

~ HERE IS HOPE ~

~ A Palestinian Girl ~ An African Boy ~ An Israeli Girl ~

By Paul King

“What is hope really made of?

It is said the future of our world sparkles in the eyes of the young,

That hope for a better World lies in the hands of our children.

Yet where is that hope to be actually found?

Hope is made where children have a fair chance to solve problems their elders could not.”

Format	Human Interest HD Documentary film
Length	60 Minutes
Target Group	International Documentary Film Festivals Television Special

TOPICAL INTRODUCTION:

‘Here is Hope’ is a clear-eyed ‘wake up call’ about the urgent need to create safety for the many millions of children living without hope and in danger in today’s world. Told from the personal perspective of four children from four different countries, this documentary film portrays a practical method that offers safe shelter and fair schooling for large numbers of orphans, refugees and other children.

CONTENT BACKGROUND:

Around our world children are being orphaned at an alarming rate, many of their parents refugees shackled by poverty, war, disease or abuse. The most powerless of all these refugees are the young. From the troubled streets of Baghdad & Karachi to the burnt out villages of Darfur, the Congo, and countless other places, a hundred million kids barely survive without parents, homes or schooling to sustain them. There are no schools large enough to take on this amount of orphans, and just not enough foster families to adopt them. These kids survive on scraps found on mean streets, and must steal to survive.

How can this tragic cycle of poverty be broken? How can this problem be treated at its root cause?

Many children, some as young as ten, are daily thrown into adult prisons, raped, or forcefully ‘drafted’ into child armies, violent drug gangs and prostitution. This is happening right now. Poverty is no longer a distant ‘foreign problem’. When a man must fight to live, it becomes easy for him to be driven to an act of desperation. In our times, when extremism is on the rise and children ever more vulnerable to misuse, there is a real need to protect them. ‘Here Is Hope’ is about practical solutions to this very real problem.

‘The 2nd United Nations Millennium Development Goal: Secure Universal Education for all children, regardless of race, religion or social condition, by 2015.’

We better hurry up.

STORY OUTLINE:

Peace is to be found in surprising places. With a hard earned reputation for explosive cultural intolerance, Israel might seem like the last place to base a story from of vivid social integration and lasting security for children. Yet, as a country built by refugees from all of the world’s nations, this country has had much practice in cultural integration and the building of safe havens. This practical experience

has evolved into a modern Youth Village network that specializes in building confidence and faith in children that need support, shelter and guidance.

Told from the daily perspective of four Teenagers living in three Youth Villages, 'Here is Hope' shows places where peace is made every day of the week, where small voices living amongst big daily explosions seek to settle differences instead of being indifferent. Newcomers in a foreign land, the films young characters come from culturally distant countries, Ghana, Palestine, Ukraine & Ethiopia. What they have in common is a basic need for shelter from poverty, prejudice, abuse or war. The first challenge these children face is to learn a common language. By this simple step, newcomers learn to establish common ground and live together. This basic new ability to respond is the first step towards fostering a real sense of social responsibility.

'Here is Hope' documents how the youth village network is able to help these children, and portrays how these villages present a real chance of hope and peace both for the future of Israel, and wherever else there is an urgent need to create dependable safety & shelter for children in danger. But what is a Youth Village? How does it work?

FILMING METHODOLOGY:

The following characters, locations and interview excerpts have been filmed over the course of a three-year period. This approach was intended to allow time for the teenage characters to develop over the course of the film, and to naturally enhance the growing storyline. The films narrative and visual style is to be dynamically paced yet allow time for characters to reflect and for images to speak for themselves. Excerpts from expert interviews and a narration voice convey voice over information (VO). Information will be kept simple & positive and accessible to a general viewing public.

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION SCENE:

Intro: Rapid fading collage of black & white & colour newsreel/archive images of child refugees: 1960's Vietnam. Wartime Germany. Darfur. African Boat refugees washed up dead on a Spanish beach. Thai child prostitute. UK ferry truck. Congolese child soldiers. Children in a prison cell in South Africa. Refugee camps in Iraq & Afghanistan:

"Mama May Have – Papa May have – But God Bless the Child that's Got His own"
Billy Holliday

Intro Voice Over (VO): Interview Professor David Macarov – Jerusalem University of Social Sciences: 'We need to protect the many millions of orphaned children around the World. If we don't they are easy prey for any one who will feed them or offer them some form of shelter. Many of these children are forced into prostitution, child armies and gangs. How can we ignore this tragedy and pretend this not is going on? We need to do something about this because we are Human. We also need to help these children because if we don't – they will certainly make our world a more dangerous place.'

Location cut Interview Avi Barry - 16 years old African boy – Kadoori Youth Village.

