Be the Change: Between Two Worlds WebQuest

Originally at: <https://www.accessola.com/osla/bethechange/webquest/worlds/index.html>

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Introduction

Picture it: a tsunami rolls in, a region is devastated by a hurricane, and ordinary people suffer, including children. Elsewhere in the world, the economy is depressed and parents struggle to provide for their children. And in yet other areas, a government policy meant to improve living conditions for everyone, means that some parents feel they have no choice but to give up their children.

Many children in these situations are offered up for adoption to people from other parts of the world, far from the country of their birth. But is this the best solution for the child?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. It also states that all children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not. Is international adoption the best option for children whose parents or country cannot care for them?

Many Canadian parents adopt children from other parts of the world, most frequently from China. Why are so many children from China offered for adoption? What does life in Canada hold in store for the children who are adopted from China? Is international adoption the best solution for these children? If not, what should be done for them? The answer to these complex questions is likely quite different, depending on who you ask.

Task

The United Nations is holding a special conference on the rights of adoptive children. Since so many Chinese children are adopted by Canadian families, you have been asked to investigate this situation and make recommendations.

In order to make realistic recommendations, you must first investigate the facts. You also need to try to see those facts from all viewpoints: everyone believes that they are doing the best they can for these children, but have very different views on what “the best” means.

Despite these differing viewpoints, you realize that your recommendations will be much more powerful if your entire delegation is able to achieve consensus, and present a united voice about what you think needs to be done to best protect the rights of children.

Process

**Step One:**
Your teacher will divide you into five groups. Your group’s first task is to investigate the facts. Each group must find out:

* Why so many children from China are offered for adoption
* What motivates Canadians to adopt children from China
* What process prospective parents in Canada must go through to adopt a child from China
* What measures the governments of Canada and China take to ensure that these children’s rights are protected

Use the organizer [***The Adoption Process: Protecting the Child***](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070155/http%3A/accessola.com/osla/bethechange/pdf/i_blm_AdoptWQ1.pdf) to ensure your investigation is thorough.

**Step Two:**
After investigating the facts, each group will look at them from a different point of view. Group roles:

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| --- |
| **Group One: The Hopeful Canadian Parent**You are an average Canadian, who, for whatever reason, wishes to adopt a child. You have gone through Canada’s rigorous process to determine whether you will be a good parent to a new child, and passed with flying colours. You will love your new child unconditionally, and you believe that you offer the best option possible for a baby who might otherwise have no real home. |
| **Group Two: The Child’s Natural Parent**You are an average Chinese parent. You love your child, but cannot keep her. You feel that your only option is to offer her for adoption, even if it means that she will move to a country halfway around the world, with a completely different culture. Your sincerest hope is that other parents will not have to make the painful decision you feel you have been forced into by circumstances beyond your control. |
| **Group Three: A Canadian Government Official**You are a dedicated public servant, whose job it is to make sure that everything possible is done to ensure that adoptive children in Canada, no matter their country of origin, have the same rights as all other Canadian citizens. It is also your job to work cooperatively with other countries to try to make sure that the rights of children everywhere are respected and protected. |
| **Group Four: A Chinese Government Official**You are a dedicated public servant, whose job it is to think of the good of your country and its people. Despite your best efforts, your government cannot care for all children, and supports the international adoption process. You are dedicated to doing the best for these children, but you are also looking for a long-term solution, so that your country can take care of its own. |
| **Group Five: The Child**You are the child caught in the middle. Being adopted by loving Canadian parents means that you will have opportunities that would not be possible otherwise. Even though you are very grateful to have been adopted, you wonder about what you might have lost in the process.Even though international adoption has worked out well for you, what about the children still waiting? Is international adoption the best option for these children? If so, what should be done to ensure that adoptive children’s rights are protected? If not, what needs to be done so that they can live happily with their natural parents, in the country of their birth? |

Use the organizer [***The Child’s Rights: Perspectives and Possibilities***](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070155/http%3A/accessola.com/osla/bethechange/pdf/i_blm_AdoptWQ2.pdf) to help you identify and understand your unique perspective. The end purpose is to ensure that collectively the facts are considered from all possible angles, and from the perspective of protecting the rights of the child. Decide on the measures that you think are most important to protect the rights of the adoptive child in the short term and in the long term.

