

# If the World was 20 People...

... how many would be children?



Complexity



8-13 years



60 minutes



4-24



Poverty



Discrimination



Human Rights

## Type of activity

Group discussion, making structures out of paper cups

## Overview

Children use paper cups to represent all the people in the world, and then build structures according to how they think a number of basic services and qualities are distributed.

## Objectives

- To develop an awareness of how resources and opportunities are divided up in the world
- To develop an understanding of fairness and equality
- To stimulate ideas and actions to address poverty, injustice and discrimination in the world

## Preparation

Draw different faces on 20 paper cups. Draw them with the cup upside down – as in the image.



## Materials

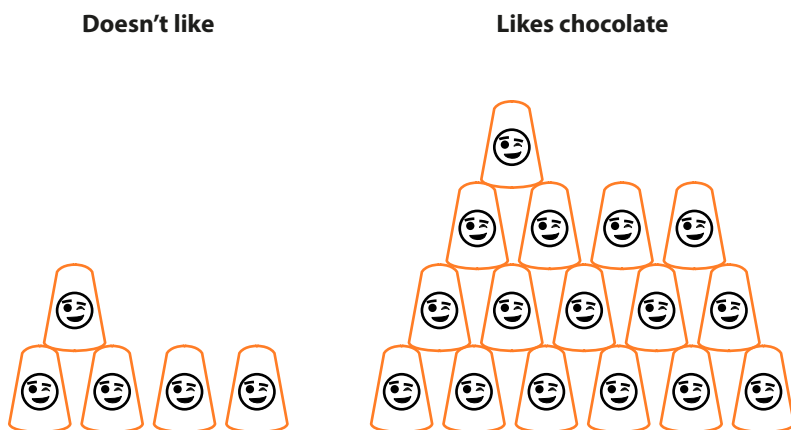
- About 100 paper cups, depending on the size of the group. 20 are for you to draw on, and each small group will need 20 other 'clean' cups to work with.
- Permanent markers
- Statistics at the end of the activity

## Instructions

1. Ask the children if they know what the word 'population' means. Ask them to think of ways of dividing up the population – e.g. according to where people live, their age, gender, etc.
2. Divide the children into groups of three or four and give each group 20 paper cups and markers. Tell them that they should imagine, in their groups, that their 20 cups represent the total population in the world. Show them the cups you have drawn, and ask them to draw faces on their cups, as you have. Make sure they draw them with the cups upside down.
3. When the children have finished, explain to them that you will ask them a number of questions about the world's population, and they will answer using pyramids of cups. Give them an example, using your own set of 20 cups:

*e.g. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would like chocolate, and how many would not?*

Ask them what they think, then make pyramids to represent their answer. For example, if they say they think 4 people don't like chocolate, and 16 do, make pyramids as in the illustration.



4. Choose a few of the questions below for building the pyramids. Read out each question, and then give groups time to discuss and present their answer.
5. When the groups finish building their pyramids, ask them to look around at those of other groups, and compare with their own. Get each group to read out their numbers while you add them to a general chart (see the example at the end of the activity). Then build your own pyramids with the correct numbers and add these to the chart as well.
6. Repeat this process for each question you have chosen.

## Questions:

- a. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would be men and how many would be women?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of men and the number of women.*
- b. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would be children and how many would be adults?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of children and the number of adults.*
- c. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would be living in Asia, how many would be living in Europe, how many would be living in the Americas, and how many would be living in Africa?  
*Make 4 pyramids to show the number of people in each continent.*
- d. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would know to read and write and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people who know how to read and write, and the number that don't.*
- e. If all your cups were all the males in the world, how many would have been to primary school and how many would not? Divide your cups between males who have (or have had) primary education, and males who haven't.  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of males with and without primary education*
- f. If all your cups were all the females in the world, how many girls would have been to primary school and how many would not? Divide your cups between females who have (or have had) primary education, and females who haven't.  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of females with and without primary education*