'I was ten when my mother died. She died because in my hometown in Ghana we had no doctors. Then I lived on the street, and had to fight for scraps of food. I reached Israel through a slave-trading network that promised to find me work, and was picked up by the police in Tel Aviv when I was 14. When they discovered I was a minor they put me in a Youth Village. Since then I have learned to use my voice. I want to be the president of my Country, and help other children.'

MAIN CHARACTERS & LOCATIONS:

Professor Macarov. Jerusalem:

Now in his early Nineties, grizzly Professor Macarov fought as a GI in the Pacific during the second world. He is still fighting – but now for peace. As a fulltime fellow at the Hebrew University, Macarov is currently lecturing on the International educational circuit, and doing all he can to push forward the

Youth Village module for poorer nations. His attempts include developing a test case Youth Village in Rwanda - Africa. Should this succeed, the foundation will be laid for developing youth villages in other parts of the world.

Kadoori Youth Village:

Built in the forested hills of the Western Galilee, Kadoori is special for its time & place in today's Middle East. A typical dormitory or classroom may include students from all major religions, including Islam, Christian or Judaism, and other smaller faiths such as Druze. This vivid friendly environment focuses on progressive educational methods, which are then 'taken home' by students to their respective social backgrounds. 'Here Is Hope' focuses on two Kadoori students:

16 year old Samar Manaa is a Muslima from Majd al Kurum, an Arabic village. She chose to come to an Israeli Youth Village to get a chance to learn things she would not have in her own village school. Samar plans to become a police officer and go back to her village to help women in need. 'Here is Hope' portrays Samar both at home and at school, and includes an interview with her father Achmed, a 45 year old Palestinian man who is 'Proud of my Daughter. I want her to succeed in anything she wants!'

Avi Barry: Avi is from Western Guinea. His single parent died when he was just 10, leaving him to face life on the street. After being told he will be helped to find work, Avi was 'loaned' travel money and then escorted through Morocco and Egypt and on to Israel. His journey took him to a Bedouin slave market, and landed him in an Israeli prison. Once it was discovered Avi was a minor, he was adopted by Kadoori Youth Village. 17 now, Avi can sleep safely and dream of a future.

Hodayot Youth Village:

Built near the Kinneret sea, Hodayot students come from all over Israel, Europe and Africa. A typical dormitory might house over 20 children. 'Here Is Hope' portrays Family unit House parents Itzik & Rachaeli Shriki, who share a housing building with three of their own children and 16 'adopted' teenagers from 10 different countries. One of them is 14 year-old Rita. The eldest daughter of a crippled alcoholic father and a mother that works nights as a hotel masseuse, Rita was saddled with taking care of her large family. Her life in her rough neighbourhood Tiberias often put her in danger of being caught up in the local drug scene. In the two years she was filmed Rita evolved from fighting her fellow students to becoming a leader in her group. Rita wants to become a teacher and help other children.

Yemin-Orde Youth Village: Sifrash Ambawu has just turned twenty. As an Ethiopian immigrant Sifrash started school three years below her age group to catch up with schooling she lacked in her home country. 'In Ethiopia we would be 60 children to one teacher. The teachers did not care. There was no food. The only reason we went to school was because it was safer there than on the streets. You never knew what might happen on the streets. Violence. Kidnappings. Rape.' Sifrash and her family walked from Ethiopia to Israel, where it was rumored they could find work. About to graduate from High School, Sifrash dreams of taking back what she has learned to her own country, and setting up a midwife clinic to help stop the high numbers of Ethiopian women that die in childbirth.

Dr. Haim Peri. With 25 years experience running a major Youth Village, Peri is keen to develop the Youth Village school system in places most needed. 'A Youth Village is a sort of boarding school. But here Teachers live with the students. Students receive around the clock attention, extra lessons and activities. In return, the students work to help maintain the school. The Youth village model can work anywhere else in the world! Right now ex students from this school, many of them Africans themselves, are building the first African Youth Village in Rwanda. This Youth Village will house 500 orphans. What could be more beautiful than Africans building Africa? The reason Youth Villages will work there is that by their very existence, they create work and build local capacity. They not only help save lost kids, and give them a chance to become leaders, they also buy food and train and employ people from surrounding communities.'

Right now the objective is to conclude 'Here Is Hope' with dedicated footage taken of the first African orphans admitted to the brand new Agahozo Shalom Youth Village in Rwanda, built in co-operation with the Rwandan government by the Heyman-Merrin Family Foundation – who initially spear-headed the creation of the ASYV Youth Village - and the American Joint Distribution Centre (JDC), both being international foundations dedicated to alleviate poverty & suffering.