there to work. “I would be able to go to school there, and buy pretty clothes. And shoes! And sweets!” Josefina thinks.

So when Josefina’s mother tells her that she is going to live with a relative in Lima she is delighted.

Beaten and thrown out

Lima isn’t anywhere near as beautiful as Josefina imagined. She has to live in a cramped, dirty room with her cousin and his family. “I’ve made a mistake!” thinks Josefina.

She lives in that little room for five years. She sleeps on the floor and often cries herself to sleep. In the daytime she takes care of her cousin’s children, sweeps the floor,

and washes clothes and dishes. Josefina doesn’t like going out because the children in the neighbourhood laugh at her because she speaks Quechua, not Spanish. Her cousin’s wife shouts orders in Spanish. When Josefina misunderstands her and does something wrong she gets kicked and beaten.

“Chola,” the woman yells, “you’re stupid and lazy!”

Josefina has found some baby clothes for Miriam’s baby, who is only two days old. Miriam, 16, has lived in the home for three months. She was thrown out of the house where she worked when the mother discovered that she was pregnant.



Josefina is often a guest speaker on Yanapanakusun’s radio show. It’s a great way of raising awareness among the girls who are maids and who aren’t allowed to go out.



When Josefina (right) starts school at age 12, she meets lots of other girls who also work as maids. Finally, she finds friends who understand her.



Josefina (centre) with her mother near her home village. When Josefina was reunited with her mother after 10 years, they could hardly talk to each other. Josefina had almost forgotten her mother tongue, Quechua.

One day, her cousin's child gets hurt.

"It wasn't my fault," Josefina tries to explain, but her cousin's wife doesn't believe her. She brings out a knife and threatens to kill Josefina.

When Josefina is twelve, she plucks up the courage to ask her cousin for permission to go to school.

"Ungrateful girl, who would take care of our child then? Get out," says her cousin.

He opens the door and

suddenly Josefina is alone on the street. But she's lucky. Through a neighbour she finds a new job with a family in another part of Lima. At last, she is allowed to start attending evening school. Slowly she learns to read, write and count.

At evening school, Josefina finally makes real friends. The other girls work too. One of them takes Josefina to an association for domestic workers. They meet every Sunday. They talk about their experiences

and try to solve each other's problems, together. And they laugh a lot!

Mum!

When Josefina is 17, she wants to find her family. She finds her cousin in Lima and he tells her how to get back to her village. Her cousin is pleased to see her, because when she disappeared after being thrown out, her mother went to the police and reported her missing.

Josefina finds her mother. It has been ten years since

they last saw each other, and there's so much she wants to tell her. But she can hardly talk! Over the years she has forgotten her mother tongue because the families for whom she worked wouldn't let her speak Quechua.

Her search for the girls' roots and birth certificates has led Josefina back and forward through the Andes mountain range. Many people now know about her work and help Yanapanakusun in their struggle to defend girls' rights.



“I’ve missed you so much,” says Josefina, and they cry together.

Back in Lima, Josefina continues to go to school every evening. When she is 23, she finally gets a degree. She is so proud! Her new friend Vittoria congratulates her. They met at the association for domestic workers and they plan to move to Cusco to start a similar association there.

Cusco is a city in the Andes mountain range. Several hundred years ago it was the capital of the Inca kingdom, and it is still a major city where lots of girls go to find work. Josefina, Vittoria and Ronald move in to a one-room apartment. When they start their work at the evening schools they realise that the situation for domestic workers in Cusco is even worse than in Lima. Most of the maids are young girls who are alone in the city, and many are only five or six years old. Most come from villages high up in the mountains, only speak Quechua, and have no contact with their families.

We care

Soon, Josefina’s work is entirely focused on helping Cusco’s invisible working girls. First they help the girls to get a birth certificate. This is difficult, however, for many of them have forgotten their surnames and where they come from. Josefina often has to take long trips to the villages in the mountains. When she visits the villages she takes the opportunity to tell people about the situation for girls who work in Cusco.

Once the girls have a birth certificate they can finally start school. Most of them attend state schools, but Josefina’s organisation has

started its own school for girls and boys who work in Cusco.

Now Yanapanakusun, Josefina’s organisation, has actually built the big house that Josefina dreamed of for the girls. They also have a small hotel, where guests from all over the world come to stay, and a radio studio to raise awareness about the domestic workers. Their work is making progress, but Josefina still meets opposition from the police, lawyers and judges who want to shut the house down.

“They don’t want to listen to the girls,” says Josefina.

“The girls who we help have been let down so many times, and they have never really felt loved. That’s why we want to show that we really do care about them.” 🌍

Games and movement are important for self-esteem and add to the fun of going to school. Physical education is a vital part of Yanapanakusun’s education programme.

WHAT DO JOSEFINA AND YANAPANAKUSUN DO?

- They run a home where young girls who do domestic work can get accommodation, clothes and care.
- They find the girls’ families and help the girls to get identity documents.
- They run a help centre for girls and women who do domestic work in Cusco.
- They broadcast five radio programmes to raise awareness about the girls’ situations and rights among the girls themselves, their families, employers and wider society.
- They run preventive work in villages and towns in the mountains around Cusco.
- They run the Maria Angola evening school for girls and boys who work in Cusco.
- They run a vocational school for girls who do domestic work.
- They run a farm in the Inca people’s sacred valley.
- They run a hotel and travel agency.

‘We help each other’

Josefina founded Yanapanakusun with Vittoria Savio Gilardi and Ronald Zarate Herrera in 1994. Yanapanakusun means ‘we help each other’ in Quechua. The organisation runs lots of projects. The most important is Caith, which is the title of Josefina’s work with the domestic workers.



Rosia

is free on the mountain



High up on the mountain, Rosia feels free. She runs around with the sheep and plays with her brother and sister. Today she's imagining that she works in the city of Cusco and has lovely new clothes. Suddenly she's brought back to reality by the death cry of a sheep! She runs towards the sheep and the grey fox, but it's too late...

Rosia doesn't want to get up this morning. It's still warm under the wool blanket woven by her father, but it's cold outside the bed. Tiny crystals of ice lie over the house and the village like a white veil.

Rosia's sandals are stiff from the frost, and soon her feet are aching from the cold. The little village is 4300 metres above sea level,

so despite it being close to the equator, the nights are always cold there. Rosia runs to the tap, then back to the house, then on the spot to warm her feet up. At least it's dry. During the rainy season she wakes up to snow and mud every morning.

When breakfast is ready, Rosia wakes her brother José and sister Jeovana. Their mum and dad aren't

home. They got up long before dawn to walk down the mountain to the family's corn fields, three hours away.

