"IT'S THE SAME WORLD"

FOOTAGE  IMAGE  SOUND

00  TITLE: IT'S THE SAME WORLD.

03  FILIPINO CHILDREN PLAYING

NARRATOR:
This child can neither hear nor speak, yet her words are eloquent.

"In every life...there is a right...there is a wrong. In every person...there is one who cannot see...who cannot hear...who cannot walk. Our world is dark...a midnight without end. Who knows the color...of the world that has been taken from us? But do not worry, my friend...though you want to sing but can't. Your heart and spirit...shout for you. Though we were born incomplete...life carries us...toward a better time."
Physical and mental handicaps respect no borders, nor they know religious, social or economic boundaries. As easily as it might blight the life of African or Asian, New Yorker or Nubian, deafness drops its curtain of silence around a young Lebanese.

No, there's nothing wrong with the projector. But for this child, life has no sound track. No education, no hope for the future, he spends his empty days selling chiclets to pay for his one pleasure: his favorite ride at the amusement park. But this has been a special day. A film crew has come to visit him, and he pantomimes his impossible dream: "I want to go away from here. Please take me with you."

Aashu is seven. Five years ago, he fell from his crib and suffered brain damage. Doctors urged his family to put him in an institution, but Aashu's father refused to tear his son away from normal society.
His father says, "I consider Aashu to be my treasure. Fate brought him to our lives, and it has been a turning point that changed my whole personality. I was an atheist; now I believe in God. I was a hard and passionless man; today I am full of emotions. We do everything together, as a family. We go wherever Aashu can go with us. If he cannot go, we don't go. To separate Aashu from our family would be like losing a part of my body."

Aashu's entire family works constantly to widen his world.

"I have been teaching my brother many things, it's hard for him to learn. I pray that God will soon make him alright. Then I will teach him good things, and he will behave in a normal way."
"When I was 20, I fell from a horse and was crippled, and my only chance in life was to be a beggar. I came to the city and begged for coins, but I could not support my family. Finally, someone told me about the government's rehabilitation agency. There, I was given training, and then I found a job. I am happy about my work, but I am happiest of all to be able to support my family."

This...is Ethiopia. But a human being's need to sustain a family, to do useful work, to feel needed, to be a functioning part of society rather than a dependant, is as powerful here as it is in any Western metropolis or Middle Eastern village or South American pueblo.

"I am not ashamed of my father. An accident can happen to anybody. The government gives me my schooling, but for my food and home I depend on my father."
Once a beggar, now a weaver.

A young Peruvian watches the game he once played.

"My boy became ill six months ago. They told me he had a sickness called polio. Medicine is very expensive, and we are very poor. I don't know what to do."

"I have no friends except my little dog. I used to always play football with my friends, and when I got sick, I had to stop school and could no longer play. My only wish...is to play football again."

Yet it doesn't always require money and medical facilities to deal with a handicap. Hard work, common sense and lots of love can sometimes do as well. This 10-year-old Mexican girl also has polio, but her mother is doing the demanding job of physical therapy herself, and the village carpenter contributed this sturdy set of parallel bars.
"There is no hospital nearby to take care of my daughter, so our community health worker taught me to do this. I work and I pray to God that maybe next year, Leticia will be able to walk to school by herself."

Helping someone who is handicapped become a functioning member of society requires devotion, perseverance and, often, ingenuity. A rolled-up newspaper rather than expensive leg braces enables Leticia's polio-weakened knees to support her: common materials and common sense providing a new solution to an old problem.

"For the first time, I can stand by myself. From up here, the world looks different."

Ultimately, the most effective way of dealing with handicaps is stifling them before they take root. The seeds of future problems are sown during infancy, when a child's body and brain can so easily be undernourished.
In the Philippines, volunteer therapists visit the rural regions to teach parents how to physically nourish and mentally stimulate their children.

This family has one retarded child, and the therapist is determined to keep the same problems from affecting the new baby.

"I visit the families here to teach them how to prevent disabilities by promoting breast-feeding and feeding for the mind as well, through playing with the children. We are also trying to change the attitude of the people to allow the handicapped to become useful members of the community."

In Indonesia, such attitude changes start in school, where integrated, side-by-side education of blind and sighted children is a national goal — an important, challenging step toward the development of a handicapped child into a productive adult.
Integrated schooling can be doubly useful, for as well as educating it cuts through the myths and prejudices that are created when the handicapped are kept separate from the rest of society.

