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PROINCO

THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

*FRANKLIN ALCARAZ DEL C.
NILDA FLORES SALINAS
EUNICE ZAMBRANA VILLARROEL
PHILIPPE BOURGOIS*

5

MINISTRY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL WELFARE**

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ON DRUG USE PREVENTION
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GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

LIC. GONZALO SANCHEZ DE LOZADA
Constitutional President of the Republic of Bolivia

LIC. FREDDY TEODOVIC
Minister of Human Development

DR. JOAQUIN MONASTERIO PINCKERT
National Secretary of Health and Social Welfare

DR. IGNACIO CABALLERO
National Sub-Secretary of Health

DR. FRANKLIN ALCARAZ DEL CASTILLO
National Director of Integral Prevention of Drug Abuse, Treatment,
Rehabilitation and Reinsertion to Society

USAID BOLIVIA

DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES

SR. PAUL G. EHMER

**Director,
Health and Human Resources
Office USAID/Bolivia**

DR. RUSSELL STOUT

**Chief of Party
Development Associates, Inc.**

LIC. MA. ELENA RODRIGUEZ

**Drug Information and Education
Specialist
Development Associates, Inc.**

**RESEARCH/AWARENESS PROJECT ON
DRUG USE PREVENTION**

USAID AGREEMENT 511-0613DIFEM/003/92

RESEARCH TEAM

DR. FRANKLIN ALCARAZ DEL C.	Director
LIC. EUNICE ZAMBRANA V.	Chief of Planning
LIC. NILDA FLORES S.	Chief of Statistics
LIC. DAVID FERNANDEZ G.	Chief of Management
SRA. EUNICE OCHOA G.	Management Assistant

*FRANKLIN ALCARAZ DEL CASTILLO
NILDA FLORES SALINAS
EUNICE ZAMBRANA VILLARROEL
PHILIPPE BOURGOIS*

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

*DAVID FERNANDEZ GANDARILLAS
EUNICE OCHOA GONZALES*

PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

GENERAL CONSULTING:

**Philippe Bourgois Antropologist-Development
Associates, Inc.
Narcotics Awareness and
Education Project**

GENERAL DIRECTION:

Franklin Alcaráz del Castillo

STATISTICS PROCESS AND SUPERVISION:

Nilda Flores Salinas

OPERATIVE PROCESS AND SUPERVISION:

Eunice Zambrana Villarroel

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

David Fernández Gandrillas

MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT

Eunice Ochoa González

DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH TEAMS

LA PAZ:

**RAMIRO RIVERA MOSCOSO
GEORGINA AGUIRRE PATIÑO**

COCHABAMBA:

**MARCOS CORONADO PANDO
DALIA JEMIO ARNEZ**

SANTA CRUZ:

**DIENY GUTIERREZ WELLS
JACKELINE KOLER TUFÍÑO**

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PRESENTATION

There is a modern fascination with quantification. In many respects, people who design and carry out surveys and quantitative studies have replaced magicians and fortune tellers.

Epidemics and elections, for example, provide abundant figures. These are translated into projections that tell us about the future. Policies and actions are based on these projections, assuming that an element of reality has been captured by the figures. But these statistics represent human beings, people capable of thinking, feeling and deciding what is and what is not important in their lives.

The process of counting is essential; it provides us with an estimate of where a given population is, at a given time. In addition, surveys and quantitative studies provide us with a basis which enables us to make comparisons between fixed populations (samples); we can measure and compare opinions, attitudes and behaviors taking into consideration age, sex, socio-economic status, place, etc. All of these are very important, above all for policy makers and opinion leaders, not to mention sales promoters. Social and marketing interventions should be based on the knowledge of the target population in order for them to be effective.

There are, however, population groups that cannot be reached with quantitative research methods. They are people who do not own telephones, who have no permanent residence, and who frequently have no hope. In other words, the people who are out of the social spectrum due to circumstances or to their own choice. What do those people think? How do they feel? How do social policies affect them? How did they get to where they are and why do they stay there? Surveys are not very useful in answering these questions about people who do not fit within the "general population." And yet, these are the very people who are at greater risk of becoming drug producers, traffickers and consumers.

In this volume, PROINCO's research team has produced a classic ethnographic investigation of Bolivian "street children," where the children tell us who they are, where they come from, and why they stay in the streets. There is no doubt that population figures are important, and we certainly should know how many children live in the streets of Bolivian cities. But even more important is the question "Why?" In these pages, that question is answered by the children, not by sociologists, educators or the police, not even by parents or other "experts." The words are theirs; the knowledge and ability to carry out this research are PROINCO's.

This study is, in many ways, a triumph of qualitative research. I congratulate DINAPRE's and PROINCO's personnel for this beautiful work.

The words of these children are sad, sometimes shocking, but quite often insightful. Please pay attention to the children's statements. They are wise beyond their years.

As far as we know, this is the first ethnographic study of the street children in Bolivia. We hope that this work will provide the

basis for social interventions that would make studies like this one unnecessary in the future.

RUSSELL STOUT, Ph.D.
Chief of Party
Development Associates, Inc.
La Paz, Bolivia

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The dramatic crisis that confronts street youths in the big cities of Bolivia worries those who work in drug abuse prevention and has forced them to search for non-traditional and imaginative research methods and strategies to get to the heart of the problem.

The suffering, violence and segregation from society visited on the rapidly growing groups of our country's poorest children has pushed them onto the country's most dangerous streets.

This panorama presents us with an urgent research agenda, because these youths are a time bomb that we must defuse to prevent, drug abuse and crime from becoming ingrained in the lives of the next generations.

Tragically, we are surrounded by examples of other Latin American countries that have not been able to overcome this challenge; their runaway street children are at the heart of crime rates, devastating statistics of alcohol and drug abuse and increasing levels of personal suffering and violence.

In many of these countries, the crisis has reached such uncontrollable proportions that groups of “vigilantes” have been formed to hunt and murder street children as if they were feral animals.

This study was conceived as an approach to that human tragedy, before it reaches insurmountable proportions in Bolivia. It has been designed as an exploratory diagnosis that will provide a global perspective of the situation confronted by street children who use drugs, so that we may develop effective drug abuse prevention programs before it is too late. The purpose of this study is to provide not only basic descriptive data, but, more important, to pave the way for new hypotheses and questions to be asked and probed by future researchers.

This study also took into consideration those who work in the midst of the situation. We want it to be useful to the people and institutions that work on the frontlines of the struggle against the destruction of Bolivian youth.

For these reasons, we have designed a study that exclusively gathered qualitative instead of quantitative data. In our country there are over a dozen quantitative studies based on surveys of street children. However, many of these reports and pamphlets provide us with contradictory figures.

None of them pretend to have systematically analyzed the life-dynamics in the streets or even to have provided a comprehensive array of the problems that street children confront. In fact, one of the reasons that led us to carry out this ethnographic study was the suspicion that researchers do not ask the right questions when they interview street children. There is not enough data to allow us to formulate and prove credible hypotheses.

Such a high proportion of street children are involved in illegal activities and substance abuse, and so many of them have suffered extraordinary levels of personal traumas at the hands of adults and institutions, that it is simply unreal to assume that they would feel comfortable telling the truth about the most intimate details of their lives to perfect strangers.

Consequently, we created three pairs of teams of researchers, each one comprising one researcher and one assistant researcher, and we sent those teams to three cities where the phenomenon of street children who use drugs is most prevalent: La Paz/El Alto, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. All the researchers lived in the cities where they carried out the study. And some of them had a long-term relationship with street children and related institutions. The research teams were trained in anthropological techniques of observation and participation. This strictly qualitative methodology requires that the researchers share the reality of the person they are studying. The objective is to gather data through a combination of formal taped interviews, direct observation, and, subtly, non-structured informal conversations and social interaction. It requires the researchers from develop warm, trusting relations with the interviewee, to break distrust barriers that frequently prevent the researchers from getting to the reality of children who survive in the streets.

The researchers had to go to places where the street children live, work, steal, and use drugs. This methodology forces the researchers to involve themselves in the same local reality and to penetrate the internal and structured "common sense" of the interviewees. The ethnographers in this study developed a friendship and observed the children in their native environment; they learned to speak in their language; and forced themselves to accept, at least for the time being, the internal logic of the street children's culture. The researchers took risks in this task; they roamed the markets, vacant lots, parks

and squares — many times in the middle of the night — where street children can be found. They also interviewed children in rehabilitation centers. DINAPRE, through PROINCO, deeply appreciates the cooperation and kindness of the institutions that opened their doors to the project¹. Unfortunately, we cannot thank the institutions by name because the ethnographers, professional ethics dictates that they maintain the confidentiality of all the individuals and institutions, so to protect the innocent and the guilty.

To maximize time and resources, the researchers established focus groups according to age cohorts. From these focus groups, the most representative children were selected for private interviews, for the purpose of taping their life stories in detail. The researchers also chose children they met in the streets to elaborate on their life stories.

We did not use the traditional random sample method necessary when gathering precise data for epidemiologic surveys. On the contrary, the ethnographers selected children willing to cooperate to gather the most precise information possible from the interviewees, to be able to place them in the panorama of street life.

Throughout their work, the researchers took careful notes to avoid being biased and to be able to access the data in an impartial fashion. The researchers were trained to take notes in a scientific manner and to cross-check their questions with as many children as possible to verify the precision of the answers.

The qualitative case studies in the reports must not be generalized in statistical terms. Instead, they try to provide parameters of the types of lifestyles that exist in the streets. They are meant to

¹ Unfortunately, many rehabilitation centers did not allow us access to their facilities.

illustrate the defined logic of street life. They also provide a basis for analysis of the direction and dynamics emerging from the increasing problem of homeless children in our cities.

And, once more, this study is exploratory; it does not intend to be provocative nor definitive. However, the issues it touches will arouse polemic and discussion, and it is therefore motivating. It does not claim to give specific proportions of how many children work legally, how many steal to survive, how many use drugs, or what drugs they use. It does claim to provide systematic data on relationships developing between the complex components that define the street child's options in life. The direction that this crisis is taking concerns us in the extreme. We hope that this humble study will stimulate other researchers, and people who work with street children, to address the problems confronting our youth — and that it will serve as the impetus for a profound, public debate.

The facts not covered by our research are not pleasant. They are impressive. Homeless street children are neither “angels” nor “devils,” but complex individuals overloaded with problems, who many times assume destructive, violent and dangerous postures.

It is not our purpose to offend any person or institution with the rudeness of our data. We hope that whoever reads this report will share with us the sense of urgency that we convey, after having involved ourselves in the ugly reality of the children who find refuge in the streets.

Philippe Bourgois, Ph. D.
Anthropologist

CHAPTER I

STREET STORIES

CHAPTER I:
STREET STORIES

When the cutting coldness of the night surrounds the passersby in Bolivian cities, when shadows appear like grotesque masks dimly lit by feeble light, the silhouettes of people stretch and shrink under the street corners' miserable light bulbs.

Strangely, in this subworld of darkness, it no longer matters what place it is. Darkness is the same everywhere. People walk with the same haste, except for friends returning home after drinking, singing badly sung songs or whistling unrecognizable refrains.

From time to time one discerns groups of children that walk without speaking or whispering. They communicate in a different language, many times with only a look, a slight gesture, or a movement of the head.

They dress poorly. But their eyes penetrate the most profound darkness.

They seem to walk by rote ... The groups of children comprise “cambas,” “collas,” “chapacos,”² and children from neighboring countries³ in a strange symbiotic mixture. They take care of each other, and even though they have serious arguments, they do not allow anyone to bother them. They close ranks at the least sign of danger. The most hardened, the leaders, are armed.

There are also groups of young women, girls, all of them. They are less violent, yet also dangerous. They look for a drunkard to “work”⁴ to have enough to eat tomorrow. Their lives are at more risk than those of their male peers.

But night becomes dawn and later day. The sun brings warmth and takes away the cold, even though not always. With bad luck it can be windy and rainy. And the children must, again, look for a haven, many times without eating...

The study was carried out against this backdrop.⁵

² “Camba”: from the subtropical Eastern region of Bolivia; “Colla”: from the Occidental region, highlands and valleys; “Chapaco”: from Southern Bolivia.

³ In this study, it was clear that street children appear as easily in one city as in another.

⁴ In the coded language of street children, “working” means stealing.

⁵ All names in the current publication have been changed, but the narration is literally transcribed from taped recordings.

JOSÉ



JOSE

José is 14 years old. He has spent half his life on the streets of Bolivia's largest cities. Now in a foster home for abandoned children in one of these cities, he has moved around a lot and survived endless episodes in the street's hostile environment ...

- At what age did you leave home?

- *I was ten.*

The researcher objects, citing what Jose said in the focus group sessions, and repeats the question. He answers thoughtfully.

- *I was seven.*

- What did you do when you left home?

- *Well, the first time, 'cause I always ran away, I left when I was five years old, I got lost. My uncle René went lookin' for me everywhere. Well I was in..... Lotsa people loved me there. They said I was cute.*

Later I didn't remember nothin'. Then I met friends, when I was six, seven years, when I was here. At eight I started stealin'. I liked it: first I shined shoes, and then my stepfather found out. I don't have a father. He's dead. In my house, my stepfather bought me a gun. It was Christmas. We celebrated with ceviche. "Do you know ceviche?" "Yeah," I said.

My father is [indigenous group from a neighboring country], I like ceviche with "chilcano". I'm from (...) of the [a neighboring country] and then he breaks down. After I started walkin' the streets, I stole a hundred Bolivianos from my mother, in coins. Since then my mother wanted to take me to [a children's foster home], she wanted to throw me in the foster home (...) I told my mother, "If you wanna put me there, Mom, I c'n go myself," I ran away from home, I called her later and told her, "I'm in the foster home (...) now what do you want?" I told her. Once I turned ten I was still in the (...) for men and I ran away from there, 'cause everyone wanted to cut my face.

- Why did they want to cut your face?

I don't know. I didn't get along with them. Later I ran away and I found myself there, at the end of a bus stop, line eleven, in the (...) neighborhood, I met a man that had a race car, 130, and rode in that car. He worked in (...) he took me to (...) and put me there. I was there a long time. I made friends, I felt good; but I got into a fight. I didn't know how to fight, they beat me. I learned. All those who beat me don't beat me anymore. I know how to defend myself. Later I left 'cause I had a fight with a big guy. I grabbed a machete. They sent me to steal around there. On Sundays they gave us five Bolivianos. I looked for fights every day. I distracted him when he was workin'. I turned around with my machete and hit him on the shoulder with all my strength, pow! with the machete on the shoulder, and I ran away.

- Do you know what happened to that man?

- *I didn' know. I waited until the night, like until this time. I went to (...), I changed clothes and I waited for the man, to see if he would come. If he did come I would escape. He didn' come. He didn' come, he didn' show up. I went there, and he was lyin' on the floor.*

- Did he move?

- *I dunno. I saw his leg trembled. I took the machete. Blood was comin' out his mouth. I held the machete, I closed my eyes and pow! I hit him in the head here [he shows the area of the back of the head] and then I grabbed gasoline and I started to breathe strongly. My head hurt but I kept on breathin'. Later I went home. Again my mom hit me. I had very red marks. My stepfather hit me with a rope for horses, but it didn't hurt 'cause my body got numb. He hit me and I didn't feel it when he hit me. Later he hit me with a cable on the legs, I felt like a electricity. I took out, from my armpit, my father always hits me, I took a Rehinol [Rohipnol]. He wanted to make me spit the Rehinol. He hit me on the head with a stick. I swallowed it, I waited five minutes till the Rehinol took effect. I didn't feel any blow. I stood up like this [he demonstrates] and I grabbed the stick and I hit my father back. I hit him in the head, in the chest.*

I was in a foster home over there in (...) a foster home with a priest. I was there. I had a horse I stole around there by (...) from a drunk. I got up on the horse. It had a saddle, very pretty the white horse, big. You would go like this and he danced. He stood up on his two feet. I went to (...) on the horse, I mean ridin'. I got up, the horse would lie like this, restin'. Then I slept on the road. I heard sounds in the night.

- How old were you when you went to (...)?

- Eleven. *I was sleepin' on the road when a truck went by, and the driver shouted at me, "Where are you goin', boy? What are you doin' sleepin' there? Come on, let's go! You gonna be my companion. Get your horse up, he's beautiful. Your horse is good, he's a pure blood," he told me. I got up on the horse. The day went by and he told me, "I have a lot of grass back there, I know you stole the horse. Don't worry, you're gonna be with me. Come. Give 'im to me." I looked at him and told him, "You're interested in the horse." "Your horse is beautiful." "How much will you give me?" "I'll give you... a hundred Bolivianos."*

I arrived at (...) and they wanted to pay me up to a thousand Bolivianos for the horse, 'cause it was purebred. "How much will you give me?" "A thousand five hundred Bolivianos," the one from the mayor's office goes. Others offered me two thousand, another told me two thousand five hundred Bolivianos. I went, "Who'll give me three thousand Bolivianos, not dollars?" "I will!" goes one man. Then I ran away. I went to Oruro, Potosí with all that money. Uh-oh! I didn't realize that my grandmother lived in Potosí! When I came back my father told me I had family in Potosí. My stepfather, he couldn't stand me!

- Well, you did hit him. Listen, what does your mom say about all this?

- *She tells me, "Why do you leave?" Once my grandmother told my mother, before my father married my mother, before she died, my aunt had left with her boyfriend and my mother was small. My aunt left home. When she went with the boy and my grandmother asked my mother where she was, she told her that she had went away. "It's your fault," she goes, and she hit my mother a lot. "I'm goin' to curse you. When you have your first son, he's gonna make you suffer, and if it isn't him then it's gonna be whoever. "*

My oldest brother was the first one to leave home and then me. My other brother he's on the street is a twin, he's big, well-built, he's 16, and he's way big.

- When did you start trying drugs?

- *Well, I started when I was 13, I bought cigarettes first, L&M, Marlboro, later gasoline. Nobody taught me.*

- You knew what they did?

- *Yeah. Later I started with grass.*

- Who gave it to you?

- *My brother. I had to keep it in my mouth fi' minutes. Later I felt super, very light. I looked like this, and when I hit a boy I threw him far away, I felt like in slow motion, I gave a strong blow that felt soft to me.*

- What else after marihuana?

- *I tried half a Rehinol, it made me crazy. I went to a man and I got beaten 'cause of a thousand dollars, it don't count. I fought with the man, I punched him a lot and I pulled out his wallet. He pushed me and he threw me on my back. "Boys mess with those they can't," he said and he left. Then I left and fell asleep and the other "palomillos" (street kids) took it from me. I went back to my house again, but I ran away again. I didn't like bein' at home.*

- Don't you like your home?

- *Yes, look, my father don't let me go out when I want. I wanna go out when I wanna go and nobody stops me. And my father bossed me too much and I don't like that.*

- Have you tried cement glue?
- *Yeah, three times.*
- What effect does it have?
- *I flew. The third time, look, the cement glue made me feel somethin' very strange. I saw Spiderman, Superman. I was like a superhero.*
- What did you do with the money you stole, other than buying drugs?
- *I went to the movies, out to eat, to "sheal" ("earring pearls"), electronic games, clothes. I dressed well.*
- Where was your field of action?
- *The (...), where I made the most.*
- Why did you sleep different places?
- *'Cause I felt the police were gonna come. Like, I stole a thousand dollars. I thought they were after me. I went, "I'm gonna sleep in (...). I didn't sleep there, I went to (...). I confused 'em so that way nobody found me. I went to (...) and I got beat up for three thousand dollars. I didn't use the money good.*
- Why?
- *I spent quick. It lasted a week while I was traveling.*
- What other drugs have you tried?
- *I dunno, thinner, "pitillo."⁶*

⁶ Pitillo: a tobacco cigarette laced with coca paste

- What other drugs do you know?

- *With paints that smell like gasoline. I held the paint, I said "nice color," and I was flying.*

- How do you get the rehinol (Rohipnol)?

- *For a Boliviano.*

- How long has it been since you did drugs?

- *Yesterday with cement glue and three rehinols.*

- What do you feel lately?

- *I feel I'm changin'. I feel I'm nicer, I heal my friends who got hurt. There's one who trembles in the night. Brother Julio is teachin' me first aid and I help him at nights and it calms me down.*

- What solution do you have for street kids' problems?

- *The government is guilty. The police take away the cement glue and give it to other "palomillos" (street kids), to shoemakers. They take our money, clothes, what reasons do they have for enlistin' us? They should take us to a foster home like this one.*

- What led you to run away from home?

- *I don't like my home. My stepfather didn't give love, but my mom did.*

- Have you had sexual relations?

- *No. I kissed the girls at the (...), but I didn't get no further.*

MARÍA



MARIA

María works in one of the facilities at the foster home for abandoned girls that presently shelters her. She is 13 years old.

- Is there something that you remember intensely from when you were a girl, something you can't forget? Something that happened at home, some problem?

- *I would say that nothin' happened to me, but yes my stepfather mistreated me. I have never done drugs, I don't like them, I don't like drinkin'.*

- María, how many people live in your house?

- *Three. Two men of my stepfather, we're eight.*

- Eight people?

- Yes.

- Your brothers, from your mother and father, how many are there?

- *Only one.*
- What you mean is that there are only two of you?
- *Me and my sister. From my stepfather there are three.*
- Your father, your stepfather, and your mother?
- *Yes.*
- Are there seven or eight?
- *Eight.*
- Who is the eighth one?
- *My stepfather's younger brother.*
- Your stepfather's?
- *Yes, my stepfather's.*
- How long have you been living with your stepfather?
- *Some time already.*
- Is this your second stepfather?
- *Yes, my second stepfather.*
- How long did you live with your father?

- *With my real father I don't know. When my mother was around 20, she got together with my father. My father left me and my little sister, the other one died, and two of us are left.*

- Have you ever heard from your father?

- Yes.

- What do you know about him?

- *That he lives there in (..) I go and visit him, I stay there every month. He sends us money, I mean like allowance and we go pick that up every thirty days, at the end of the month.*

- Have you ever visited him?

- Yes.

- What do you think of your dad?

- *I think... He has his wife. My mother doesn't wanna go. I use to go sometimes. I tell my dad, "Why did you leave?" My father says, "I'm not going back with your mother 'cause I already have my wife." My father told her, "No, I wanna go back, tomorrow I'm gonna give you money for your daughters," and then, "I'm not gonna live with you, no, I got my wife, I can't go back with you." He told her that. "Why didn't you wanna live with my mom? Why did you leave her? Why did you abandon her? You should have stayed," I told him. "I'm gonna give her money for support," just like that.*

- Would you like to live with your father?

- *I wouldn't like to. My mother sacrifices in everythin'. She made me study in school, she washed clothes, she woke me up to go to school, she cried, she took a walk, my mother. I don't wanna live with my father.*

- And your first stepfather? How old were you when you got your first stepfather?

- *Me, when I was nine. Then my mother split, she left him. He hit her a lot. Me too. If he didn't hit my mom, he hit me. We made the police get him. He only hit me. That's why my mother split.*

- Why did he hit you?

- *'Cause he was jealous of my uncle. Also, when he was talkin' he didn't let me talk with anyone. My aunts always came to visit me. He didn't wanna know anythin' about them and he goes to my mother, "Cause of your family I have lost you," 'cause now they don't talk.*

- Did you have a new brother with your new stepfather?

- *Yes.*

- Is he living?

- *No, he's dead. They were two, they died. They got sick and they died.*

- How old were you when your mother got together with your second stepfather?

- *My father left her after we were together about a year and a half, 'cause I was workin'. When I was little I didn't see my mom. I used to work as a baby-sitter. It paid. I didn't sell much. "You're not*

gonna go with your mother.” My mother came cryin’ and later my stepfather didn’t wanna see me, not this girl, I don’t wanna see her, and that’s why my mother left him and stayed. He’s got all our stuff. We got other stuff with my other stepfather. And after one year with my stepfather we came here to Cochabamba.

- From where?

- *From (...). She met my other stepfather here.*

- And how long have you been living there?

- *She met him in Sucre and she got pregnant. She was with him, we lived with him, I don’t know how long, but long time ago.*

- How old is your little brother, your last stepfather’s?

- *The one from my last stepfather, three years.*

- At least four years?

- *Yes.*

- How do you get along with your stepfather?

- *Okay. He gives me money. “Go, get yourself somethin’,” he says. He good, he doesn’t abuse me. Sometimes they argue. He never fights with my mother.*

- Has your stepfather ever hit you?

- *My first stepfather hit me lotsa times. My second stepfather doesn’t hit me. He hasn’t never touched me.*

- How long did you work in the cemetery?

- *Half a year.*

- And why did you work in the cemetery?

- *'Cause then my stepfather wasn't makin' much. My mother didn't have enough to support me. My little cousin worked and my aunt sell sodas in the cemetery. "Let's go there, let's go make money." She takes me there. It was a Friday. I was scared to work, to take in the water, but I was scared. I used to take my bucket in. I was scared that the girls would yell at me, 'cause there are girls and they used to yell. I was scared of comin' here. And my friend, later I met this girl named (...). "Let's go to (...), it's nice there. You can eat, you pay thirty cents, you eat," she told me. I didn't pay attention to her. "I'm scared. Maybe they'll yell at me, they're goin' to throw me out of the cemetery," I used to tell her. And so a week went by and they brought me here and since then I got used to bein' here.*

- How long have you worked in the (...)?

- *In the (...) it'll be two and a half months.*

- Why did you enter the (...)?

- *'Cause they pay us monthly and I need that just for my transportation. And they told me, "Come here then, you're gonna (...)." I told my mom and she said, "You're gonna get lost, you're gonna do that cement glue like the other girls," and i told her "I'm not gonna do cement glue," I explained to her. "If you become..., if you get lost, I'm gonna get you. You gonna live with your father." She told me I was gonna get lost 'cause I came here. I needed transportation money for my school, for my recess, that's why I came here and*

I have changed everythin' and my mother told me "You're gonna get lost, I don't want you to be going with anyone." "OK," I went, 'cause Delicia had been drinking chicha. My mother found out about that. "The ones from the (...) drink chicha, your daughter too. You have to control that," my aunt told her. "I don't want you hangin' around with Delicia, with nobody." My mother knows Pancha, she also did drugs. "I don't want you to be with her." Now she's not usin' them. "Well, talk to her, but not to Delicia." Delicia used to drink chicha. Once she wanted to take me. I told her "No, you go." I had to study. I went to my class to study 'cause my mother was gonna find out, 'cause my little sister is in the same school. My mother was gonna find out, she would have stuck me with my dad, that's why I don't wanna go home. I don't get along well there.

- Have you had any problems with the girls?

- They had it in for us. Delicia, she had it with me. We used to fight. Once we fought in the cemetery 'cause I owed her money, that is, I had her jug. She lent me her earrings and they broke. My mother cuffed me, and the earrings broke, and I had to pay. "I don't got it, Delicia, I'm gonna give it to you," and I told my mother "I have to pay for the earrings." "I'm not gonna give you nothin'. Tell her to come in the afternoon, I'll give her two pesos." "Go to my house," I told her. She didn't wanna go. She started pullin' at my sweater. At that time I was, like, kind of humble. Every time someone shouted at me, I cried. We fought. She took my sweater. "You're not gonna take it like that 'cause I'm not your doll," I told her. Ever since that time I don't get along with her 'cause she's bad. She goes everywhere. I don't wanna be with her. With Margot I also don't get along.

- Did you ever fight?

- *Marlene and I used to yell nonsense at each other. I didn't pay attention to her; I only fought with Delicia. I get along with Pancha, Angustia, Alba, nobody else. One time Delicia came to my house. I wasn't ready for her to come here. "She is always callin' you," my mother told me. "Why don't you go alone?" I told my mother, "It's far away." She came to see me so that we could go. "Hurry up," she yelled at me. 'Cause of that my mother hit me. "I don't want you to come home." We argued about that. "I don't want you to come to my house," I told her. "My mother hit me. I told her you yelled at me, and she got angry 'cause of what I said, 'cause I came to see you." I don't know what things she told me. "It's better if we get mad. I don't wanna talk with you anymore," I told her. The other day we argued too. Now I'm not talkin' to her 'cause my mother forbids me to talk to her, 'cause she found out that I drank chicha. And she told her she gone drinkin' with some boys. My mother found out about that, she told me, "I don't want you to hang out with Delicia."*

- How much do you make a month here?

- *Here? It depends. In the half month I've been here, I think it was three weeks, I went in and they gave me five pesos; now we got the first payment, 'cause they owe us a lot most times. It looks like today they're gonna pay, we don't know how much, it depends on the cleaning.*

- It depends on the work you do? What do you remember the most, María? What is that you like the most about your father and mother? What do you remember from when you were a little girl?

- *My father took us out every afternoon. Every Sunday he took us to a restaurant, to a movie. We used to go to the circus with my mom, but my father got involved with another woman, and he didn't wanna take us anymore. He only took me. He didn't take my mother. He*

went out with the other woman. I used to ask him, "Why daddy? You have children." "No, she's your aunt," he told me. I believed him 'cause I was little. "She's your aunt. You have to get to know her, she knows your mother," he told me. We used to go with her. He took her, and he bought everythin' for me so I wouldn't tell my mom. He bought everythin' for me: dolls, toys, the whole thing. "Don't tell anythin' to your mom." "OK," I said. I didn't tell my mom. My father also used to buy me clothes so that I wouldn't tell. He gave me recess money. I wasn't tellin' nothin' to my mom, but later I was sorry for not havin' told her.

- How did your mother react when she found out that your father was going out with another woman in secret?

- Once my aunt saw us. She asked me, "Who is that lady?" "My aunt, my father says," I said. "Who is she? I don't know her." "My father says she's my aunt," I told her. "How can she be if I don't know her?" "I don't know, my father told me she's my aunt." "How can that be? She's the maid at that chicheria. It looks like your father's going out with her." Then I found out, 'cause when my father went with those women from that house, "she left with her husband, she left. That woman's brother — what's his name?" My mother told me that they called him Gualberto. She told, "Alberto is his name." That woman called my father by his name and I still remember she called him Alberto. Alberta is her name 'cause she's like her husband. Like if they were fallin' in love, that is how I realized, 'cause one time my father gave me money. "Go and buy somethin'," he told me "Anythin'." He gave me five pesos. She was lookin'. At night I went to buy by the little door in (...) at the movie theater(..). They were there and they were kissin'. Then I knew she wasn't my aunt. I told my mother. My father found out I told my mother, and we moved. We were no longer at my house. He took all our things and our things disappeared. He left our clothes

and my bed and my table. He took everythin' else. We can't buy a TV.

- How do you get along with your second stepfather?