Rosia's mum told her to take care of her brother and sister. But they just splash a little water on their faces instead of washing properly – the water in the well is ice cold.

"Don't tell mum," says Rosia, and giggles.

Bad eyesight

Rosia takes her siblings with her to the light blue school. Inside the stone walls of the playground, the children play football. Rosia loves football. The boys play against the girls and Rosia is not afraid to tackle to get the



Rosia Sencia Peña, 11

Likes: Being on the mountain with the sheep.

Favourite food: Boiled potatoes.

Wants: A pair of pale leather shoes.

Loves: Her brother José, 8, and sister Jeovana, 5. Playing football.

Hates: Arguments and fighting, and when children treat each other cruelly.

Dreams of: Working as a maid, earning money and buying beautiful clothes.

Proud of: The skirt my dad made for me.



Stamped potato – yum!

Every day after school, Rosia helps her dad to dry potatoes. The family can store dried potato all winter and it doesn't go off.

1. Choose fairly small potatoes. Lay them in the sun to dry out.



2. After two days, it's time to stamp on the potatoes, so that the skin breaks and the moisture comes out.

3. Repeat the stamping part a few times, until the potatoes are dry and black.



4. Grind the dried potato to make potato flour, and use it in sauces, soups and stews.

Rosia

ball. She dribbles it up the field and scores! The other girls cheer and jump and Rosia stretches her arms up into the air.

In the classroom, Rosia is not as sure of herself. She likes going to school. But the strong sunlight on the mountain has damaged her eyes and she finds it hard to see what the teacher writes on the board. Her mum wants to take her to the doctor, but first they have to save up to pay the doctor and the four-hour journey there. Until then, Rosia has to keep straining her eyes and having a headache by lunchtime.

Longing for shoes

School finishes at noon every day. Rosia takes her sister's hand and they head back up the mountain. They're going to find the sheep. "I feel free on the mountain," says Rosia.

She has a sling that she uses to throw small stones, to make the flock of sheep head homewards in the evening. Rosia likes the swishing noise the sling makes.

Sometimes she plays with other children who herd sheep on the mountain, but most days she and her brother and sister are alone. Then she likes to sit on the mountain, watch the sheep and imagine things. She dreams of going to Cusco to work. Rosia has seen lots of girls from the village jump on the back of a lorry and disappear off towards the exciting world of the city.

"I'd like to work and earn money. Then I'd buy beautiful clothes. First I'd buy a yellow cardigan with shiny buttons. And shoes! I'd love a pair of shoes," says Rosia.

Rosia's mum worked in Cusco when she was young. She has told Rosia about the cars and the fruit stalls that overflow with apples, oranges and mangoes.

"But I only want to work for people I know, not for a family of strangers. I'd like it best if I could go to Cusco with my mum," says Rosia.

The grey fox comes

Suddenly a sheep gives a heart-rending cry and Rosia is brought out of her day-dream. Her brother and sister scream too, because they can see the grey fox's shiny teeth biting the sheep's neck. Blood spills out over the wool.

Rosia runs over to the fox and the sheep. She throws a stone to scare the fox away, but it's too late. Her white sheep is dead.

"What are we going to do? Mum will be angry and beat us," says José and stares at the sheep in Rosia's arms, terrified.

It's normal for parents to smack their children, but Rosia knows that their mother will not do that. She will shout at them though, and she'll be angry.

On the way home, Rosia is sad and quiet. She carries the sheep and her top gets covered in blood.

There's no electricity in the village, so when the sun has set and her mum's finished shouting at her, Rosia sits alone in the dark outside the house.

"I'm going to leave," she thinks, as her tears flow. "Everything will be better if I go away." 🌐



Rosia with her family outside their house, in the middle of the village.



Many of the children in the village don't eat breakfast. Without food in their stomachs, they get unruly and restless in the classroom. So some of parents in the village give the children a cup of porridge in the morning. Once every two weeks it's Rosia's mother's turn to bring the children's morning snack.





Why do the girls want to move to the city?

- Families in rural areas are often extremely poor. Some girls go to the city to get away from the hunger and cold.
- The schools in the villages are small and only have about three or four grades. Some girls move to the city to continue their education.
- Alcoholism and violence are common problems in poor villages. Some girls move to the city to get away from abuse at home.



Car tyre sandals

Rosia and most of the other children in the villages outside Cusco wear sandals – summer and winter. They are called ushuta and they used to be made from llama hide. Now they're made from old car tyres.

Most of the girls who move to the cities in Peru know very little about what awaits them. Girls who do domestic work often have to work very hard and are isolated in the homes where they work, even more so before they learn Spanish. They are often treated badly and subjected to abuse. That's why Josefina and Yanapanakusun work with the village schools to inform children and adults about what life can be like for domestic workers.

Rosia and her classmates love playing football. The stone walls of the schoolyard form the sidelines.





I am great!

“I am great! I am great!”

The cry bounces off the houses and the mountains. Dimitri from Josefina’s organisation, Yanapanakusun, has arrived on his motor-bike on the new gravel road, the first road ever to reach the little village. It is one of 30 villages that Yanapanakusun visit regularly.

The students in year five and year six play, talk, write lists and draw all morning. It’s all about dignity. It’s a difficult word and it takes a while to figure out what it really means.

“Dignity is respecting yourself and others,” says Regina.

“Exactly,” says Dimitri. “We may be poor, but we are still worthy of respect. You must make an effort in school and be friendly to adults, but the adults also have to be kind to you. No-one should hit you or treat

you badly.”

Lidia looks thoughtful. When her father comes home drunk, things often end in arguments and fighting. That’s disrespectful, Lidia thinks.

“I get angry when my dad behaves in that way,” she says.

Lidia and the other students have talked a lot about drunken parents and adults. Many adults here drink alcohol in order to forget their difficult work, hunger and poverty. But the children never forget.



Lidia Garate Luza, 13

Likes: Playing in the school playground.

Doesn’t like: When adults argue and hit each other.

Demands: That my dad respects my friends and me.

Misses: Mum. She died when I was small.

Looks up to: Dimitri, who teaches us about the rights of the child.

You use your whole body in Yanapanakusun’s lessons.

“I used to dream of moving to Cusco or Lima, but now my dream is for another school to be built here in our village,” says Lidia.

“I want to finish high school and then open a shop. I’ll sell bread, noodles, potatoes and sugar. I really want to live here. But I’ll never, ever drink alcohol and when I get married my husband won’t drink either.”



Stop drunken teachers



Jeni Maribel Piñe Pucyura, 9

Likes: Maths, it's logical and simple.

