

Social Justice and Equality (2)

'If we could shrink the earth...'

Based on an idea from TIDE (2003)

Advanced (Classes 11-12)

Intermediate (Classes 7-10)



Social Justice/School Reform (A Pestalozzi Approach)

The facilitator divides the participants into pairs and gives each pair the quiz *'If we could shrink the earth...'*

The pairs do the quiz and the teacher then asks different pairs for answers. Pairs mark their own papers.

The participants go through any points of interest arising from the quiz, especially any that relate to inequality. If the participants fail to come up with any points of interest, the facilitator should elicit them, ensuring that the final two paragraphs of the following, which are about Pestalozzi, and as much as possible of the rest, is covered:

- Which of the areas listed are, for the most part, the developed richer areas and which are, for the most part, the developing poorer areas? Europe, North America and Oceania are the developed richer areas. Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean are the developing poorer areas. (Of course there are exceptions, such as Japan in Asia.)
- How many in total are from the poorer areas (82) and how many in total are from the richer areas (18).
- 20 people own 89% of the world's wealth – where do these 20 people come from? Almost all of them come from Europe and North America. 13 people would not be properly fed and only 27 would have access to clean drinking water. Which countries are the people without enough food or clean drinking water likely to be from? Wealth is very unevenly distributed. How has this come about? Industrialisation? Colonialism? Corruption? Are things starting to change?

Materials Needed

- *'If we could shrink the earth...'* quiz for every pair of students
- One copy of *'If we could shrink the earth'* answer key





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- Consider China and India's technological advance. 4 people would own a computer and 50 would never have made a phone call. Many of those without a computer and who have never made a phone call come from China and India, the very countries which are making such technological advances. What does this tell you? That wealth generated by a country does not necessarily trickle down to all of its people
- 20 people generate 86% of the world's rubbish. Where would these 20 come from? Again almost all of them come from Europe and North America, although developing countries such as China are also increasingly adding to pollution. What does this rubbish include? Waste such as pollution, which is leading to climate change and global warming. So who should take the lead in dealing with climate change? The countries which produce most of the pollution – Europe and North America. Yet who is suffering the most from the effects of climate change? The poorer areas. What example could other areas learn from the richer areas? The importance of waste control
- 39 would be under 20 years old. If we take an average life span to be 80 years, how many, in a world of 100 people, would you expect to be under 20? Only 25. What is likely to happen when you all grow up and have children? A population explosion. What might be the consequences of a population explosion? Not enough food, not enough land... How can a population explosion be prevented? Is China's one child per family policy an infringement on human rights or is it a reasonable way to prevent a population explosion?



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- In the 18th century and early 19th century, Pestalozzi was fighting for an education for the poor in his country. He believed that education should be available to everyone and since then many people who were influenced by him fought for education for all. Now it is generally recognised that education should be provided for everyone. So what is the problem? Why is it that in the early 21st century, if the world shrank to contain 100 people, only 17 would be able to read and only 2 would have had a college education? What is the problem? What would Pestalozzi's answer have been? It could be largely due to the fact that the education provided is often totally irrelevant to the needs of the people. As a result people drop out of education. Pestalozzi always argued that education must meet the needs of each individual and prepare each person for the life he or she would be most likely to lead as an adult. It could also be that there is not enough flexibility in the provision of education. If children were able to learn while they worked, as Pestalozzi advocated in his novel 'Leonard and Gertrude', they would be able to earn an income and learn to read etcetera. In 'Leonard and Gertrude' the children spin while they learn to read and to do arithmetic.

Pestalozzi believed that the provision of a relevant education for all is the only way to overcome inequality. What do you think? How might a relevant and accessible education help countries to overcome inequality? Where does the movement for change need to come from? Should it come from the rich countries? Should it come from the rich living in the poor countries? Should it come from the poor people themselves? Pestalozzi believed that any kind of giving from the rich to the poor, which does not help people to help themselves, is useless because such gifts simply make people dependent and even less able to help themselves. But a gift which helps the poor to help themselves - that is, the provision of a relevant education - is the most valuable gift. Do you know of any other people who, or organisations which, think like this? Confucius (the Chinese philosopher who lived from 551-479 BC) is supposed to have said 'Give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime'.

For further information about Pestalozzi's belief that education is the only way to solve social injustice, refer to 'Poverty' (pp.32-37) in 'Section 4: Pestalozzi and Education' of the 'Pestalozzi Information Pack'.