- I get along fine, he treats me good. I respect him, my sister too. He talks to her lovingly, 'cause he loves her more than he loves us 'cause she's his daughter. Like, he treats me well. Sometimes I didn't make money at the cemetery. I earned good money. Now my sister don't make money, 'cause she's gone wrong, she's different. Now he's not supportin' us, 'cause when he didn't have, and I had somethin' to sell, I supported them, made money for the car. Then we bought a car with the money we made, the one where we sell the soda, he added to that, that's how we bought it. That is what my stepfather sells, soda, he does well, with that he supports us.

- And your older sister?

- No, she's younger.

- How did she go wrong?

- 'Cause she's spoiled. She likes goin' to parties. She seems spoiled 'cause, like, last night we came late, at 10:15. "What did you do?" my mother asked me. We got ready to explain to her calm-like. We went up to where my mother was. She told her, "What do you care?" 'cause my mother was sick, I don't know how, she was not OK, I don't know how she told her, "You 'imilla'⁷ you're always arguin'." Then she cried. She didn't know what to do. My stepfather told her, "You don't have to be like that." My aunt also went, "You don't understand a bit, you're somethin' else."

⁷ Young person, in Quechua and Aymara

- A rebel?

- Yeah.

- In what grade are you?

- Me? In fourth grade.

- Fourth? Did you quit studying for a while?

- Yes.

- Why?

- *'Cause when I was with my second stepfather, the first year my uncle put me in kindergarten and then in second grade. My mother put me in third grade. My aunt said, "Come on, I'm takin' you to Oruro." I wanted to go 'cause my stepfather abused me. I told my mother, "I'm goin'." I quit school and I went with my aunt and my aunt didn't behave well. I used to put up with it. She was gonna put me into school. "I'm gonna put you in next year, just leave it like that." I obeyed her. "OK," I went. I was with my aunt two years. She never put me in. Two years later my mother came thinkin' I was studyin', but I wasn't studyin'. And my aunt said, "I didn't have the money." "Well then, you shouldn't have brought my daughter like this," my mother told her. 'Cause this year I was supposed to be in eighth grade, but later there were problems with my mom, so I didn't go two years; it looks like a year and a half 'cause there was no money. All I worked for was to support my mom and my little brothers, nothin' else and that's why I didn't go in that year. My father put me into fourth grade 'cause I didn't study. Not even one year. There wasn't no money, around there it was expensive. Registration was expensive, ten Bolivianos I think,*

and we didn't have it. For the two of us it was twenty. They also asked for the uniform. My mother couldn't support the two of us. Then my little sister didn't get into school. The first year that she went in, my father put her in.

- What is it that you like the most about studying, María?

- I like to study all subjects. But once I left school. It was a girl's fault. She told Pancha and me, "Don't come in" and later I told her "No, Pancha," and that girl left us alone, she left. Me and Pancha stayed outside, we couldn't do anything 'cause the door was shut. "Let's stay," and we stayed. My teacher was angry at us, and I said, "Teacher." "Come in!" And now the second one wanted me to get out, like the other girl. And my sister said, "No, no." "Well, open," and I went out. I'm never gonna leave my house 'cause my mother found out. I also know why I like studyin', to keep goin'.

- If someone could help you, María, what would you ask him to do?

- To help me?

- If, for example, I could help you, what would you want?

- Help me to change, 'cause I changed a lot. Before I wasn't like this, I didn't leave school. All my notebooks were up to date. Not now. They're not done and my mother goes, "You don't have to leave." My teacher, too. "You have to stay away from Pancha." 'Cause we're in the same class. She goes, "you have to stay away from Pancha," now they seat us in different seats, "You turned Marlene bad," my teacher went. "Don't go out with Pancha anymore, I don't wanna know you're with her," "OK, teacher," I went. She goes the same to Paola: "You don't have to hang out with those glue sniffin' boys," 'cause we see (...) from the school with cement glue. They always talk

to us 'cause they know us and they see us and they tell them that we hang out with glue sniffers and I tell them they're not glue sniffers, others are the ones that sniff glue in [my foster home] 'cause in [the same home] we weren't allowed to sniff glue, I tell her. My teacher goes, "You're a liar, you were speakin' with that glue sniffer, the one with the hat," she told me. "Me, no, I didn't talk with nobody with a hat." A boy came here, it looks like they told her, his face is cut now. That one does cement glue. He spoke to us once, me and another girl. They know Margarita. He spoke to us both. The teacher told me, "I saw you talkin'." "Who told you, 'cause you didn't see me, teacher," I told her. A little girl told her I was talkin' to glue sniffers, that we were sniffin' glue, and I told her, "It's a lie, teacher." "María, you need education. If not, I'm gonna educate you. You don't have to be like that," she told me. Since that time whenever I meet the (...) I don't speak to them. I just walk by, 'cause my schoolmates see me, and I always go with a girl from my class. "Come," she tells her. And every time I see them I say "hello" and then I walk by "Mañazo" [a boy's nickname]. I just walk by and she tells the teacher that I'm sniffin' glue.

- What do you need for school? Notebooks?

- I need notebooks. I need a dictionary 'cause my father didn't get me it.

- You need a dictionary?

- A dictionary, a book like this, 'cause my teacher takes out the drawings from the book and I don't have anywhere to take them out from and I told my father lotsa times to buy me one, 'cause I don't have one.

- What book do you need then?

- *We need the basic book and a dictionary. I don't have those things and my father buys everythin'.*

- What dictionary did she ask for?

- *A small dictionary, like this.*

- Everest?

- *Yes, it looks small, the "Sopena" book.*

- What do you think about drugs, María, about cement glue? Have you seen your girlfriends using cement glue?

- *I think they are doin' wrong 'cause it's no good for them. I explained that to Pancha. I told Pancha several times, "You don't have to sniff glue," and the same to Mery. Mery used to come and I told her, "How're you gonna sniff glue, you don't have to do that 'cause you hurt yourselves, your brain..." I mean, young Freddy explained to us, the one that works here, in the (...) he said we mustn't do drugs 'cause the brain, I mean your brain, gets smaller, like water that does nothin', he said. He showed us in a glass, he drew a brain and there he showed us what the brain is like, how drugs eat it. "Like that, little by little it melts," he told us, and I tell them that, and then it's finished. He explained that you become dumb, you don't know anythin', he told us and I told them, "You're gonna be like that," I made Mery forget and then Mery went home last night, then she left her house and I told her, "You have to go home, Mery." I went lookin' for her one night 'cause she didn't have nowhere to sleep. I feel sorry that my friends sleep on the streets and I took her home. "Let's go to my house, tomorrow you go home," I told her and I explained to my mother that her mother was angry at her and that was why she was out. She didn't obey her mom any more, she told us, "But I don't want her to leave home 'cause I don't want problems," she told me.*

And the same with Pancha. I took Pancha home several times. Last night, she slept in my house 'cause her mother drinks chicha and she threw her out of the house. "I don't wanna see you here, don't talk to me," she told her. I don't know what she called her and she went, "What does that mean?" and she came just the same.

PABLO



PABLO

Pablo lives on the streets. He has had a wide range of experiences surviving in this environment. He was placed in a foster home for abandoned children, but now he is back on the streets.

- How long have you been living on the streets?
- *Since I was four. I ran away from home.*
- Why did you run away from home?
- *Like, the problem came the problem was the fights between my parents. That was the main cause.*
- Do you have a mother and a father?
- *Yeah, I guess so.*
- Why do you guess so?
- *Because my father had four women, he lived with the four of them. It's been a long time since I've seen them. About eight years.*

- And at what age did you leave home?

- *At four.*

- And what did you do at that age on the streets?

- *I went out on the streets. Well, when I went out, the first thing I did was wander around. I met other kids my age, and later I meet other people that were more into the thing, bigger criminals, heavier ones. I got in with them. And they were the ones who supported me. I didn't steal but I helped many times, watching or as a mirror⁸.*

- And that was when you were 4 or 5?

- *Until I was 11, then I went to....*

- Why don't you tell me about it, in a little more order; at four, what did you do, at five what did you do. Like that, year by year.

- *The first thing I did was to wander around the streets. A family picked me up, for about a year; I learned how to read and write. I went to the streets again. I ran away from that family.*

- How long were you with that family?

- *For a year, and then I ran away. I roamed the streets. I already knew some of the kids on the streets. The first times I was uncomfortable. Later, I got used to it. I met some delinquents, heavier ones.*

- How did you meet those delinquents?

⁸ "Mirror" or "bell", in the code of the street, is the sentinel who looks out for the police.

- *Through my friends, also on the streets.*
- You had older friends?
- *My same age, but they knew older ones.*
- How old were you then?
- *Six.*
- And what did you do at six, when you met these delinquents?
- *No. Before I had already learned how to steal. I was surviving. Later I met them. We would travel from one place to another. We went to Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz. Once in a while we robbed a house. I remember one house, a money changer's, where we stole 11 thousand dollars. With that they bought me all my clothes. The best that I wanted. They gave me a hundred dollars for my expenses. We slept in flophouses. I enjoyed my life that time, until I was like eleven. Later I left them. I was in Cochabamba, selling drugs in matchboxes, marihuana. I was there till I was thirteen. Later I came to (...) and I went to a kitchen, a soup kitchen to work.*
- Tell me a little about the time that you spent in Cochabamba, before coming to (...). Aside from selling drugs, were you also using them? And what were you doing in Cochabamba in general? How did you survive on the streets? On your own? Or with friends, with the friends with which you had robbed in (..)?
- *Yeah, with them and sometimes ... There was a secret flophouse, where they gave us shelter, um ... It was a house, in a neighborhood ... You could go and sleep there for a few pesos, more or less a Boliviano. Only that you had to sleep on the floor, on top of some*

cardboard. But the police didn't come to bother, nothing. You could leave your things, and then go and make a living, selling drugs or stealing.

- And how did you do in that? Didn't you ever have problems?

- I had. The narcotics police were onto me, I had a police rap sheet, I don't know if it's still there. I remember that twice they took pictures of me. Later, little by little I got more involved in that. And it wasn't the same amount of drugs that I was selling, little by little I was selling more. I wanted more money too. I made myself known. All the time I ended up in the police station and I ran away to (...). I came here.

- That's why you've gotten away from...?

- *Yeah.*

- And that at what age more or less?

- *Thirteen.*

- Later in?

- I was there for about a month. I stole but I didn't get caught. I didn't end up in the police station, nothing. Then some social workers found me and took me to a soup kitchen. Since then my economic situation got a little bit better.

- And you are in a shelter?

- *Yeah.*

- In which?

- *Soup kitchen (...), there.*

- Until what age?

- *Fourteen, fifteen. Later I went to (...), I was there for three months. When I was 16 I went into the military. I got out at 17. I went back to (...). It was okay. I had a cousin, that you can say comes from a good family, from a well-off family. He does drugs, he injects himself. Well, I went to visit him too, sometimes; and he gave me some money. He gave me a hundred dollars, like nothing. And he gave me his..., some "pitillos." I liked it, I smoked it. I started shooting up. Later I was in there.*

- That when you were in (...), when you were 16. And later, how did you make your living? That is to say, how did you survive?

- *In (...) I was in the second stage. After, I went into the third one, that is for boys that behave well. I went into the third stage. They give you a certain amount of money, so you can support yourselves the whole month. I was in that. And, well, I didn't care about the money, and instead of taking care of it, I got into alcohol. They caught me. I told them I had problems, that little by little it was getting worse. And that's how they decided to send me to a Rehabilitation Center, that helps drug addicts and alcoholics.*

- That was last year?

- *No. This year, two months ago. There was a time I wasn't here.*

- In (...), were you still stealing?

- *No, not anymore.*

- *Instead, you were into drugs?*

- *Well, I think so. I went to the streets. I was into alcohol. When I found out the scholarship was gone, I started assaulting people, to steal.*

- *I want to ask you two details. One, to understand what you are telling me, if you started drinking and later drinking took you to stealing. Did you also do drugs? Because everything is associated.*

- *Sometimes.*

- *And what types of drugs did you consume?*

- *I did it several times, grass, marijuana....*

[At this stage there was a break in the recording. When it started again, the dialogue with the researcher continued:]

- *Well, I was in the (...), the first months I was okay, I took advantage to the maximum, everything. But later, little by little I started going back to the things I did before, to do the same things I did before, only now I had a house to go to, where to eat, something sure. But my problem then, I didn't do it to survive, but to get alcohol, I stole so I could go drink.*

- *Tell me a little about how you got into alcohol. How did you start, why did you like alcohol so much?*

- *I was 13 when I tried it for the first time. It was cold, they gave me a little, I wasn't cold anymore. Later, little by little I started liking it.*

I started drinking it, little by little. Later I was in the (...) and we went to the bars in groups. Afterwards when we ran out of money, we wanted to keep on drinking and we had to go out and steal, and rob.

- How did you do that? Tell me.

- We went to wander around (...), we would get lost for about half an hour, an hour in the darkest streets. When we saw someone, we went at him, we made him faint or with put a scarf around his neck and made him faint, yeah we choked him and then we took whatever he had⁹, and if he didn't have money then we took his clothes. We left it in the bar and exchanged it for alcohol and we kept going.

- Until when did you continue?

'Til we were very drunk. Then we went home and the next day we were like if nothing happened. Like nothing, the next day we kept on drinking, normally. At night again. It started happening every day. Until they told me I had a problem and sent me to a Rehabilitation Center.

- I want you to tell me what you did on the streets, in (...). The difficult moments you have been through, the things that you got to know, the abuses, of the older people that you were related to, and all you experienced in (...) Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz, differentiating the three departments. How it is, how you've done, telling me anecdotes, moments when your life was in danger, when you did things, um, very strong things, very serious, and what lessons you learned, what impact they had on you and what you think of all that.

⁹ The victim is approached from behind and choked with a scarf or a string around the neck.

- *In (...) at the beginning, when I started on the streets, everything seemed it was all right, I stole, the police didn't know me. But little by little I became known. Later it happened every time.*

- Why did the police know you? Why didn't you do things right? Why did they beat you?

- *They beat me... let's say I stole a hundred Bolivianos and another kid came and asked me to give him fifty or twenty-five Bolivianos. I didn't want to give them to him 'cause he hadn't helped in anything. Then he called a cop and told him that I had stolen. The cop came, he beat the hell out of me and plus he took me to headquarters; then they sent me to (...) in (...). They did that to the ones they got on vagrancy, minor thefts, things. The beating, it was very often. I ran away lotsa times and I got caught again. Until I got tired of that. I got bored and went to [another city]. In (...) I was okay for a while. I sold drugs in matchboxes.*

- Who did you sell to?

- *They sold it to me, let's say for three Bolivianos and I sold it for ten Bolivianos. That's what I done. I made some money. But there the narcotics police started to know me too. I went into the Chapare, I was stamping coca.¹⁰*

- Did you stamp coca?

- *Yeah.*

- What was that like?

¹⁰ Stamping coca: The process of standing on the coca leaf with certain chemicals to macerate it.

- *They gave us alcohol or, if you wanted it they gave you cigarettes prepared with, um, ... with cocaine and the work wasn't so tiring, 'cause I was drunk and flyin' and we didn't feel hungry. Once in a while they brought us food or we had fruits, bananas. Then the Umopares¹¹ came. They combed the area and I split.*

- How long did you stamp coca?

- *I went in once in a while. I would stay for 15 days, sometimes a month, and then I'd leave. I didn't stay long. I went in every time I had problems in Cochabamba and when the police were on my case too much.*

- How much did they pay you for stamping coca?

- *At that time it was five Bolivianos. Later it went up to 20 Bolivianos. At night it's more or less eight hours. You don't feel anything 'cause you're drunk and drugged, and the next day you sleep and go at night again to stamp. I left there too, there was too much control in the Chapare, in (...) I also had too many problems with the police and every time, they were abusing me too much. I went to [another city].*

- How in (..) did the police abuse you? What relationship did you have with the police?

- *Every time that... they knew me, 'cause I sold drugs in matchboxes, they knew me. And every time they saw me, they didn't take me to the police anymore, instead they beat me right there. They beat me with sticks. Then they told me, "Tomorrow at this same time, you come here with a certain amount of money, two hundred Bolivianos or*

¹¹ Umopares: slang derived from UMOPAR, La Unidad Movil de Patrullaje Rural (Mobil Rural Patrol Unit), a specialized Bolivian Police unit used in fighting illicit drug traffic.

whatever, I don't care where you get it from, you can steal, anything." Well, and that was more frequent all the time. Sometimes I made it, sometimes I didn't. And if we didn't come up with it they took us — not only me, they took lots to the police station. They beat us, they made us clean the bathrooms, wax the floor, we were there for a week. Sometimes they gave us another chance, so that we could get out and bring them money.

- So they made you steal again?

- Yeah.

- And you had to obey?

- Yeah.

- And what did you do to obey?

- I went back to sell, come up with some money, steal. You took it to them and they relaxed a little and said, "Get out." But after a few days, they'd come again and bug you. It was too much and I decided to go to [another city]. In [that city] it was the same — stealing at first, watching how they did. At first they didn't know me. I met other kids on the streets. Little by little, it was the same. Only that the police were more, um... they were stronger, meaner, more demanding. I had a friend I slept with on the streets, in a corner, and they came and took him and after a few days he was found dead. Everybody said that they had applied "the escape law" on him, but nobody talked about it. Just between us. Only the ones on the streets knew that. It was like nothing had happened to him, as if a dog had died, like that.

- And you never found out what really happened?

- *No, but we knew it was the cops.*

- *And that is the only time that you found out about the police killing one of your friends?*

- *They took him from my side. But I also met some friends that got lost and later, after some time, turned up dead. And it was always a street kid, so we assumed that it was them.*

- *What do you think of all that, do you believe that in (...), the police are doing what the police in Brazil are doing, the “death squadron,” with the street kids in cities like Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paolo, you know something about that?*

- *Yeah. I can't prove it, but that's what I seen. I found out, but, yeah, you could say, the ones on the streets ... the street kids know what's happening, but if you start talking, you're going to be taken to the police; from then on they threaten you or put you in jail, or something, you're going to show up dead, the same. So nobody says nothing. Everyone's quiet, like nothing happened, but it happens.*

- *That is the fate of the street children, isn't it? There is impunity for the police, isn't there? What else do you know, what other experiences have you had in (...)?*

- *In (...)?*

- *What were you doing there? Did you sell drugs?*

- *No.*

- *What did you do?*

- *I stole, but it was easier.*

- What did you steal, or why was it easier?

- *The streets were darker, you escaped and then entered anyplace, a house. When the police were after you, you went into a house and since the walls are not high, you jumped over and hid and they went right by. Generally, it was more relaxed.*

- And you did that alone or with your friends?

- *I met some friends, but most times I did it alone.*

- Why?

- *'Cause I didn't trust 'em, 'cause they ratted and then they wanted more.*

- Of all the experiences you had in Santa Cruz, did the police ever catch you?

- *Lotsa times, they put us in wagons. But before we got to the station, they stopped the wagon, they asked us for our money and they only took the ones that didn't have any. Them, they took. The ones who had money, even five Bolivianos, they took it from them, or if they had good shoes, good clothes they took them away and then let them go; of course they hit us before for a while. That's why mostly the people that got caught were drunks who were caught in the bars, those that don't know anything about the streets. They always got taken.*

- You mean that normally it's the innocent that end up in jail?

- *Yeah. The ones from the streets too, 'cause they don't have anything. They take them as well.*

(At this point the recording stops again because the interviewee wants to say something to the researcher, asking him expressly not to record that part of the dialogue. When the interview starts again, the dialogue continues.)

- Tell me, how did you get by when you were on the streets? How did you earn money?

- *I stole purses, cholas'(name given to women of middle-low social status) earrings, the ones that are pure gold, and I ran away. Yes, I also ran away at night. When a person was alone, it didn't matter that he was bigger than me. I held a handkerchief, I put it around his neck and I made him faint, or else I hit him on the floor and I punched him in the stomach and he fainted then and there. I knew all the techniques well, 'cause during military service we learned karate and other things. I also learned in street fights, and it wasn't hard to make people faint with some punches.*

- Were there no people stronger than you? Or do you choose people, do you have an eye for that?

- *No. I would see how they were dressed and that was enough and almost always I was drunk and when you're drunk you got courage for anything. Also, I always walked with a gun or with a knife. If he was stronger and wanted to defend himself, I pulled it out an' I stuck his leg or his arm.*

- Nothing serious ever happened with that?

- *Once they beat the shit out of me, this guy, well, he was the "Alligators" leader. We were hangin' around there and eight people showed*

up drunk. Well, they hit him with a stick right on the head. He fell to the floor and I didn't know what to do. I kicked the one that had hit him and he fell to the floor and I punched him, and he fell flat. I wanted to kick the other one but he held me by my leg and punched me. That made me jump and the other one, my friend, was already up. He grabbed some stones. He threw them at them, and we made them run away. My leg was bleeding. I pulled out my sock and I tied up my leg with it and I walked like that for three days and it just went away.

- It didn't get infected?

- *No, nothing.*

- And why was that? Did they want to rob you?

No. I think that they knew my friend. It was 'cause they had it in for him.

- In the survival methods that you've used, choking or other ways, have you never had problems? I mean not only fights, but that you had a very strong shock, because maybe instead of making the person faint you could have killed him, because you overdid it or because they defended themselves and they almost killed you, something like that?

- *Once, when, um..., I was walking with a knife under my sleeve.*

- How old were you?

- *Some four years ago. Here, by the (..) in (...) around one in the morning. We were two and there was a group of three. Since they were three, well, they were drunker than us, we could have robbed*

them easy. I had a knife, but we didn't know that one of them had a bottle and we went, we held two, we made them fall, and the other one broke his bottle and cut my new jacket with it, he cut my friend's leg. The others got up and picked up stones. Yeah, that time they made a hole in my head. That time it turned out wrong. After that, once we went out as a gang, here to the (...) to fight with other gangs 'cause they were buggin' us too much. We had hoses full of nails, or broomsticks full of nails. We were goin' and one of us decided to walk in the street, playing with his stick. Two police lieutenants grabbed him. They cornered him with guns and took the stick away from him. They were already hittin' him when we got brave and picked up rocks. There were about 15 of us, and we threw the rocks at them and they started shootin', I don't know if at us or only in the air, but we heard several shots. We ran away. The good thing that time was that we saved our friend. They didn' take no one, none of us got caught. And like that several times...

Once the cops caught me for being drunk. We were walkin' and always when they wanted to take me to the police, I gave them explanations, make it like big, like I was innocent, like I didn't know nothin', and I talked good, they always let me go. But many times, when they didn't let us go, if we were in the wagon, I jumped from the wagon and ran away from the "tombo."¹² I escaped and they couldn't run neither, 'cause they're useless. Once, I ran against one of those that... I was already runnin' away, I got free of him, I made him let go of me, and he was running, holding his club and he threw it at my feet and I fell. But it was like if he was breakin' my foot and it was like this (he points at his foot) is from that. I don't know, I think he was a specialist in that. He stopped me, he almost left me invalid. My foot was swollen for two days. He took me to the police, where they beat me hard, but I got out of there too. The cops ... Every time we got caught

¹² "Tombo": plainclothes policeman.

in a group, when there was more people in jail plus the Departmental Command up here, when there was a raid against gangs or whatever, they took them there. The normal thing the following day was, after the beatings they don't take bribes, to let you go a relative had to come for you, to guarantee you getting out. Those were the harder ones, but normally the police, when they are like that, when they are not lieutenants, they are not officers, and they get you drunk or stealing, anything, they take you to a corner for a moment, they take away what you stole and then they take you.

- And does that give you more confidence? You're not so afraid of the "tombos" as you are of the officers?

- Just some. There are some officers that also ask for a lot, more than the "tombos," but normally, little by little, they develop that. Some you think are your friends, but when they need something, they beat the shit out of you again. They treat you well when you get to the police station, and if, say, you stole a hundred Bolivianos they say, "Save me, lend it to me," they ask you. They get ten, twenty Bolivianos, they treat you well. When you go to the police they say, "This guy's my friend, let him go! I will talk for you," and they let you go, they bring you food, they buy bread, they treat you like a friend. But when they need something and you don't have it, then they are different, their face changes.

- I want to ask you another thing: You said that once you were in the company of older delinquents, you robbed more or less \$10,000. Was that the most you ever stole, or have you had other opportunities in which you have also made as much, considerable quantities?

- Yeah, seven thousan' dollars, five thousan', it was when I had to study, since I was young and walked around dressed nicely, like I wasn't a street kid, they bought me good clothes. The only thing I did

was to watch the ones that we had to rob, where they went, follow them, all that and tell it all to the others. They did the rest. I was still a kid. They always said, "Here, take twenty dollars, go and buy a hat," anything.

- You only earned money like that, so much money, with them?

- Once I did it alone. I made four thousand dollars. I stole four thousand dollars, here in (...) They suspected it was me, so I had to go to (...). I hid the money in the freeway. I buried it. I left with little money, some two hundred Bolivianos, like that. In (...) I was out for a month more or less. Later I came back to (...); the search operation continued. The police were still asking, trying to find out who it could be; 'cause if a lot of money is stolen, the police get interested in arresting everyone in the street. If they know something, they start asking. They continued the investigations. I took my money and I went to (...) for another month.

- You took it all?

- Yeah. And when I returned, it was gone. Nothing was happening.

- Did you spend that money just like that or did you invest it in something?

- Yeah. I took some friends to the movies. On the streets they always say, "Easy come, easy go." So I made it go.

- How did you make it go?

- Treating people at the chicherias. I bought clothes, I dirtied them quickly, I threw them away and bought new ones. I slept in flophouses, I ate well. Like that, it went fast. I also treated others.

- And you didn't spend it on women?

- *Not very much.*

- Have you had experiences in that sense? Have you had stable relationships with girls?

- *Yeah, I hung out with girls, but they were my friends. Nothin' else. Like that, on the streets they were like friends. They were prostitutes; for the johns, anything; and for who's left, nothing.*

- You never had a partner, you haven't lived with a woman?

- *No. I was in..., but I lived with many. One week, two weeks, after that they left, we split up and that was it, like nothing happened.*

- In all those years, you never had a child, or don't you know?

- *No, I dunno if any of them got pregnant, I dunno.*

- You spent your money on drinks, having a good time with your friends?

- *Yeah.*

- Any other experience where you made lots of money?

- *Yeah. Here once. No, not once..., um, we were stealing good money. Two hundred Bolivianos, three hundred Bolivianos. I started renting a room. I was packing it with things, a television, a betamax, a radio, I had a rug. Until I decided to share my room with two other friends. And one time, when I went back to my room, it was empty. They stole everything.*

- Your friends?

- *Yeah, them. They stole everything.*

- You never asked for them to return your things?

- *No. I never saw them again.*

- They disappeared?

- *Yeah.*

- And don't you think that was very naive? You told me that to survive on the streets you had to know how to think. How was it possible that they suckered you like that?

- *It's 'cause I trusted them. Little by little we got along well, three months, nothin' happened. And we were getting settled. I was furnishing my room, everything. We said, "Let's stay here, let's not steal anymore, 'cause the police are going to get us." We got jobs. I in a bakery, the other one as construction worker, he went to work. I left at 5 in the afternoon and came back at 8 in the morning. And meanwhile the others stayed to sleep. And while I was at work, they emptied my room.*

- And what did you do after that?

- *I looked for them and nothin'. I left the room and went again into the street, sleeping in flophouses again. But I didn't have nothin'.*

- Now do you have something, a room, things?

- *No. Not anymore.*

- Then, you're on the streets. In street terms, the dangers that the streets hold for kids like you have to do with developing a habit. You get into alcohol, drugs. There's a story now, and to end our conversation let's talk a little of those two things. First, I want you to tell me what types of drugs you used when you were in La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. You told me a little that in (...) you smoked cocaine paste, and here you've smoked marijuana. Have you also taken tranquilizers and well, I want you to complete that also, telling me about when you were a kid. Did you inhale thinner, cement glue, or gasoline? That is to say, I want you to tell me your experiences in drugs. A little on how you did that. Why did you do it, how did your friends make you like it? Did you do it out of necessity, for taking away the hunger, or sorrows? What were the causes, how did you do it, for how long, how did you stop it, all that, I want you to tell me a little about that.

- *Well, in the beginning, when I was hangin' with those people, the ones I stole with, nothin'. I was okay; I told them, let's say, "I want to study, I want to get into school, or anything." "Why do you want to study? You already know how to read," they said to me. They bought me books, 'cause I knew how to read. They bought me books and report cards from the school Principals, they bought them for me, without me having to go to school. I was set. But they didn't want me to inhale anything. "You 'llokalla'¹³ you don't have to drink, you're going to ruin your life." Later I left them. And on the streets I felt..., when I was alone on the streets, I needed, in (...) I mean, very cold and I tried a little alcohol, and the cold went away a little. Later it was more frequent. After that, even marijuana, before that "pitillos," but not very much. Once in a while. A little to have the will, um, to steal. But later, when I was in the Center up*

¹³ "Llokhalia": young man, in Quechua and Aymara.

here, in (...), there, I was more desperate and didn't have no money. But when I went out into the street, I had to be in the house all the time, doing my duties, I got nervous. That's why I bought valium and I also bought Singani. A sip of Singani with a pill. It relaxed me for, like, three hours. Then to get to sleep, another pill. When I was drinking, no. When I went to the bar I didn't take valium, 'cause I was calm. But, um, on the streets most young ones start with thinner, they start to inhale thinner or cement glue, 'cause they don't got money. Cement glue costs fifty cents or a Boliviano, thinner, the prepared bottle, costs ten Bolivianos or seven Bolivianos. Since they don't got much, they start with cement glue, later cement glue starts to make them cold. Later they start stealing, they know more about the streets, they want something stronger, thinner. After thinner they start with bags, drinking from bags, they start mixing it with that, after they go to sleep around the (...), I don't know, they get up half passed out, they go and make money again, they drink a lot. Sometimes they don't even worry about eating, 'cause they're not even hungry. After that, the normal thing is that they go into (...), um, ... some get into marijuana. The ones on the streets are always like alcoholics; some also shoot up with morphine, I have some friends.

- Where do they get the morphine from?
- They sell it, here in [he mentions the city].
- Here in (...)?
- No, in the city, there in (...) there's a faggot that sells it.
- How much does he sell it for?
- I don't know.

- Because that's not common, no? One sees that in Brazil, in Argentina, in Colombia, but in Bolivia almost no one uses morphine. Do you have friends that use morphine?

- *Yeah, yeah I have, and they're still on the streets.*

- What effects does the morphine have?

- *I dunno. But they tell me, "alcohol doesn't do nothing to me, neither does grass, it doesn't do nothing anymore, nothing makes me feel anything anymore. I want something stronger." And so they shoot up with morphine, they like it.*

- And is it expensive?