Hates: Drunken adults.

Wants to be: A librarian, so that I can read all the books.

Jeni Maribel loves going to school and loves doing sums. But today is Monday and the class is not going to learn anything new.

Jeni Maribel and the other children sit very still when they hear the teacher coming. He smells of sweat and alcohol. He starts to shout at them straight away.

“Why has no-one pulled out my chair? You are worthless, stupid farmers’ kids! How did I end up in this dump?”

The teacher comes from Cusco, but works in Jeni Maribel’s little village. Lots of adults from the city look

down on the people in rural areas. That’s why the teacher doesn’t care about his job. He’s often drunk and today, like most Mondays, he falls asleep with his head on the desk.

The children sit quietly all day. When the teacher wakes up he takes off his belt to strike someone’s fingers.

At the end of the school day, the children gather behind Jeni Maribel’s house.

“We have to do some-

thing,” she says. They decide that they should all go home to their parents and tell them about the teacher. Jeni Maribel tells her parents about the beating and how the drunken teacher shouts at the children. That evening, the parents gather and go to the police.

The next day, the teacher doesn’t come. The pupils are alone in the classroom every day that week. The next Monday, however, two new teachers arrive.

“We have heard about your problems. But we promise never to come to school drunk. We will treat you with respect, just as you respect us as teachers,” they promise.

Jeni Maribel is proud. Together with her classmates, they managed to get rid of the drunken teacher.

“They should throw all bad teachers in jail!” she says. “Not only teachers, but all adults who beat children or treat them badly.”



Jessica Quispe, 11, and Juli Borrientos, 9, have clothes from the Tinta area, south of Cusco.



Victor Manuel Meza, 10, and Marco Antonio Luna Huisa, 11, are wearing outfits from the harvest celebrations in the Tinta area.



Cusco's wardrobe



Rosemary Ugarte, 12, is wearing an outfit that came to Peru with the Spanish conquerors several hundred years ago.

The children in the Cusco area love to dance and sing. There are lots of beautiful clothes to wear and dances to learn. Some originate from the Inca period and others have their roots in Spain.

During June and July there is one party after another. The most important festival in Cusco is called Inti Raymi and dates from the time when the Incas celebrated the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice.



Reyna Caceres Puma, 10, and Carlos Enrique Contreras, 11, are wearing clothes from Chicchinchca. They are called the cowboys of the Andes, since lots of people in that area have horses and cows.



Jose Nicolas Ccapatinta Lopez, 12, is wearing a Canchi costume that is used in one of the oldest Indian dances. The dance is about drying potatoes.



Sabina Yahaira, 5, is wearing a Tincus costume from the area around Lake Titicaca in southern Peru.



Clorinda Cachira Owepe, 15

- Happy:** When I dance.
- Sad:** When our llamas and sheep die because of the cold in the winter.
- Angry:** At adults who force girls to work day and night without a single day off.
- Wants:** To dance on the mountainside again.

Clorinda dances the clifftop dance

"I love to dance! But I need space to be able to dance the way I want to.

My village is near a mountain called Apu, which means 'God' in Quechua. It's the highest and most sacred mountain near Cusco. Every winter we have a big party here, and everybody in the village dances. The girls get the most carried away. The place where we celebrate the festival is on the mountain, beside a steep slope. The old people in the village tell stories of girls that danced so wildly that they fell off the cliff. Once I nearly fell off! But my dad grabbed me."



At www.childrensworld.org you can watch two video clips of Clorinda and her school friends dancing.

Gregorio Cansaya Quispe, 10, is wearing a devil costume from a traditional dance from the Paucartambo area, near the Peruvian jungle.



Tired and lonely in Cusco

Most of the girls who come to Cusco to work are from the rural areas in the mountains that surround the city. They dream of a life in the city; of education and of pretty clothes. The reality, however, is often more like a jail sentence.

Treated like a dog

"I have to sit in the kitchen and eat leftovers like a dog. Sometimes I don't get any food at all. Once I was so hungry that I searched the bins behind the house for something to eat. It made me think it would have been better if I'd never been born."
Reyna, 11



Nobody sees me

"The wife cooks the food, but I have to peel all the vegetables and make sure the stove stays lit. Afterwards I'm the one who washes the dishes and cleans up. People think she's a good cook. That makes me angry. No-one ever notices that I help."
Fany, 12



Pulls my hair

"I wash the whole family's clothes. The worst part is when the children have spilt fruit juice on their white tops. It's hard to get the stains out and if I can't manage it then the mother gets angry. She yells and pulls my hair."
Carmen Celia, 13



Never go out

"I never go out. I'd get lost and who would I ask for directions? I don't speak Spanish. My employer also says that I could get mugged and beaten on the street, or that the police might take me in. That scares me."
Laydi, 12



Shouts and swears

"The man of the house gets angry really easily. It doesn't matter what I do, he always shouts at me. He swears, really loud. It makes me want to cut my ears off."

Juli, 13



At evening school, the girls get the opportunity to use computers. Most of them only get to dust the computers in the houses where they live.



Valeria falls asleep at her desk

Valeria fell asleep today, with her head on her reading book and her arms on her knees. The teacher at Cusco's biggest evening school wakes her gently. It's not the first time he's seen a girl exhausted by her day's work. Even so, Valeria is ashamed. She wants to do well at school, but it's hard when her eyes are smarting and her arms are heavy as lead.

"I get up just before six in the morning. The whole house is cold and I hurry to get started with the cleaning to warm up a bit. If I'm lucky, the two boys sleep until half past seven. Then I have time to do some homework before they wake up.

The mother goes to work when I wake up, so it's my job to get the boys dressed and take the older one to nursery. The younger boy is only one year old. I take care of him and play with him all day. I like it when he laughs and he likes me too.

At midday I give the boys lunch and wash them. Then I look after them and do laundry for the rest of the afternoon. Most of the time it's easy, but sometimes my employers get angry. Last week I was playing with the boys in the street when the man of the house came home. There were no cars there, so it wasn't dangerous, but he got really angry and called me an idiot. I felt stupid and sad.

At six in the evening I go to school. It's the best part of the day, but I'm always so tired. I get headaches and I can hardly even hold my pen. That's why I don't do so well at school. I'm too tired to concentrate on what the teacher says. I wish I could go to school in the daytime like other children. But I have to work, so it's impossible.

At half past nine I come back to the house. Then I have to do the dinner dishes and I try to eat something before I collapse into bed."

Valeria Llamacehima Churata, 13



Likes: Crafts and making earrings.

Gets sad: When I think about my mum and how she used to laugh and hug me.

