**2008**

 **11-13 Years**

**3rd Place**

**Jordan Carruthers**

**Age 13**

Europeans/Americans adopting African children

Stars such as Madonna and Angelina Jolie are finding that adopting children is an easy way to get the child that you want. The issue is that stars are increasingly choosing African children to adopt and to westernize them. Personally I think that it is very good for the children and the families (if they are still in touch. In this essay I will say why.

 The younger that the child is adopted the better in terms of getting them used to the environment. The new environment is really a gamble. If the child thrives in the new environment then it would be a big success as they would have more chance of living a better life. Out in the west the child will get lots of privileges such as clean water, three meals a day, a decent education and money. All these things the child might not necessarily have in Africa .

If the child doesn’t fit in then problems could arise. This is why many celebrities pluck them young. If they are young then not many babies have the awareness to notice such a dramatic change in environment. The biggest obstacle to get over is the publicity they will have to cope with for the rest of their lives. Paparazzi will scrutinise their every move and will be in their faces. If you’re a baby that’s still getting used to a new place then a bunch of people all bustling and flashes everywhere would not be the best experience.

If the child’s natural family really loves them and are in no fit state to look after the child (which they obviously are not as they are up for adoption) then they would let the child go. All the benefits that their child would get would persuade anyone to give them up. A lot of the time the family also gets support financially from the celebrity including regular visits.

Apart from obviously not seeing the child there are no real disadvantages for the family apart from maybe it not learning as much about their own culture as they would like to.

For the country it may bring some publicity and definitely tourism as all the paparazzi and television cameras will need to come to the country and use their, in some cases, much needed money. Some good natured celebrities may feel as though they will need to give something back to the community as they have taken something away from them. Often this may be some school resources which will help other children to become more educated. In the long term these children with a good education may be able to pull the country out of the Lesser Economically Developed Country tag and in to the More Economically Developed Country. Another thing also often donated is a water pump. This can give the people clean water and protect them from bacteria induced illnesses such as typhoid.

The only disadvantage that I could think of for the country is if the child has such a big appeal to a celebrity that they can pick them from the thousands of children that they could have picked then maybe they would have an appeal to a wider audience that being the world. Maybe the child could make it as a model which would definitely give the country more publicity therefore more income.

Alternatives for poor, African children don’t really exist unless they have a real talent such as football, politics or acting. Otherwise unless someone takes the whole of Africa bar and by the scruff of the neck and lifts it up they may end up like their parents – poor.

Of course in some parts of Africa there are wealthier people; if these people chose to adopt then there would be absolutely no problems whatsoever. As the child would still be living in the country it would learn about its own culture. As the child would still be living in the country it would take nothing away from the country. It’s a problem free solution. But this is if they choose to adopt.

So in conclusion I think that the advantages of taking a child out of an LEDC and bringing it up in an MEDC substantially outweigh the disadvantages. To give a child in a LEDC a chance of succeeding in life is something which I personally admire. Although it’s only one person’s life, that one person’s life will change dramatically for the better and at least the celebrity with all that money will know they’ve given one person a better quality of life. That should stay with them right up until the day they die.