**Step Three:**
The Secretary-General of the United Nations (a.k.a. your teacher), will convene a special meeting to hear recommendations on this issue. Despite your different perspectives, your goal is to listen to and understand all perspectives, and ultimately to reach consensus and all agree on what should be done. **Your united voice presents a stronger case and is more likely to affect change.**

**Resources**

**Step One: Finding the Facts**

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Federal Government) outlines the laws and process for international adoptions in Canada:
[**http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/adoption/index.asp**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/adoption/index.asp)

The Government of Canada’s website offers links to government information on intercountry adoption services:
[**http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/hip/sd/10\_fedGovDept.shtml**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.sdc.gc.ca/en/hip/sd/10_fedGovDept.shtml)

The Adoption Council of Canada is a charitable organization whose aim is to inform Canadians on the benefits of adoption. Their page on the adoption process outlines what adoptive families must do before being considered as eligible to adopt children from Canada or elsewhere in the world:
[**http://www.canadaswaitingkids.ca/adoption.html**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.canadaswaitingkids.ca/adoption.html)

Children’s Bridge is an organization that helps Canadians adopt internationally. Their “Frequently Asked Questions” provides insight into the adoption process.
[**http://www.childrensbridge.com/pages/faq.html**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.childrensbridge.com/pages/faq.html)

The Cultural Profiles site gives an overview of life in China and the Chinese cultural community in Canada. Although the site has not been updated in some years, the Family Life section provides some useful background information:
[**http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/china/index.html**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.cp-pc.ca/english/china/index.html)

**Step Two: Seeing the Facts from Different Points of View**

Stronger Than Blood is a journalistic article about international adoption. It outlines the process and issues about Canadians adopting internationally:
[**http://www.fims.uwo.ca/olr/apr1502/adoption.htm**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.fims.uwo.ca/olr/apr1502/adoption.htm)

Families with Children from China is a support group for adoptive parents. This link is to the website of their Toronto chapter:
[**http://www.fcctoronto.org/tor\_index.asp**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.fcctoronto.org/tor_index.asp)

Adoption.com is a support organization for adoptive families in the U.S.. Their article on issues surrounding transracial and transcultural adoption is also useful in the Canadian context:
[**http://library.adoption.com/Interracial-Multicultural-Adoption/Transracial-and-Transcultural-Adoption/article/23/1.html**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/library.adoption.com/Interracial-Multicultural-Adoption/Transracial-and-Transcultural-Adoption/article/23/1.html)

Human Rights Watch, a non-governmental organization concerned with human rights, published this report on concerns about Chinese orphanages:
[**http://www.hrw.org/summaries/s.china961.html**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/www.hrw.org/summaries/s.china961.html)

The Council of Europe’s 1999 report, International adoption: respecting children’s rights:
[**http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc99/EDOC8592.htm**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070403/http%3A/assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc99/EDOC8592.htm)

Evaluation

You will be evaluated on the following:

* Investigative Work: *The Adoption Process: Protecting the Child* organizer
* Information Processing: *The Child’s Rights: Perspectives and Possibilities* organizer
* Processing & Transferring: Your contributions to the special U.N. meeting will be assessed by the Secretary-General (a.k.a. your teacher). See the assessment rubric for specific criteria.

Conclusion

**Be the Change**
While the overwhelming majority of adults involved in international adoption have the good of the child as their focus, the missing voice is often that of the child. Many international organizations are dedicated to empowering children to find their voice and work for positive change. Check out some of their websites:

The Canadian International Development Agency’s Youth Zone:
[**http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-12882713-HSK**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070235/http%3A/www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-12882713-HSK)

UNICEF’s Voices of Youth:
[**http://www.unicef.org/voy/index.php**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070235/http%3A/www.unicef.org/voy/index.php)

Free the Children: Children Helping Children Through Education, founded by Canadian Craig Kielburger.
[**http://www.freethechildren.org/index.php**](https://web.archive.org/web/20101213070235/http%3A/www.freethechildren.org/index.php)

Teacher Resources

See the attached lesson plan and student resource sheets.

Attachments:

* [**Be the Change Lesson Plan**](Lesson_Plan_Be_the_Change_Between_two_worlds_Teacher_Resources.pdf) (58 KB pdf file)
* Student Resource Sheets (pdf files)
	+ [**Organizer: The Adoption Process: Protecting the Child** (](Protecting_the_Child.pdf)28 KB pdf file)
	+ [**Organizer: The Child’s Rights: Perspectives and Possibilities**](Perspectives_Possibilities.pdf) (31 KB pdf file)
	+ [**Record of WebQuest Sources**](Record_of_Sources.pdf) (38 KB pdf file)
	+ [**Assessment Rubric: Between Two Worlds**](Evaluation_Rubric.pdf) (35 KB pdf file)
	+ [**Group Role Descriptions**](Roles.pdf) (41 KB pdf file)