Dream: To be a nurse.

Josefina meets girls at the evening schools

Visiting the different evening schools is an important part of Josefina and Yanapanakusun's work. That's where they make contact with girls who need help and support.

The evening schools are really for adult domestic workers, but many of the students are children. Employers often don't let the girls go to normal schools, but they do let them go to evening school after their day's work is complete. Some girls are only allowed to go once a week. That's why the evening schools organise extra lessons on Saturdays and Sundays.



Luz Garda finds her way home



Luz Garda is 11 and is sitting on a bus, on the way to a city whose name she doesn't know. She has run away. Now she's alone, hungry and a long way from shouting relatives and pawing men's hands. A woman dressed in pretty clothes sits down next to her.

"Do you need help?"

Luz Garda is only wearing a thin t-shirt on. The woman wraps her in a blanket and smiles at her.

"We're on the way to Cusco," she says. "It's a big city, but don't worry, I'll take care of you."

This cheers Luz Garda up. Finally, an adult who cares about her! Until now she hasn't felt welcome anywhere. When she was six, her stepfather sent her away to live with an aunt in town and go to school. But it was several years before her aunt decided she had enough money to pay for school fees. Luz Garda had to help clean the house and work in her aunt's little shop instead.

One day, Luz Garda's sisters were waiting for her

outside the door. Surprised, she hugged them. She had missed her older sisters ever since they left the village many years ago.

"You're coming to live with us now," said her sisters. So she left her aunt's house without saying goodbye or telling her where she was going.

Life with her sisters didn't turn out as Luz Garda had hoped, however. She quit school to take care of her nephew. The sisters worked in a bar from the afternoon until late at night. But the worst thing was the boyfriend of one of the sisters. When Luz Garda's sister was at work he tried to take her clothes off and touch her. When Luz Garda told her sister she was furious.

"Don't lie about my boyfriend," she screamed and slapped Luz Garda in the face. "Get out!"

It's the first time Luz Garda and her best friend Adaluse have been to Cusco's annual market. The families they worked for before wouldn't let them have time off. It's the first time they've eaten candyfloss and been on a carousel or a ferris wheel.

So Luz Garda walked out the door, went to the bus station and bought a ticket for all the money she had.

That's how she ended up sitting next to the beautiful woman on the bus to Cusco.

Dream became a nightmare
The first week goes like a dream. Luz Garda sleeps well and in the daytime she helps the woman to sweep the floors in the house.

But the woman starts to ask Luz Garda to do more and more. Cook dinner, do the dishes, wash the clothes, dust, rinse the vegetables, do





Luz Garda
Callapiña Chani, 16

Likes: Dancing, listening to music, reading books, shopping.

Favourite book: Harry Potter.

Favourite music: Reggaeton.

Dreams of: Becoming an artist or a tourist guide.

Looks up to: Josefina. She is like a mother to me.

the shopping, clean the windows. The chores keep growing and the woman gets more and more annoyed.

Since Luz Garda comes from a village that doesn't have electricity, she has never used an iron before. One day she burns a hole in one of the woman's blouses. When the woman notices it she flies into a rage.

"You are ungrateful and lazy. I should hand you over to the police," she hisses.

Luz Garda works every day of the week, from seven in the morning until bedtime at half past nine. She tries to do all her jobs right but the woman always finds something to complain about.

Luz Garda buys carousel tickets with money she has earned working for the family who employ her now. They are kind and fair.

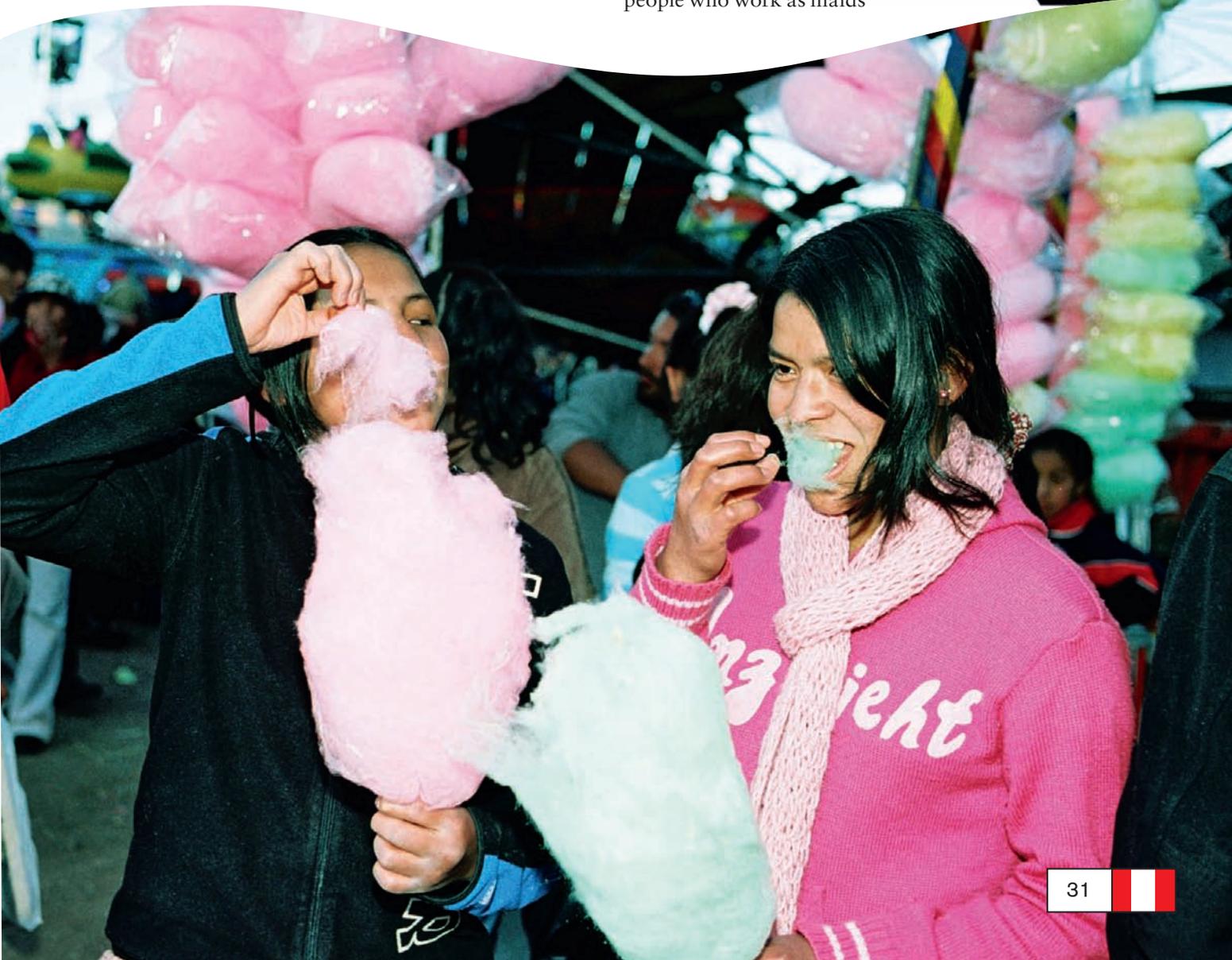


Maids' rights

One day at the market, Luz Garda meets a girl standing beside the bread stall.