- *I dunno, but it costs them.*

- And only that faggot sells morphine, or are there other places too?

- *I don't know, he's the only faggot they told me about. I haven't seen him either, but it was one of my friends, that shoots up, that told me.*

- How do you see you friend? Has morphine affected him, does he look bad? It is a very strong drug that causes even more harm than cocaine. Does your friend seem normal? How long has he been using morphine?

- *I think he feels okay.*

- And what do you think about all of this?

- *I dunno. You gotta stop, but there's no way. Nobody helps us. People keep fucking themselves up on the streets, nobody cares, society re-*

jects us. "This is a stupid drug addict 'llokalla,' put him aside, there." The cops reject us. You even rejects yourself and say, "they told me I'm a piece of shit, then that's what I am." And they think that's what they are. And they continue doing it and it gets worse.

- Why did you take drugs? Because of that rejection? Because of your family problems? Because it gave you the guts to steal? Or because you liked it?

- At first, just to follow. After that, I didn't like sharing with other friends, 'cause they freak out and I didn't like 'em to freak out; so I did it on my own. I tried "pitillos" and nothing happened, I also felt relaxed, more confident in myself and there wasn't nobody to stop me. Sometimes, before I went out to the streets at night, I smoked a "pitillo" and I was relaxed. It gave me courage, the will to fight with anyone, um, if someone ran into me, I hit him right there. That's why I thought it made me feel better.

- "Pitillo" had that effect on you; and alcohol, was it more or less the same?

- No, another effect. Just the same, at first I started 'cause of the cold, then when we started drinkin' in a group, um, to follow the lead. After that, little by little, I liked the taste, to enjoy the taste, all that. Even the dizziness made me feel good.

- And when the effect of drugs and alcohol goes away, how do you feel?

- I have a headache, I'm thirsty, with "cha'ki"¹⁴, I'm thirsty; and sometimes to cure the "cha'ki" you gotta keep goin', do even more.

¹⁴ "Cha'ki": Quechua or Aymara word for hangover.

- And that leads you to keep doing drugs, drinking?
- *Yeah. After that, when you wanna stop, let's say you say, "I'm not going to drink today, I'm not going to drink this week," well, you feel nervous, like alone, disappointed, like you didn't want to do anything, and you keep on even more. You feel like drinking. You drink, even a little, and you feel good again.*
- When you drank or did drugs, wasn't it because you wanted to get a girl?
- *My friends, yeah, me almost never.*
- And why not you?
- *No, I did it to feel good.*
- You haven't had many relationships with women. Is that because since you were small you've lived with men, or is it because you don't like women very much?
- *I didn't get involved with street women, I didn't like 'em. But I've been with other women, with girls from the school, with those.*
- Why not with the ones from the streets? -
- *Because I didn't like them.*
- You don't think the girls on the streets are nice girls?
- *No. No.*
- What happens with street girls in general?

- *They prostitute themselves, they drink too much, at any moment they leave you, and they get you into trouble with the police. It's better not to get yourself in trouble.*

- Are the school girls different?

- *Yeah, from school, from a family.*

- And how did you do with them?

- *Well, I don't know.*

- Have you ever been in love?

- *Yeah.*

- How was that? Tell me.

- *That was when I was in (...). I was working in a factory. The daughter of one of the workers was always coming by. That was when I ... before I went into the military. I was 16, yeah, some three months before, 15. After that she bugged me and that was it. After that she caused trouble. She didn't go back to her house, we went to flophouses. So much nonsense!*

- They didn't want her to marry you?

- *No. That time they were trying and I ran away to the military.*

- That's why you went into the service?

- *Yeah.*

- But if you loved her, if you were in love, why didn't you get married?

- *No, I didn't have a family and they were forcing me.*

- But you could have said, "I don't have a family, my family's dead."

- *They would have me put in jail.*

- How's that?

- *They would have taken me to the police.*

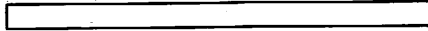
- Why were they going to take you to the police?

- *'Cause she threatened me. "You are nothing, my daughter has her parents. She has a car," they were asking so many things of me. After that, when I left the military she was with another man, she was already married to another "gil."¹⁵ I went and beat the shit out of that "gil" and I came here to (...).*

- And why did you do that? What did he have to do with this?

- *I don't know, it bugged me.*

OBO



OBO

Obo, 14, is very experienced about the streets. He is in a rehabilitation center in an urban area. The researcher asked him to narrate his life and this is what he had to say:

- *Well in (...) my father worked in the mine. We lived in a house an' needed money, an' my father didn't have money for us to study.*

- You told us that you came from (...), that you lived there for a while, what do you remember from (...)?

- *Everything.*

- What do you remember from (...)?

- *Little.*

- What is it that you remember the most from (...)?

- *The thing I remember most is how they celebrated my first year. I got pictures.*

- But you remember how they celebrated?

- *No, I got pictures.*

- When were you born, Obo?

- *April 1, 1978.*

- 1978? You are young. When you were born I was 17. Okay, what else can you tell us about your life, Obo? What about your father?

- *My father, when he worked in [a mining center] I dunno what happened, what they told me, my mother, his foot get scratched with a bone, an' that's why he was fired from the mine. So we went to Oruro. We didn't have money there neither.*

- How long did you live in the mine? Do you remember?

- *Since I was two until I was five, I think.*

- You lived three years in the mine?

- *Yeah.*

- What is it that you remember the most about the mine? What did you like the most at the mine?

- *The company shop, they gave us bread, sugar, milk.*

- There was everything to eat, right?

- *Yeah. They also sent us school stuff.*

-
- What is it that you liked the least about the mine?
 - *It was dangerous.*
 - Did you play there? Did you have friends? Do you remember?
 - *I had my aunt, my uncle, they're still there.*
 - They live there?
 - *Yeah, my grandma, my grandpa.*
 - They also live there?
 - *Yeah.*
 - How many brothers and sisters does your father have?
 - *Only two.*
 - And your mother?
 - *My mother?*
 - Yeah.
 - *Eight.*
 - Eight?
 - *Yeah.*
 - So there are ten in your mother's and father's families. How many cousins do you have?

- *That.*

- You don't know? They are many, right? Well, after that you told us that you went to (...)?

- *Yeah.*

- What did you do in (..)?

- *We looked for a house, an'they found a house around the airport. An'my father begun working in construction. Then I went to school. I was in school until fifth grade.*

- In which school?

- *In the (...)*

- (..) of the (...)?

- *Yeah. An'we had problems with my father. He had the construction company advance him money an'he spent it all drinking, almost everything. That's why we came to (...).*

- So your father ran away from the (...)?

- *Yeah.*

- What do you remember from (...)? What did you like the most in (...)?

- *My school.*

- The school?

-
- *Yeah, when I was there in the afternoons.*
 - What did you like the least about (...)?
 - *It is cold.*
 - Cold no, no one likes the cold. During the time that your father worked in the mine, did he drink?
 - *Yeah, he drank.*
 - A lot?
 - *On Saturdays. Sometimes he didn't drink.*
 - Did your father and your mother get along well?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Did they fight or did they not?
 - *They fought.*
 - How many brothers and sisters are there in your family?
 - *Us? Nine.*
 - Nine?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Many, many brothers and sisters. What else do you remember from (...)? What did you do in (...)?

- *There was a program where it was allowed....only open on Saturdays, It was called (...), I went there to play on Saturdays, an'every afternoon I used to play soccer.*

- You played soccer?

- *Yeah.*

- With your friends?

- *Yeah.*

- Where did you play soccer?

- *In a small field in (...).*

- How long did you live in (...)?

- *Six years.*

- Six years?

- *Yeah, but then when I was ten years old, or I think eleven, no ten, we went to Argentina.*

- Did you travel with your mother and father?

- *No. With my mother.*

- And what did you do with your mom in Argentina? Only you?

- *I was with my mother, an'then a week later my mother came back. She left me with my aunts. She was working in the bakery, an'since flour is cheap, she was smuggling it across the border.*

-
- They brought flour from Argentina?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Obo, who are your brothers and sisters? The oldest one?
 - *Virginia, Gumercinda, me, Willy, Eddy, Maria, Julia, Marcela, an'the little one that don't got a name.*
 - You are the third one?
 - *Yeah.*
 - What did you do in Argentina when you traveled with your mother?
 - *We were with my uncle. Later my mother smuggled, in one day a lot of money.*
 - And what did they do with all that money, do you remember?
 - *I dunno, she took it to (...), then they say they came here, I just arrived here, I didn't get to (...).*
 - When you came back from Argentina, you told us that you went to your uncle's, did you live with your uncle?
 - *Yeah, we lived there.*
 - How long did you live with your uncle?
 - *Half a year.*
 - What did you like the most when you lived with your uncle?

- *To eat bread, an'sometimes on Sundays they made pique¹⁶ or roast lamb.*

- What is it that you liked the least when you lived with your uncle?

- *He scolded me too much.*

- Did he hit you?

- *No.*

- He never hit you?

- *Never.*

- Afterwards, who came from (...)?

- *Everybody. First my father came, my little brother, they were working here for two weeks, it seems. Afterwards they brought all our things from Oruro. My mother came to pick me up from Argentina, after that she told me we're not going back to (X), we are going to (Y) she told me. I didn't know (Y), when we arrived I got to know it.*

- Why did you come back from (...)?

- *My father's problems began.*

- You remember your father's problems?

- *Yeah. What I dunno about is the house construction.*

¹⁶ "Pique": Mid-morning meal, where all the family eats from a plate.

-
- And what did you do after that? Did they resolve it or they never resolve it?
 - *They solved it.*
 - I think the police were looking for him, no?
 - *No, it's okay. I got my house in (...). They're renting it.*
 - When did you come here to (..)?
 - *In 1989.*
 - In 1989?
 - *In August.*
 - Where you studying?
 - *No, that year I didn't study.*
 - *Why?*
 - *Because I was in Argentina, an' my report card didn't arrive so I could register. I lost that year.*
 - You lost that year. Did you come to (...) in August 1989?
 - *When I wasn't studying, I was working in a carpentry shop.*
 - Whose shop was it?
 - *It was around there. It was around the corner from my house. A barrel shop, carpentry and barrel shop.*

- And what do you remember since 1989, since you came here, and what have you done up to now? Because it's been, let's see 89, 90, 91, 92, three years. Tell us, what's happened to you in these past three years?

- *First when I came there wasn't no water, there wasn't no electricity. We rented another house.*

- First when you arrived, where did you live?

- *There in (...).*

- After that where did you move?

- *We went to Villa (...).*

- What did you like the most at the (...)?

- *I almost didn't live there, only a week.*

- After that you went to Villa (...)?

- *Yeah.*

- After that you lived in Villa (...)?

- *Yeah.*

- So what do you remember from that time, Obo?

- *Ah! First I met everyone in the neighborhood, then my mother talked to the carpentry about me. I worked.*

-
- How long did you work in that carpentry shop?
 - *Two months an'then I came back.*
 - Why?
 - *Because I cut my hand.*
 - That's dangerous, no?
 - *Yeah. Don't go anymore, she told me.*
 - But the owner made you go, didn't he?
 - *Yeah, like fifteen days.*
 - How much did they pay you?
 - *They paid me a hundred an'fifty.*
 - After you left the carpenter's what did you do?
 - *I wasn't working, I was in my house.*
 - You weren't studying either?
 - *No, I was bored. I went to the street, my little brother no. First I started smoking, then my little brother.*
 - So you gave him "pitillos"?
 - *Yeah.*

- You smoked then? Where?

- *There, in (...).*

- Did you mother say it was all right?

- *It was all right.*

- Did she know you did that?

- *She knew, they told her.*

- What did your mother say?

- *She scolded me. Then I didn't go no more.*

- Did your father say anything about that?

- *No, my father wanted me to work.*

- Why did your father want you to work?

- *I dunno. "Only I bring money, you don't bring none", he used to tell us. Later, there at the (..) we met Marcelo. My younger brother started going. Afterwards, even Ricky, Serco, Corclo, Windy an'Elio, they were all sniffing glue. I used to see them, in (...).*

- How did you meet them? Playing soccer? There, where our program was?

- *No, we played here.*

- And did they want to give it to you, so you would sniff glue?

- *No.*

- And when you joined the group, what happened to you during those three years? Can you remember other things? You can't tell me that nothing happened. Think about it. The year you started working in the buses, how much did you make?

- *Me? Two pesos, three pesos, like that.*

- Not much, no? And what did you do during that time?

- *I was here, I went to the stadium, then I heard about that field (...) an'I was playing there, we played Saturdays an'Sundays in the stadium.*

- When you stopped working in the buses, what did you do?

- *I was at home, sometimes I helped my father.*

- What was your father doing?

- *Construction.*

- Is he still working?

- *Yeah.*

- He has a job?

- *He does.*

- What does your mother do?

- *She washes clothes.*
- And your other brothers and sisters?
- *My brother is on bus line (...).*
- Who are in your house?
- *My father, my mother, my sister, me, an' my two little brothers.*
- Where do your two little brothers work? Shining shoes?
- *Yeah.*
- You told us that when you came from (...) they made good money. Doing what?
- *Um, he loaded trucks, an' when my father got money he bought lambs, I think they were six months old, a lot, he bought about ten, an' there were sixteen, an' a truck ran them over, only one was left.*
- It ran over all of them?
- *Yeah.*
- How long have you been here in the program?
- *Me? A year.*
- Are you studying now?
- *Yeah.*

-
- What do you like the most about studying?
 - *I like language.*
 - Language classes, what else?
 - *Science.*
 - What grade are you in?
 - *Seventh grade.*
 - What don't you like about studying?
 - *Me? Home economics and math, because we don't make any progress in math.*
 - What would you like to be?
 - *I would like to be a lawyer.*
 - Why?
 - *It seems like I'm the only one in my family interested in studying, almost nobody is.*
 - If you could talk to someone in the government who could help kids, what would you tell them?
 - *About work. Provide carpentry scholarships, for mechanics, and about drugs too.*
 - What do you know about drugs?

-
- *About drugs? There's cocaine, marihuana, cement glue, gasoline, sealant, thinner.*
 - Have you ever seen someone smoke marihuana, for example?
 - *No.*
 - Some people sniff cement glue?
 - *Many.*
 - Why do your friends sniff glue?
 - *I dunno, they can imagine, among them, they buy the liter for, like, fifteen pesos.*
 - Some other drug? For example, someone who uses cocaine, thinner, or gasoline?
 - *Gasoline. One time at the cemetery some little kids took gasoline from a motorcycle, they wanted to sniff it.*
 - Thinner?
 - *Thinner, when I was working in the carpenter's they made me varnish a stool an' it smelled strong. Not the sealant mixed with thinner. I was half drunk, it's like that when they sniff glue. I saw it the other day, a lot of them had what looked like chicha.*
 - Have you ever spoken about drugs with your friends?
 - *Young Marcelo was explaining about drugs, about the drug addiction problem in Bolivia.*

- Not with the educators. For example, what would you tell Serafín if he sniffed glue, what would you tell Ricardo if he sniffed glue?

- *I would tell them to stop it, an'to study to get a profession.*

- Do you ever talk about that?

- *No.*

- Well, in any case, the people who use drugs, we know that it's wrong, but people who do drugs have many problems. We're trying to learn more about these kind of problems, to be able to help them. What else do you remember, Obo? This last year, what have you done?

- *This last year I played in Carnival, I played with water.*

- What else do you remember, Obo?

- *After that classes started, I started going.*

- What school do you go to?

- *[A school name]*

- Night school?

- *Yeah.*

- Do you have friends at school?

- *Yeah.*

- What do you do in your school?

- *I go to classes, language, math. Then some friends took cement glue. They went to the bathroom an' one day I was going to the bathroom an' they told me, "Get out of here" and they threw me out.*

- What is it that you like the most about the bakery?

- *I like the baking part.*

- How do you get along with the teachers here?

- *Fine.*

- What do the teachers do?

- *They teach us about drug addiction, about eating habits. I dunno what else, language, we have classes in the afternoons.*

- What classes do you have?

- *Here we got first, second, third, fourth, fifth grade an' in sixth grade they teach us fractions an' other things.*

RAÚL



RAUL

The researcher made no preamble...

- How long have you been on the streets?

- *Five years.*

- How old were you when you left home?

- *No. I ran away. Three months 'go I went lookin' for my mom.*

The researcher asked Raul to tell him about his life on the streets during his stay at (...), where he met him. He asked him if he lived on the streets...

- *No, I ran away from home. The thing is, my grandmother didn't see my mother, an'I used to go out looking for her. I was a shoeshine boy an'my brother taught me how to steal an'I learned to sniff glue. My brother told me I should learn how to steal, I didn't want to steal... an'my grandmother was making me steal from the one that I was doing the job for. I went to live on the streets an'I sniffed glue. Then*

my mother came an'brought me here. In (...) she took me home, my clothes were dirty. Since then I'm fine, I'm not sniffin' glue.

- What about your mother and father?

- My father died, my mother is still living. I got three brothers.

- Why were you being raised by your grandmother?

- Because my mother used to throw me out of the house..., because she was drunk, she didn't love me very much.

- Did she have another husband?

- Yeah.

- Did your stepfather hit you?

- Yeah, he used to hit me with a chain. He tied me up to the bed so I wouldn't go out on the street.

- What do you like about the streets?

- I dunno.

- First you shined shoes?

- Yeah.

- How old were you when you started sniffing glue?

- Eleven, when I met you.

- What foster home were you in?

- *In (...). That time I was there three years, more or less. They taught me how to make envelopes for cough medicine. We made 300 to 500 envelopes an'they paid us five Bolivianos. Some went home, the ones that could leave, the ones that couldn't stayed.*

- How long were you on the streets in (...)?

- *Long enough.*

- How did you live on the streets?

- *I lived like this. I cut cane. That's how I ate. Or I took bread from the ladies an'I took cane from the trucks. Or friends bought me a plate of food, the ones I stole with, because I didn't have any. They took me to the movies. Cement glue, I started at 11. I slept a lot on the streets.*

- How was your relationship with your parents during that time?

- *I sniffed glue an'in (...) my mom didn't let me sniff glue. My grandmother told me not to sniff glue because I made my uncle look bad. At night I waited for dawn an'I got up to sniff glue. My grandmother didn't want me to be there, she told me, "Go away," an'I went to the streets. I didn't go back to the house.*

- What about your brother, the one who taught you how to steal?

- *He's in the military, an'he had to give my mother money. He didn't, so she took him to the police an' from there he went into the military.*

- What about the other brother that you have?

- *He's Machine Gun (his brother's nickname).*
- What does he do?
- *He's in jail.*
- Why?
- *Because he stabbed a cop. That's why he's in jail.*
- How did you get to (..)?
- *My mother came to (...) with my little sister. I already got a sister. My grandmother hit her a lot. My mother cried, she wanted to make her run away from my grandmother, so she told me to come an' we came to (...).*
- What did you do in (...)?
- *I looked for my brother, I saw my stepfather an' I got to know (...) which I didn't know.*
- I know you were in (...)?
- *I left home an' I started to gamble. I played billiards. There was one that cost one Boliviano an' many came to sniff glue. I started sniffing glue again.*
- What else did you try?
- *Solvent, thinner, gasoline. That's how you learn.*
- What differences do you find between [a city] and [another city] and the children who sniff glue? (The boy can't answer so I explain the question again).

- *I left my grandmother's house an' there are lotsa "tombos" an' they caught me an' took me to the police. I took flowers to the Virgin an' they let me go. They caught me again an' let me go.*

Since I came to (...) there weren't many "tombos," only some that didn't wear uniforms, with glasses, an'I ran away because I knew them, an'also I met some guys I didn't know an' they took me to see (...). They cut people all the time with their machetes.

- Where did you sleep in (...)?

- *In (...).*

- How is your relationship with your mom now?

- *It's all right. She sells at the Temple, near the (...) an'on Sundays she goes far away to sell an' then she drinks chicha. She comes back drunk an' my stepfather beats her, an' when she's drunk she doesn't take care of my little sister. She limps. One day she lost my little sister. A man was takin' her away, my brother went an' took her away from him, he beat the man an' took her home.*

- Where you ever in a gang?

- *Yeah, with many of the kids. Let's say that I made money. They were after me because of my money, then the "tombos" caught me. They blamed me because I made a million. I gave it to my mother, because of that they took me to jail.*

- How long were you in jail?

- *Three days, until they got the money. I went home, I asked for the money, I brought it an' they let me go.*

- What other problems did you have with the police?
- *A lot. They all know me.*
- Have you had revenge?
- *Yeah.*
- How?
- *In (...) my brother, Machine Gun, he defended me with a knife. They didn't get close.*
- Did you drink alcoholic beverages?
- *Not alcohol, only chicha in (...).*
- Have you smoked?
- *Yeah, a cigarette. It lasted for a night between my friend an' me.*
- When was the last time you sniffed glue?
- *'Long time ago.*
- Where did you go to stop sniffing glue?
- *First at the foster home (..) an' then here.*
- What does your mother say about this?
- *She comes for a week if she don't go drinking.*

- What are you going to do when you get out of here, when you're older?
- *Work, not sniff glue, as a shoemaker, carrying bags.*
- Have you stolen a lot of money in Cochabamba?
- *Yeah, an' the police caught me. I went to the stadium an' I ate salteñas an' I gambled for money.*
- Do the older people abuse you?
- *Yeah, the "pitilleros" in the stadium in (...).*
- Did you steal earrings?
- *Yeah, one time.*
- How do the police treat you?
- *They hit me. They ask me, where is the money? They found my cement glue, an' the kids told me, "Don't tell or we'll cut your face." I didn't tell an' they beat me.*
- How long were you in jail?
- *Two months. They got me out (...). They brought money so I could get out. I got out an' went to their house. There were many glue sniffers. I brought money an' I took it to their house.*
- Have you had sexual relations on the streets?
- *No. I haven't done nothin'.*

CARLOS



CARLOS

- *I left home when I was 5 years old. Every time I ran away to my aunt, to (...). My father brought me back. All the time. I would escape an' he would bring me back.*

- *Why did you run away all the time?*

- *'Cause one of the important reasons was that he brought my step-mother. I was a kid an' pretty naughty. She took me to her work when we lived alone. Then I started runnin' away until I was 11. I got tired of comin' an' goin'. I went to (...). I met (...) through a stepmother called Ana. I went all the way to (...) I was in a town (...) with a family for about a year sowin' an' harvestin'. They took advantage of me, they didn't buy me nothing, they didn't dress me, they didn't make me study, so I came to (...).*

- *How old were you when you came back?*

- *Twelve. I only stayed a year in (...). I came here to (...) scared, because there they wanted me to harvest. After that a lady hit me; no, it was a man an' he was drunk. He hit me. I stole money off him to come to (...). I got here without clothes, only what I had on me. I*

didn't have no place to go to, nothin' to eat when one that's here in the foster home came near me an' went, "What're you doin'?" "Nothin'," I went, "I came from (...) an'I don' know where to go," we started bein' friends. "I'm gonna take you," he told me. He took me to the back of the construction in the (...) The others were there, they were sniffin' "amazonas,"¹⁷ I didn't know it was for that. I knew how to use it for my father's work. I didn't even know how to say things, nothin'.

- How did they react when you got there?

- *Well, "What's your name, do you wanna eat, dress, everything, that depends on you, you gotta steal," they told me. "If you don't, you don' eat. We're gonna support you for two months."*

- Was it an organization?

- *Between five of my age. "Don' get in with older ones, only between us, we're gonna teach you first." I saw how they got the shoes. I didn't have the courage. They made me smell cement glue. I started looking and I was scared, they treated me like a faggot. I went and it worked out. Since it was the first time, I was scared. I ran a lot and I stumbled and I made the shoes fall. I carried them here (he shows the line of the abdomen under his t-shirt) an' a man saw me an' he asked me, "Where did you get them?" I didn't know what to answer. The man took me to where I took them from. The lady went, "I'm sure he took them in a moment I wasn't watching." They took me to the police station in the (...) I escaped to my friends. I went back, they welcomed me in the group. Since I was in jail for a week, the older ones came an' they started beating us, taking what we made, an'I told them "Why do you do that to us, we're younger, why do you abuse..."*

¹⁷ Amazonas: cement glue.

- What did you use after cement glue?

- *Gasoline. I didn't know the prostitutes, but I started knowin' them. I was with a prostitute called Elaína. She tried to teach me to do "pitillo." We agreed to go one night, we went but a "pitillero" did a lot of nonsense to me to get an envelope. So they caught me an' she was able to escape. The cops beat me. First they interrogated me. They told me, "Give us money for our bus fares," an'I told them "I don't got none, wher'm I gonna get it from?" They talked without watching their words, they beat me. I cried. Luckily a man was walking by an' he saw them. The cops said, "What do you care?" an' he told them, "I know this guy at the Central Office, his name is Dragoneante (...) an'I can arrange things, plus you're abusing a minor." They took me an' they lied to their boss, telling him that they found me doing drugs. The boss sent me to (...). an' my father came an' got me.*

- What did your father say. Was he still with your stepmother?

- *No, he thought it was my stepmother that took me there, he saw I was older. "Let's go home," he goes. I had to wash, cook, an' take him food, an'I had to wash my clothes. I didn' study, he sometimes took me to his job an'it was a pain, I wasn't interested because I was lazy, so I ran away again. I was 11 years old an'I went back to the streets an'I met some older ones an'I started using gasoline an' thinner.*

- How long were you on the streets?

- *As a whole, I've been out there four years.*

- What did you do to run away from the foster homes?

- *I waited till they trusted me an' then I took advantage.*
- What did you feel being on the streets?
- *Like it was normal, like it was my home.*
- Why?
- *I was free, I could do what I wanted, I could lay down where I wanted, if I wanted on the streets, lay down an' nobody would tell me nothin', if I wanted I studied or I didn', I did what I wanted with my life.*
- Did you drink alcohol?
- *Yeah.*
- How was the time when you were drinking?
- *It was short, because in (...) to work you had to drink an' do coca too.*
- Did you smoke?
- *Yeah.*
- Lots of cigarettes?
- *Yeah.*
- Marihuana?
- *No.*

- "Pitillos"?

- *No. I sniffed gasoline an' cement glue.*

- What other things did you try?

- *Shoe polish.*

Where did you get the money?

- *Stealin'. If there was three of us, we got together to buy a big can, so it would last a whole month. My field of action was (...) an' (...) a little.*

- Did you ever steal large amounts of money?

- *How do I know how much? A thousan' dollars? Once I was with a man that didn't know what to do with his money an' I wasted it all. It was a pack like this (five centimeters wide) of dollars. He was givin' it away.*

- Did you dress well on the streets?

- *When I had money.*

- What did your father say when he saw you?

- *He cried. He didn't have a job, he don't got one, he's gotta go looking for one. Sometimes he don't even got enough to eat.*

- When did you stop doing drugs?

- *Last time I ran away from here, from the center, a year ago, July 14th.*

- Why did you run away?

- *My mother came back. I didn't know my mother. My mother came from the Chapare, an' she started talkin' an' I ran away, I had to go to the Chapare. Then my brother wanted to take me there. I got scared, because a lady told me that that life was no good.*

- So she wanted to take you to make drugs?

- *To stamp coca. I ran away. I started sniffin' cement glue an' then the (...) caught me. The cops, one with his partner, they come an' talk to you.*

- Have you had sexual relations being on the streets?

- *Yeah. Once my father found me, he screamed at me an' the girl too.*

- The girl was from the streets too?

- *Yeah.*

- You haven't gotten venereal diseases?

- *No.*

- Did you get treatment to stop doing drugs?

- *No, only here in the (...)*

- You were born in Argentina?

- *Yeah. My parents separated when I was a year old. That time the government was givin'... so that all Bolivians would return on the*

train. The tickets were free. My father took advantage of that and my parents got separated.

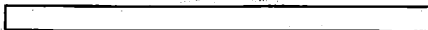
- Do you have brothers and sisters?

- *No. I have half brothers.*

- How do you feel here?

- *Fine. When I go home I feel lonely, because I don't have a brother my age, someone I can talk to, trust. I feel lonely.*

ARTURO



ARTURO

- You live on the streets, right?

- *Yeah.*

- Why do you live on the streets?

- *So that I don' gotta be in my house. Sometimes there are problems at home an' that's why some of us split.*

- Can we record you?

- *Yeah. Only about the streets or about me too?*

- You too. Tell us about your life, OK?

- *OK. We're on the streets, we were walkin', sometimes when we lose our [shoeshine] boxes, we're walkin'. Some of us also steal an' we fall in (...) there (...). They beat us, they all treat us badly, after that they throw us out, we gotta live on the streets again. We get a box, we start to shine shoes, but we're always sniffin', they teach us that.*

- You sniff too? What do you sniff?
- *Only cement glue.*
- You do cement glue?
- *Yeah. No, the younger children don't know. Um, I mean friends take us to other places, they teach us to drink. The ones that were here before, sleepin' on the streets, they already know how to live on the streets, like that. So, they teach us an' we obey 'em.*
- Where do you sleep?
- *In the (...)*
- They told us that you also sleep here on the stands?
- *Yeah, we sleep there, on the door of the (...). We stay there.*
- And you, how do you get organized? Do you have groups, gangs?
- *No, no, I mean, we go in groups of a few boys, like three, four. But the cops, they always bother us, walkin' on the streets, "(...) bring money!" They ask for money for coffee, food. We sniff. In the church, um, we go in an' sleep, they catch us sometimes, an' they take us to (...), they hit us, they throw us out too, they wanna put us in jail, we get out, we steal money from the people, um, to eat, to buy cement glue.*
- Do you cut people or not?
- *Sometimes, when there's nothin'. We go to the (...). At the flop-houses we eat French fries.*

- I've always been curious about one thing: why do some of you wear a hood?

- *I mean, it's like this, the boys got girlfriends on the streets, they come from good families an' that way they're not recognized, that they are shoeshine boys, that's why they wear 'em, they cover their faces.*

- And they don't cover themselves because they have scars?

- *No. No, those that have 'em, some, yeah, some do. The ones with green eyes, they cover 'emselves, but most of 'em do it so that their friends won't see 'em, the ones who're studyin', so they won't make fun of them because they're shoeshine boys, they cover 'emselves.*

- Do you have a family?

- *Yeah.*

- Do you live with your family?

- *Yeah.*

- Did you run away from home?

- *No, I already live ..., I ran away a long time ago.*

- Do you still live with your family?

- *Yeah, I left my house an'I use to live on the streets.*

- What else can you tell us?

- *I mean, that so they won't see we're shoeshine boys, we cover our faces, so they won't call us shoeshine boys, so we're not humiliated, so we can be with our girlfriends.*

- How long have you been on the streets?

