

2" Scenario

Visiting people in developing countries and the homeless

Students' response:

"They live a simple life, accept their fate with optimism, and their smiles are radiant. I think their lives are better than mine."

Teachers can guide students to analyze their response as follows:

- (1) "They live a simple life, with radiant smiles, and accept their fate with optimism" is their observation.
- (2) "I think their lives are better than mine" is their personal impression.

1.1

Students' observations and impressions of the beneficiaries are often short-term and superficial. Teachers can guide students to consider the broader and deeper issues that their beneficiaries face in various aspects such as society, economy, personal life, and career planning, in order to understand the limitations they encounter.

Using students' visits to impoverished countries in Africa as an example, teachers can prompt students to think further by asking:

"What is the general level of education among the local population? What kind of work do they engage in after graduating?"

"What is the average salary level for the local population?"

"If someone in the local community becomes seriously ill, what kind of medical treatment can they receive?"

"What is the average life expectancy of the local population?"

"How accessible is the internet in the area? How do people receive daily information?"

"What kind of welfare or assistance does the local government provide to its citizens?"

Useful background information for students:

In many countries in Africa, despite the government's provision of free education from primary to secondary school, many children from poor families are still unable to attend school, resulting in a low literacy rate. Children who cannot attend school often end up working in agricultural or manual labour, while those who do graduate typically find employment in industries or the tourism sector as low-skilled workers. The issues of unemployment and underemployment are severe.

The average annual income in poverty-stricken countries in Africa is less than US\$1,000 per person. Healthcare standards lag behind, with a lack of medications and limited access to timely and appropriate treatment for the population. In addition, various infectious diseases pose a significant threat, resulting in an average life expectancy of around 40 years. The internet penetration rate in Africa stands at 33%, with most people relying on state-owned television or radio for information. Due to limited resources, political instability, or rampant government corruption, social security coverage in African countries is low.

This background information helps students understand that they should not rely solely on short-term encounters and superficial observations when making judgements. Instead, they should try to empathize and consider the long-term limitations and difficulties faced by the beneficiaries from different perspectives, in order to arrive at a more comprehensive observation and deeper reflection.

2.1

In comparison to the beneficiaries' situation, the lives of typical Hong Kong students are generally better, making it difficult for them to perceive that others are better off than themselves. However, if a student has such feelings, teachers should guide them to analyze the reasons why they feel they are not doing well. The following questions may be useful:

"What aspects of your current life do you feel are not good?"

In what areas do you experience considerable stress? What aspects do you find unsatisfactory?"

Responses from students can be:

- Poor family relationships
- Unfavorable home environment
- Academic pressure
- Stress from public exams
- Pressure in interpersonal relationships

2.2

Teachers can further guide students to think concretely and take practical actions based on their answers, in order to change their current situation.

"What do you think you can do to change the difficulties you are currently facing?"

Responses from students can be:

- Spend more time with family and communicate with them.
- Form study groups with classmates to review and study together.
- Allocate study time appropriately.
- Explore diverse career paths.
- Seek support from teachers, social workers or friends.
- Interact with others with respect and cultivate empathy.

When students are contemplating specific improvement actions, they may come across problems that they find themselves unable to solve, such as their parents' relationship or their family's financial situation. Their situation is shared by the beneficiaries, who face various limitations imposed by their environment which cannot be resolved by individuals alone. Teachers can guide students to approach their problems with an optimistic, positive and proactive mindset.