"Hi, are you a maid too?" asks the girl.

Luz Garda nods in surprise. The girl says that even people who work as maids



have the right to go to school, the right to a day off every Sunday, and the right to get paid. Luz Garda isn't allowed any of those things, but how can she dare to speak to the woman?

Luz Garda never sees the girl again. Sometimes she wonders if it was an angel that she met that day next to the bread stall. She thinks about what the girl said every day. But each time she tries to talk about her rights the woman just laughs.

One night Luz Garda runs away again. She runs until she feels like her lungs are going to burst and nobody follows her. That night she sleeps in a square in the centre of Cusco. When the police wake her she's cold and afraid.

The police keep Luz Garda locked up for days. In the end though, she gets sent to Josefina and Yanapanakusun. Around 15 girls of different ages share a dormitory there. All of them come from small villages outside Cusco and have worked for families that have treated them badly. Josefina asks lots of questions, but Luz Garda doesn't answer them. She just stares back in silence. She can't trust anyone any longer.

Trusts Josefina

For a long time, Luz Garda does her best to annoy Josefina. She is unpleasant, refuses to help out and doesn't want to make friends with any of the other girls. Josefina is patient though.



Luz Garda needed her birth certificate to be able to go back to school.



These two bags are Luz Garda's wardrobe where she keeps her clothes.



Work clothes

"They're not that nice, so it doesn't matter if they get dirty."

Work shoes



Luz Garda's wardrobe

Dancing clothes

"I love dancing to reggaeton music. I've done a few dance courses to help me learn to dance better. It's important to wear heeled shoes when you dance."



Dancing shoes



She understands that it is Luz Garda's way of showing that she is sad and angry. After she has been at the house for a year, Josefina says,

"I think we should find your family."

At first Luz Garda is scared. She doesn't want to meet the family members she ran away from. In the end, however, she agrees. During the long bus journey, she chats to Josefina. It feels like the first time they have had a proper conversation.

At her aunt's house, Luz Garda gets a copy of her birth certificate. That means that she can start school again. Then Luz Garda plucks up the courage to say,

"I'm sorry that I ran away."

"I'm sorry for the times we didn't treat you as well as

we should have," says her aunt.

On the way back to Cusco everything is different. Luz Garda has finally decided to trust Josefina.

My new family

Now Luz Garda is 16. During the day she works for a family who pay her well, and in the evening she goes to school. Then she comes home to Josefina's house and the room that she shares with Fortuna and Adaluse.

"The best thing of all is that I've got a family here at Yanapanakusun. My room mates are like sisters to me," says Luz Garda.

"Now I can be glad and happy. And when I'm sad I can cry without being scared." 🌐



Luz Garda's favourite sweets.



Luz Garda and her best friend, Adaluse, are both in their final year at the Yanapanakusun school, Maria Angola.



Sport clothes

"I wear my new clothes when I play and do sports. My favourite game is double skipping. I do a lot of sport to keep warm because it's so cold here in Cusco."



Sport shoes



Try speaking Quechua

Hi	Allillanchu kashanki
I'm fine brother (to a boy)	Allillanmi waykey
I'm fine sister (to a girl)	Allillanmi panay
What's your name?	Ima'n sutiki?
Yes	Ari
No	Manan
Thanks	Diospagarasunki
Bye/See you soon	Tupananchis cama
I love you	Noka munakuyki

Gregorio will teach you to count to ten in Quechua at www.childrensworld.org!

Right to two languages

Both Spanish and Quechua are official languages in Peru. Spanish is sometimes thought to be a better language because most of the people in the cities who have money and power only speak Spanish. Many of the poor people in the mountains only speak Quechua.

Often when a girl moves to the city to work, she can't speak to anyone. The family she works for refuse to speak Quechua and she has never learned Spanish. After a couple of years, once she has learned Spanish, it wouldn't be unusual for her to forget how to speak Quechua. This means that if she ever gets the chance to see her family again she won't be able to talk to them.

"That's why it's important that the girls learn Spanish and have the chance to maintain their mother tongue," says Josefina. "It's not just about language. It's also about holding on to your history and your self esteem."

The Harry Potter books are Luz Garda's favourites. "I like the sense of loyalty between the three friends. And Harry has magic powers that he develops the more he learns. I want to develop my talents in the same way."



Luz Garda's schoolbag and school things.



Summer clothes

"These are my beach clothes. I went to Lima once and saw the Pacific Ocean!"

Sunglasses



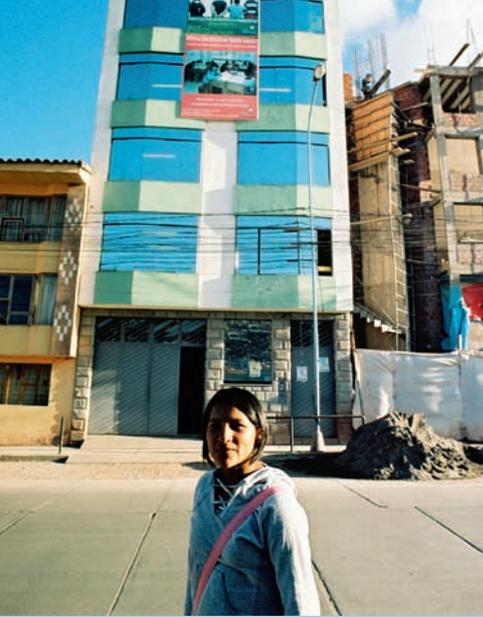
Winter clothes

Sun hat

"When I walk in the mountains I wear this sun hat. You have to protect your head from the strong sunlight, otherwise you might faint."

The duck bag comes from Lake Titicaca in southern Peru.





A school for girls and boys

Josefina's organisation runs the Maria Angola evening school. It is open to any children who work, both girls and boys.