- *Almost a year, sleepin' there.*

- Do you have older or younger brothers?

- *I got older ones. I'm the younges'.*

- Do your brothers work as you do?

- *They do other jobs. At that time my brother was in the military service, he didn't know I slept on the streets. When my brother came back, then I went back home.*

- You parents... do you have both of them?

- *No. He's dead. My mother yeah, I only got my mother.*

- And how does your mother treat you? Well?

- *Fine. Sometimes bad too, when I make her mad, she treats me bad.*

JERJES



JERJES

- How long have you been on the streets?

- *Two years.*

- What drove you to leave your home?

- *I left my house shinin' shoes. They taught me how to shine shoes and they took me to the park an' there I started learnin', an' then I went out on my own. Then I left an'I always came back, an'I went to places an'I met friends. Then I followed 'em. When they talked to me an' they told me what I wanted with 'em, they told me to follow 'em, an'I did. They taught me those thin's. They said, "Let's go do somethin'" an'I was confused. I said, "Shine shoes, right?" an' they said, "No, to make somethin' else" an' they gave me thin's, when they hugged me, they gave me.*

- Why did you shine shoes?

- *My reason always was to help my family.*

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *Nine brothers an' sisters.*

- Are your parents living?

- *Yeah.*

- What number are you?

- *Four.*

- Did you want to help at home?

- *Yeah.*

- How old were you when you left home?

- *Twelve.*

- You didn't go back to your home?

- *The first day I stayed to sleep at the Station, I didn' go back an' then I started, then they stole my box.*

- Your parents didn't look for you?

- *No.*

- What did they teach you first?

- *Ah, first they taught me to take things without askin', they sent me there, "Go there, pick that up, if you wanna be with us," an' I went an' lifted some things. They beat me. I thought they were gonna leave me. I couldn't like 'em. They told me, "You do it like this, look,*

follow me," an' I saw how they did it. First I was a little ashamed of stealin', later I was okay with it.

- How old were your friends when they taught you?

- I never asked 'em, but they were older. On the streets I started sufferin' the cold, an' then the cops came. "Raids," they said. Then they picked us up, they took us, they asked us, "What is your nickname?" I didn't know what that was. "Your name," they said. "What do they call you?" an' I told 'em, "Small bread."

- When did you start doing drugs?

- Later, when they took me in a taxi to the river an' they took gasoline in a jug. Everyone bought it with their bag. They gave me a little. I didn't want none. My head hurt, but later I got used to it.

- What else did you try on the streets?

- *"Pitillo."*

- Who gave you the "pitillo"? Who?

- That place around the station (...), the (...).

- How long did you smoke "pitillo"?

- About two months. I didn't want any because I knew it was gonna waste me, because when one tries the "pitillo" it an' likes it, you get like other friends that disappeared.

- Cement glue?

- *Yeah, all the time. Before there was no cement glue. Just gasoline. After that there was cement glue. I was home, later I left again an' when I came back from (...), I went to (...) with my neighbor an' my little brother.*

- Why did you go to (...)?

- *We... just because we were crazy.*

- Did you want to start another life?

- *Yeah.*

- What happened to your younger brother, the one you took to (...)?

- *We came back. We had 20 Bolivianos. First we wanted to go to Puerto Suarez, later at night we walked (...), later we went back in a bus, to (...). From there we went by (...) straight to the (...) first to (...) every day we walked. A lady picked us up an' took us to (...). Then we went to (...) an' in (...) we were there a day. We suffered from the cold. After that a truck passed by an' we went an' arrived at six in the afternoon.*

- What did you do in the (...)?

- *I arrived in a town called (...), there we were with some relatives of our neighbor. I couldn't stand bein' there. Too many mosquitoes. We were gonna leave our neighbor, but he knew it.*

- Why exactly did you go to (...)?

- *They owed our neighbor money, so he went an' asked for it, since we had spent a lot, we didn't know what to do. "Let's go, let's escape." We*

already had that idea when goin' out, "We're gonna ask for the money." I didn't wanna hear about it. At that time an idea came to us, to get horses. First we got a lasso an' we stole 'em. I went to the side an' my little brother waited for me an' I brought the lasso an' the machete. We went on foot. We got the horses. We took off ridin', we arrived at (...) an' we ate there. We sold the lassos for five Bolivianos. I didn't sell it, because a lasso is expensive, a hundred Bolivianos, an' since we were starvin', we sold it. We sold it fast. We sat down to eat, the lady gave us more food. After that we went to the road to (...), we wanted to do the same thing, get horses. We got 'em an' the owner came an' said, "What're you doin'?" We told him we were bringin' 'em back. He asked us, "Where you goin'?" "To (...)" "An' this boy? leave 'im here." "No," I said. "Then stay, the three of you." We stayed, he gave us clothes, an' since I was use' to stealin', I was gonna steal a shotgun. He caught me, I had to leave the house alone, I went to the road stop. A boy asked me, "Where you goin'?" I lied to him about bringin' cattle, afterwards I told him the truth, "The tigers are gonna eat you there," he told me. I stayed in his house for a month, after that they spoke to a man so that I could work on his land.

- What happened to your little brother?

- *They say he was with a lady.*

- What happened to him?

- *He's with his grandfather. The third time I ran away I found my brother.*

- Is he on the streets?

- *No. I was on the streets. He told me, "Are you still stealin' on the streets?" Since I had stolen five Ajinomotos (seasoning), I gave 'em to him.*

- What drugs have you used? Grass?

- *No, I haven't tried it, I've seen others... ugh! It makes you get lost real ugly! 'Cause I did other drugs I didn't care about that one. I knew they were gonna go wrong. I liked cement glue. I can't forget it.*

- Thinner?

- *Yeah, I've tried that. It's stronger than gasoline.*

- When was the last time you did drugs?

- *In Parza-pizza, there's a ditch, the cops caught us there. 'Cause of a fat guy that taught me how to steal. He sniffed glue like me but now he is a "pitillero."¹⁸*

- Is there a difference between a glue sniffer and a "pitillero"?

- *There are differences. Cement glue is less than "pitillo," when one likes "pitillo." Sometimes you don't smell glue. You get more hooked on "pitillo."*

- Were you in jail?

- *Yeah, we wanted to steal from the police an' they caught me an' I was in jail for four months. After that they took me to (...). There are cops that spy on you, the ones in plain clothes.*

- A big theft?

¹⁸ Pitillero: a person who smokes pitillos.

- Yeah, two of us broke into a house. We took out a kitchen, other things, we left through the market. I liked pickin' pockets, or anythin' of value.

MERY



MERY

- What's your name and age? Where were you born?
- *My name is Mery Elena, I'm 11, and I was born in (...)*
- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- *I have seven, including me.*
- What age are they?
- *One is 21 years old, the other one is 18, the other one is 15, the other one is 12, the other is 13.*
- So they are older.
- *Yes.*
- And do you have younger brothers or sisters?
- *Yes.*

- How many?

- *That are younger? Three.*

- How old are they?

- *The other one is seven, the other one is five, and the smaller one is only four.*

- Tell me about your parents. Where are they from? Where do they live? What do they do?

- *My father is from (...)*

- What does your father do?

- *He's a miner, and a mason.*

- And your mother?

- *She's a cook.*

- Where was you mother born?

- *In (...). My father was born in (...).*

- How long did live in (...)? Or where did you live when you were born?

- *In (...) for how many years? We were there from before. Before I came, before I was born, they were there. My brother, the younger one. He was born, the older one, was born there too. Since that time we lived there. When I was eight years old I came to (...).*

- With your whole family, your parents and your brothers?
- *Yes.*
- Why did you come?
- *The owner threw us out.*
- You mean that you lived in a rented house, it wasn't your own?
- *Yes.*
- Did your father have enough money to pay the rent?
- *No. My father, let's say... he worked and my mother didn't want his money, and my mother burnt it.*
- Your mother burnt it?
- *Yes.*
- Why?
- *There were some orange bills, remember? She used to burn them, from his job.*
- And why did she do that?
- *Because my mother for him only, and my father for all the parties he bought us toys, um, clothes.*
- For all the children?

- *Yes.*

- How much did your father make, do you know?

- *No.*

- And now?

- *No.*

- But now he's working as a mason?

- *Yes, he's working.*

- Where do you live, here, in [city]?

- *In the (...) neighborhood.*

- What year did you come, did you say?

- *When I was eight years old.*

- So you came three years ago. You came to find a job and because you couldn't pay the rent?

- *Yes.*

- And here, did your father find a job fast?

- *No. Before we lived at my uncle's. We lived... it was his house and he had to get it repaired and he told us, "Get out," and we left the house. We have already been at my uncle's two years.*

- And your aunt, does she have a big house?

- *No.*

- How did you live? In one room, two?

- *It was like this, one room on one side and one on the other side, but it didn't have a door, when you went out there was a door. Inside there were two rooms.*

- All of you lived there — the seven brothers, your father and mother, nine in total?

- *Ten.*

- Including you, ten?

- *Yes.*

- And before you came from (...) were you in school?

- *Yes.*

- What grade were you in?

- *First.*

- And your brothers, the older ones, where they there also?

- *Yes.*

- What grade did they get to?

- *Up to fifth grade, in the afternoon, intermediate.*¹⁹
- And did any of your brothers finish school?
- *One, the one who always comes to visit me, he's the only one who finished.*
- And now is he working somewhere, or is he still studying?
- *No, he's working.*
- What does he do?
- *He's a mason.*
- Mason... like your father, and he lives with your parents?
- *Yes.*
- How many people are living with your parents?
- *With my mother and my father there are five.*
- They all live in your uncle's house, right?
- *Yes.*
- And the other five?
- *We are nine brothers and sisters in total.*

¹⁹ The school system in Bolivia is divided in three levels: elementary (5 years), intermediate (3 years), and high school (4 years).

- Then the four that are not in the house, where are they living?
- *One lives in [an institution for abandoned children] the other is in [a state institution with similar characteristics] and I am here and the other one is with my grandmother.*
- And your grandmother, where does she live?
- *In [a neighborhood in the city].*
- How old are your brothers and sisters, the ones that are away from home?
- *The one who's in (...) is 15, the one (...) is 13 and I'm 11.*
- And the one that's with your grandmother?
- *He's 17.*
- Who was the first of the three brothers who left home, or of the four who are away?
- *The one who's in [the state institution].*
- The one who's thirteen, at what age did he leave home?
- *At eleven.*
- Who left next?
- *Me, and then my brother.*
- The oldest one, who's 15, who's in (...). Tell me, why do you think he left home?

- *Because my mother hit him.*
- Why did she hit him?
- *It's just that he didn't obey, that's why.*
- What did your mother order him to do that he wouldn't obey?
- *He didn't do his things, he didn't wash the dishes, he didn't do it.*
- When you arrived here, did you go back to school?
- *My older brothers did, I didn't.*
- What did your father say? Why weren't you able to go to school?
- *Because they didn't have money, my mother and my father, that's why.*
- Did any of your brothers get upset by that, because they couldn't go to school?
- *Yes, the oldest one, the one who's 19.*
- What course did he get to?
- *Fifth grade.*
- When you weren't able to go to school, when your father didn't find a job, did you stay in the house or did you start working?
- *The older ones started working.*

- What did they do?

- *As I said, they were masons. The other one, when we were at home was an auto repair worker, and the other a mechanic.*

- And did they give the money they earned to your mother and father or did they spend it themselves?

- *No, they gave it to my mother.*

- Only three of them worked, the others... what did you do? You stayed home... did you go out and play in the street, what did you do?

- *We stayed home.*

- And your mother too?

- *Sometimes she did her wash across the street, where I worked, she went to wash.*

- Where did you work?

- *Across the street from my house, at a lady's.*

- What did you do there?

- *I baby-sat two babies.*

- How old were the babies?

- *One was one year old and other one was two or three.*

- Your mother told you to work, or was it that you decided to work?

- *Alone.*

- Tell me, how did you get that job?

- *The lady wanted a person to take care of them. I told her, "I'll take care of them." She said "OK" and she paid me 40, 30 she paid me.*

- During the day, or how was it?

- *During the day.*

- And your mother, did she know you were working?

- *Yeah.*

- She gave you permission to do so?

- *Yeah.*

- And she didn't ask for the money that you earned?

- *No, I lent it to her.*

- And with the rest, what did you do? You gave your mother a part, and the rest?

- *Oh! I bought clothes.*

- Alone.

- *Yeah. And later, when she had none to cook, I gave it to her.*

- Tell me now, Maria. How long did you take care of those babies?

- *Two months.*
- And why did you stop working there?
- *Because my mother didn't want me to work.*
- Did she tell you why?
- *No, but she was drunk, she didn't want me to work, she hit me.*
- Your mother?
- *Yeah.*
- Does your mother drink a lot?
- *Yeah.*
- When?
- *Almost every day.*
- And what does she drink?
- *Alcohol, Singani²⁰, those things.*
- Day and night?
- *Day an' night.*
- And your father drinks with her, or does she drink alone?

²⁰ Singani: a popular alcoholic beverage in Bolivia made from grapes.

- *Alone.*
- At home?
- *Yeah.*
- How much does she drink?
- *She buys a little bit at a time.*
- Every day?
- *Yeah, from time to time she buys it.*
- Why do you think your mother drinks?
- *I dunno.*
- When did she start drinking?
- *Since we came from (...) since ... She didn't drink, but we came to my uncle's, to a shop there. Sometime after we lived at my uncle's, where we lived first, in that shop, there. He gave us money, we went for bread. There she didn't drink. After that, when we came to my uncle Obo's she started drinking, because my uncle also drank.*
- She started drinking with him?
- *Yeah.*
- Then she started hitting you? Before was she kinder to you?
- *Yeah.*

- With what did she hit you?
- *With a cable.*
- And did she say something while she hit you?
- *No, she didn't say nothin'.*
- And why did you leave home?
- *The same as my brother, the one who was in (...) they picked him up from (...) without money, with documents only, they took him. She started hitting him again, he ran away again and now they don't wanna let 'im go.*
- How long after he was away from home did she go looking for him?
- *First, when he ran away, after a year and eight months.*
- And she didn't look for him during that time?
- *She looked for him... but she thought he was dead.*
- But he was still young, wasn't he?
- *Yeah.*
- He was 10 years old. And did he tell you he was leaving home, or didn't he tell anyone?
- *No, he didn't tell no one, because my brother silently... because he burnt my brother's face with fire and kerosene, because of that my*

mother and my father hit him and he ran away. He was away a year and eight months. He disappeared from home. My mother was sad, she drank because of that, but now she still drinks.

- But did they look for your brother?

- Yeah.

- Where did they go looking for him?

- We went to (...) and nothin'. My mother went to (...) to look for him and there was nothin'.

- And she told you something about why your brother ran away?

- Nothin'.

- When you found him, how was it?

- I went to my aunt's to watch TV and there in (...) my brother came out. After that we found him. We went to (...) from (...) and we got him.

- And how was your brother?

- He was fine.

- Did he return home?

- Yeah.

- But did he want to come back, or was he forced?

- *No, he wanted to come back.*

- Your mother didn't hit him when he came back?

- *No. She treated him well. And after that, in the end, after a week she hit him again. She hit him a lot with an iron bar, she hit him.*

- And why did she hit him?

- *He didn't obey. And in the afternoon... after hitting him, he ran away with a Boliviano. My mother sent him to buy kerosene. She gave him a Boliviano and told him, "Go and buy kerosene." He went to buy it and he didn't come back no more.*

- He didn't come back. He ran away again?

- *Yeah.*

- And how long was it before you heard about him?

- *Six or seven months.*

- During that time he was in (...) or better said, when he came back from (...) did you speak to your brother? Did you talk about how he was away from home? Did he tell you anything about that time?

- *No. No.*

- He didn't say anything?

- *No.*

- If it was ugly, if it was nice, nothing? You didn't ask him either?

- *No.*
- *When he ran away again, after six months, who else ran away?*
- *After that, me and my brother.*
- *The one who's now in (...)*
- *Yeah. After that one day passed, two days passed and I ran away too.*
- *Why did you run away?*
- *'Cause she hit me.*
- *But you told me that she always hit you?*
- *Yeah, I always ran away but she caught me.*
- *Tell me about the first time you ran away. Everything you remember.*
- *The first time was when my father hit me.*
- *When was that?*
- *When... the first time that he hit me, when my little brother got burned.*
- *How old were you?*
- *I was ten. My brother was eleven.*

- And why did your little brother get burned? Were you taking care of him?

- *No. We were washing our school uniforms outside, with my brother that's in (...) with him. Meanwhile, he was in the room, taking care of our younger sister. He touched the fire with kerosene and he got burned.*

- He got burned? Where?

- *Here [She shows the lower part of the face and neck]. He has a scar now.*

- How old was your brother when he got burned?

- *He was ... he must have been three.*

- Three years old?

- *Yeah.*

- And your mother was in the house when this happened?

- *No, she was... she had gone to work.*

- As a cook?

- *No, at a snack stand.*

- When she arrived, did she see your brother burnt or what did you do with him?

- *He was in the hospital. My uncle took him.*

- And they took care of him there?

- *Yeah. They put bandages on him. And my father hit us. My father told my brother, "Go throw that water out!" he went out to throw it out and he ran away.*

- Your brother, the one who's now in (...) did he run away again?

- *Yeah.*

- When you ran away for the first time, when your father hit you, where did you go?

- (...) *I didn't know much.*

- Tell me, where did you go?

- *There (...) down there (...) that's the only place I knew.*

- And how did you go?

- *I hitchhiked.*

- Did you run away during the day or at night?

- *During the day.*

- You went in a bus? How did you hitchhike?

- (...) *and I appeared in (...)*

- But, how was that, who took you?

- *A young girl. One of those special ones, right? Those big ones, special ones.*

- And she didn't ask anything?

- *No.*

- When you got in, were there no other people?

- *Yeah there were, lots of them.*

- They didn't ask you anything?

- *No.*

- And how did you feel?

- *I dunno, strange...*

- And when you arrived at (...) you got out?

- *Yeah.*

- What did you do? How was that day?

- *I got down where she stopped, at the stop. From the stop I went further down and at (...) I arrived.*

- What did you do in (...)?

- *I had money, I sold my jacket.*

- How much did they pay you for your jacket?

- *They paid me ten Bolivianos. There, in the (...) neighborhood.*
- Did you know you could sell things there? How did you think that you were going to get money selling?
- *No, we met my brother, the one who's in (...). When we met, he told me, "We'll sell cigarettes." We bought them. I bought two packs for him, two packs for me, and matches.*
- And you sold them?
- *Yeah.*
- With the ten Bolivianos you had from selling your jacket?
- *Yeah.*
- And did you make money with the cigarettes?
- *Yeah. From that instead of 10 I made 15.*
- And what did you do with that money?
- *We bought things, we had lunch with that money. We spent all the money.*
- Only in food or in other things?
- At the "tilines."²¹
- He took you to the "tilines"?

²¹ "Tilines": electronic games.

- *No, I knew where they was.*
- How did you know them?
- *From (...) further down.. in the (..).*
- Who took you there the first time?
- *It was when my brother, the older one, took me. We went to (...). We went to see and after that my brother took me. After that I learned how to go.*
- And how did your brother teach you?
- *He told me, "You gonna hold this, there are some buttons, see? Them, the clutch, the cars too, they are in (...), hold the wheel well, yeah, yeah."*
- What did you feel when you played, what do you feel now when you play?
- *I feel I'm fightin'.*
- You like fighting?
- *Yeah.*
- Why?
- *I don't know, just because. It doesn't matter why, it depends.*
- Do you like fighting because you win or what?

- *No.*

- Because you can compete with someone?

- *Yeah.*

- And if you lose, how do you feel?

- *The same. If I win or lose, it's the same.*

- The nice thing is to be fighting...

- *Yeah.*

- And that first night you were in the streets, where did you sleep?

- *No. I stayed till dawn with my brother.*

- How old were you then?

- *I was 11.*

- What did you do till dawn?

- *We sold cigarettes.*

- Where?

- *There..., where there are some night places, there.*

- Until what time did you sell cigarettes?

- *All night long.*

- And you weren't scared?

- *No, 'cause I was with my brother.*

- Your brother was 13 years old, right? And he defended you? Did something happen to you that night?

- *No, when my brother is 'round I'm not scared.*

- And you weren't cold that night?

- *No.*

- The next day, what did you do?

- *After that, it was like this. We went to (...), since he knew all the city. We went to (...) to (...), that's how we went.*

- Did you have fun and spend money?

- *Yeah.*

- And he didn't ask why you left home?

- *No.*

- You told him something?

- *No.*

- How long were you in the streets?

- *It wasn't that long, only a month.*

- But where did you sleep that month?

- *No, we stayed up till dawn. During the day, at the park, there's grass, see, I lay down.*

- When you were cold, did you drink something?

- *Yeah, hot coffee.*

- You didn't feel bad, living like that in the streets? How did you feel during that time?

- *It was better.*

- In what sense was it better?

- *How can I say? It was like leaving home and going for a walk.*

- To see places... new places?

- *Yeah, like that.*

- You didn't miss home?

- *No.*

- During that time did you ever speak with your brother about going back home?

- *No... afterwards, when I was in (...), further down, in (...) we got spoiled. My brother had gone home. After that, the next day, they caught me where they sell "pasankalla" (sweet puffed corn), see? There, down there, where the (...) right there, they caught me.*

- Who?

- *My mother and my brother.*

- And what did they tell you? What did your mother say?

- *"What are you doing here?" Then they took us. We went home. After that, we ran away again. After a week she hits us. My brother, this time, was workin' in a bus, she'd put him there while we were away from home, she put him in a bus. She caught us on the bus.*

- What did she say?

- *She wanted us to work, but we were tired...*

- And during that month you were in the streets, did you earn money only by selling cigarettes or did you also steal?

- *No. We sold cigarettes.*

- Only cigarettes?

- *Yeah.*

- And then you tried drugs?

- *No.*

- But you saw it in the streets. Your brother was always with you, you told me you were never with the other boys in the streets?

- *No.*

- You didn't get together?

- *No. From (...) they were my brother's friends. They were young.*

- They didn't do any of that?

- *No.*

- You slept with them?

- *No. Who knows where they went. To [a foster home], I think they went there.*

- You never went to those institutions, there in (...)?

- *No. One night I went there to sleep, after that I never went again.*

- Why didn't you go?

- *The older ones go there. The small ones only go there to sleep. I didn't want to go no more.*

- Were you scared?

- *Yeah, it scared me.*

- What were you scared of?

- *The drunks. Before I wasn't scared. Since my uncle and his friend, the car crashed, everything broke, the windows, the windshield, the bumper, everything was broken. After that I was scared of that car.*

- Were you scared of cars?

- *No. Just that car, 'cause it crashed I was scared. They said my uncle was gonna die, and since that day I was scared.*

- And when you ran away again, when he was working in the buses, did you run away together with your brother?

- *Yeah. The three of us ran away.*

- With [your older brother] also?

- *Yeah.*

- How did you decide to run away?

- *It was like this: let's say... since my younger brother had money, the one from (...), he said, "Go buy," he told me. He also told my brother to, then he himself would go buy. We had to meet in the park (...) We met there and we ran away together.*

- Where?

- *We had to meet in the park (...) The three of us met, at the same time. We arrived together. And my brother said, "We're leaving." Since he had money, we even went in a bus.*

- And where did he have money from?

- *He worked in a bus.*

- When you went to (...) where did you arrive?

- *He knew almost everything.*

- Where did you go?

- *We went to (...) After that, I don't remember.*

- What did you do in (...)?

- *We saw each other every night. He ratted on us. He had gone home and told them where we were.*

- What did you do during the day?

- *Nothin', we walked.*

- You didn't get bored?

- *No.*

- You walked together with your brother?

- *Yeah, with my brother, the one who's in (...).*

- Did he ever teach you to steal?

- *No. My brothers, never.*

- Who taught you how to steal?

- *It was my friend, called Mery.*

- How did you meet her?

- *I met her in (...), when we went to (...) we went to play, I met her there. After that we walked together, my brother disappeared.*

- How old was she when you met her?

- *She was 13 or 15.*

- What were you playing in (...)?

- *There were some circles, bicycles for rent.*

- You had money to play there?

- *Yeah.*

- Where did you get the money from? From the city?

- *Yeah.*

- And the girl, how did she teach you to steal?

- *A drunk was laying there, and she told me "We'll work him," and I told her, "How are we going to work him?" and she said, "Like this, taking stuff out of his pocket." "Let's see! You do it first!" and she did it. Then we ran. He followed us, but drunks can't run fast...*

- Was it daytime?

- *No, it was night.*

- What time was it?

- *Around 11.*

- There weren't many people around there, then. Where did you go after you stole his money?

- *We went to eat. Then we bought things, we kept the money after eating. An hour later it was already cold. It was 12 or 1, and we were cold. We bought coffee. After that we didn't have no more money. Because we only stole about 20 Bolivianos.*

- And she, was she also in the streets?

- *Yeah.*

- When had she left home?

- *She didn't tell me.*

- Where did you sleep that night?

- *We went to a foster home, where they let us sleep.*

- She told you where to go.

- *Yeah.*

- What else did she teach you?

- *Nothin' else.*

- And you liked making that money?

- *Yeah.*

- What did you feel?

- *I liked seein' what I was makin'.*

- You weren't scared?

- *No.*

- And you didn't feel sorry for the people you were robbing?

- *No.*

- Since she taught you, have you kept on doing that?

- *Yeah.*

- Have you done it alone?

- *No, no I haven't done it.*

- You don't dare, or why don't you do it?

- *No... I don't dare.*

- But with some of your friends, in a group...

- *I had a group, but it was all girls.*

- What did the girls do?

- *They were thieves.*

- How was the group formed?

- *You found them in the streets, they wanted to sleep, they were hungry, they were cold. You did like this: (she makes a sign) "Do you want to come with us?" "OK," we said. We were going*

to go to sleep there, I don't remember the name of the foster home.

- Here downtown or in (...)?

- *In the city.*

- How many girls were there?

- *Seven or eight.*

- What ages?

- *The youngest one was nine or ten.*

- And the oldest one?

- *The oldest one was 17 or 18.*

- All of them were away from home?

- *Yeah, for a long time already.*

- For how long?

- *More or less a year.*

- They knew more about the streets than you did? They taught you other things?

- *Yeah.*

- For example...

-
- *Stealing, after that, washing cars, watching them.*
 - How did you wash cars?
 - *There was a lady who gave us water. We told her, "From what we make from washing the cars, we'll give you half and half for us." "OK," she said. We got water from her house and we washed them with that.*
 - You mean that the way you made money was by stealing the money from the drunks and sober people too?
 - *Also.*
 - In the markets?
 - *Yeah, markets or no markets, the same.*
 - How do you steal?
 - *Let's say someone is standing, he doesn't feel anything, his jacket is hanging from his hand.*
 - So you are quick with your hands.
 - *Yeah.*
 - And how did you learn?
 - *I dunno, they taught it to me.*
 - After that did you get together? Did you split the money? What did you do?

- *At night we distributed it.*

- Where did you meet?

- *In (...)*

- Always at the same time?

- *Yeah, at ten, nine.*

- Each one said how much she had made and you split it? You didn't lie? Some didn't keep a part before handing it in?

- *No. No. There was a boss and they were loyal to her.*

- Who was the boss?

- *The oldest one.*

- And did she do the same thing or did she only sent you to do it?

- *No. She did the same. She made more and the youngest one made less, some five, they made about five.*

- And how much did she make?

- *The older one, about one hundred, fifty.*

- More or less... What did you make in a day?

- *Twenty, thirty.*

- How did you distribute it?

- *If she had the least, they had to give it to her. The youngest one got very little. After that she didn't show up, and she had got 50 Bolivianos. All the girls thought it was strange.*

- Because she had made so much. And they, what did they say?

- *"Where did you get the money from?" "I worked," she lied. She scolded me. "Why aren't you with us?" that this, that that, she screamed. But we distributed that money.*

- And how do you know who's the boss? Does the older girl say, "I'm the boss"?

- *Yeah, she knew them like their mother, like their older sister.*

- But she didn't get angry at you?

- *No.*

- Did she help you? Did she tell you anything else? Did she teach you other things? Didn't she teach you to do drugs?

- *No, no one did.*

- And how did you get out of that group, or are you still with them?

- *They are there.*

- But when you got out, did they say something about you getting out?

- *No, I told them, "I'm going to such a place," and she told me, "We are going to meet any day".*

- They are in (...) then. And do you know if they've had problems with the police?

- *Yeah, once when we were making (stealing), one realized it. He called the police. That moment the ones from (..) were coming and made him stop. You know they're wandering around, in cars, undercover? And that one caught us and we ran away. And one of the younger girls ... she got caught. She's still there.*

- And she didn't tell on the rest?

- *She had told them where we slept and all. She sold us out.*

- Were you mad at her because she had told on you?

- *No.*

- Do the girls do other things besides making money?

- *No.*

- They didn't get together with older boys?

- *No, I think they didn't like it. The older one had a boyfriend.*

- Was he also from the streets?

- *Yeah.*

- And they worked together, with some of the money they made?

- *No.*

-
- Have you seen other groups of girls in the streets, like yours?
 - *No.*
 - You were the only ones?
 - *Yeah, I think so.*
 - Or maybe you don't all know each other.
 - *We know each other.*
 - Because there could be other girls in some other places doing the same as you, but somewhere else.
 - *There must be.*
 - And are there more boys?
 - *There are. There are lots of boys.*
 - And the boys, how do they get together? In gangs?
 - *The same as the girls.*
 - But by ages, or any age?
 - *Any age.*
 - And is the boss always the oldest one?
 - *Yeah, the boss, the oldest one.*

- And do they have any special signs to distinguish themselves?

- *They have ... how can I say. They set off firecrackers. Like on party days? They make them blow.*

- And that's a sign that they're calling each other?

- *Yeah, so that they get together.*

- And they, how do they make money?

- *The same.*

- Stealing from people, houses, cars?

- *Yeah, from cars, they take the side mirrors, sometimes the tires, the lights.*

- Do they break in houses to steal?

- *No. Sometimes they do, sometimes.*

- When you were in the streets, what drugs did the boys and girls in the streets use?

- *Cigarette, cocaine, cement glue, thinner, only that.*

- Did you try any of them?

- *When I was in the streets, no.*

- Not once? How did you get to know drugs?