These children not only learn to read but learn that their blind classmates have important, too often ignored capabilities as well.

Prejudice must be taught. These sighted and blind children are instead learning the lessons of laughter that will lead to far more productive lifetimes for both.

"I like to be with the blind children because I can learn with them, we can play together, and I can help them when they need it."
A government-supported community for the victims of leprosy, in Nepal. Through the centuries, "leper" has become synonymous with outcast, untouchable. But this 12-year old girl's leprosy is controlled with medication.

It takes more than pills to change the attitudes of society, but now Tara is allowed to attend school in the nearby village.

"My father had leprosy too. He is dead now, but he could not get any medicine in those days. He was driven away by the villagers, who were frightened. Today I get medicine from the government. I go to school now too, and the villagers all accept me as one of them."

Her disease is no longer communicable, but fears, suspicions and taboos so often build barriers between the handicapped and the rest of society. Yet, one little girl going to school despite a disability can begin to tear down those wasteful walls.
This unusual Egyptian village has been built to prove that the adaptation of urban planning to the needs of the handicapped -- such things as simple ramps and modified bathrooms -- is neither difficult nor inconvenient. Its residents are people such as this crippled veteran.

"I was wounded during my military service, when I was 19. When I go out among people now, I feel better because I can do everything for myself. I can work with my pottery and sell what I make, and I know that I am the same as anyone else. People are not better than I am simply because they can use their legs. I have a heart and feelings just like they do."

Given a chance and a challenge, the human spirit is capable of surmounting any physical handicap.
It's a small shoulder for a big man to lean on, but this recently blinded Filipino uses the help and training of a young woman. He must relearn his skills as a farmer, for the ability to plant and harvest crops is for him the most basic part of supporting a family.

"I know how important it is to be able to plant, to be able to gather crops, to be able to care for farm animals as well as for yourself, for I too was born in a barrio like this. Do I know how to teach these things? Come inside this little church and I'll show you."

She is the maid of honor at a simple wedding that serves a proof of her skill...for she has helped her friend Aquilino become no longer just a handicapped person but a farmer, a villager, a husband for a woman he met after he became blind.
Terry Fox lost his right leg to cancer, but nothing has conquered his courage. As the world's television cameras recorded his painful steps, he set out to run across all of Canada -- a marathon affirmation of his belief that a physical handicap lives only in the mind.

**TERRY FOX (OFF CAMERA):**

"Right from the beginning I have had a competitive attitude. The attitude that I can beat my disability. Right now I believe I can handle any job that anybody else can handle. I can go to a university. I can drive a car. I can do anything that anybody with two legs or two arms can do. And, I'm as happy as anybody can be and there's no limit to what I can do."

**TV ANNOUNCER (OFF CAMERA):**

"By yesterday, Terry Fox had covered just over half the 3,000-mile run."
NARRATOR:
He finished his run on a stretcher, struck down by a recurrence of his disease.

TERRY FOX:
"Originally I had primary cancer in my knee three and a half years ago and that the cancer has spread and now I've got cancer in my lungs, and we gotta go home and try and do some more treatment. But all I can say is that if there's any way I can get out there again and finish it I will."

"I am in a difficult situation. I have an artificial leg, I have cancer. But I believe that I love life and I believe that no matter who you are or what situation you're in, that people can deal and can beat anything, can beat any disability, can beat any depression situation for whatever reason that is. And that if we want a world with peace and without war, I think if people try hard enough, that they can have that."

TERRY FOX (OFF CAMERA):
"Now I'm not sure what my future is, whether I live, or whether I'm able to go back and complete my run, if God wants it and I make it, I'm gonna give it everything I've got. And if I don't make it, if I die of cancer, there's gonna be a good reason for that too."
TERRY FOX:

"I'm really fighting now. That's the way I look at it. I'm just gonna keep fighting it and it's gonna take a lot to bring me down."

NARRATOR:

Terry Fox will run forever, for those who have seen him turn a crippling disability into a triumph.

TERRY FOX (OFF CAMERA):

"I know that I have a wooden leg but I also know that I am not disabled."

NARRATOR:

If love is the heartbeat of beauty can anyone say they should be polite outcasts rather than part of our society? Their needs are so small, yet their courage is so great.

The world of the disabled need not be a special world. For after all, it's the same world that the rest of us live in.