The girls are often domestic workers or help their relatives with housework. The boys often live on their own, sometimes renting a bed and sometimes sleeping on the street. They might work as dishwashers, street sellers, or as assistants at bakeries or workshops. But both the boys and the girls are often really lonely and feel worthless. They have to work hard and they're often tired. Many people think it's hard to work in groups, since they've never learned to cooperate by playing or studying with other children.

The students at Maria Angola get to learn lots of things, but most importantly they learn:

- that all children have rights.
- that boys and girls are of equal value.
- that all people deserve respect, freedom and knowledge.
- to cooperate.
- to demand their rights.

TEXT: JOHANNA HALLIN PHOTOS: TORA MÄRTENS



A day at Yanapanakusun

7.15 am

Time to wake up

During the winter months, Josefina wakes the girls at quarter past seven. That gives them just enough time to make their beds, get ready and eat breakfast before some of them head for school.

"It's cold in the house, so they get to stay in their warm beds as long as possible," says Josefina.

In the summer, when the sun's warmth comes earlier, they get up at half past six.



7.45 am

To school

Clorinda, 15, hurries down the street towards school. She and half of the girls in the house go to school in the daytime. The others go in the evening.

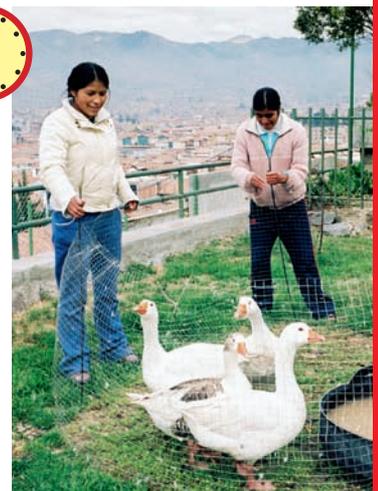


9 am

Feed the geese

Fortunata and Youana feed the geese and give them water.

"They eat grass, orange peel and other kitchen waste. We have seven geese and they each lay one egg every day," says Fortunata.





9.30 am

Clean out the guinea pig cage

The girls have 14 guinea pigs that live in a cage in the yard. They're not pets for playing with though. In Peru, guinea pigs are a delicacy and people eat them.

"But we don't eat our guinea pigs. They are so cute and we feel sorry for them," says Vittoria, 11.

10.30 am

Rabbit, rabbit

There's a rabbit that lives in the garden and Fortuna, 17, has named it Meggi. The rabbit comes running when she calls it.



10 am

Water the plants

Sonia, 12, and Elisabeth, 11, have planted seeds in small pots. Now the plants are growing and they get bigger every day.

10.15 am

Wash Trapo

The dog is called Trapo, which means cloth or rag. It got the name when it was a puppy and Josefina tried to throw it out because she thought it was just a rag on the floor. Adaluse and Sonia wash Trapo every week. The dog lives in the yard and barks if any strangers try to get in.



10.30 am

Rabbit, rabbit

There's a rabbit that lives in the garden and Fortuna, 17, has named it Meggi. The rabbit comes running when she calls it.

11 am

Group discussion with the psychologist

Elisabeth, 11, and the other girls meet with Yanapanakusun's psychologist a couple of times a week. This is where they talk about the hard things the girls have been through, but also about how they are now and about the future.

"We learn to breathe deeply and how to talk to our friends, how to listen and how to communicate. A lot of people in Peru think it's shameful to talk to a psychologist, but I think it's good," says Elisabeth.



Rosalbina, 14, loves to play llajes. You can learn how to play it too at www.childrensworld.org.



12.30 pm

Knitting and games

When the morning's tasks are finished, Vittoria, 11, relaxes. Every Sunday, girls who work come to the house to spend time together and have fun. A few weeks ago the girls all learned to knit. Vittoria is already onto her third scarf. She wraps it round her neck and carries on knitting it.



"We take care of the animals and the animals take care of us. Many of the girls come from rural areas and have grown up with animals around," says Josefina. "It's important that they get the chance to continue that contact. The pets are also good because girls who have been let down by adults can begin to regain their emotions in their contact with the animals. They can learn about care, trust and love."

1 pm

Lunchtime soon

Mariam, 16, and Sonia prepare lunch. All the girls eat lunch together. It's often stew with potatoes, corn and other vegetables.



4 pm

Time for homework

Gracelia, 12, and Jeni-Maribel, 9, do their homework in the library. Both go to school in the morning, so when the other girls go off to school in the evening they do their homework together.



In the library there are jigsaw puzzles and comics all about girls who do domestic work.

4.30 pm

Treat time with DVDs

At the weekends, once all their homework is done, the girls are allowed to watch TV. Their favourite thing is watching music videos. Clorinda has some DVDs of the Peruvian singer Fresialinda.

"She's always happy and she sings beautifully. And I like huayno – traditional Indian music," she says.



See and listen to Clorinda's favourite artist - Fresialinda - at [www.childrens world.org!](http://www.childrens.world.org!)

6 pm

Earthquake training

Many of the buildings in Peru have earthquake circles marked with an S. These mark the safest parts of the house, where the girls should go if there is an earthquake.



8.30 pm

Dinner

When the last girls have returned from the evening school, it's time for dinner. After dinner the girls get a spoonful of honey. During the winter months it's very cold at night and lots of the girls get colds. The honey is soft and soothing for their throats.



10 pm

Good night

Elisabeth and Vittoria brush their teeth and play for as long as they can until Josefina comes in. Then it's bedtime.

"Sueña con los angelitos," she says. Dream with the angels.





The girls' own radio show

It's Thursday morning and the second hand is ticking towards half past eight. The lights get switched on. Now it's time for the maids' very own radio programme!

"Welcome, today we're going to talk about being treated justly and fairly," says Inés Kcorahua Cruz.

When Inés was young she

worked as a maid and was rescued by Josefina. Now she presents this radio programme to inform other children that are in the same situation. Joining her in the studio today is Amanda, 14, domestic worker and faithful listener.

"I know there are lots of

girls out there who are still learning how to do their domestic chores," says Inés, "and it takes a while to learn. Even if you do something wrong, you still deserve to be treated justly and fairly. When the wife in the household gets angry, shouts and hits you, do you think that makes it easy to learn? I don't think so!"

"I don't think so either," says Amanda into the microphone and out across the radio waves. "Anyone can

make mistakes and you learn a bit at a time. But not with shouting and beatings."

The maids' radio programme is broadcast five hours a week, both in Spanish and in Quechua. Most of the girls that work in houses aren't allowed to listen to the radio. That's why the programme is broadcast in the mornings, when most girls are alone in the house and can listen sneakily.