-
- *It was when... the girls... one of them had a boyfriend.*
 - *A boy went with the girls, he took it?*
 - *Yeah, he took it. He made us get used to it. After that we made money to buy cement glue. He bought it for us, since he was older. He seemed like he was working, he was well dressed.*
 - *He bought a small jar for each one of you?*
 - *Yeah, thinner, a bottle of thinner.*
 - *Have you ever tried cocaine?*
 - *No, not once.*
 - *But you've seen it... how?*
 - *Some inject it in their hands and others... I dunno what they do. I saw some shooting up.*
 - *Boys or girls?*
 - *Yeah, boys and girls. I saw a boy, he was very young, he was shooting up.*
 - *In the street?*
 - *Yeah.*
 - *Where did you see him?*
 - *At the obelisk. At night. A cop caught him.*

- Where do they get those things?

- *I dunno.*

- Do you smoke cigarettes?

- *Yeah.*

- When was the first time you smoked?

- *I learned to smoke here, with Ilda and Sulka.*

- They taught you?

- *Yeah.*

- Do you still smoke?

- *No. We smoked two times when we went out and once more, and they caught us, because Sulka talked.*

- What is that?

- *She said we smoked.*

- She sang. And have you ever drunk alcohol?

- *No, never.*

- Why? You don't like it?

- *No.*

- Wouldn't you like to try it?

- *No.*

- When was the first time you tried cement glue?

- *The first time was when I got here. The (...) that time he was flying, the (...) brother of the (...), after that, (...) who is in (...) I tried it with him the first time.*

- How old were you?

- *Eleven.*

- How did he teach you?

- *The first time it was when ... in the (...), back there there's a (...), behind the (...), there.*

- At night?

- *Yeah.*

- At what time?

- *I don't know what time it was. I had to go, they caught us, they caught a lot of us.*

- That's the first time they took you to the foster home?

- *Yeah.*

- What did they tell you so that you would try it?

- *They said, "Take this."*

- They gave it to you. So they didn't make you do it, it was voluntary then?

- *Yeah.*

- What did you feel the first time?

- *No, nothin'.*

- Did you like it the first time?

- *Yeah.*

- How does it feel when you smell it?

- *Half drunk ... just that.*

- After that time, how many times did you try it?

- *A lot.*

- More or less, how many?

- *Two by two, a small jar.*

- And how long does the jar last?

- *If you go fast, it ends up fast.*

- You do that with other boys or alone?

- *Accompanied by (...) "Choreti."*
- Where do you go to, to (...)?
- *Yeah.*
- At night?
- *No, in the day. At night you can't go because there are thieves.*
- Are the thieves old, or are they also boys?
- *Big ones.*
- Did they ever do something to you?
- *No, nothing. They are "koleritos" also.*
- What are "koleritos"?
- *"Koleritos" are people that sniff glue.*
- The ones that smell thinner, what are they called?
- *The same, they are "koleros."*
- You mean that they don't have a different name?
- *No, glue sniffer, inhaler, sniffer...*
- How do you get cement glue?
- *We buy it.*

- Where do you buy it?

- *Anyplace.*

- How much does it cost?

- *One Boliviano, one fifty, that's what it costs.*

- And where do you get the money from, Mery?

- *I sent a little boy, so that he would shine shoes.*

- You had your own box and he worked for you?

- *Yeah.*

- And how much did he give you?

- *He gave me three Bolivianos every day.*

- How much did you give him?

- *I gave him half.*

- How old was the boy?

- *He's still here, he's John Doe.*

- Since when have you done that?

- *Inhale? For some time. Since the first week I came.*

- Do you like it?

- *Yeah.*

- What did you feel? Why do you think you like it?

- *I don't know.*

- Does it make you forget something, do you feel happy?

- *Yeah, I feel happy. It looks like things are turning round and round, it's funny.*

- After you feel that, does your head hurt?

- *No, only when I let go at once it hurts.*

- How do you have to do it?

- *Like this, let's say ... let go slowly.*

- Now Mery, are you doing that again?

- *Yeah. For a time I quit, but now I'm doing it again.*

- Then, you've already been doing it a year?

- *No, six months.*

- And your brothers too?

- *No, my brother from (...), no. The one from (...), "The Swallow," yeah.*

- But he doesn't say anything to you?

- *No.*
- Do you think that is good or bad?
- *It's bad for me.*
- Why do you say it's bad?
- *It has thinner, thinner makes you forget everything.*
- And that's bad?
- *Yeah.*
- Would you like stop doing it or not?
- *Yeah, but I can't quit.*
- You mean that you try but that you go back to it?
- *Yeah.*
- Why do you think you go back to it?
- *I don't know. That night that I had a party I inhaled. I forgot for some time. Now I'm inhaling again.*
- And how much are you inhaling now?
- *Just a jar. Let's say, I go from here to the corner, it must be a block, but a big one.*
- You inhale walking?

-*Yeah.*

- But at night, when no one sees?

- *Yeah.*

- And if you do it when someone sees you?

- *There's no way, because they could tell, or take it away.*

- But do you think you can get help to quit or not?

- *Yeah.*

- Who would you ask for help?

- *The lady.*

- You told her? Yeah?

- *No I haven't told her.*

- Why? Don't you trust her?

- *I don't know, I'm scared.*

- Are you afraid that she'll get mad, that she'll scream at you?

- *Yeah.*

- And for the kids that you see inhaling, what do you feel for them?

- *I don't know, I feel sorry. But when I inhale, I don't feel nothin'.*

- Do you think that could get better somehow?

- *Yeah.*

- How could it get better?

- *Helping, getting help for myself.*

- How would you like them to help you?

- *Giving me advice.*

- But the advice, would you listen and put it in practice?

- *Yeah.*

- Do you think that one of the reasons that you started doing that is that you were in the streets?

- *Yeah.*

- If you had been home, would you have been able to try it?

- *No.*

- Your brother in (..), does he still inhale? And what does he say? He can't quit it either?

- *Yeah.*

- And the money to buy cement glue, where is it from? Do you still go out and steal?

-
- *No.*
 - Where do you get the money from?
 - *When I have money, I go.*
 - When do you have money?
 - *Any day. I wash comforters, they pay me what they owe me. From there.*
 - And now, that little boy that you told me about, does he still work for you?
 - *No, not anymore.*
 - Since when?
 - *For some time already, some weeks, a month.*
 - Why did he leave?
 - *Because he didn't have polish. Now he sells cigarettes.*
 - And the other boys, when they don't have enough money to buy, do they steal too?
 - *No, they have a scholarship.*
 - And if they didn't have a scholarship?
 - *They would steal, to make money.*

- At night?

- *Yeah.*

- And they, what do they say? How do they feel doing that?

- *Since they already have experience, they don't feel nothing.*

- Mery, would you like to go back home?

- *No.*

- Why?

- *I dunno. I don' wanna live at home.*

- How would you like your home to be so that you go back?

- *My mother wouldn't drink anymore, my father would be with us, he wouldn't go away.*

- Your father isn't with you anymore? Where does he go?

- *He goes to Yungas.*

- For how long does he go away?

- *For a month... he goes for a long time. If he goes, he doesn't bring nothing.*

- Would you like to finish school?

- *Yeah.*

-
- What grade would you be in?
 - *Fourth grade.*
 - Then you know how to read and write?
 - *Yeah.*
 - What would you like to do now?
 - *I dunno, anything.*
 - For example....
 - *Study.*
 - Why aren't you studying now?
 - *Because when I was here, I was working with a lady and since the time was up, Carlitos didn't put me in school.*
 - What were you doing at that lady's house? What did you do?
 - *I baby-sat.*
 - And did they pay you well?
 - *Yeah. Eighty, but then she told me she was only going to pay me 40 Bolivianos.*
 - Now that you are 11, next year I think you could go back to school.
 - *Yeah.*

- When you finish studying, what would you like to be when you grow up?

- *I dunno.*

- What would you like to do?

- *I dunno.*

- You haven't thought about that?

- *No.*

JOHNNY



JOHNNY

We continue with Johnny about the details of his life story. In that regard, Johnny, do you remember when you were a child?

- What I remember from when I was a child: I lived with my mother, with my father, I was a little happy. I was in folk groups an' then bad luck came to my family an' they started drinkin' a little bit an' then the family problems continued until they separated. It went wrong.

- Is there something from when you were a boy that you remember the most, that you never forget?

- What I can't forget is when my parents separated, my mother wanted to live with another man an' that man hit me, when I was a little boy, his name was Warman, he was from Oruro, 'cause of that I hated my mom.

- And how old were you when that happened?

- I think I was five or six years old, an' the asshole wanted me to call him "Dad" an' I never called him that.

- After that what happened, did your parents get back together?

- *Yes. My father wrote her letters an' when we came here to (...). I told my father that he had hit me an' then my father started drinkin' a lot an' my father hit my mother a lot.*

- How long did your mother live with that other man?

- *'Bout six months, but I told him an' my father was very hurt. Well, some six years passed an' when I was 11 I was used to my father. She told me, "Go," an' I went with my father. Now I don't care nothing about my mother. I care about my younger brother, from my mother.*

- What was the main reason you left your mother?

- *'Cause my father was drinkin' too much. She left him because of his alcoholism.*

- Do you think your father was an alcoholic?

- *Yeah.*

- Did you ever have problems with your father?

- *Yeah, he was furious, when he drank he kicked me bad an' slapped me too.*

- Did he ever harm you physically?

- *Yeah. He gave me bruises.*

- What do you think about your father? Is he right or wrong?

-
- *It's the alcohol's fault. If there was no alcohol, when he wasn't drinkin' he was good an' when he started drinkin' he asked me to forgive him.*
 - *When you went to (...), what happened?*
 - *Yeah. I studied in (...) an' I helped my mother sell stuff. I sold pencils, razors, an' lighters.*
 - *How old were you when you left?*
 - *Eleven. I left in January an' came back in June.*
 - *How old were you when you started drinking?*
 - *I was 16.*
 - *Between 12 and 16, what do you remember most?*
 - *I remember when I studied.*
 - *What did you like to study?*
 - *I always liked math, an' science.*
 - *Do you remember any problems between 12 and 16?*
 - *No, none.*
 - *What happened the first time you got drunk? What happened?*
 - *It was my birthday an' I don't remember nothing, I slept at a friend's.*

- And your father found out about that?
- *No.*
- And getting drunk between 16 and 17?
- *Yeah, I had problems... I fought when I was drunk an' I cut my friend with a glass, 18 stitches.*
- What happened?
- *Yeah... everythin' came out all right 'cause he was my friend. We didn' have problems. I just paid for the cure. I was older an' I told his father I didn't mean to harm him.*
- When was the first time you used drugs?
- *When I went to discotheques.*
- And how was it? Did they tell you to take drugs? Did they give you drugs?
- *It was to know what it felt like. Curiosity. I bought it myself. It was in (...) an' I started flyin'... The first time I started laughin', I think I laughed all day.*
- 'Well, Johnny, where are you from?
- *Here, from (...)*
- You've been in (...) all the time?
- *Until I was seven years old I was in (...). Family problems. I went with my mom for a year an' three months to Santa Cruz when I was*

seven. My father stayed alone, then it was me an' my brother, after that he called us, he sent letters for us to go. I was in first grade, second, we came back here, then we traveled again; there were always family problems between my mother an' father. Too much arguing, fighting. The second time I was 12. When I was in seventh grade we went there, I mean my mother couldn't support my brother, me an' my little sister an' she told me, "Why don't you go back to your father's, you an' me." "Okay," I said. I got ready to get back, I came at midyear. Since then I left my studies. Ah! no. I studied here again. We lived with my father, I was with him, I studied until eighth grade, in eighth I left, eighth grade, since then... no more.

- Since that time you've stayed in (...)?

- *Yeah, but I traveled.*

- School trips?

- *I traveled to Oruro, to La Paz, to Santa Cruz.*

- And what do you think of La Paz?

- *It's beautiful, but very boring. Going up, going down, going up, but the city is beautiful.*

- Santa Cruz?

- *That is big, very beautiful. I know everything in Santa Cruz because I almost lived there. I liked Santa Cruz more than any other city, more than Cochabamba. I am (...) I like the heat, I love the heat.*

- Did you like Trinidad?

- *Yeah, but it don't look like a city because it's small an' no other city, Quillacollo...*

- *I went to (...) yesterday, otherwise I would have never known it. Another thing that they asked me is to find out about the work you did. Have you worked? For how long? Why did you quit the job? Well, maybe you didn't like working?*

- *Well I told you that since I went the first time with my mother to (...) when I was six, seven, I always helped my father, I mean I helped him hold things up in the shop. "Do this," I helped him an' the second time when I traveled, I came back. I was already 12 an' I started working. Since I already knew by watchin' my father do it, I learned how to weld. I worked. I worked ... like, I mean, six years for me, ... no, no, for my father. My father told me, "You won't give me nothin', if you're gonna work that money is gonna be yours, right?" When I saw that I had money I met friends an' then I didn' like to work. It's just now I've realized I gotta work.*

- *How long have you been working at the shop? Have you only worked in the shop?*

- *Not there, I mean in groups, in music groups a lotta them knew me an' called me by my name. "Pablito, help me take the equipment," an' they paid me for that. I helped them carry the equipment, I helped them install it an' for that they paid me 10 or 20 Bolivianos.*

- *Other types of jobs?*

- *No, 'sides the radiators workshop my father had an' helping the bands, no? Well jus' that, nothin' else. Oh! Like two, three months, I worked in... what's it called, a mechanics shop. I left.*

- In car mechanics?

- *Yeah, car mechanics. I left that too. I met friends, I started goin', out, I felt lazy about workin', I felt more like bein' with them, goin out... all that.*

- Johnny, what about violence with the police... what problems have you had with the cops?

- *Lotsa times.*

- They beat you up?

- *Yeah, they even took my sweatshirt an' my t-shirt.*

- They took your clothes?

Ah! many times. I mean, three times when I went to the cops with just my I.D. What do you call it... they took my I.D., or when I was dizzy an' there they make you lift your arms or they see you cut something, that you're scratched an' they tell you, "You are a Cholo," an' right there, pow! they make you feel it. They even threw tear gas at me. Once I was fighting on a street corner, they caught me, I mean it wasn't my fault, it was the other guy's fault an' the cop wanted to take me, an' held me against the car an' they took me by force an' they hit me with a stick, but they didn' make me go in an' to make me get in they put tear gas in my eyes, an' then another time they took my clothes. I mean I was drinkin' with a friend an' we were goin' back, when they wanted to take our I.D.s. I was scared, I don't like goin' there.

- What you said at 17, 16 in parties, what did you feel the first time, Johnny?

- *What I felt was nothin' strange... the only thing I felt was like laughin', even with the ones that I was ... they called me "the cat" an' they told me an' I started laughin', something about being macho, yeah. I mean I wasn't afraid, nothin'. Not even of the cops, like it was normal. I went walkin' in the park. It gives you courage.*

- *Have you had any problems sniffing cement glue or did someone give you problems?*

- *Problems, problems like that ... no. They found out that ... I mean, they told them they saw me sniffing glue, then they hated me an' they didn't wanna talk to me, they didn't wanna be my friends... That type of problems I've had, other problems no, none an' less with the cops.*

- *And drinking problems?*

- *The only thing in that respect ... the "camba" pulled my ears... problems with Carmen when I was drunk.*

- *How many times a month do you get drunk?*

- *Now it's three weeks since I've had a drink, I mean once a week, a Sunday, once we drank Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday.*

- *Monday too?*

- *Yeah, an' if possible all week.*

- *Why do you drink so much?*

- *I didn't do nothin', I mean I didn't help my dad. I didn't do nothin', I didn't work, that's why.*

- And did you ever drink alone?
- *Until I was drunk.*
- Alone, without company?
- *Once I drank alone... but only a small jar.*
- What do you think causes you to be like this... that you drink so much?
- *That I don' work.*
- But how could you get a job if you drank every day?
- *I think if I stopped drinkin', I met with my friends... I already told you. We started hangin' out in groups. Not everyone has money, but someone had money an' we went drinkin' together.*
- Sometimes friends lead you the wrong way. Not all of them are true friends, right?
- *That's right, no?*
- I understood that you started to quit drinking?
- *Yeah.*
- The fact that you are not drinking, is it causing you problems?
- *No... I'm doin' fine. For that time my ... For example, I have a friend that has a girlfriend an' she introduced me to her cousin an' I don't think that girl would go out with a drunk. It's also good for me not to drink.*

- Of course... that's true.

- *Ha! It's weird that I drink only Sundays. Now you know... it's very strange because it don't do me no good, because the next day I wake up with a headache... that's why I don't wanna drink even on Sundays.*

- Any other type of drug use?

- *No.*

- Of alcohol?

- *No.*

- You haven't tried marihuana?

- *I know it an' I never used it.*

- "Pitillos"?

- *Them neither.*

- They never tempted you?

- *Yeah, they tempted me but I never tried them 'cause I was scared.*

- As to girls, have you had a girlfriend?

- *Yeah, I can remember three.*

- Tell me about them.

- *What I remember... they always left me.*

- Because you drank?

- *Yeah.*

- How long were you with those three, how many months, years?

- *I was with one of them a year an' three months.*

- She couldn't put up with you?

- *Yeah.*

- Something that you can remember... something about any of them?

- *I don't remember what was happenin'... so much drinking I've forgotten.*

- How is your relationship with your parents now?

- *Yeah, I get along well with my father.*

- It's all right for him to come here now?

- *Yeah.*

- Does he know why you're here?

- *They made me get up around 9 to 9:30... they locked it an' they made me get up early.*

- And your friends know?

- *Yeah. All of them know.*

- And what you are doing?

- *"Palito" is workin', the (...) went the wrong way too, the (...) too, the (...) is workin' as a mason an' almost all my friends're workin'.*

- Do you have any plans for the future now that it's easier to deal with you?

- *My feelings are that I'm not gonna give up until I have a profession.*

- What else do you like other than being a musician?

- *Mechanic, chauffeur.*

- What would you like to do most in your job?

- *Let's see... I dunno.*

- What you wouldn't like to be?

- *To be a drunk an' mean... no.*

- What do you think you should do to improve?

- *Well, what I should be I dunno. Well, try to improve, right? First, stop drinkin', second to work an' make money to improve socially an' dedicate myself to music.*

- If someone could help you, what would you want from him?

- *Money.*

- Only that?

-
- *Depends, no? Not only money... that they also help me, I mean in something.*
 - *In what way do you want them to help you?*
 - *Like they say ... advice, 'cause advice can become a reality, right?*
 - *Someone who can help you study, something like that?*
 - *Oh, of course, I'd like to study because I've always been interested in studyin'.*
 - *Would you like to study, Johnny?*
 - *Yeah, in school.*
 - *Not necessarily in school... in an institute... here, for example.*
 - *Yeah. 'Cause I've always had... I've always been interested in studyin'.*

MARIO



MARIO

Mario is 16 years old.

- How old were you when you left home?

- *I was eight year'.*

- Where did you go after you left home?

- *First I started beggin', then I got together with bad friends, then I started stealin' potatoes, then I started drinkin'.*

- Why did you leave your home?

- *'Cause of no money.*

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *I have four brothers. I'm the second one, I got an older brother.*

- Are your parents living?

- *My mother is living, my father left me at two, I dunno my father, I dunno if he's alive.*

- *Tell my about your stepfather...*

- *He's good; I think he's sorta shy, he never corrects me, he sees me an' he doesn't say nothing; I feel ashamed to talk to him, I'm not with him.*

- *After stealing potatoes, what did you do?*

- *I started stealin' bigger stuff.*

- *Like what?*

- *Money from pockets. I went late at night, by the (...) an' I rolled the drunks.*

- *Who taught you to steal?*

- *I had a friend... a cousin. He taught me in (...) I started pickin' pockets in (...). When he took the money out I watched him an' I saw it was easy to get money. I watched him 'til I learned.*

- *Were you a shoeshine boy?*

- *Yeah. It was fun, but I was into stealin', I couldn't stop ... then I joined a gang. Sometimes we broke into kitchens an' ran, we went an' sold the stuff.*

- *How long were you like that, hanging out?*

- *Six years, since I was eight until I was thirteen.*

- Did you go back to your home?
- *Yeah, I went back. But my mother didn't want me there.*
- Why?
- *'Cause I went to my house to sniff cement glue an' my mother didn't want that. She threw me out an' I left.*
- How old were you when you started sniffing glue?
- *I must have been ten. One day I was sniffin' gasoline by the (...) an' one of the boys that was already sniffin' went, "This is better than gasoline," then I sniffed it an' I felt better.*
- How long did you do gasoline?
- *It was my first drug, then thinner.*
- Rehinol?
- *Yeah.*
- What do you feel?
- *It gives you courage. We went to (...), many people looked at us, 'cause you walked like a drunk.*
- What did your mother say, other than throwing you out?
- *She told me to quit that, I shouldn't get together with bad friends, I told her, "OK," but I still ran away.*

- Where you ever arrested?

- *Yeah.*

- Tell me about it.

- *About six times.*

- For what reasons?

- *The first time was 'cause they caught us sleepin' on the streets. They took us to the police station. After that it was for theft. The municipal police also carried out raids (periodic raids by the police or mayor's office to catch bums, tramps, etc.). After that they took us ... sometimes (...) they picked us up, an' after that they let us go, they always took us to (...) an' we escaped.*

- Several of you?

- *Yeah. The first time we got caught was with three friends. After that a cop was helping us to get out because nobody knew us ... It was the first time, an' he helped us get out. Then we got caught again, they started to know us. After that he wanted to adopt us, we were starting ... so we could change, he said.*

- What other things have you tried?

- *Rehinol. Life on the streets is not for me. It's not very good. For me it's something instructive ... to realize it myself. So when you are old you know a little, on the streets you learn more, when you are shy it gives you courage to talk to people, you don't feel shy.*

- Have you had serious problems with the police?

- No.

- Have you gotten dizzy?

- *Once I stole a bicycle, after that I was stealing bicycles for some time. I went through (...) all the neighborhoods, even stole a small motorcycle.*

- What did you do?

- *I gave it to the older ones. Then they gave me, I dunno how much, but for me it was a lot then.*

- Did you ever get out of (...)?

- *The farthest I went was (...) I didn' know nothing, I was gonna (...) but I got on the wrong train an' it took me far away, I stayed at the stop, an' I came back on the same train that came back that day.*

- Without paying for a ticket?

- *Yeah, on the upper part, or down, I went in to eat in the wagons that carried the cargo.*

- Why did you want to go to (...)?

- *To see places. I was goin' with other friends, an' they got caught an' they kicked them out, on the road.*

- Were you in other foster homes?

- *No, only in this one.*

- Who brought you here?

- *My mother.*

- Why?

- *I mean, I ran away. I went out to the street the last time, I went with my box, I was away from home two years. Then I felt sad for not seeing my mother... I asked one from the (...) to help me, he helped me go back home, then I went an' hugged my mother, the one from the (...) started talking with my mother, I dunno what they were talking about, then they took me from one place to another, to the (...) to the office of the (...) the last time she brought me well dressed, then they went to the office of (...) an' they brought me here.*

- Of your own free will?

- *Yeah, she didn' say nothing. "Get changed, we're going there." "OK," I said, since I didn' know this place. I came in an' she made me stay.*

- Does your mother come to visit you?

- *Yeah.*

- Why don't you go home?

- *'Cause I don't wanna go.*

- Why?

- *I went out alone, I just ran away Sunday, four days ago.*

- What did you do?

- *I came back Monday.*

- Where did you sleep?

- *It was cold. I slept in a pit in the Avenue (...). There is a pit in the middle of the avenue an' some (...), I got in... the cars passed on the side.*

- Were you sniffing glue?

- *No, no drugs. That's why I was cold.*

- Why did you run away?

- *There's an educator that doesn't know how to lose, in soccer he always gives us problems. I don't like that. He also punishes us unfairly; that's why I left. It's not the first time... since I left the foster home (...) the problems started. When I was in the foster home (...) I didn't have problems, it was cool.*

- What are the kids on the streets to you?

- *I wasn't with the girls, I always liked to be alone, when I had money. They lent me, I gave it to them... but I didn't stay with them. I slept alone... I loved them as friends. I got a sister that went wrong.*

- Where is your sister?

- *She's on the streets.*

- What's her name?

- (...)

- How did she go wrong?

- *She went looking for me so I would go home. "No," I said. An' I misled her saying, "I'm gonna go later." She begged. After that it's the same, anyone who starts beggin' goes wrong.*

- What do you mean begging?

- *I mean asking for money, things... It's an experience. You start beggin' an' you see bad things... my friend, or even if not my friend, you see them an' you learn.*

- But is you sister still on the streets?

- *She worked, my mother told me: but she run away.*

- Is anyone else on the streets?

- *My brother. He's in (...)*

- What does he do?

- *He went into a snack shop an' he stole the money box. It was the first time, so my mother goes, "I don't want him to go wrong," an' she took him to his godfather, it's gonna be three years ago. I had a friend on the streets, an orphan an' another one, they called him (...), we looked for a job together. We were younger, we shined shoes with our shoeshine box. They brought lotsa shoes to shine. Sometimes they paid us or gave us food... an' other times we washed cars. That's when they made raids. We went, these ladies adopted us but we never stole from them. Since they brought me here, I haven't seen*

them again. I saw one of them changed. Fat, with a nun. The other one works.

- What solution do you have for the street problem?

- *Here (in the foster home) I'm getting an education an' with a profession I'm gonna be able to work, from there...*

- What would you say to your parents?

- *I don't wanna go back to the streets, I'm not very sure.*

- Why aren't you very sure?

- *Well, because here it's OK. If you go back to the streets, for example (...) you are gonna see friends an' you wanna do the same thing as before.*

CHALY



CHALY

Chaly is going to let us know a little bit more about kids that have or have had problems. As I was telling you, Chaly, a life story is nothing more than a series of things that you remember from your life, that you can't forget. What you liked or haven't liked. The problems you had with drugs, especially cement glue, everything you think is important so that we get to know you.

Chaly, let's start the work. What's your name?

- *Chaly.*

- How old are you?

- *Ten, no, eleven already.*

- When is your birthday?

- *The fifteenth, when we went on a picnic.*

- Fifteenth of August? On August 15 you are going to turn twelve?

- *Yeah.*
- What would you like me to give you?
- *It depends.*
- But what do you need the most? I won't give you what I want... it has to be what you want.
- *A toy... could it be big? Skates.*
- A skateboard?
- *Very big... clothes an' shoes.*
- I'm going to bring you clothes, OK? What do you remember from when you were a boy?
- *I would leave my house, I liked playin' in the street an' when I left my house an' after playin' my father arrived an' he hit me. I should have obeyed him, the next day I went out again.*
- What do you like to play?
- *Marbles, playin' with my friends.*
- What friends do you remember from when you were a little boy?
- *The (...) an' the (...)*
- Older or younger than you?
- *The (...) is older, the other one is my size.*

-
- And what have you heard of the (...) and the (...)?
 - *The (...) stutters, he's very poor an' the other too, they're brothers.*
 - Where were you born?
 - *Here in the hospital (...)*
 - Here in (...)?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Have you been to other places, do you know other places?
 - *No, nothin' else than this an' (...) I know.*
 - Some other city?
 - *I only know (...).*
 - Have you lived in (...)? How long did you live in (...)?
 - *A month.*
 - Who did you live with there?
 - *With my father, my mother an' my grandma.*
 - Chaly, how many brothers and sisters are there in your family?
 - *Three.*
 - The oldest one, what's his name?

- *It's me.*

- You're the oldest one?

- *Yeah.*

- Who follows?

- (...) *my sister.*

- How old is (...)?

- *She's six.*

- Who follows?

- (...) *is four years old.*

- Are your parents living?

- *Yeah, they are.*

- Together?

- *No, separated.*

- They separated?

- *My mother went with another man an' my father, he lives alone.*

- And your brothers and sisters, who do they live with?

- *In the (...) foster home.*

- Why did your parents separate?

- *'Cause my mother went to live in another part too often an' my father didn't go so much. He went to work an' came back drunk; he asked my mother. We cooked for ourselves... me an' my mother an' my brothers.*

- Why do you think your parents drank?

- *They liked chicha; my father didn't drink so much, only when he "emptied" (the cement mix into a construction site).*

- What did he do?

- *Construction.*

- Your father was a construction worker?

- *Yeah.*

- And your mother?

- *She sold things on the street.*

- How old were you when your parents separated?

- *I was ten.*

- Not too long ago... two years ago?

- *Yeah.*

- Have you heard anything about your parents?

- *No, I haven't.*

- So it's two years since you've seen them?

- *Yeah.*

- And your brothers and sisters?

- *I haven't see them for two years either. When I was with my father we always went... sometimes we bought "chicharron" (fried pork) when my father had money.*

- How long ago since you've seen your brothers?

- *Two years.*

- You've never seen them in these two years?

- *Yeah.*

- Your brothers, how long have they been in the foster home?

- *Just a year.*

- And how come you have not seen them in two years?

- *'Cause when I lived in my house with my mother an' my father, we went to register them. I lived there a year... then I ran away when my parents got separated.*

- Would you like to see your brothers?

- *I'd like to.*

-
- Chaly, do you go to school, or not?
 - *Yeah.*
 - What grade did you get to?
 - *Third grade.*
 - Third grade? Do you know how to read and write?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Would you like to study?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Are you still studying?
 - *Classes haven't started yet, but I'm already registered, they say that they're on strike.*
 - Where?
 - *Here, in the little school.*
 - What would you like to do the most when you grow up?
 - *Carpentry work.*
 - What can you tell us about when you were a boy? You told us that you left your house and that your parents hit you. What else do you remember?

- *Just that, I don't remember anymore.*
- You don't remember anything else from when you were a boy? Only that? What about your brothers and sisters?
- *Sometimes I took care of them an' when my parents went out... my parents went to buy fruits... vegetables in the morning. Fruit to sell, my mother. My father... when my father came back he went to his work, he left my brothers. Then I went out, I helped my mother a little an' then I left my house.*
- What else do you remember from when you were a boy? From your grandfather, your grandmother?
- *My grandfather was fighting a bull an' he died, he was gored.*
- How old were you when your grandfather died?
- *I was two years old.*
- Very little? Do you remember something about your grandparents?
- *Only that. My grandmother died of rheumatism.*
- How old were you when your grandmother died?
- *Three already. The same day it happened. When the mourning was over my mother an' my grandmother cried. The next day at night I got in an' when they arrived my mother an' my grandmother prayed... rheumatism.*
- What did you do afterwards, Chaly?

