

# off the fence.

## Most Dangerous Ways To School, The (Series 1)

5 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

### 1. Siberia

In Oymyakon, the cold controls everything. The town is located in eastern part of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), which belongs to Russia and is known as the world's Pole of Cold. Nevertheless every morning the children march to school, the youngest just 6 years old. Making their way by temperatures of -50 degrees Celsius. Such circumstances would seem completely inconceivable for Europeans, but in the coldest town in the world, it is the beginning of an ordinary day. At least there is a school bus. But does it still work by temperatures of -50 degrees Celsius? The temperature controls the entire life here, not just the way to school. Running water? The pipes are broken, which is not surprising when the water literally freezes in the air. The inhabitants must melt blocks of ice in order to obtain water. How do the humans, the animals and the nature survive in such a unreal region? This film provides the answer.

### 2. Himalaya

It is the journey in hell, through the Tibet's mountains. It is 100 kilometers long and only with the help of their father do the children have a chance of getting it safely. The only way there takes them over a frozen river, through the Tibetan mountains, by icy temperatures; and all this for almost an entire week. It carries them past fallen avalanches while the sun beats down on the ice causing it to melt and making every step life threatening. Our journey starts at the "Roof of the World" in the region of Zaskar in northern India. Due to the icy climate, this region is cut off from the rest of the world 5 months of the year. Almost 10,000 people live in this small town. Every spring the time comes when the children must leave, a week before the vacation is over, to begin their trip back to school. During the day, they climb and march; at night they build their camp, try to get some sleep without freezing by -30 degrees. In the morning they wake up and start climbing and marching all over again; 6 days long the same thing

### 3. Kenya

Over 30 degrees Celsius, barefoot and walking a distance of over 20 kilometers. For the children of Massai people in Tanzania, this is the daily way to school. Their way to school takes them through the Dorn Savanna, past the warren boars and the hyenas. It takes them past their only source of water, the Pangani River. But the river is also the greatest enemy as well with the at times up to 4 meter long crocodiles that could attack them at any given time. When the ferryman and his boat are not there, they even have to swim across the river. All this for just one goal; to

get to school. Not even the most difficult circumstances can stop these students from going to school. No dangerous wild animals, no extreme temperatures, or the long way. These children fight their way through it all- then only this way do they have a chance to break the bond of poverty and hunger. The children of the Massai live in villages without any schools. There is no space and no qualified personnel available. To make matter worst, they are nomadic and constantly moving. Once their cattle have grazed all the grass, they move and settle somewhere else. The new village will also have no school of its own, and the way to the school might even become more difficult.

#### **4. Lake Titicaca**

Lake Titicaca is the largest lake in South America and the highest navigable body of water. Here Bolivia and Peru meet. According to legends, the Incan civilization originated on its banks. A magical place, but today only the many temple ruins in the region give attest to the once high culture of the past. What is left are the Uros; an ancient people, described at times as the only decedents of the Incas. They are the people of the floating islands, a very small community of about 2000 with a community consisting of fifty swimming islands. Every day from the furthest corners, the youngest inhabitants paddle their way in their small boats to school. Ronald lives on one of the furthest island from school. His school way takes him every day around three hours of paddling on the lake full of fish. The lake with its wealth of fish and seafood, delivers the dietary basis of the Islanders, while the school offers the children hope for future.

#### **5. Nepal**

School lessons at edge of a super power- without a computer or technical assistance, with just one teacher, always demanding extreme physical exertion. 10 Kilometers there and 10 Kilometers back, on foot and every day. For Zuoh, this is completely normal- since he does not know it any other way. His day begins at 4:30 every morning. At this early time he gets ready to start his way to school. Only after an hour of non-stop walking, he is joined by others who live closer to the school. Until then, he is completely on his own, traveling along a amazingly dangerous path. It is a path through a dazzling landscape- deadly beautiful should one deviate from the way. On the most narrow parts of Zouh's way, which takes him straight through the fantastic mountainous landscape, it is only a few centimeters wide; on both sides steep drops of hundreds of meters. One false step could prove to be fatal. One cannot be afraid of heights and want go to school in the town of Gulu. It is the only school far and wide. No one knows how much longer the teacher, who has been there now for over 29 years, will be around. He teaches them Chinese and Mathematics; these students who have never seen a computer or a car.