

Kids Who Could Teach Nations



Solemn youngsters from Finland take school seriously. Children from nine nations attend classes in German.



IN THE ROLLING hills of Switzerland's Canton Appenzell, there is a cluster of 18 houses that comprise a unique community of children. Here some 200 youngsters from nine nations are growing up in a spirit of interdependence while still keeping the customs and language of their mother countries.

Begun in 1945 as a community of war orphans, the Pestalozzi Village (named after Swiss educator Heinrich Pestalozzi) today is a refuge for needy children from all over the world. It is supported entirely by private contributions, largely from Swiss citizens.

To keep roots in their native culture, each nationality group lives in a separate chalet where house parents conduct primary school in the mother tongue. German also is taught in the early grades and is the official language of the children's village. Secondary school, conducted in German, is attended by all the youngsters.

But there is a communications system in the village that is common to youngsters everywhere. It is the high-pitched squeals of girls playing in a meadow, the laughter of boys climbing over a water trough, and the squeak of a musical instrument in the hands of a young virtuoso. It is this unofficial language that helps make the Pestalozzi Village a true United Nations of the young.



Sweet music resounds over the valley as a group of pipers takes to the great open spaces for their lesson.



An old favorite, ring-around-a-rosy wins international favor. House parents join their charges for dinner.