-
- *When she died we came back to (...) an' we stayed, we went to (...) again.*
 - *And what did you do in (...)?*
 - *We lived there, sometimes we went to the fields to sow potatoes.*
 - *You had land?*
 - *Yeah.*
 - *Someone's land, your land?*
 - *Yeah, ours.*
 - *After that what did you do?*
 - *Later, four years ago we came back here an' we went there on All Saints Day... we took roses.*
 - *And what were your parents doing here?*
 - *My father worked an' my mother too.*
 - *And you helped your father in his work?*
 - *Yeah, sometimes he took me, then sometimes my mother took me to (...) to sell.*
 - *What did your mother sell?*
 - *Fruit an' vegetables.*

- After that what happened? Your parents got separated and...?
- *My mother left with another man... since that day I haven't heard from her.*
- What happened after your mother left?
- *Then I ran away from home, I escaped to the streets, an' I was there a week.*
- Why did you run away?
- *My father hit me too much, 'cause I left. I made him mad... an' I ran away to the streets.*
- How long were you on the streets?
- *Two years.*
- How old were you when you ran away?
- *Ten. When I was ten my parents separated.*
- Then you ran away from home?
- *Yeah.*
- And what did you do on the streets?
- *I was with my friends.*
- Where?

-
- *There in the (...) in the cemetery... we hung out there.*
 - And what did you do there?
 - *We sniffed glue.*
 - Did you steal?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Cars?
 - *No, just from women.*
 - What did you steal from them?
 - *Their money.*
 - Who taught you to sniff glue, Chaly?
 - *An older boy.*
 - And how did you do it?
 - *I don't know... when I was on the streets I saw it. "What's that?" I asked. "Cement glue," he said, an' he told me how it would be. "How do you sniff glue?" I asked him an' he showed me how he sniffed glue, inhaling.*
 - What else?
 - *I started sniffin' glue, we stole.*

- Speak a little more clearly... you are a young man, what else happened?
- *We started stealin', he stole an' I held the money an' ran away to the hill.*
- The boy was older than you?
- *A little older than me.*
- Only a little?
- *Yeah.*
- How old were you when you started stealing?
- *Eleven years old.*
- Between ten and eleven what did you do?
- *I was on the streets.*
- Where did you sleep?
- *In the (..) on cardboard.*
- You didn't know about (...)?
- *No.*
- In the (...) where you all sleep?
- *I know that because of the shoe store, there's one (...) right? Across from there, we slept there.*

- And when you started stealing, you never had problems with the police?

- *Never.*

- And your friend?

- *Yeah he had, because I ran away.*

- And your friend also sniffed glue?

- *Yeah.*

- How long did you sniff glue?

- *We sniffed glue two years. We split up when I went to (...) an' I heard people talk about the foster home (...). I asked a boy, he told me where, "It's around (...) by (...), a little further," he told me.*

- Why did you split up with your friend?

- *'Cause he was in jail.*

- Why was he in jail? What's your friend's name?

- (...).

- Why did he get thrown in jail (...)?

- *'Cause we stole 500 Bolivianos from a woman an' they caught him. I escaped to the hill where (...)*

- And have you heard anything about your friend?

- *No. Since the day they put him in I didn't hear nothing.*
 - How long have you been in (...)?
 - *A week. Sometimes I went to the street to see my friend, I went for a walk, I came back to (...), went in, ate, went out.*
 - What did you like about the (...) (the foster home)?
 - *There... help them.*
 - What didn't you like about the children's home?
 - *We played too much... When they hit me I remember... I think I'm at home when they hit me like that.*
 - You didn't like it because of that? After (...) you came here?
 - *Yeah.*
 - You came alone?
 - *Yeah.*
- Why did you come?
- *'Cause sometimes they hit me too much.*
 - Why did they hit you?
 - *'Cause sometimes... they hit us for anything.*
 - Chaly, how long have you been sniffing glue?

- *Two years... When we split up they put him in jail... I ran away to (...) an' then I came back to (...) then I heard this home was nicer than the (...) an' other foster homes.*

- Aside from cement glue, have you done anything else?

- *Gasoline.*

- What did you feel when you inhaled gasoline?

- *My head spun ... It hurt.*

- An' how long did you inhale — one hour, two?

- *One hour, sometimes one, it hurt a little while and then I rested, an' then it hurt again.*

- And what did you feel?

- *My head turning around.*

- And do you like that?

- *Yeah.*

- You liked to feel that your head was turning around? What else?

- *No, we liked the smell.*

- With how many friends did you inhale?

- *Just two, for a while.*

- After that, did you do any other drugs?
- *No, only those two things, cement glue an' gasoline.*
- And the cement glue, what did you feel when you did cement glue?
- *We thought we were in heaven.*
- You imagined heaven?
- *An' when we looked at the floor, we weren't.*
- Like you were flying?
- *Aha!*
- What else did you feel?
- *We imagined things in the movie, when we were watchin' movies.*
- What else do you remember?
- *Just that.*
- How long did you sniff glue? An hour? Two? Three?
- *An hour.*
- More or less? And how much cement glue did you buy?
- *A quarter.*
- What's that?

-
- *Only a quarter.*
 - But what is a quarter?
 - *A quarter of a liter.*
 - A quarter of what? Half a jar? The fourth part of it?
 - *Yeah.*
 - Where did you buy it?
 - *From the hardware stores.*
 - They sold it?
 - *Yeah, we fooled them.*
 - What did you tell them? Let's see... how did you buy cement glue?
 - *We told them, "Sell us cement glue, we need it to glue shoes in the shoe repair store."*
 - They sold you that little?
 - *Yeah! in a jar.*
 - And what did you do with the jar?
 - *They sold it to us, it's always bottled in the jar. We bought two, for him, half for me.*
 - Did you sell it or didn't you?

- *No, only for us.*

- *And gasoline?*

- *Gasoline, we bought very little. We smelled it in bags.*

- *Chaly, have you got in trouble for stealing?*

- *Never, they only caught me once an' I made him let me go an' I escaped.*

- *And what happened? They caught you?*

- *No they didn't catch me. No. They were holdin' me hard until, little by little, I was getting loose, then I reached out my hand an' I escaped.*

- *Why did you come here?*

- *'Cause it's nicer in here.*

- *You like being here?*

- *Yeah.*

- *Do they treat you well?*

- *Yeah.*

- *What do you think you should do to improve?*

- *Yeah... to improve I would like to be OK... solve all my problems.*

-
- What problems do you have?
 - *That my father goes back with my mother, because sometimes it makes me sad.*
 - Don't you think that's difficult? Don't you think it's better that you accept that your parents are separated? That they are not going to live together? Have you heard from your father?
 - *No, once I saw him in a bus... we were going an' my father was working in (...) we saw him an' then we went to (...).*
 - Why did you leave?
 - *All of us left. It was children's day, I saw him working on the bridge. He was repairing the bridge.*
 - You haven't heard from him again?
 - *Yeah. Since that time that I saw him, the bus was going fast.*
 - What do you remember about your brothers?
 - *My brothers, almost nothing.*
 - How long has it been since you've seen your brothers?
 - *Two years.*
 - You haven't seen them even for a day?
 - *Not a day.*

- Not once?
- *Not once, because I didn't get out of here.*
- And you didn't ask them to take you?
- *Yeah. The young man (...) told me, take me to (...) "Yeah, you're gonna let me know when you go, OK?" I told him, because once he had gone an' he didn' tell me.*
- What else Chaly, let's see. What do you remember the most from your mother and your father?
- *Nothing else, that's the only thing I remember.*
- What did you like the most about your mother?
- *My mother was always selling. She gave me fruit to eat, just that.*
- What do you remember the most about your father?
- *My father gave me money, we would buy candy, soda, when we went to his work.*
- Did you like being with your father?
- *Yeah.*
- What did you like the most about your father's job?
- *When he worked there, what he was doing with the cement, when he was about to finish, then I liked helping him finish.*

- Here in this city, in what area did you live?
- *I lived in (...)*
- (...) on this side or the other side?
- *Upwards.*
- Towards (...)?
- *No, on the (...) there.*
- Was it your house or was it rented?
- *Rented. My father was saving an' my mother spent it all on chicha. He had to buy bricks to build my house.*
- Where there ever problems in your house? A serious problem with your father?
- *Once they fought, because my mother had been drinking, heavy, when she spent that money.*
- And what happened?
- *My father hit her an' he left her there, he hit her an' she covered both her eyes. Then they separated, my mother left.*
- Something that you remember from your house, Chaly? Some of the most important things that happened in your house, that you remember from when you lived with your parents...
- *My mother an' my father fought bad in my house because my mother went drinking at the chicha place. When my father arrived sober*

from his work, an' my mother arrived drunk an' we didn't know where to go, my brothers an' me. An' my father waited for my mother. We were cooking. "Leave the house!" my father told us, "Go out an' play, I'm gonna beat your mother!" "OK" we said, because there was no way of saving her. 'Cause my mother got drunk. 'Cause of that my father got angry. He always hit her because she would go too much an' she didn't learn.

- Do you remember your sisters?

- My sisters... when we went outside, to play an' my father would let us go out. Sometimes we watched TV in my house an' once the three of us went out, we went very far an' we almost got lost.

- You took a long time getting home?

- Yeah, at five, six in the morning we arrived.

- You mean the next day? At what time did you leave?

- We went out in the afternoon an' my father was very worried.

- Chaly, when you studied, what subject did you like to study the most?

- To practice the tables... help the other boys when they need something.

- What did you like the least about studying?

- The multiplication tables.

- Only that? When you were living in your house, what was it that you liked to play the most?

- *With marbles an' with my friends. Sometimes I washed cars.*
- Where did you wash cars?
- *There, in the gas station in a (...) there (...)*
- Where?
- *From (...) over here.*
- Here in (...)?
- *Of (...) a little going up... around here (he makes a sign).*
- Another thing that I think is very important to mention is this problem of cement glue. Have you had problems using cement glue?
- *Yeah.*
- How long did you sniff cement glue?
- *For a year.*
- During that year, what were you doing?
- *I was on the streets with my friends... Sometimes we rented a room, when we stole money. We slept there, in that room.*
- You were sleeping alone for a year?
- *With my friend.*
- Where did you live?

- *By the (...)*

- Did you have problems that year?

- *Yeah.*

- What type of problems?

- *My father saw me a lot on the streets, I ran away. He wanted to get me an' take me home an' I didn't wanna go home.*

- Why did you run away from home?

- *'Cause sometimes my father treated me bad. 'Cause of that I ran away.*

- Did your father ever find you? Did he catch you?

- *No.*

- How long were you in the (...) house?

- *I was in the (...) house three weeks.*

- How long have you been living here?

- *Just a week.*

- Here in the house, and how long were you in the (...)?

- *Four weeks.*

- Those four weeks in (...), what did you do?

- *I did my cleaning up, I also helped the others when they weren't there. My educator sent me to help them because they were small, I helped them when I finished my cleaning quickly.*

- What were your daily activities at the home? What did you do in the foster home? In a day what did you do in the foster home?

- *We ate.*

- You didn't get up to eat?

- *No, first we cleaned ourselves up, then the man asked us to form a line. An' then we... he checked our hands, if we had combed our hair an' washed. If we weren't well groomed we had to go an' wash again an' then when that finished we had breakfast.*

- What else?

- *We finished breakfast, we went out to play, then another man came an' he gave us an hour an' we cleaned the garden, when we finished the garden we washed our hands so they didn' crack, then we finished that an' we played with the skates.*

- What else?

- *Then we had classes with "The Hindu" (teacher's nickname).*

- What classes did you have with the Hindu?

- *He taught us how to add, multiply.*

- Nothing else?

- *Also to paint.*
- After that what did you do?
- *When the classes were over... it was time to pick up the dishes, then we had to wash the dishes... then we watched TV.*
- What do you like the most about TV?
- *Laisman an' G-ban.*
- What else?
- *An' cartoons.*
- After that what did you do?
- *After that we turned the TV off an' we got in a line... dinner was ready to eat, an' then we sat down an' prayed. We finished eating an' we had to wash.*
- And after that?
- *After washing ourselves, they checked us.*
- Who checked the cleaning?
- *The man.*
- And after that?
- *He finishes checking... an' we play afterwards.*

- And after that?
- *We have to form a line again an' we clean the garden.*
- In the afternoon?
- *Yeah. In the afternoon we clean two times.*
- After cleaning the garden, what do you do?
- *Then we finish that an' we go play soccer again.*
- After that?
- *We eat dinner... we had to form a line.*
- What else did you do during the rest of the day?
- *He made us form a line... then we went inside, we prayed, we ate. Then we keep on living. We finish eating, we have to say, "Enjoy your meal." Then we go watch TV, then "Laisman" ends an' we go take a shower.*
- With hot or cold water?
- *Hot.*
- And after that, what do you do?
- *Then we take a shower an' we watch TV again.*
- And at what time do you go to sleep?

- *We went to sleep at nine.*
- That's what you did in the foster home?
- *Yeah.*
- What you do, more or less, in the foster home?
- *Yeah.*
- And when you lived with your friend, what did you do during the day?
- *During the day I went walking alone. Sometimes I met other friends on the street.*
- And what did you do with your friends?
- *We stole, we went to where they sell clothes, we lifted their clothes, an' we ran. The ladies didn't see us.*
- Did you ever have problems because of that?
- *No, only one time.*
- What happened?
- *I was taking something an' one lady screamed... a man caught us. "Let them go," she told them. Then they let us go.*
- They didn't hit you?
- *No, they didn't do anything to me, they only scolded me.*

- And when you lived with your parents, what did you do during the day?

- *First breakfast in my house, we got up from the table an' played an' I washed my clothes.*

- When you lived with your parents did you prepare breakfast or your mother?

- *My mother.*

- That's another thing, right?

- *Yeah.*

- What else did you do during the day?

- *I got up from the table, sometimes I helped my mother wash the glasses.*

- What else did you do?

- *Then my mother went to the market to sell.*

- What did she sell in the market?

- *Fruit.*

- What else does she sell during the day? And when you lived with your parents?

- *We were there until noon. We had lunch in the street with my mother. My father would come to where my mother sold. At noon. My father*

took me to lunch, my mother gave him money so that we had lunch. We took it to my mother in a small pot.

- What else did you do?

- *We were there until the afternoon. My mother was still selling. Then at six we went home.*

- And when you lived with your friend, where did you eat or have lunch?

- *We ate.*

- Where?

- *In the market.*

- How old were you when your parents got separated?

- *Ten years old.*

- Ten? Why did your parents separate?

- *'Cause they fought too much.*

- Was there some other woman or man?

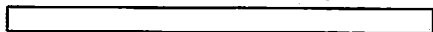
- *No, not for my father.*

- For your mother?

- *She went with men when she drank.*

- Did you ever have problems because of that?
- *Once my father fought with this man when he saw that he was leaving with my mother, then they fought. My father beat him.*
- The police didn't go?
- *The police didn't come.*
- What happened to that man?
- *He left all beaten up.*
- And your mother?
- *My mother left too. "If you want you can go 'cause we can't have you, because you leave us too much," 'cause of that my father got pissed off. He kicked my mother in the back.*
- You told me that you were sniffing glue for a year? With whom did you sniff glue?
- *Sometimes with my friends... we sniffed glue in a group.*
- And where did you sniff glue?
- *Up there.*
- Behind the wall?
- *You got it!*

MARIO JOSÉ



MARIO JOSE

We are going to talk to one of the people who is part or was part of observation group number 1; now he's in group number 2.

- Well, first what's your name?

- *Mario José.*

- Mario José, how old are you?

- *Fifteen.*

- What do you remember the most about your childhood? When you were a child whom did you live with? Your parents?

- *What I remember is that my parents fought lots . . .*

- Your parents fought lots . . . How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *We are. . . I have a brother and two half sisters.*

- The half sisters are on whose side? Your father's or your mother's?

- *My mother's.*

- What happened to your father? Is he alive?

- *No.*

- He's dead?

- *Yes. I only have my mother.*

- You said that when you were a child your parents fought very much. Why did they fight? Do you remember?

- *When my father went to the Chapare to stamp coca, the money he made, he blew it on drinking. When I was small he didn't even wanna recognize me. My mother went to the lawyer and spent a lot of money on that. 'Cause of that my father, to forget about me, he drank too much. When he was drinking, in the Chapare when he drank he fell down drunk. The humidity of the floor.. he got sick with pneumonia. When he came back, instead of coming back healthy and with money, he arrived sick and he didn't even wanna recognize me. That's why my mother split. Then when he didn't wanna recognize me, he was a little healthy, after his illness he kept drinking, he didn't even say ... nothing. "Don't drink." He would say, "Is it your money?" so then my father came drunk to the house to hit my mother. When I was small I knew about it.*

- Is your brother older or younger?

- *Younger.*

- How old is your brother?

- *Ten.*

1 - Where were you born?

- *In (...)*

- You've always lived in (...)?

- *In the province (...).*

- From there, where did you go? To the Chapare?

- *No, only my father went to stamp coca in the Chapare, in the beginning when they didn' know nothing.*

- Do you know if your father got into trouble because of his activities? Did he get in trouble with the police for stamping coca?

- *Yes.*

- What happened? Do you remember?

- *Yes, when he was stamping at first narcotics [police] came to my house. And my father told them, "I don't know nothing" and they came to look for him. My father hid some time... you know, until narcotics changed. Others took over and my father left, so that's what I was very scared of, I was afraid that they were gonna kill my father, I cried then I went looking for my mother and told her that narcotics was there and they were in the house I told her, she didn' wanna go because they were separated. One day, I remember he was drinking and my mother didn' wanna go because she had also been*

drinking, because when my mother made money from coca, she said she didn't wanna share it with my father, she would say, "It's not your money either."

- Your father was only dedicated to that activity? Or did he do something else?

- *Yes, a workshop.*

- What type of workshop?

- *Welding.*

- What did your mother do?

- *Coca.*

- She sold coca?

- *Yes. She sold coca and sometimes she brought cocaine. She went to the Chapare, she went to bring back cocaine.*

- And did your mother get into trouble?

- *Yes.*

- What happened?

- *Yes, the "Leopardos"²² they caught her, but they let her go after she paid a fine.*

²² Leopardos: rural police in charge of narcotraffic control.

- A lot of money?

- *Yes, and then that came out and she and my aunts went there, with my aunts that I have. They also worked in cocaine, going to the Chapare and they bought it and sold in Montero.*

- Your parents lived together or separated?

- *They were separated almost five years.*

- How old were you when your father died?

- *Twelve.*

- They were separated for five years, and before that they lived together?

- *Yes.*

- How long did they live together?

- *For a year or two.*

- What do you remember the most about your childhood, when you lived with your mother and father?

- *What I remember? That my father at first was... after my uncles told him "don't drink," they recommended him, he was interested in evangelism, he wanted to become... but his friends said, "Let's go play cards," he spent his money there, he didn't even say... my uncle told him, "I have a piece of land, a piece of land in the Chapare, I'll give it to you," my father accepted. He sold that land. During that time he thought about me a little bit, and he set up a workshop. He sold*

the piece of land and had bought welding material and then my father was working in the workshop. My mother started drinking because she loved my father so much, she drank because they were separated. She forgot about me, about my brothers. I had a brother that died, two that died, one was called (...), the other one was a two year old girl, the other one that died was a year and a half, because my mother wasn't careful, she drank too much... because of that I was very scared, I went to my grandmother's...

- Was the workshop in the Chapare or in Yapacaní?

- *It was in (...)*

- When you went to (...) to your grandmother's, how long did you live with her?

- *The first time when I went to (...) it was when I hit a girl and a boy also, because they had hit my little brother and they told me, "I'm gonna make your dad hit you!" They told my father, my father was mean, perverse, and because of that I ran away to (...) I got lost there.*

- Do you remember when your father wanted to hit you hard?

- Yes.

- What happened?

- *Since I was very little I liked playing, so he would tell me, "Come and do your homework." I would say, "In a minute," and I did my homework and after that I looked somewhere else. He hit me in the head, he pulled my ear, he would say, "Do this!" and he hit me with his belt and he broke his belt, he was hitting me so much.*

- How old were you when this happened?

- *Almost six.*

- Do you remember anything very important that you felt about your brother?

- *No, I can't remember.*

- Something that you remember about your grandmother?

- *Yes. She was good. She also gave advice to my father, she told him, "Why those fights? Don't fight," because she is an evangelical. She told them they should live well, to set up the workshop, to buy machines, my father said, "I wanna buy." When he was working he was in a co-op he built a school, it's called (...). He was saving, he went to Brazil to buy machinery and he sold it, he didn't sell it, it was my stepmother who sold it, because when my father died, it was her fault that he died because she sold a lot of bicarbonate to make drug, after that she sold this, um...*

- Paraffin?

- *Paraffin those things, spices (basic chemical materials used to make cocaine). She sold those and when she went with my father they were saving money to buy a piece of land for him, when one of those from narcotics came, they said, "You have to pay a fine of a thousand dollars" and he had six thousand to buy his land. "I don't have that money," and my stepmother said, "What do you mean you don't? Go and get what's in the box." Then my father got all red in the face, once he threw up blood, when he went to the doctor, the doctor told him, "If that happens one more time you're gonna die." That day when he left the workshop all red, like he got*

beaten by the narcotics police... they had hit him. I was in my school, I was practicing for a festival, then my father when he was leaving had vomited a lot of blood, my stepmother took him to the hospital and the narcotics people took his money and then they almost had no money. My stepmother told me, "Run to your grandmother's," I went to tell my grandmother and they said "I don't believe that," because before, every time they went to tell her he was feeling sick, when they came, "I'm fine, I feel better," my father said. This time my grandmother went, my grandfather didn't wanna go and if my father wasn't well he was gonna go back to (...) to tell everyone, my relatives, my uncles... then when I told them they took him to the hospital (...) in (...) he was in there for three days. After that, one night I had a dream about my father and I went to visit him, stealing ten pesos from my sisters, with that I went with my little brother... that night I slept in the street, my little brother didn't sleep in the street, he was with my cousin who sells sodas in the bus that comes at five in the morning, the buses when they come they stop there, so my little brother slept with my cousin in her stand and I went to pick him up there. We went in a bus... after that we arrived at (...). I didn't go directly to my father's, I went to my godmother's to tell her that he was sick. "Is he sick? she told me, "I hope he gets better..." she told me, I went around seven at night to see my father, my uncles were already in mourning, my grandmother was crying, he was already dead, I cried. He had a hemorrhage, lots of blood came out, it wouldn't stop. My aunt asked me "Did they hit you?" they gave me alcohol, after a long time the blood stopped.

- Your real mother lived with your father?

- Yes.

- After that your mother and father separated?

- *Yes.*
- After that your stepmother showed up, right?
- *Yes.*
- You lived together — you, your father and your stepmother?
- *Yes.*
- How long did you live together?
- *About two months, because that time my mom was in jail with my father.*
- So your mother had problems and you went to live with your father and your father lived with another woman, right?
- *Yes.*
- What do you remember the most about your mother?
- *She was... I had a stepfather too.*
- Your mother was with another man?
- *Yes, because my father already had another woman. Both of them had. I had a stepfather and that stepfather was mean, not so bad but he hit my mom. Then I was weak, a long time I didn't have much strength, I threatened, "I'm gonna kill you with a knife!" I told him and he got angry and he told me I was lazy, because I didn't do nothing. I left, I went to school, but I didn't work. I went to the Chapare with my father, my stepmother to make cocaine and I learned a little*

bit how it's made. My stepfather also taught me, "You stir this strongly, like this."

- Do you know anything about your mother?

- *She...*

- Do you know where she is?

- *Yes, in (...) but now I don't know what she's doing because they say they caught her, they took away all her money and that it's bad.*

- How long has it been since you've heard about her?

- *Since last year in August.*

- And do you know anything about your stepmother?

- *Yes, once I saw her in the Chapare with another man.*

- After you grew up, what happened? When your father died, did you live with your stepmother?

- *I didn't live with her. Then I lived with my uncles, with my god-mother, I was living with my grandmother.*

- After that what happened?

- *After that I went back home, my mother took me in. By that time my mother was, she didn't get caught, and she had a lot of money. She bought me a bicycle. I told her, "Mom, buy me expensive shoes, some Reeboks," she told me to wait, "I'm going to the Chapare and I'm gonna buy them for you." She always said the same thing and*

she didn't buy them, I cried until one time I demanded. "Mom, don't work in that, you have money, set up a business selling clothes." I told her that and she didn't listen and went drinking with my stepfather, they drank and they fought because my mother was jealous and so was my stepfather. When someone came to talk to my mother, my stepfather got jealous and he hit her, when a lady came to my stepfather and talked to him, they also fought.

- What really happened when you left home?

- The first time I left it was when I hit those two boys when I was 17.

- Afterwards?

- I escaped to Santa Cruz, I got lost and I was in the police for a month, in the 110 (urban mobile patrol police) around (...). I stayed for a month and then they took me to (...) from the (...) to a foster home, I don't know what foster home it was, I was young, I didn't know, I met some boys, they said, "Let's run away" and "A mean man is gonna come and he gonna hit us". I told them, "No" until one day my grandfather came and he found me and cried, since then I lived with my grandmother, I went home and my father found me in my house. "Why did you come?" he said, he wanted to hit me, but my mother was watching. Every time I saw my father I ran away because I was afraid of him. He didn't wanna see me on the streets, he wanted to see me in the house studying, working or doin' something.

- After that what happened? Did you run away from home again?

- Yes, I went to (...). After that when my father died, I was selling "bolos"²³ in the Chapare, I met some people there that stamp coca

²³ Bolos: yogurt in plastic bags.

and they asked me to smuggle it in my box. . . "OK," I told them and I did for a while, but after that I didn't wanna anymore.

- How much did they pay you?

- *Twenty, thirty pesos, ten pesos, it was good for me.*

- And after that what happened?

- *After that since the "Leopardos" were my friends I also gave them "bolos". After that I left. Every time I went through Chimoré, I thought of going to Cochabamba until I ran away. I sold my bicycle. I sold it in Yapacaní.*

- You came to (...)? What did you do in (...)? Where were you?

- *The first days I was on the streets, looking for a job because I was afraid. After that, since my aunt was living there, I started looking for her. I had a little money left, I went. I spent it in bus fares. I found my aunt, she asked me, "Why did you come?" "I came to visit you," I lied, "to see the place." I ran away because my father, my stepfather, and my mother they didn't listen to me. I lived almost two months with my aunt. After that I heard... that my sister-in-law was getting separated and had gone to (...), I went to (...) for a while and I was my friend's house too. His father didn't want me to stay and he threw me out and since I was angry with my brother-in-law, he was separated from my sister, I came to (...) I looked for a job and I didn't find one. I was there until midnight.*

- The sister you mention, she is your sister from what side?

- *My mother's.*

- Your sister is older?

- Yes.

- But she is your mother's daughter?

- Yes.

- With another man? What happened afterwards?

- I met a boy in the discotheque, in the (...), let's go to a flophouse, it costs two Bolivianos and I told him, "They're gonna catch you," I told him. "Don't be like that, let's go." I left my clothes with a lady and I told her, "I'm gonna pick them up tomorrow at such an hour." I went with him and he took me to a secret flophouse where the drunks sleep. I paid two Bolivianos. I went in and slept.

- Where is this flophouse? Do you remember?

- In the (...) around the flophouse (...) that's not the one, it's further over, around where there's a bar, (...) with curtains, you see? I was near there and I slept. Next day I found a job, he told me that he was gonna pay me less, only 40 Bolivianos because I didn't have an I.D. or anything, I just gave him my name and he asked me where I was from. I am from such a place and he let me stay.

- What did you do?

- As a waiter, I didn't like working there, the pay was low and I wanted to earn more to go back home with something, and one of those nights I went out around 9 at night... I slept there, with a bed and everything was the job and that night I went out, just because, I went out. I went to the street and I met some boys there. That boy went, "Let's go and

make money,” and I didn’t know what it was yet. We went and the first thing that we found was a drunk on the floor. He had a watch and good shoes and only that. The boy said the shoes for you and the watch for me, the shoes didn’t fit him, they fitted me, we stole them from him.

- You took his watch and his shoes?

- Yes, after that time, I liked going out to the street, I went out often and the lady told me, “If you go out once more, you gonna be fired.” After that time I didn’t go out no more, until one time I went out and I never went back. After some time I went back, but I was already in the foster home, ‘cause I was all dirty on the streets.

- What days did you go to the street? On the other side you had your job as a waiter?

- Yes.

- Other than the foster home, what did you do?

- I didn’t sniff glue, only once... sometimes, when I had friends that treated me a little bit and I didn’t let anyone catch me, I smoked in the (...).

- Where in the (...)? There (...) back there?

- Yes, back there around the (...) around that place. They left and then I met some boys that watched cars in the cemetery... I watched cars with them and it wasn’t sure that I took care of cars because the cops threw me out, “You don’t have anything, get out.” Others were nice, “Let him,” they said. I met friends and after that the boys said, “Let’s go to (...) Do you wanna go to (...) to the program?” “What

program?" "The program for kids who work," I went, the food was thirty cents. After that I went every day. I'm gonna stay on the streets, I know where to go to sleep, to eat... I already knew that flophouse for two Bolivianos, when I watched cars I went there to sleep, to have lunch I went to (...), I didn't save any money, I spent most of it.

- When was the first time that you did drugs?

- *When I was 11 years old.*

- What did you do?

- *Cocaine.*

- Cocaine or "pitillos"?

- *Cocaine, cigarettes, I smoked since I was little, because when my mother sold coca, she also sold cigarettes, she sold those cigarettes and we smoked with my cousin my age. We smoked in hiding.*

- What did you feel when you smoked that?

- *My tongue was hot. It was hot, it looked like "astote."*

- Your head didn't spin?

- *No, not yet, we only smoked two or three cigarettes.*

- You told us that one of the things you used was cigarettes, how was that?

- *That time that I was with my cousin only, I smoked with him and in hiding. Nobody knew. Only once my sister caught us: "What are you*

doing, I'm gonna tell Mom!" "Don't tell her," we told her.

- So your sister saw that you were smoking?

- *Yes, after that I was there, I used to "pijcheare" coca²⁴ and I felt the coca, when you chew it, it numbs you.*

- They made you "pijcheare"?

- *It makes you numb, after that at eight I learned about cocaine.*

- How did you learn about cocaine? What is cocaine like?

- *It's white powder. I saw that my mother made that dry and it smelled like I don't know what. I said "What is that..." I heard my mother say "merka" in Quechua and then I said what's merka, I asked my mother what that was, it smelled, I liked the smell.²⁵*

- What sensation did it produce? How did you feel when you smelled it?

- *Nervous, I felt strong. Sometimes my body got numb.*

- After that, how?

- *After a while, when I was 11, when I was in (...) I went back to Yapacaní to my mom's, I tried it then, I felt all numb, my head was like it was flyin'.*

²⁴ Pijcheare: the process of soaking the coca leaf in the mouth to extract the juice. Also called "acullicar."

²⁵ "Merka" comes from "merchandise" and is the drug traffickers' code word for cocaine, in the form of cocaine base paste, cocaine sulfate, or cocaine powder.