"We know there are lots of you out there who don't get the respect you deserve, just because you are humble, alone and can't defend yourselves," says Inés.

"But remember that if you need help, Yanapanakusun is here for you. Write down our address and telephone number, so that you can call or come and see us!"

You can hear the radio programme at www.childrensworld.org.



Rights on the radio

"I always listen to the girls' radio programme. I have a little silver battery-powered radio. My favourite thing is when they talk about girls' rights.

I work every day, selling sweets, biscuits and ice cream on the street. Now I know that I have the right to be treated well. The right to go to school in the evenings. Now that I know my rights I feel stronger, smarter and safer. Before I never knew what to say when someone treated me badly. But now I know! There are laws to protect children and workers.

I usually listen to the radio programme with my parents, so that they can learn about the rights of the child too."

Zaida Ines Canahuri Quispe, 12





¡Feliz cumpleaños!

Congratulations! Today is a very special day in Yanapanakusun. Today we celebrate everyone's birthdays!

Birthdays are important in Peru. Most children and adults have big parties and celebrate with cake, balloons, clowns, presents, piñatas and lots of good food. But nobody organises parties for the girls who work. Instead of being a fun day, their birthdays are extra lonely and sad.

Several of the girls who live with Josefina don't know when their birthdays are. They have lost touch with their families and relatives, and no longer know where or when they were born. That's why Josefina puts on a party to celebrate all the girls' birthdays at the same time.

Rebeca has just found out that her birthday is the 13th of May. It feels strange. She knows that she has celebrated her birthday before but she doesn't remember it. That was before her mother got ill and died.

"I was six years old then,

and after that my dad was drunk every day," says Rebeca. "I always left the house early in the morning and didn't come home until the evening. The house was full of shouting and fighting."

Rebeca walked on the mountain with the family's sheep and llamas. She was free to think about her mum and cry there. At home she had to be quiet and careful so as not to annoy her father.

When she was ten years old, her cousin came to visit. "You have to let the girl go to school like other children," said Rebeca's cousin to her father.

"No, she should be at home with me," her father shouted.

But Rebeca's cousin could see that she was scared and unhappy. Early the next morning, before her father woke up, they walked the long path to the nearest town and caught a bus to Cusco. 🌐

Rebeca's wish list

- Adventure books, preferably about dragons.
- A red car, so that I can drive to my hometown for a visit. That would surprise them!
- A room of my own with a little window, a blue bed, a CD player and a microphone to sing into.



Rebeca Aguilar Condori, 12

Dream: A quiet room of my own.

Wants to be: A singer and songwriter.

Looks up to: Gabatshwane, member of the World's Children's Prize jury.

Tell us about your special day!

Do you celebrate your birthday or do you have a different special day? Go to www.childrensworld.org and tell us what you do to celebrate.



Princesses

visit the sacred valley

“Wow!” says Luz Garda and stretches her arms out like a condor, the sacred bird of the Inca people. Although she and the other girls who live with Josefina have all grown up in the area around Cusco, this is their first time visiting an Inca ruin.

Almost a million tourists from all over the world visit Cusco every year. They come to see the archaeological excavations, to hike on the Inca trail and to admire the remains of the Inca people’s culture.

Josefina, Luz Garda and the other girls stroll along narrow paths and up and down steps. When they get to the Inca city of Pisaq they sit down beside the round temple of the sun.

“I know that many of you are ashamed because you come from rural areas,” says Josefina. “But look around you! Your ancestors built on mountaintops and they were kings. That background is nothing to be ashamed of. You are princesses!”

Luz Garda and Sonia look at each other and giggle. You don’t really feel like a princess when you’ve spent all day washing your boss’s underwear.

“I know,” says Josefina and laughs with them. “Sometimes it feels like we’re worth nothing, especially when our employers are cruel and our work is difficult. That’s when it’s even more important to remember our origins.”

Pisaq is situated in the sacred valley of the Inca people. The Urubamba river

flows through the valley and at least fifteen kinds of corn grow here.

“Why did the Inca people live so far up the mountain?” asks Luz Garda.

“Because the mountains were holy and the rich Inca people wanted to live near Inti, the Sun God,” says Josefina. “Plus it was easier to defend the city if they were attacked.”

“Was God here when the Inca people lived here?” asks Elisabeth.

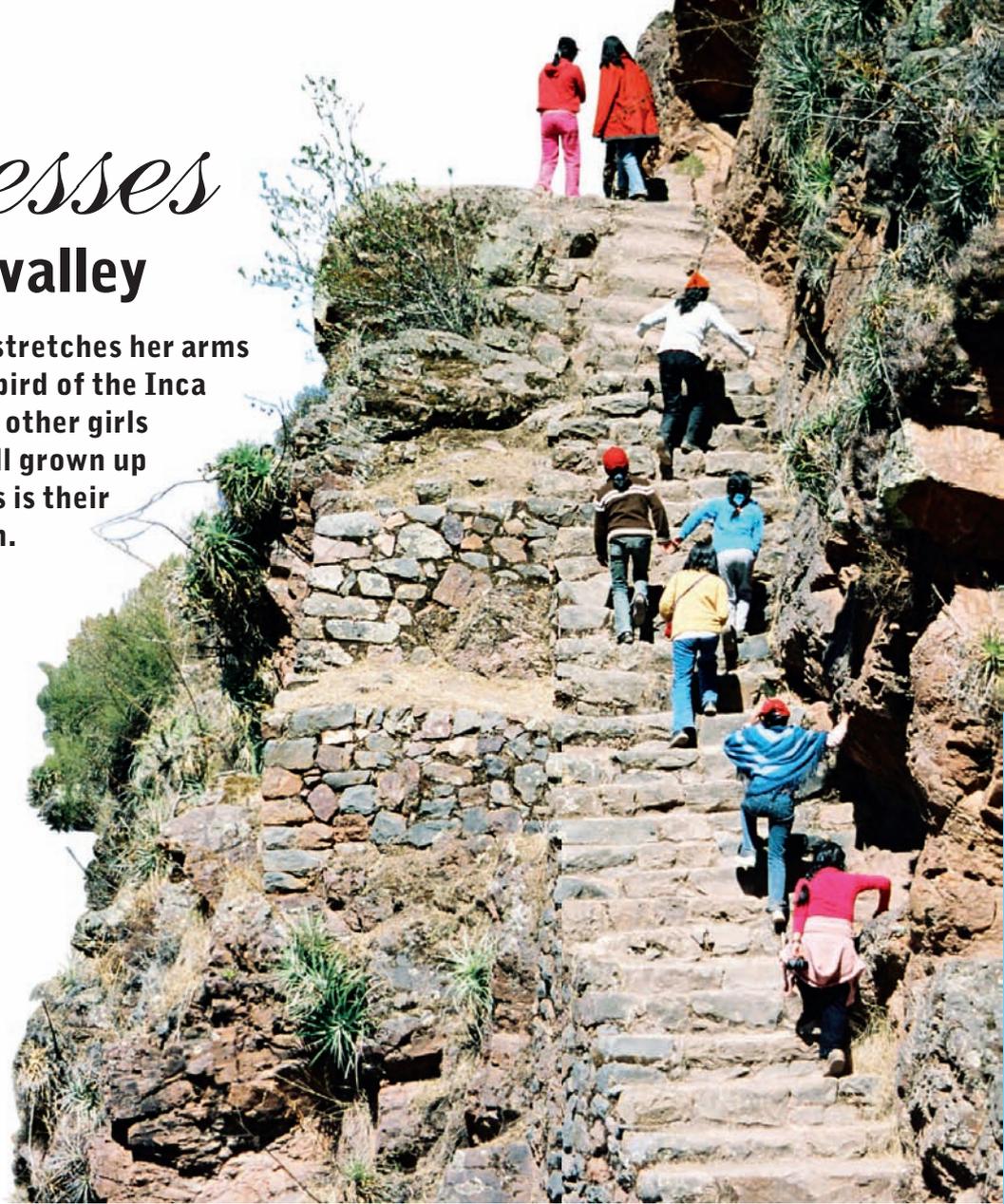
“Yes, I believe he was,” says Josefina. “We are Catholics and we believe in God. But the Inca people saw God in the sun, the