- g. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have access to the Internet and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people with access to the Internet, and those without.*
- h. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have a mobile phone and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people with mobile phones, and those without.*
- i. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would be undernourished and not have enough food to grow healthily?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number who are undernourished and the number who have enough food to grow healthily.*
- j. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have a place to shelter them from the wind and the rain, and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people with shelter and those without.*
- k. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have clean, safe water to drink and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people with clean, safe water, and those without.*
- l. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would live in a city and how many would live in the countryside?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people living in the countryside, and those living in towns.*
- m. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have electricity and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people with and without access to electricity.*
- n. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would live on more than 1.5 Euros per day and how many would not?  
*Make 2 pyramids to show the number of people living in extreme poverty, on less than 1.5 Euros per day, and those living on more.*
- o. If all your cups were all the people in the world, how many would have good sanitation, how many would have inadequate sanitation, and how many would have no sanitation at all?  
*Make 3 pyramids to show the number of people with good, inadequate, and no sanitation.*

## Debriefing and Evaluation

- Discuss the activity using questions such as these:
  - What did you think of this activity?
  - Was it difficult to agree on how the cups should be divided?
  - How did your results compare with the real answers? Which ones were similar and which ones weren't?
  - Which information surprised you most?
  - If we did this activity again in five years, do you think any of the results would change? Which ones? Why?
- Relate the activity to issues of equality and human rights, asking questions such as these:
  - What can we learn, looking at the results of our pyramids, about equality in the world? Why do you think there are such big differences between different groups of people?

- Do any of the inequalities concern you? Why?
- What can we do to change some of these inequalities?
- Which of the questions relate to human rights?
- If human rights were respected everywhere, how would that change some of your pyramids?

## Suggestions and follow up

The activity 'What if...' could be used to investigate the consequences of some of the inequalities in this activity.

## Ideas for action

Take pictures of the different pyramids and use them to run a small campaign in the children's school or neighbourhood. Instead of using pyramids of cups, you could use the children themselves to represent the world population.

You could create a short drama around the issue and present it to members of the community. The book *If the world were a village* by David J. Smith, illustrated by Shelagh Armstrong, is a good starting point if the children do not know how to build a story.

## Tips for the facilitator

The activity and data have been adapted from the website '100 People: A World Portrait' (<https://www.100people.org/statistics-100-people/>). The statistics have been scaled down from 100 to 20, but you could use more cups and scale the numbers differently if this is more suitable. Because data regarding population is constantly changing, you may also like to do your own research to find more recent statistics on some of the questions.

Do not feel you need to use all questions: select those which show differences more relevant to your group. You may find it is more useful to discuss a few questions in detail rather than looking at all of them.

If you have a small group, you can do the activity as a single group and build a common pyramid.

If you cannot access paper cups, you may like to run the activity using other objects. Make sure the cups are recycled after the activity if the possibility exists to do so.

## Adaptations

Use children instead of cups. You will need to scale the answers differently: for example, if you have 22 children, divide the numbers in the column 'Official Data' by 20, and multiply by 22. Then round to the nearest whole number. You could place images or objects on the floor to represent the different categories (women, men; children, adults; continents, etc.), and ask children to form groups around the images to represent their best guess.

## Resources

### Table for collecting group data

Draw a table on the board or flipchart using the model below and the questions you have selected. Do NOT write up the data in the last column! This should be included only **after** the children have built their pyramids.

QUESTIONS	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	OFFICIAL DATA
<b>MEN AND WOMEN</b>				
MEN				10
WOMEN				10
<b>CHILDREN AND ADULTS</b>				
CHILDREN				5
ADULTS				15
<b>CONTINENTS</b>				
ASIA				13
AFRICA				4
AMERICA				3
EUROPE				2
<b>READ AND WRITE</b>				
Can read				17
Can't read				3
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR BOYS</b>				
Go to school				16
Don't go to school				4
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS</b>				
Go to school				15
Don't go to school				5
<b>INTERNET</b>				
Have internet				8
Don't have internet				12
<b>MOBILE PHONE</b>				
Yes				13
No				7
<b>FOOD</b>				
Undernourished				1
Not undernourished				19
<b>SHELTER</b>				
Yes				15
No				5
<b>WATER</b>				
Clean, safe water				18
No clean, safe water				2
<b>CITY OR COUNTRYSIDE</b>				
City				11
Countryside				9
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>				
Yes				16
No				4
<b>POVERTY</b>				
Extreme poverty				2
Not in extreme poverty				18
<b>SANITATION</b>				
No sanitation				3
Inadequate sanitation				4
Adequate sanitation				13