- For how long did you use it?
- *For a while and then I left it... afterwards I didn't do it much.*
- I mean the first time that you did it.
- *For example, I get together with my friends, I have a few drinks... sometimes I go at 7 and I get back at 11, How many hours have I been there? Four, right?*
- Did you do it that time? For how long? Do you remember?
- *Only about five months.*
- And how long do the effects last?
- *I don't know, but I went to my bed and I slept there.*
- Until the next day?
- *No, from 2 in the afternoon until almost 7, 8 at night.*
- Besides that, what else can you tell us about drug use? How long have you been doing cement glue?
- *When I was in Yapacaní, because I traveled very often to (...) until one time I decided to take matchboxes to sell in (...) what is it called... the sulfate, I took that. I took it, then my cousin said, "What did you bring?" "It's a hood" I told him. "Let me have it." I told him, "It's not for you." "Sell it to me..." he begged me and I sold it for 10 Bolivianos. I wanted to sell it for 20 Bolivianos, because he told me, "You don't know anyone." "I you want it," I told him, and I sold it to him and he drugged himself and some time later my cousin came to*

Yapacaní to visit me. "How are you?" he said. Then he told me that he shot his friend that had gone into the military, because he wanted to kill him. Only here they made up, because of that my godmother told me, "Why did you give it to him?" she asked me and I denied it: "I didn't give it to him." "They saw you," she told me. I denied it because I didn' wanna be seen. Every time I traveled, he told me "Have you brought it," he wanted to become a drug addict, and I told him, "No, so that you will shoot (...) again" he just shut up, after that he drank some beer.

- Did your mother and stepmother know that you were taking cocaine?

- *Only my sister knew a year, only that.*

- They didn't realize that you were stealing it?

- *Just my sister because she and I were in it together. Like they say, she too, her husband, my brother-in-law, was working in that, my sister took it but I asked her for a little. She sold it in matchboxes, what my sister had was extra money for her children, for her expenses.*

- And did they ever find out that you were taking it?

- *My brother and my other brothers... but my mother didn't realize, she only saw me handling bags. I sold two or three in my pocket, I spent that on a Sunday alone.*

- You mean that your mother still doesn't know that you were selling?

- *I think that she must know, because she saw me handling it, "Whose is that?" "It's my sister's," I would tell her, "I'm taking it for her.*

- You already knew that that white dust was cocaine, “merka”? What did your mother say about that? How did your mother explain what that was?

- *She didn't say anything, she only told me... the only thing I've known pure and white is the cocaine base paste, that is used for medicine, when it's kind of gray it's sulfate, it is used to drug oneself because the other one is the base paste, it's very strong, it can kill a drug addict and the sulfate is milder.*

- How long did you do it? Often?

- *Like for two years.*

- After that what else, alcoholic beverages?

- *Beer (...)*

- Beer?

- *Yes, the local brand.*

- Did you ever get drunk?

- *Yes.*

- What happened?

- *My aunt had a beer agency. When my aunt went to the Chapare to distribute the beer she was gonna be there for a day. Only my cousin that goes to school was in the house, it was a Friday. My aunt goes on Fridays, she distributes all day, she comes back Saturdays, like at noon.*

- To Yapacaní?

- *From Yapacaní, she goes back to the Chapare. Then I went with my cousin. A beer... in a day we almost finished a box.*

- How old were you?

- *Fourteen.*

- Fourteen? And what happened?

- *We drank, after a while, little by little, my body got numb, I looked at one thing and I couldn't focus, I looked like a drunk.*

- Did things move?

- *Things moved. It was the first time we got drunk with my cousin, then, he pinched me, he bit me, it didn't hurt, I laughed, nothing hurt, we were with him like that. Next day we got up early, almost at eight in the morning. We didn't go to school. I was more or less sort of OK, my head started hurting a little bit, nobody found out.*

- Nobody found out?

- *No.*

- When you were here, who gave you cement glue?

- *Other boys from (...).*

- What did you feel when you did cement glue?

- *The same, but when the effect is about to end, you feel cold.*

- And what are the effects?
- *You wanna steal, fight.*
- Did you see things?
- *I only wanted to see girls, to bother them.*
- Some other type of drugs? Thinner?
- *No.*
- Gasoline?
- *No, nothing like that.*
- How long did you use cement glue? How many months?
- *Only a little, it wasn't often, once a week.*
- But how much in a week? Once a week?
- *I was on the streets two months.*
- You told me a while ago that you tried to place yourself in a flop-house and that you ate in (...) what happened afterwards?
- *After that I thought about my house, and I cried and I told my mother, "What are my sisters doing?" I wanted to steal a lot of money to go back home or go to (...) and not be far away from my family, that is what I wanted to do, but afterwards I heard the boys say (...) to (...) I went to (a foster home for abandoned children).*

- You went to (...) or they took you?

- *I went there.*

- And what happened in (...)?

- *I arrived and I went in. Afterwards I was very abusive, I pestered them and because of that they bothered me. I behaved... they told me "why do you do that," others behaved... I just wanted to bother them and I almost didn't accept when they said "Let's fight." "No," I said, "Yes" sometimes.*

- You fought?

- *Yes, I fought until one time I left and they told me that in (...) they do die-casting. When I heard die-casting I thought that it was mechanics. "I'll go and study that," when I first came I was under observation, after observation I went to (...).*

- Why did you leave (...)?

- *Because I didn't like the control, because you don't study there, you don't do nothin', they're lazy, they become lazy there, they don't do anything.*

- How old were you when you entered the (...)?

- *Fourteen.*

- Then where did you work?

- *In (...) I turned 15.*

- Why did you come to (..)?

- *Because they told me that you could study die-casting, carpentry, I'm gonna study there, I said. I thought that I was gonna study right away, when I arrived they took me in...a Sunday we entered and they told me the rules, I obeyed the rules for a month and a half, I went to (...)*

- From (...) you went to (...)? And do you like being here?

- *Yes.*

- Would you like to go back to your family, to your mother?

- *Yes, but before that I wanna learn something, not like I went last time, so that my stepfather won't scream at me, that I am lazy, that I don't know how to do anything.*

- Do you know if your mother looked for you?

- *I dunno. I don't think she's looking for me, because when she's there she don't remember me, 'cause she drinks too much.*

- And your grandmother, what do you know about her?

- *I don't know anything about her.*

- Do you know if she's alive?

- *I dunno.*

- How long has it been since you lived with your family?

- *A year ago I came from there, I found my uncle here and he told me we were gonna go back to (...). I ran away from my uncle, I thought a lot I thought about that, I came to (...).*

- What else can you remember? What else did you like about living here with your aunt in (...)?

- *I felt very bored, I felt like a "daddy's boy," they told me I was raised that way... I didn't wanna be with my uncle, 'cause of that I ran away, I wanted to find a job, I wanted to learn how to work.*

- Do you like studying?

- *Yes.*

- What do you like to study the most?

- *Social Sciences.*

- What do you remember the most about the time you lived on the streets?

- *Only that the "tombos" caught me, they took me, they hit me, they kicked me. "Disappear," they told me, when I was in pain.*

- Why were the police hitting you?

- *'Cause I was in the street and they asked for my documents, where I lived, everything and they said, "What do you have in your pockets?" "Nothing," I told them. I only had my cloth for washing cars. "Take it out," they told me and I took it out, I had nothing else, only my cloth, because I had spent it all and I lied to them saying, "I'm from (...)". Then they said, "Why are you in the street?" and they hit me.*

- But you don't know why they hit you?

- *No.*

- Did that happen once or several times?

- *Twice.*

- What do you remember the most about the friends you had on the streets?

- *Only what they told them in the cemetery, they told us of the ones that were stealing from cars, free. "Now if you leave, we're gonna cut your face!" that's what they told me, then I got scared.*

- Have you met John Doe?

- *Yes.*

- And John Smith?

- *They called John Smith "Wash," Pepe they called "Mañazo."*

- And they threatened you?

- *Yes... I don't know, they threatened me when they were stealing, after that, "You are my buddy," we sat and we talked.*

- What did you talk about?

- *About things... stealing. "You're gonna put that armor there and open it." I didn't say no because if they found me. . . Since I didn't know where to go, I didn't wanna steal anything, no.*

- Has anyone ever given you cement glue?

- No.

- Never? What do you remember the most from the time that you lived here in the house?

- *Only when I thought of my family, I thought of going directly to stabilization, I mean, I said, "I'm gonna behave well." Behaving well... I almost didn't fight. I just fought the first days with (...), I hit him because he was bad. He hit the small boys, because of that with (...) too... he bothered the educators too much. The kid he said, was like this and like that, I fought with him 'cause of that.*

- While you were living on the streets, did you have problems with friends? Serious problems? An ugly fight?

- No.

- Never?

- No.

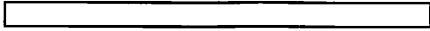
- When you were in the other foster home, did you have problems?

- Yes.

- What happened?

- *I fought with a kid my size and since there was a gang, there were girls that hung with the gang and they told me, "We gonna cut your face."*

LUCHO



LUCHO

Lucho is 14 and lives in a city that is not his own. He is a “cambacolla” (double identity from the Bolivian highlands and the sub-tropical valleys).

He says: *“When I was three, my parents brought me to live in (...). When I was five or six, I started meeting bad friends that took me down the wrong road until I became a bum.*

- At what age did you leave home?

- *I left because I had friends. They taught me to go to the streets, and I became a bum.*

- Where did you go with them?

- *Fishing all day. I went home to sleep.*

- What did your parents say when you would leave?

- *Sometimes my father would hit me, because I left without permission or he scolded me and well, since they were my friends, I didn't*

know they were bad friends, but I realized they were bad... that, that was when I was on the streets.

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *Six.*

- Are you the oldest one?

- *No, others are older.*

- Did you work on the streets?

- *I just went out, but once I worked with a man, he took me to his house... people took me to their houses, but I left.*

- Why did they take you to their houses?

- *'Cause they found me on the streets, disoriented and... I mean they charmed me, they took me to their house and I was there for two, three months and then I would split again.*

- Did your parents look for you?

- *They looked for me. Sometimes they found me, but I was in my house for a week and then I would leave again. I was used to the street.*

- How long were you on the streets?

- *Seven years.*

- Only in (...) or in other places?

- I traveled to (...) and once I went to the Beni to (...) I went with some friends and since I already knew how to steal and I did drugs we was stealin' and they threw us out. We had it in for them and we left...we were only there two or three months.

- What did you do in Beni?

- I was with a man, I helped him herd cows and then I ran away.

- How old were you when you went to (...)?

- Eight.

- How did you get to (...)?

- A man found me and he took me to his house. He was married but they didn't have children, and he told me I could go to his house like if I was his son. I liked riding horses and I went with him and then I ran away.

- At what age did you start stealing?

- Since I was young, six, seven, then I started using drugs.

- What drugs did you start using?

- The first one was gasoline, then thinner, then cement glue and then "pitillo."

- Did you try grass (marihuana)?

- Yes.

- Rehinol?

- No.

- How old were you when you sniffed glue?

- *Eight.*

- How long did you stay like that?

- *I started using drugs since I left my house, until I got here.*

- The experience on the streets, how was it for you?

- *Bad.*

- But during that time wasn't it good for you?

- *Yes, I had friends and we stole, they would run after us... sometimes they would catch me, they took us to the criminal division or to the police station, there we were locked up for two weeks, sometimes a month. When the cops knew us well, they put us in more time. Also, if they knew us they asked us if we had something and then they would let us go, for such a day at such time. I almost never took it to them, I mean to the ones that were really my friends I took it... we made an "appointment" with them, they let me off easy when they caught me, I mean with some of the others, he lied, "This one's nothing, let him go," and then I left.*

- You were friends with the police?

- *Yes.*

- Did you ever steal with the police?

- *Yes, one, two, three times, he thought that I didn't know, he was watching me, in (...) if they caught me, he came and said, "I'm a policeman, he's in my charge," he took me a couple of blocks and then let me go.*

- Did you share what you made?

- *Yes.*

- For how long did they lock you up?

- *One or two months.*

- Did they hit you?

- *Yeah. Also when we stole with some friends, one had his partner as they say, and we got rooms for rent and sometimes we would go to (...) to dance, to drink and we looked for the drunks' money.*

- What are "partners," explain that to me?

- *Three of us got together and we paid the rent. Sometimes we bought tape recorders, beds, all that. Some of the ones that were already there had girlfriends and they took them.*

- Who gave you "pitillos"?

- *They sold them in (...) here in (...) Ave. also in (...).*

- You bought them yourself?

- *Yes.*

- Who sold grass?

- *I mean... there was a man we knew. He looked like a Yankee, tall, green eyes, he knew us and he trusted us, like we trusted him and he looked for us and asked us if we wanted, since he knew our vices we told him yes, we bought it from him.*

- For how long did you drug yourself with “pitillo”?

- *A year. Then I realized that I was ruining myself.*

- With grass?

- *I mixed “pitillo” with grass... I made the mix.*

- What effect did it have? Was it more intense?

- *Yes, we mixed the “pitillo” base and we mixed it with grass. That’s stronger... it gave us more effect. If a “pitillero” is smoking for a long time, the same “pitillo” doesn’t do it. I mean, you need more.*

- How did you realize it was ruining you?

- *Because I saw some friends were turning yellow, they were deforming themselves.*

- Were you like that too?

- *Yes.*

- Where did you go to smoke?

- *To (...)*

- Where?
- *To (...) to (...) sometimes in (...) in the houses where they sell... I went there, some that knew me, I went in and smoked.*
- They allowed you in the houses?
- *Yes, they already knew me.*
- Do you think that there's high class people who do this?
- *Yes.*
- Did you know them?
- *Yes.*
- They allowed you into their houses?
- *Yes, the people who knew me, they knew that they sold to us in some houses. They knew us, we told them if we could go in, they told us, "Come in!" since that is a family house, we went in and we smoked.*
- For how long were you in the house smoking?
- *It depends, sometimes we bought an envelope, sometimes a box, and a box lasts all night, sometimes they sold half... it depends on the quantity you got.*
- How long does an envelope last?
- *For a while, 20 or 30 minutes.*

- And how much for one night?

- *A matchbox.*

- Then, what did you do?

- *I went out... my body wanted more and I stole.*

- To smoke again?

- *Yes.*

- That's what you call hangover?

- *Yes.*

- What was the purpose of mixing things? I know that it is to have more effect, but why?

- *Because my body asked for more, what I inhaled didn't do it for me.*

- What effect were you looking for?

- *Stronger, more intense.*

- To get lost? When you got lost did you forget your parents, everybody?

- *Yeah.*

- Have you drunk alcoholic beverages?

- *Yeah, but not pure alcohol.*

- For how long did you drink alcoholic beverages?

- *After I left the “pitillo” I got with another group, where they didn’t smoke “pitillo”, I mean... they smelled cement glue, like I told you we went to (...) on Saturdays and Sundays, we drank and we stayed there till dawn.*

- How old were you?

- *Ten.*

- And when you were 13 and 14?

- *At twelve and a half, I was here, they brought me here.*

- How long have you been here?

- *Two years, now I’m going to turn 15.*

- How did they bring you here?

- *I was in (...), they made a raid and they caught us all and they took us to (...), there were some 40 people in jail, and I had some friends in (...), I mean since a psychologist works here, we called her “licenciada”²⁶(...),” she loved me like her son, she didn’t want me to run away, but for me to be OK, she had already done my papers so that they would bring me here, I mean I wanted to get straight, but I was used to it, and that day 11 were coming here with me, with me we were 12 and first they went, they put them in a truck and they took me last, because they thought that I was going to run away, ‘cause I was*

²⁶ Licenciado/a: Spanish term that indicates that a person has a university degree.

very smart, they took me out of jail last. I cried so that they would bring me here, they brought me here and I didn't want to be on the streets, they brought me here and I got straight.

- During all the time that you were on the streets, did you see your parents?

- Once when it was cold, I remembered when I was hungry, that in my house I didn't suffer like I was suffering on the streets. I wanted to go home, but I couldn't.

- Why not?

- I was afraid they would beat me, or they would say something to me, or they wouldn't treat me like a son, and I stayed on the streets.

- You parents looked for you?

- They looked for me.

- Did you ever meet your mother?

- Yes, we bumped into one another.

- What happened?

- She looked at me, I looked at her and I started crying, I started thinking to myself and my mother got near and told me, "What are you doing here?" "I was walking by..." she took me home, I was there two or three weeks and then I left.

- Were there fights in your house?

-
- *No.*
 - Why did you leave?
 - *I was already used to it.*
 - What does your mother say now?
 - *She's happy, my father, too... their relatives.*
 - Did you try to get better before?
 - *I tried.*
 - Where?
 - *On the streets, I mean... to live by myself, to be independent, it didn't work out.*
 - Why didn't it work out?
 - *Because of friends, I told them "no" and they told me, "You are betraying us," not to betray them... for us it was like a sin to betray them.*
 - What did they do to you when you betrayed them?
 - *They didn't do nothin' to me. When they saw me around there, they looked for fights... with knives or a razor.*
 - Did they ever cut you?
 - *Yes, in a fight.*

- Why?

- *We stole, and he didn't want to give me my part, I mean we said, "toco cabal"²⁷well, I was calm, because I wasn't going to fight about that. It was my turn to steal, he asked for his half, and I told him, "Remember that time you didn't give me half of what we stole?" he got angry and he picked a fight, he cut me with a glass when I wasn't looking, I held another glass. Since he cut me when I wasn't looking he looked for a fight... his name was (...), a "palomillo," and I got angry and I took off my t-shirt. So that he wouldn't keep on cutting me I wrapped it around my hand, 'cause when he wanted to cut me again I did made like this, (he shows what he did) and I cut him on the cheek... then we calmed down.*

- Were you on drugs?

- *No I wasn't. I knew how to defend myself.*

- How do you feel here in the foster home?

- *Fine, happy.*

- What do expect to do after you get out of here?

- *The first thing, to keep on studying. After I have a profession, help my family like they helped me, I mean to give them back what they have given me and then have a family.*

- Have you had sexual relations on the streets?

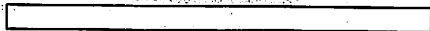
- *Yes. Several times.*

²⁷ Toco cabal: to go fifty-fifty.

- Venereal diseases?

- *No.*

RAMIRO



RAMIRO

- How long have you been in the foster home?

- *Four months.*

- At what age did you leave home?

- *A long time ago, I ran away.*

- How old were you?

- *Six.*

- Why did you leave home?

- *I ran away a lot.*

- Why?

- *Because my mother went to work and I didn't stay with her.*

- And your father?

- *He worked... he's dead.*
- *Where?*
- *In the (...) jail.*
- *What did your father die of?*
- *It was because they say they betrayed him. He crashed into a pick-up truck, they took him to the police station and they killed him there.*
- *Does your mother live alone?*
- *No, she has her husband... That one was not her husband. My sister has her father. I live with my grandmother.*
- *Where is your grandmother?*
- *There, near the (...), a block from (...).*
- *How did you get here?*
- *No, they brought me from (...), from there to (...), from there they brought me to (...), then here.*
- *Where's your mother?*
- *She's working. I don't know her work, but she works. I know where she works but I don't know the street name.*
- *In what city? In (...)?*
- *Yes, in (...)*

- What about your grandmother?
- *She's living.*
- How long did you live with her?
- *A long time, since I was born.*
- She raised you?
- *My mother raised me first. After that... she's like a mother.. I have two mothers, my grandmother and my mother.*
- Where is your grandmother?
- *She works too.*
- Where does she work?
- *In her job. She leaves in the morning at 7 or at 6.*
- You stayed alone?
- *No, with my younger brother.*
- Why did you run away from home?
- *Because my mother went to work and I stayed alone.*
- Did you leave with your brother?
- *No, I ran away alone.*

- Where did you go?
- *Any place, around there, anywhere, where I know more.*
- When did you start stealing?
- *It was a time... at six I learned how to steal.*
- Who taught you?
- *Some "palomillos," some boys that are in (...), but a lot are missing, yeah. They were around (...) five of them ran away. Two arrived, three are missing.*
- What did you steal?
- *Money, wallets from pockets.*
- When did you start sniffing glue?
- *I was ten, I started sniffing that.*
- What did you do before cement glue?
- *I smoked "pitillos."*
- Who gave them to you?
- *I bought them around there, in a shop.*
- Where?
- *It's far away, around (...), we went there and there's a shop and they sold "pitillos" there.*

They sold them to you?

- Yes.

- They didn't feel compassion because you were a child?

- *I gave them money and they gave it to me, and I bought from them.*

- For how long were you on "pitillo"?

- *A long time ago, I was going to be 11. I arrived here and I didn't smoke "pitillo." On November 1st I turn 12.*

- How many "pitillos" did you smoke a day?

- *Lots.*

- How many?

- *One during the night or one during the day. I went around there. Then my brother caught me, he took me home, then, I ran away again until he brought me here. The social worker sent me from the (...).*

- Have you tried grass?

- *Yeah, cocaine too.*

- Marihuana?

- Yes.

- Where did you get it?

- *Around there (...) they sell "pitillos," and here they sell marihuana.*
- How did you feel on marihuana?
 - *It made my stomach hurt, my mom drank so that it wouldn't hurt me, after that she didn't like it, she wanted to drink, I told her not to drink that, that it doesn't work, she bought a pill and she threw it up.*
- You were alone on the streets?
 - *No, with my friends.*
- How old were your friends?
 - *Eleven years and up and ten and down.*
- They were ten? Because I have not found younger ones.
 - *No, but they were ten when they got here.*
- But have you ever been arrested?
 - *They put me in jail and they took me out, they put me on a mattress to sleep, the cops took me out, 'cause I was young. When I was six I went to jail, my mother got me out. I escaped from jail by myself. In the... street there's a jail, they were going to take me to (...), but they didn't take me, they were taking me and I jumped from the truck and I went to (...). They looked for me and they didn't find me, I went home.*
- What did your mother do when she saw you at home?
 - *She visited me and took me to her job.*

- What did your grandmother do?

- *She went to visit me at the (...) foster home. I ate and I studied, they put us in a classroom. The ones that were bad or behaved bad, they put them in a classroom and they hit them, I didn't run away because I liked it, we played soccer. It wasn't a jail there, it was for children, there were beds.*

- Where is that?

- *It's there (...)*

- How do you feel here?

- *Fine.*

- How long have you been here?

- *Four months.*

- Were you on drugs when they caught you?

- *Yes.*

- On what?

- *Cement glue and gasoline that gets you drugged.*

- Aside from cement glue, gasoline, "pitillo," grass?

- *Thinner.*

- How much?

- A lot.

- Pills?

- *Yes, I can't remember the name my mother took that so her stomach didn't hurt.*

- Does your mother also do drugs?

- *She didn't like it, she worked every day, she rested and she comes to see me on Sundays.*

- Is your mother young?

- No.

- How old is she?

- *I dunno, she didn't tell me yet.*

- Do you have brothers?

- *I have lots, four brothers and three sisters.*

- Did you study?

- *Yes, until second grade.*

- Are you studying here?

- Yes.

SARAH



SARAH

Sarah is a 14-year-old who lives on the streets. Her life developed like this...

- At what age did you leave home?

- *Me, at 11.*

- How old are you now?

- *Fourteen.*

- What led you to leave your home?

- *Well... I don't know, I can't remember.*

- Tell me...!

- *My uncle sold drugs before, but I didn't know what drugs were, he went to the streets and he got on drugs and he was on drugs half a year, and in that half a year my father discovered that he drugged himself and they sent him to Panama, and 'cause I al-*

ways got along well with my uncle, I missed him a lot; I went out to the streets.

- What was the main reason?

- I feel it was that... Not because I so much... this... 'cause when I got on drugs, I forgot everything and I still do, and I started sniffing glue. I did cement glue, gasoline, later I did marihuana, pills that are called Rohipnol, "cheiro,"²⁸ "seba," I mean base, "pitillo."

- What drug did you start with?

- With cement glue.

- Wasn't it gasoline first?

- No, gasoline was later.

- How long did you sniff glue?

- I stopped doing cement glue four months ago.

- What do you do now?

- Marihuana and Rohipnol.

- Why did you stop doing cement glue?

- Well, because you start with cement glue and in time there's another drug you like better. Well, I like marihuana more.

²⁸ Cheiro: cocaine.

- Why do you like marihuana more?
- *I dunno ... Illusions with big things... like we say here I "hallucinated," I was hallucinating and stuff, I forgot about my family, I forgot about everything.*
- What are the big things?
- *I mean, I don't know how to explain.*
- For example, a lot of money?
- *Oh yes, you feel rich with big things. Everything, I saw everything, sometimes I saw my family smiling.*
- Did you like that idea?
- *Yes, I remember that I hugged them; when I reacted it was a tree or my friends, with cement glue I was flying, like you say... I felt in the air, flying.*
- After that?
- *With gasoline, I got lost completely.*
- What do you think is stronger, gasoline or cement glue?
- *Gasoline.*
- Because of the quick effect?
- *It has an effect in 15 or 20 minutes, and cement glue, of course you feel flying in a moment, but to be very drugged, ...it takes a long time, you can use up a lot of cans, gasoline is faster.*

- What effect do you get with Rohipnol?

- *Me, when I took Rohipnol, I took six, seven... It made me sleep. When I took three or four pills, it upset me. If someone did this to me (she touches herself), um, I was already on top of him, he could be big, a cop, whatever, I even fought with some cops here.*

- Being on Rohipnol?

- *With Rohipnol I got upset. I hit the cops three times.*

- You hit them?

- *Yeah.*

- Where did you grab them to hit them?

- *I mean when they wanted to get me, they wanted to put me in jail, then I'd go, "What have I done?, what have I done?!" and they beat me and then it was like I got angry and I scratched him and if I got a glass, I cut them... yes, one day I made a cut this big on a cop (she points above her eyebrow).*

- How many times have you been in jail?

- *Wow! If I tell... A lot of times.*

- Tell me.

- *I've been in the police station three or four times for theft... other times raids, I've been more on raids.*

- How do the guards treat the women?

- *Well, here there are... we called them "tiras," the ones from the Criminal Division, the ones that don't wear uniforms, sometimes they want to abuse you, and you tell them, "Why?!" then they beat you with sticks and they send you to the police station and they beat us up a lot there. They hit us a lot! Well they hit me many times because I always got upset; there are others that don't, they let the cops abuse them.*

- Sexual abuse?

- *Of course, I... never liked that. Since I had it in for them... I've always had it in for them, and sometimes I... I intentionally drugged myself... I mean I went and took Rohipnol, to get high and when I was in the police station I sent my friends to buy it, because I knew they were gonna beat me an' I took like six Rohipnol and I didn't feel anything, I mean, when you take that you don't feel nothing.*

- Is it the same with cement glue?

- *No, with cement glue I... felt.*

- How many pills did you take?

- *Seven... the maximum six or seven.*

- Wasn't it too much?

- *I almost died.*

- When?

- *Last year... That day I took "esterilla"²⁹ there were ten, I had one every five minutes. I had ten. I smoked a pack of cigarettes, the*

²⁹ Esterilla: several cigarettes together that look like a mat

whole thing, L&M. They took me to the hospital (...) I almost died, I was very sick. I thought, "all my friends here, it was them, they paid it all..." more than 300 Bolivianos.

- That's interesting, do you have a community here?

- Yes, like you see they all drug themselves. A friend gets sick, everyone steals, like they say "making money" and everything for the hospital bill. They go, they visit you, they take you fruit. When you're in jail your friends go and visit and they get you out or they take you a "tranquilizer," they take you all that so that you'll rest there, and they even pay the fine and that... in the hospital it's the same.

- How much is the fine?

- In the Criminal Division from fifty to a hundred Bolivianos, depends on the theft, but if it's for a raid it's fifty to a hundred Bolivianos. If one steals... like they say... chains, I go and do the "tipia"³⁰ chains, collars, I mean for a month I was "tipiendo." They were going to send me to jail, but they didn't send me because I'm a minor and they took me to the foster home (...). I was there for a day, only that and I escaped the next day. I also "morreo."³¹ Do you know what that is?

- Yes.

- I went in the houses.

- You went by yourself to steal?

³⁰ Tipiar: to pull women's earrings off.

³¹ Morrear: In the Eastern part of Bolivia "morrear" is what in the West is called "monrear"—to break into houses through the roof; also to pick pockets or snatch purses.

- *Yes, me alone, because there are "giles"³² and if you get there they raid you or they tell the "tiras" and when they know that one is a "morrero," you're fucked because the cops say, "You have..." they lie, they tell lies: "You have such and such a thing." They want to make you talk, if you don't talk they hit you, they make you stay longer and every day the fine gets bigger, but me, I have my friends in the police station that are (...), (...), (...) they help me get out... in time they didn't beat me no more. It's already a year an' a half since I met them. So they help me... "Whenever you come and visit your friends, give me coca..." they chew coca, it's normal there, so I have friends that save me, they warn me and they're happy. For example, today I met (...) they asked me if I'm at the Center, he even went there today, they took me there. In the Mayor's Office they know me too. When I was there, they warned me. When I went there they beat me, the ones from City Hall, and now they're my friends. Now they tell me, "Why did you do it?" and they congratulate me. They've even done it through the radio, they tell me to keep on going.*

- What do your parents say about all of this?

- *They don't know.*

- Where are they?

- *They're here, they live in (...) in the Villa (...)*

- Are they looking for you?

- *I don't know if they're looking for me... They don't know if they drug themselves here in the park, because my brother never drugged himself here, it was in (...).*

³² Fools.

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *Three. I'm the one that follows the oldest one that is now in Panama. We are three brothers, and the older, we are five, the youngest one, one year.*

- Where are your other brothers?

- *They're studying. One is seven and the other eleven.*

- Do your parents have money?

- *My father, he has his own press, I mean a normal house.*

- The strange thing is that you are here.

- *Me, with time already... I got used to it, I don't miss my parents, no more. Before, I went and visited them.*

- From the street to your house?

- *I went there well dressed... but I never found my father. He works and my mother never knows. She thinks I'm working... I don't know why I lie to her. I want to go to (...) to forget, to think that I don't have a family, 'cause I got used to it, for me all of them are my family (she points to a boy in the park), that's what I always say, because they have been through what I have, I never... It's the first time that I got sick, there were other times when I had attacks. I fainted, they helped me a lot, and I'm already used to them.*

- If your parents appeared, would you go with them?

- *No, not anymore, because I have a grudge since that time with my brother, I dunno... I think they're gonna do the same with me. They separated me from my brother. My brother is 23 years old, he raised me, he raised me in my house, like my mother, my older brother is like my father... I miss him a lot, I feel for him even now when I do drugs, I feel him, that he talks to me, and that he tells me not to do it. And because of my brother I wanna change. But I always had that grudge against my family, and I have it now, I have it in for my father, more for him, and for my mother also, because my brothers suffered very much.*

- At what age did your parents send your brother to Panama?

