



CLASS 2

The Power of One

Adapted from Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference by Stephanie Kempf

MATERIALS NEEDED

Stories on how one person made a choice and had an impact. The stories included are entitled, “The Power of Fair Trade,” “Organizing Farmers in Peru,” and “Delivering a Message to a World Leader.”

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

INTRODUCTION: This is a class designed to inspire you. You’ll hear stories of how everyday people have helped bring about positive change. These stories will show you that every effort, no matter how small, matters. You will see that the idealism, energy and determination of one person can enlighten and motivate others, even those who have become apathetic and passive about the world’s problems.

DIALOGUE: Have you ever tried to change something? Do you know someone who has? Can one person’s efforts really make a difference?

ACTIVITY: Read or tell some of the stories that follow.

DIALOGUE: How do the stories make you feel? What images stayed with you? What do you think of the people in the stories? Do you know anyone like them? Are these people heroes? What if everyone in the world did things like this?

CLOSING: It’s possible for us to treat the earth and everyone on it with respect. A great deal of suffering is caused by human actions but can be ended by human actions. Everyone’s efforts and skills are needed. Despite the complexities of the problems we are facing in our world, many courageous people are proving every day that solutions are possible.

Fair Trade is one way people can make a difference. It addresses the inequalities that exist in farming communities around the world, from Latin America to Asia to Africa to the U.S. Fair Trade is an approach to trading, but it works because of individual choices. It relies on eaters, shoppers, and thinkers to keep the movement strong.

Suggested Activities:

1. Encourage students to interview family members and look through newspapers for local heroes. Present several of these over the course of study to inspire students.
2. Invite speakers who are making a difference in your community to come talk to the students.
3. Read Ten Amazing People and How They Changed the World by Maura Shaw (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2002) aloud to your students.
4. Read stories from Choosing to Participate: Facing History and Ourselves found on:
http://choosingtoparticipate.org/cms/index.php/plain/explore_and_learn/explore_the_exhibition
5. Have students write about a time when they made a difference in someone's life.
6. Create posters or poems depicting the beautiful, healthy, and just world students are hoping to create. What does it look like? What kinds of people inhabit it? How does it feel to live there? Display the posters.
7. Watch these videos available from UNICEF, 212-986-2020, www.unicef.org/videoaudio:
 - “Children of Soon Ching Ling,” which tracks the history of the children's rights movement in China and emphasizes the life and work of Soon Ching Ling, who fought for children's rights.
 - “Raising Voices,” which explores the concerns of young people and some of the positive ways they are working to change their communities.

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Stories of People Who Make a Difference, 1



Taking a Risk with Fair Trade

In 1986, three young men in their 20s learned that coffee farmers all over the world were living in poverty. They did not think it was fair that millions of adults began their day by enjoying a cup of coffee, while the farmers who grew the coffee couldn't even afford to send their children to school. These three men—Rink Dickinson, Jonathan Rosenthal and Michael Rozyne—met to discuss how best to change this system of injustice, and how to create a food system based on fairness and respect.

These three men understood that significant change only happens when you take big risks. So they cried “¡Adelante!” (rough translation from Spanish for “No turning back!”) and pursued their vision. They left their jobs and used their own money to start the company called Equal Exchange. Equal Exchange would be a Fair Trade buyer, paying farmers a fair price for their hard work. Other people thought they were foolish and would not succeed. But after a few years of working directly with farmers and offering them a better deal, the business started to grow. More and more people started buying Equal Exchange coffee, and more farmers were being helped.

Today, Equal Exchange works with thousands of farmers in over 19 countries, and buys millions of pounds of coffee every year. Farmers selling Fair Trade products have health care centers, quality school classrooms, and safe drinking water. Equal Exchange proved that fair business is good business. And the same companies that didn't believe in Equal Exchange at the beginning are now following Equal Exchange's example of buying fairly.

Three determined individuals changed the lives of many people when they learned about an injustice and did something to address it.

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Stories of People Who Make a Difference, 2



One Farmer in Peru

Arnaldo Neira Camizan is a 55-year-old farmer. He grows coffee on about 10 acres tucked away in the lush, green foothills of the Andes mountains in northwestern Peru. Until 1995, he grew coffee that was sold on the open market through intermediaries, or middlemen. The price he and the other farmers received was low, but he had no way to bargain with the middlemen. “Many times the intermediaries would arrive at the fields and offer a low price—there was no negotiation,” Arnaldo remembers.

Then he heard about Equal Exchange, a company that helps small-farm owners in distant places such as South America, Africa, and Asia break the middlemen’s hold by buying directly from farmers who are organized in cooperatives. Because the farmers deal directly with Equal Exchange, they get a higher price for their coffee.

Working first at the village level and then at the regional level, Arnaldo and a dozen other farmers in northern Peru established the coffee cooperative CEPICAFE in 1995. Arnaldo walked three to six hours a day to neighboring villages to talk to the local farmers about the organization. More people joined the group and talked to other neighbors about the potential benefits and risks of organizing a farmer cooperative and selling to the Fair Trade market.

Those early efforts have paid off. Today, CEPICAFE has over 2,400 farmer members and sells \$7 million of the coffee, cocoa, sugar, and fruit produced by those farmers. Farmers earn an average of 30% more than they would if they were not selling through their cooperative. Their success benefits the farmers’ families too. When he visited the U.S. in 2002, Arnaldo said, “Before we were organized, most of the kids of coffee farmers only got through elementary school. Now that we’re organized and don’t have to sell to intermediaries at whatever price they are paying, most of the children don’t have to work and are completing high school. And of the 1,640 farmer members of CEPICAFE, there are 30 who have kids studying at the university.” When Equal Exchange visited Arnaldo in Peru in 2007, he announced, “Now my two children have both graduated from university and one of them works as an agronomist at CEPICAFE.”

Currently, Arnaldo, who began his farming career as a single small farmer with few choices for how to support his family, serves as president of the National Coordinating Body of Small-Scale Coffee Farmers of Peru. He and his farmer cooperative continue to help shape the international Fair Trade coffee movement.

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Stories of People Who Make a Difference, 3

Delivering a Message to a World Leader

This is how Heidi Hattenbach describes her feelings the first time she heard that 30,000 children die every day from hunger: “It hit me so deeply. I cried. It just didn’t make sense, so I decided to do something about it.”

So Heidi joined an organization called Youth Ending Hunger, where she met other young people who were speaking out against hunger and finding creative ways to help stop it. At the time there was a terrible war and famine in Ethiopia. The governments of the U.S. and the Soviet Union were sending weapons to the war zone. The people at YEH were encouraging citizens all over the world to write letters to the presidents of different countries saying that it was not alright with them that so many people were so hungry, and that they wanted the leaders of the world to take responsibility for the children who were dying.

Because of Heidi and many other young activists, the organization collected 65,000 letters from people in Europe, Africa, the U.S., and Canada. Some of the messages in the letters were conveyed in pictures by children too young to even write. YEH organized a delegation to deliver all the letters to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow. One person from each country in which letters were written was chosen to go. Heidi was among them. Her friends and family raised the money to pay her way to go.

Mikhail Gorbachev was out of the country the day Heidi and her friends from 12 countries walked into the Kremlin carrying several heavy bags of letters, but Mrs. Gorbachev greeted them with huge hugs and told them of her own hope of ending hunger. She promised to pass on their message and letters to her husband. The delegation was invited to speak about their mission on Russian television. Their words reached over five million people!