earth, the stars and the water. Some parts of their religion are still alive today. For example, it’s extremely important for us, the people who live in the Andes, to be kind to nature.”

“Did Cusco exist in the days of the Inca people?” wonders Luz Garda.

“Yes, the Inca people thought Cusco was the centre of the universe, since it was the capital of their kingdom.”

The girls laugh again. “What a fantastic day out!” declares Luz Garda. “I’m glad that I know what I have that I can be proud of.”



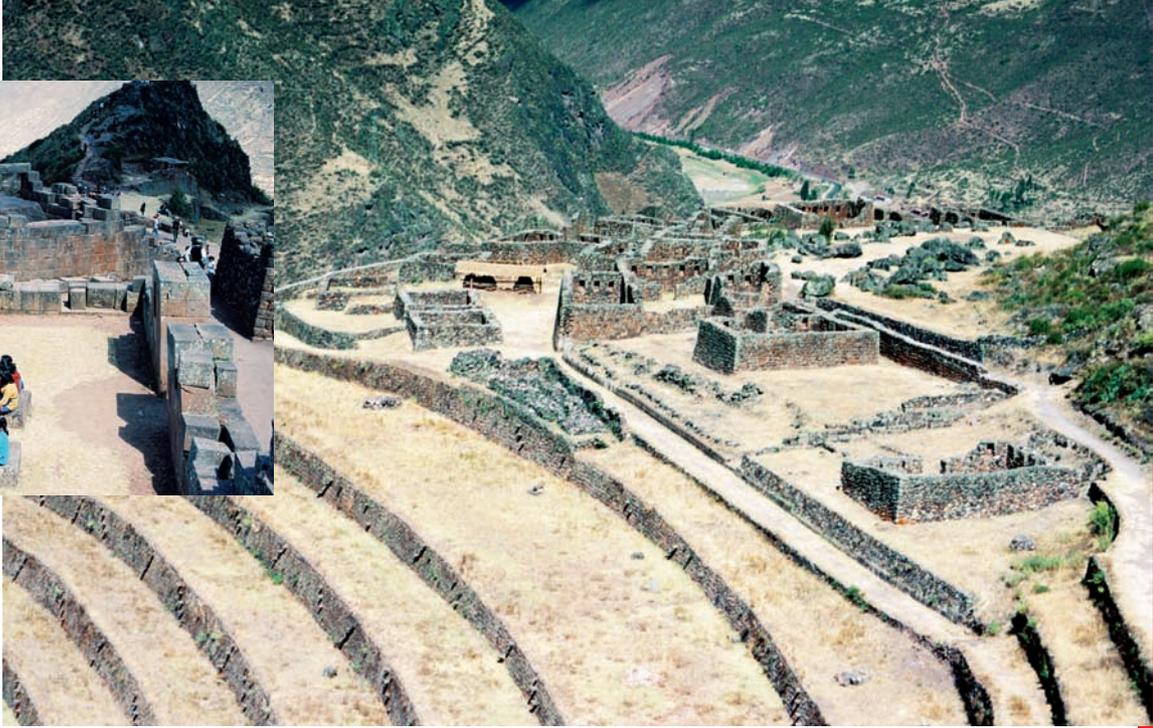
A narrow stairway leads the girls up the mountain to the Inca city of Pisaq.

Inca Kola is the most popular soft drink in Peru.





The Inca people built terraces so that they could grow corn, potatoes and grain on the steep mountainsides.



If I was an Inca king I would...



"... build a school that's only for girls and it would be the best school in the whole world. With the best, kindest teachers and everyone would eat delicious food for lunch every day."
Graciela Games, 12

"...give all children who are alone loads of toys to play with. And they'd have a day off school every Wednesday to make sure they had time to play with their new things."
Rosalbina Nina Condori, 15



"...build a park that was just for children! It would have slides, seesaws and giant swings, and all children would be able to eat as many sweets as they wanted. On Sundays the children would rest, but the other days would be for playing. The park would be open to rich and poor alike, but adults wouldn't be allowed in."



"...make sure that no children had to work or do boring things. All children would be able to play in the daytime. In the evenings they would be with their mums and dads."
Sonia Poña Hoyta, 12



"... give out all my gold, so that no one was poor any longer. Then no children would have to work!"
Zulma Panique Escolante, 14

People of the kings



- The Inca people only ruled for 100 years, but during that time they had control of an area that stretched from southern Colombia to central Chile.
- Inca means king.
- The Inca people did not have a written language and did not use the wheel, but they were experts at building houses from heavy stone blocks and channelling water from the valleys up to the mountaintops.
- The most famous Inca ruin, Machu Picchu, which is also in the sacred valley, was the summer residence of the Inca kings. The beautiful stone city was forgotten about after the Spanish people invaded Cusco, but the ruin was rediscovered by an archaeologist in the early 20th century.
- For a long time, the Inca trail was the only way of getting to Machu Picchu, but now thousands of tourists arrive by train and bus every day.
- Machu Picchu has been declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco.