- *It must have been when he was 19, before I came here.*

- Why did they send him?

- *To rehabilitate himself and to study... I think he went to that, I don't know. I mean that he left like he's dead, because sometimes I saw him dead, in a coffin, you know... I used to sit down and I saw him in a deep lake and he fell there, I cried a lot at first, right? And now I found out everything... They told me, my grandmother and grandfather... I know... the one I now miss is my grandmother. She gave me advice, because my mother was never with us. She worked as a cashier in a steak house, I mean, more than my brother.*

- My conclusion is that what drove you to get out of your house was the lack of love.

- *Yes, too... My father before he had his press.*

- How was you father before he had a press?

- *He worked in a printing company, I mean my father... he knows the press (...) he's an orphan and he was raised there and he worked there in a press called (...) and he got home every Friday drunk and he hit my mother. I used to see that, since I was little I saw it, and my brothers were scared of him, when he arrived... let's say, here was my mother's house and across from us my grandmother's. He screamed at my brothers, he kicked them, me too, I didn't like that, since then I stopped loving my father and of course know my father's much better and he don't drink every Friday. It was a sure thing that on Fridays he would drink, we knew that Fridays he would come hit us, I left my house out of that fear, and with more of a grudge about my brother, because then I missed my brother. Before the print shop, my mother had his baby. He changed more, my brother who's one... he changed a lot, it's different, I mean, he doesn't get drunk anymore, he doesn't drink, I always had that in my mind, about the fights, I even went to the police three times I remember, to have him put in jail, because he was not respectful towards my grandfather who's a war veteran.*

- He's your real father or your stepfather?

- *He's my real father. I mean, he was like that, a drunk, almost an alcoholic, every Friday, they paid him, he took home 100 pesos, and the rest he drank.*

- What grade did you reach in school?

- *Third grade... no, fourth grade, when I was five my brother that is in Panama taught us to write. I mean, my brothers went in knowing... in the school they were the best students. They knew how to add, he was our teacher, he was everything to us, he was like a mother, he changed us, he even ironed, he taught us how to read, he was a guy that didn't care about anything, with time I think, from so much... he went into drugs, and after six months he was on drugs, my mother*

already... already. Me, when I went to the street I learned that my uncle sold drugs, I mean he sold envelopes, I never knew that that was drugs, only here did I learn it was drugs.

- You should be in sixth grade. What happened?

- I mean I flunked. I started thinking about my father and everything went wrong, and I don't know how many times I flunked, but I remember that I flunked, because I was like that in school (she strikes a thinking pose) at least Fridays, since I studied till six in the afternoon, my father arrived at that time and sometimes he didn't arrive, but... I was... thinking that he was going to hit my mother...! I thought things! my mind was troubled.

- Among the things that have happened to you on the streets, what has struck you the most?

- I suffered a lot, because I've slept on the streets, I slept in abandoned houses too. I rented a room with what I stole, I was happy for a while, because before I was always in discos from Monday to Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday I went to (...), to the (...) and on Sundays to a disco that's called (...) those days I went to (...) and (...) I forgot everything, sometimes I started drinking, a year ago I drank for a month I drank every day, I would wait till dawn drinking and my room was in (...), that was from January to February.

- This year?

- Of course, I've always drank... but like that... for a month or two I drank often, every day. I mean from six in the afternoon until three in the morning, here in (...) that discotheque is already closed, I mean I stole in the afternoons and I went to my room to sleep, until four in the afternoon, I changed and again to the discotheque, from there

directly to find my friends, I went to drink, dance, steal, to whatever, then until the discotheque closed at three in the morning, again to my room, and I was like that every day without missing one day, on Saturdays I went to (...) and Sundays to the discotheque (...) until midnight or six in the morning, I was there, the same thing on Monday. There were times that I slept there and sometimes I took out my shoes, I went barefoot... a lot of things. There were times that we even stole between us, like they say they do the "resistance."

- How did you end up that month, your body?

- I felt weak, I didn't want to eat, then I went to the foster home (...) where the "Adoratrices"³³ are, and I felt weak... I regretted everything, I lasted a week and then I ran away again, straight to my friends. The next day the nuns came, they took me, I was there a month, I met my teacher there, now I miss her very much, and if I want to go to (...) it's because they go there, and because they always told me, "Go to the community." "No," I said. I'm sure that I'm going to go, but I don't know what happened. With time I want to go, for three or four months I want to go,

- Why do you miss the center so much?

- I dunno, I can't explain it, but I worry about going to the foster home (...), my friends are there, because everyone that is here is new, all of them... only... (...). Well, some 25 are here a year and a half, but the ones that were here when I arrived, I met them and they taught me to do drugs, and they advised me, are the ones that are now rehabilitated or in rehabilitation, and I know that if I go, I'm going to feel their love and they are going to help me go on. Do you understand?

³³ Religious order of nuns

For me, the ones that are here are new, I'm the oldest one here. I met them when they were just learning the streets, see? and I don't feel the same.

- You think that women are starting to use drugs more?

- Women?

- Three years ago, were there as many women as there are now?

- There were more... all the girls that are here are prostitutes, they go into cabs, all that. Before the people were well dressed, and they dressed in what they stole. At least the girls were stealing, but now the girls here don't know how to steal, but they sell their bodies to make money, they buy their clothes, they do drugs, that's their vice, and sometimes they steal from the drunks around here, they pick pockets, it's not like before. Before you saw cement glue sniffers well dressed, nobody doubted... there were not as many cops as now, the cops from the Mayor's office were only for the market, see? Now there's more delinquency, girls' prostitution... it's different, for example there in the snack, all those women prostitute themselves, the ones here some, others no, that's what I seen.

- Have you ever had sexual relations?

- I had with a boy that's in the Center, but with the one from the street, that one's in jail, his name is (...), he's in jail for six years, because he used to "morrear." "Morrero" and "tipidor," wow! He has a very long sentence, because he stole TVs, tape recorders, bigger things, and he stole chains, he knows how many grams, he knows about stealing and it's a serious problem.

- Without offending you... they told me you are a lesbian...

- *No, it's not true.*

- *Why do they say that?*

- *I dunno, because when I arrived here, I always dressed like they dress, OK? Men always bothered me and I never liked that and even now I don't like it. And I dressed normal, I put on shorts, and like that no one bothers me... I know my friends... I feel better. Before the cars honked at me, now I walk like this... they might think that I'm a man, whatever, and they don't bother me, 'course I've just been dressing like this for six months. I used to dress myself like this and they bothered me a lot, they'd go, "How much do you charge?" things that bothered me, and sometimes I was on drugs and I would throw cement glue in their face, and I went to jail for that, and I stabbed them with a knife, glass, all that. To avoid that, I dress like this for a while and I got lost for a while, I would get lost for months.*

- *Why do you get lost?*

- *For example: now the Criminal Division is looking for me, because three months ago I stole a TV, I stole a 3-in-1³⁴, sofas... big things.*

- *How do you carry them?*

- *I have my friends that have their cars and big houses. My friend's house is like that (she points to a building) it is around (...) almost like a residence, they do "cheiro," they are my friends, they make money from the people who exchange dollars, from the ones that have a lot of money, see? Since I know them... with that one from here, with that one I stole things, big, we made a deal, I went to the house, I looked at it well, well, and that night we watched it. During the*

³⁴ 3-in-1: stereo, cassette and radio player

holidays we stole a lot, right?... They go out and he went with his pick-up truck and I opened the doors easy, like if we owned it, we took out the things. Of course they caught me twice and I remember that they tied me to a lightpost, they videotaped me, they beat me, I finished ripping all this off, I've healed.

- How long ago was that?

- *Three months ago, yeah. That's why they're looking for me, because they just found out I'm a "morrera."*

- What do you tell the boys on the streets?

- *I wish they would change, that they have a new life, 'cause for me the streets are not like they used to be, 'cause at first you feel it's nice, 'cause you steal good. I used to have all this money, 'cause with my friend, which I'm telling you about, we used to steal from the people who exchange dollars, we had money to burn, but I never took advantage of that money... drugs, drinks, in a week I had nothing. Three hundred or 400 Bolivianos that we earned a day, next day we didn't have anything. You do drugs, you don't know what you do, see? I wish they'd change.*

- What would you say to your parents?

- *Nothing, I don't want to know nothing about them.*

- What would you say to the authorities?

- *I don't know, I wouldn't know what to say because they don't help us, they don't help the people, because they caught me with things, and they take it away from me and you know what they do? They keep it. We tell them they're insatiable, because everything they take*

away from us is for them, if they take away money, it's for them, they don't give it back to the owner, and that's very bad, I think cops should be honest with people, because there are cops that send you to steal. Honestly! You're standing on the corner and they tell you, "Go, make money and 'toco cabal.'" They get you and they say, let's go, let's go and why aren't you working that kind of thing or the other, they can even beat you in front of the person you robbed, then they take you two or three blocks, "How much did you make? give me half, it's OK." Five minutes later you can see me here... and when I sniffed glue the cops caught me "OK! give me five pesos and I'll give it back to you," and of course you're desperate for the drug and you give it to them. They sold the drug themselves, they would take drugs from others and came to sell it to us, for me that's not authority. There was a time that the whole group wanted to get together and denounce them to higher authorities. We wanted to do that, but now they're in the foster homes (...) in (...) in (...) the (...). Many professional delinquents wanted to do that 'cause those cops that you see there, honestly! I hate them, that's why with that in mind I did drugs and I stood up to the cops and sometimes I pushed them and I broke their window. I would like to change, I want them to help me change, there was a time when I wanted to change, I had illusions, and then I went back to the streets again. I have dreams again and I'm afraid of getting disappointed, because when I say no... I fall again.

- Have you ever been pregnant?
- Never.
- When was the last time that you did drugs?
- Saturday, four days ago I took four Rohipnol pills.

CARLOS ENRIQUE



CARLOS ENRIQUE

Well, Carlos Enrique, I'd like to know a little about the experiences you've had.

- What's your name?

- *Carlos Enrique.*

- How old are you, Carlos Enrique?

- *Thirteen.*

- When is your birthday?

- *August 24, on Monday.*

- How many brothers and sisters are you? How many are in your family?

- *There is my older brother, the boy from my stepmother, her son is called David, we're two.*

- So there are two and one half-brother?
- *Yeah.*
- There are three. Your mother?
- *My mother died in 198-, in (...)*
- Your father?
- *My father is living.*
- Where does he live now? Do you know?
- *Yeah, in the Chapare.*
- How old were you when your mother died?
- *Two.*
- You mean little? And how old were you when your father got married again or began living with someone?
- *Seven.*
- Between two and seven years, who did you live with?
- *When my mother died, when I was two, I was with my father for a time, me and my brother Efraín, my older brother and I worked, you know, my father didn' even come home.*
- You're telling me that when you were seven years old you were living with your father?

- Yeah.

- What did your father do then?

- *He worked and when he had things to do... he peeled rice, he had to take me I don't know where on his shoulders, in his arms.*

- Where did your father work?

- *In the Chapare.*

- What do you remember the most about that time, before your father got married again or started living with someone?

- *I remember I burnt my brother with soup, when my father went to work on his plot of land.*

- And what happened?

- *I burnt him.*

- Did they hit you or didn't they hit you?

- *My father hit me and we made it go away with dental paste.*

- And did it heal?

- *He got well and with my brother, the other one, after that we went out fighting, with machetes and all.*

- He cut you with a machete?

- Yeah.

- And what happened that time?
- *It got well.*
- Did they have to stitch you?
- *They didn't stitch me, it got well just like that and I have a scar.*
- And how did you get along with your brother? How much older than you is he?
- *He's my size, he must be 14 or 15.*
- He's older than you?
- *Yeah.*
- And how do you get along with your brother? Did you fight?
- *Sometimes we fought, sometimes we got along well, we used to go fishing and we also got along with my uncle....*
- What do you remember about that time, what did you do with your brother? Other than playing, did you go to school?
- *We went to school and we played, we did sports, we made a team of two and the two got in a team, he in one team and me in the other. When they separated me... the two of us are in a team or else, nothing.*
- How did your father meet that other woman? Did he marry her or not?

- *He hasn't married, he's just living, my father is from Potosi and my mother that died was from Santa Cruz.*

- Where were you born?

- *In (...)*

- *In (...)?*

- *The woman he got together with is from Potosi, they met in the Chapare. And that woman sold oranges, tangerines. They met because they were from Potosi and they got together.*

- How old were you when that happened?

- *I was seven.*

- And how did it happen? Did your father bring her to your house?

- ...

- He was just living with her?

- *Yeah.*

- For how long?

- *Until now.*

- And you, how long have you been living with her? You and your brother?

- *With that woman? Like that... until now.*

- And your brother?

- *Still.*

- He's still living with her in the Chapare?

- *Still, I didn't like it there because I didn't like it. She was mean and my father was good and he didn't tell her nothing... she hit me.*

- Why did she hit you?

- *Yeah, my father hit me, he hit us, even my uncle hit me.*

- And why did she hit you?

- *I don't know... My uncle used to come hit us with a stick.*

- Was she mean?

- *She was mean.*

- What do you remember the most of the time that you were living with your father, your stepmother and your brother?

- *I remember them all, when my mother was there, my uncles would go to work.*

- What did they do?

- *They farmed, I didn't like it, I never liked it. My father took us to harvest rice and I had to serve, he gave us rice and we went to harvest and all of us made "yuca," sometimes there was meat.*

- And why did you leave home?
- *When I stole those 50 dollars from my dad, in 1990, I think my father was an authority there.*
- And what happened? How was it that you left home? Did you run away? What problem made you leave home?
- *Because the stepmother hit me too much, that's why I didn't like it.*
- And you left home, you stole money from your father and you left?
- *I left, now I'm studying, some time ago I sent him a letter, the Saturday that just passed, I don't know if he is coming after Urukupiña, I think it has already passed.*
- How long were you away from home, before you came here?
- *I've been away from home a year and a half.*
- And what did you do during that year and a half?
- *I was in (...) and for a short time I was in the streets and now I'm here.*
- If you left home, where did you go then?
- *A short time I was in the streets, I went to (...) and then I came here.*
- During the time that you were living on the street, what did you do?
- *Well, when I arrived there I didn't know what stealing was... I saw people with their jars and I wondered what that was and I didn't*

know about that. What was a foster home... I never saw a foster home, nothing. Since I didn't know, at nights I paid two Bolivianos to sleep in a house. Every night I paid two Bolivianos... during the day I watched in (...) there.

- What else do you remember? Did you work?

- I watched cars.

- How long were you in the streets, do you remember?

- I don't remember anymore.

- What happened when you worked in the streets? You said you were watching cars... what else? Did you have friends?

- Yeah.

- I suppose that at that time you already knew about cement glue?

- I learned a short time ago.

- How was it, let's see?

- When they made me sniff glue there was a guy that they called the (...) he sold photo albums, we met. "Let's go sell," he said, "OK," I told him and we went there and we sniffed glue.

- Do you remember how it was? What did you feel?

- Yeah, you feel dizzy and sick.

- What things did you see?

- *A friend that was flying, you know.*
- For how long did you sniff glue? For example, I don't mean the time that you've been sniffing glue, but, for instance, one gets together with friends to have a drink, to drink at a party, the night ends at eleven. For how long have you been drinking? From 7 to 11, that makes four hours till eleven, right? When you sniffed glue for how long did you sniff glue?
- *That time they gave me a full jar from twelve to four, they gave it to me, and I finished it in the afternoon, then we slept till five.*
- You sniffed glue for four hours? And how did you feel?
- *You feel sick, drunk, I felt cold.*
- For how long after that were you sniffing glue? Say... twelve weeks, twelve days?
- *Two weeks.*
- That's when you were on the streets?
- *Yeah and a little bit more on thinner.*
- And how's thinner, what do you feel with thinner?
- *With thinner, I didn't feel anything, I didn't get into it, a little bit when I was in the bus, yeah and that boy wasn't afraid, he sniffed glue in the bus... he flew; thinner... everything.*
- Some other thing, some other type of drugs?

- *No.*

- Never “pitillos”?

- *Never.*

- After you were on the streets... for how long... I imagine that you weren't that long on the streets since you left (...). Now how was it that you left (...)? How long were you in (...)?

- *Half a year.*

- What did you do there?

- *Well, there I had a job as cook's assistant... bakery shop... making envelopes there in... in agriculture, in the workshop (...) I worked there.*

- Why did you go to (...)?

- *I told myself that I wasn't going to sniff glue because I didn't want to be a sniffer, when I sniffed glue I remembered my family, after that I went there.*

- Did you have problems with the police when you sniffed glue? What happened?

- *No, I ran away in the market there in (...). There where the market is around (...) we went there, we were sniffing glue and two undercover policemen came, “Hey, come...” they told us. We were leaving and a car passed by and we knew that they were cops and we ran away back there, they came and they stopped. “Come!” they said, we ran away.*

- They caught you?

- *No, they didn't get us and we ran far away, the others were big and Juanito couldn't run, they almost caught me. They waited for me and they held those things, they helped me and they made me run away too.*

- Problems with your friends?

- *No.*

- You said you went into (...), why did you want to leave the streets?

- *Yeah.*

- And why did you leave? What happened that you left?

- *Because there is a (...), the old ones think they're too much, they're abusive... Only old ones live there.*

- Are they the ones in the house or are they the ones that orient the others?

- *No, in the house.*

- And what happened? They hit you? What happened? What caused you to leave (...)?

- *No reason, "I'm going home," I told them. Once one of those older boys, when he didn't know the street owner, a drug addict wanted to hit me. "Tonight I don't want to see you, asshole," he told me. "OK," I said, "then I'm going to leave..." , I went to the (...) and (...) we came here.*

- Were you on the streets some time after?
- *No, they brought me here right away and I came here and they took me.*
- How long have you been here?
- *I think since February.*
- How old were you when you left home?
- *When I left home...*
- How old were you when you ran away?
- *Eleven.*
- You left home two years ago?
- *Yeah, I remember because it was my birthday.*
- Because you are going to turn 14 on the 24th.
- *Yeah. I turned 13 in (...), now I remember... yeah. When I slept in that two Bolivianos flophouse I went for a walk and they helped me. I told that lady August 24 is my birthday, then we are going to celebrate here. I lived a long time in the house of the man I met there, I always slept here. They knew me and sometimes they gave me tea. Then I started washing cars... I was all trusting, those people were good, they called their friends, their neighbors... they gave me eight Bolivianos and coca cola, popcorn, everything was ready... everything. And when I watched cars, and I came back late.*

- What happened?
- *They waited for me a long time. "Why didn't you come?" they gave me kisses and I said thank you.*
- Is this the first birthday that you spent here, then?
- *Yeah.*
- During the time that you were in the streets, have your friends gotten in trouble for stealing, drinking, sniffing glue? Your friends, not you.
- *Yeah.*
- What problems do you remember?
- *I remember, they drank chicha with me.*
- And what happened?
- *The time I was telling you that I escaped from the police I went there..., from there I didn't go to the chicha place. There they drank a lot. I was like ...you know, and it went to my head until I threw up, always, I felt weak and I slept there in a hole, we got in there and nobody found us, all of us, the three drunk.*
- Who were your friends?
- *The (...) but many are in (...)*
- What problems did they have?

- *Problems with cement glue, thinner, they stole.*

- Have you gotten in trouble for stealing?

- *No.*

- What problems have you had?

- *To the (...) they told him, "You are a glue sniffer." "You have taken the box" and after that he told them, "Don't take me, I'm going to pay you." The policeman made him give him an album, "give me one or I'm going to take you," he had to give him one, they didn't take him.*

- What happened? Did the policeman find him or not?

- *Not anymore, that policeman is now a friend of (...) he lives in (...) it is his house.*

- What do you know about your friends now?

- *I remember the market, we smoked a cigarette, I had a sleeveless t-shirt, up to here, I was feeling cold and I was carrying that thing they sell, a backpack. Cigar... we smoked it all. We even came walking from the market, we went to (...), with many of them, smoking.*

- Does your father know where you are?

- *I think he's going to know, after that we drank chicha there with the boy that is in observation, his name is (...), I don't know what they called him, from the house (...).*

- The (...)?

- *Yeah, he knows (...), I hung with him first, I was with (...) he taught me to sniff glue, he taught me to smoke, and because of him the police almost got me, we ran away.*

- How did you feel when he took you to those things? Do you like being with him?

- *No, and afterwards I thought and I remembered my family, even when I drank that little chicha I threw up and it was the second time that I drank, I didn't drink anymore and I could tell, "I'm going to throw up," I said and I drank and I threw it away when nobody was looking, the boy drank believing he was good and he drank the whole thing at once, he threw up a lot, I pretended I was drunk, and nothing happened.*

- You told me that it was possible that your father found out you are here? Would you like to go back home?

- *Why not?*

- He might find out that you are here, because you wrote to him, right?

- *Yeah.*

- Would you like to go back home?

- *Of course I would like to go back home, but after military service.*

- Why wouldn't you like to go back home?

- *Because here I'm fine, I'm studying.*

- Just because of that?

- *Yeah.*

- Have you had any serious problems with your stepmother?

- *No.*

- Then why don't you want to go back home? Or do you think they're going to hit you?

- *No, it's not that, because I know my dad is not gonna hit me and because my father is good and he's going to come, because everyone there knows him.*

- Why did you steal the fifty dollars from your father? Did you want to run away from home?

- *No, there was a guy in Ivirgarzama that called me boy and he told me to steal. That was the story, when I ran away there was a guy that they called (...) I don't know his name, but they called him (...) I think that guy was in this foster home. He told me, I went with five Bolivianos, it was a lot. There was another boy that they also called boy, my house was here and his was there, his father was an authority, he had gone with the story to Ivirgarzama, my mother wanted to take that money away from me and that boy was a thief... he didn't have a mother, nor a father, that's why he "worked" in the streets, after that he told me to sit and he said, "Why don't we go and we take all the money from your dad."*

- And you obeyed him?

- *I told him no and one day he really pushed me and I took it from my father.*

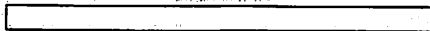
- Was this boy your friend or wasn't he?

- *The boy was my friend, he pushed me to do it. The other one, the boy had his father and his mother, the other one... what did they call him? That one was tricky, he didn't have his father or mother.*

- You spent all your father's money, and what did you do afterwards?

- *I took fifty Bolivianos and I went, then we bought shoes and pants, he kept that and I came back home. By that time there were no shoes, nothing... he had sold them and the other one gave it to him. My father saw the boy, he found out and came with my stepmother and I didn't go to Ivirgarzama and there the man from (...) told him that people were onto him, my father and everyone knew him and that man (...) was an authority in (...). Since my father knew him, my stepmother came and they took him to a reform school, they put him in jail in a room like this, and then I realized that my stepmother wasn't good. My father didn't want me to be in jail and I didn't like that they put me in jail and they boy didn't want to.*

CHICO



CHICO

- I started shining shoes when I was twelve, I mean, the reason that I'm shining shoes is 'cause my father went to jail and there wasn't no one to provide food to my little sisters and because of that I shined shoes, after that, I started having trouble going to classes, and then they threw me out of the house and I had to come here to (...). Little by little I started learning about drugs and I also started inhaling, and later I went to (...) and I started sleeping in the streets, I mean on the stands.

- Where are the stands?

- In different places. Here, in that street behind, the (...), we sleep on the streets. And some nights the police comes to bother us, they take money from us, they tell us... I mean, they ask us, "What are you doing?" we tell them, right? But there are some other ones very abusive and they take money from us. Plus taking money from us, they hit us and without a reason they take us to the police station. Then, sometimes, we sleep here in the door of the (...) market and we sleep all night. Let's say, if we need money, we get it by, I mean, we steal.... yeah, we make money, corner people like they say, we don't do that very often, only once in a while, when we need money and then we go.

to sleep around eight, nine, you know; and we wake up at five, six in the morning... we go to get our boxes, then we come to shine shoes, all day we're here. Some also drink, here in the (...), but we are only a group, there in the stand, we also go to a new museum that just opened, there is a photography exhibit and the (...) also, I mean, they let everybody know, in that group any boy that is doing drugs, alcohol, can go in, that group doesn't have a boss, but the boss is the whole group, I mean, the whole group decides what we are going to do, if we are going to do it or not.

- What do you have to do?

- Come to meetings Wednesdays and Saturdays. It lasts from two in the afternoon till four, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, from eleven until two in the afternoon, I mean, we... all the group decides if he's in or not, if he has serious problems. He tells us his problems, and we, the whole group, we give him advice so he'll know.

- You help yourselves?

- Yeah, I mean, we had a talk with the man (...), so that he would give us money to rent a room to hold our meetings. Don't you see? Before they were here (...) and we had our meetings back there in (...) and they thought we were doin' drugs or drinkin'. Sometimes they brought the police.

- Have you been in (...)?

- Yeah.

- Have you ever gone there to eat?

- Many times.

-
- Have you ever been to the foster home, down there?
 - *Never.*
 - And the foster homes at ...?
 - *No, I don't like them.*
 - Why?
 - *Because the delinquents go there, right? And they use some things...*
 - Drugs?
 - *Yeah, and I don't want to learn those things, they know I've been into drugs, but I don't want to no more.*
 - What did you inhale? Cement glue?
 - *No, thinner.*
 - And now you don't?
 - *No. I'm in this group a year already.*
 - You mean... that this group is especially to treat drug addicts?
 - *Yeah. I mean that this group was set up by a psychologist, he worked here, in the (...) and because he was with us they threw him out, but he still helps us.*
 - Have you met (...)? He works in (...) he's called.

- *One that's not so tall, with his hair kind of like this? Yeah, I know him, we traveled to (...) with him.*

- He's nice, no?

- *Yeah.*

- In the group you have formed, do you have a separate organization? Do you have places where others can't enter to work or make money?

- *I mean, in the (...), they let in little boys and big ones too, they won't let in kids my age, I mean, there are fights and if they want to get in, they have to suffer, they steal their brushes, they beat them. Me, when I got in they did that to me, but now I'm OK.*

- You have to be initiated, as they say.

- *Yeah, but now they almost never do that, because there are around 150 to 200 in the (...) alone!!*

- The ones that shine shoes? There are so many?

- *Yeah. I mean, half the people are not in the institutions, (...) and the other half is from (...). The boys that shine shoes because they want to, each one has his problems... I mean, family problems, they don't have a father... and that kind of thing.*

- Were you born in (...)?

- *Yeah.*

- And your father?

- *From Tarija.*

- And why did you come here, did your father come here to work?

- *Yeah. I mean, my mother is from Mendoza, you know that, right?*

- From Mendoza?

- *Yeah, from Argentina and my father is from Tarija. But my first mother already died, and now my stepmother is from Yungas. My father is going to get out next year.*

- What happened to your father?

- *I mean, my stepmother taught him how to sell drugs. I ran away from my house, when I was a boy and that year it happened. I came back to my house and my father had already gone to sell drugs, they sent him to Chonchocoro three years ago.*

- How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- *Me? An older brother that is in (...), the oldest one, my little sister, that is with my uncle and three sisters from my stepmother.*

- And you, do you go to your stepmother's or not?

- *No, no.*

- Did she abuse you?

- *Yeah. When I was a kid she abused me.*

- What do you want to be when you grow up?

- *A friend is taking me to live to his house, in (...), I'm going to go and live there.*

- Where are you living now?

- *I'm still on the streets. I'm saving money.*

- What grade did you get to?

- *Eighth.*

- But it's difficult living in the streets, right?

- *Yeah, at night it's cold, we cover ourselves with a cardboard box or nylon.*

- You don't have a blanket, then?

- *Nothing.*

- And in winter, don't you get sick?

- *Yeah.*

- And you sleep in a group?

- *Yeah, between five or four, sometimes six. Before there were more. When I arrived, something like ten, eleven, went to sleep. Not in the stands here, in the highway.*

- You sleep in the tunnels at (...), right?

- *Yeah.*

- It must be very hard, right? And you don't fight there, there are no problems?

- *Sometimes, because of the place.*

- You fight for space?

- *Sometimes they fight to sleep in the middle, because the one that sleeps in the middle gets very warm, doesn't have problems, the ones who sleep in the sides, those are cold, for those things they fight.*

- How long have you been sleeping on the streets?

- *Two years.*

- Is that where you get high?

- *Yeah. Sometimes. Almost all night long. It's cold, at five in the morning it's very cold.*

- You mean that dawn is hard?

- *Yeah. I mean, being on the streets I got to know a little bit about La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, those cities.*

- Do you know Santa Cruz?

- *No, I'm going to go now, I'm going to travel.*

- And what did you do in (..)?

- *At first I was shining shoes, then I didn't have any place to sleep, since I didn't know, I mean, my friends left me there. We traveled for*

the (...) holidays and they left me. When we arrived, some cops asked us, "Where are you from?" "From (...)" we told them, they asked for our papers, since we didn't have them, they put us in jail, they took our money, everything. When we got out, my friends got their boxes, the blankets that they had and they came... they left me alone. I didn't know what to do and from (...) I took a bus to (...), then, I was there for half a year, I started working as a mason, die-casting, I came back here, for Christmas.

- Did you meet some boys there?

- *Yeah, in the (...) shelter*

- And there in (...), did you sell drugs, anything like that?

- *Ah no! I didn't deal, my father did.*

- But some boys get into that.

- *They get into that. I've seen boys smoke marihuana and the white one. I mean, they wanted to make me try, but I didn't try.*

- A boy from (...) told me that he shined shoes in (...) and he says that they paid him more than here.

- *Yeah, depending on the colors you shine with, you charge 1, 1.50; brown, black, 50 cents.*

- That boy said that in the (...) festival it's easy to make money.

- *Yeah.*

- Are there many drunks?

- Yeah.

- Have you had experiences of that kind?

- *No, they cornered me (stole) in (...) yeah, the boys that were on drugs, there are many, by the market, at the station, most of them smoke marihuana.*

- And how did they steal from you?

- *I mean, when I was with my things in (...) I didn't know where to go that night. I didn't have a blanket, nothing. Then the wagon from the (...) shelter came. Every night they handed out milk. I asked them where they were from and the educator told me, "Why don't you come? you can go and sleep there," he told me. "Do I have to pay?" I asked him. "No, you're going for free" I went to sleep there that night, they made me take off my shoes, they made me take a bath, and I went to sleep. Next day we woke up to music. They told us, "Make your beds!" Everyone had to do his thing, like sweep the floor, they had meetings there. Then I met some kids, most of them were from here, from (...) for the festivity of (...).*

- To make money?

- *Yeah, lots of them came. There was me and another small boy.*

- Both of you stayed?

- Yeah.



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