

# If the World Were 100 People

Sometimes it is hard to understand how big, complicated, and interconnected the world is.

In the early 1990's, Donella Meadows presented a framework for understanding the world as a fabric of physical, economic, or social relationships that determine world development. If we look at the world population as a village of 100 people, it is easier to know our world neighbors and we can often gain a greater understanding of some of the issues that affect the planet we all share, as well as learn more about what it means to be a global citizen.

The world population has now reached 7 billion people and the statistics have been updated from the original. The changes over the past five years are remarkable. In 2006, only 1 person out of 100 would have had a college education - today that number has jumped to 7 thanks in part to advances in higher education in Asia.

If we look at the world population as a village of 100 people, today:

50 would be female

50 would be male

26 would be children

There would be 74 adults,  
8 of whom would be 65 and older

There would be:

60 Asians

15 Africans

14 people from the Americas

11 Europeans

33 Christians

22 Muslims

14 Hindus

7 Buddhists

12 people who practice other religions

12 people who would not be aligned with  
a religion

7 would have a college degree

22 would own or share a computer

12 would speak Chinese

5 would speak Spanish

5 would speak English

3 would speak Arabic

3 would speak Hindi

3 would speak Bengali

3 would speak Portuguese

2 would speak Russian

2 would speak Japanese

62 would speak other languages

77 people would have a place to shelter them  
from the wind and the rain, but 23 would not

87 would have access to safe drinking water

13 people would have no clean, safe water  
to drink

1 would be dying of starvation

15 would be undernourished

21 would be overweight

83 would be able to read and write; 17 would  
not

## Resources:

- 100 People: A World Portrait
  - Website: [http://www.100people.org/statistics\\_100stats.php](http://www.100people.org/statistics_100stats.php).
  - Book: *If the World Were a Village*, by David J. Smith

## For Parent and Educators

On occasions such as International Night, we celebrate the nations and cultures of the world. We try to grasp and learn more about the world's remarkable diversity and infinite ways of living and thinking. We can learn about our ethnic heritage, or the heritage of those around us. We can travel, learn about other cultures by attending cultural festivals, or read books about (or written by authors in) other countries. We can sing and dance the songs and music from around the world. We can correspond with e-pals in other countries and other languages. As exciting and important as it is to learn together, sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by the limitless facts and details about the myriad of countries and cultures worldwide.

## From International to Global

We also have the opportunity to explore the ties that connect us – all of the world's countries, cultures, and people – together. If we shift our perspective from “international” to “global,” we focus on our world as an interconnected system that we all share in common, and the things that matter to all people everywhere in the world. Some examples of topics that may inspire a global perspective include: water, air, climate, energy, health, migration, economy and trade, transportation, art, music, technology, wildlife, waste, conflict, as well as sports, children, food, shelter, and family... Can you think of more examples?

As we look to help our children learn about and thrive in a global community, we can take a variety of paths. Following is a list of resources – just a start – that can help us all understand and celebrate the many ways in which we are both a part of and connected to the rest of the world.

## Stories for Elementary Students (with a Global Perspective) – mostly “picture books” for all ages.

- *A Cool Drink of Water*, by Barbara Kerley
- *Because Amelia Smiled*, by David Ezra Stein
- *Children Just Like Me*, by Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley
- *Common Ground: The Water, Earth, and Air We Share*, by Molly Bang
- *Everywhere the Cow Says “Moo!”* by Ellen Slusky Weinstein
- *How the World Works: A Hands-On Guide to Our Amazing Planet*, by Christian Dorion
- *I Have the Right To Be a Child*, by Aurelia Fronty
- *My Map Book*, by Sara Fanelli
- *One World, One Day*, by Barbara Kerley
- *People*, by Peter Spier
- *The Amazing Pop-Up Geography Book*, by Kate Petty and Jennie Maizels
- *The Earth Book*, by Todd Barr
- *This Child, Every Child: A Book About the World's Children*, by David J. Smith
- *We Are All Alike... We Are All Different*, by Cheltenham Elementary Kindergarteners
- *What a Wonderful World*, by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele
- *What Does Peace Feel Like?* by Vladimir Radunsky
- *Whoever You Are*, by Mem Fox

## Teacher Resources (locally-based, on global themes and issues)

- **Facing the Future** - [Teaching Global Sustainability in the Primary Grades: Curriculum Guide](#). (Much of FTF curriculum is free to download.)
- **World Affairs Council** (Seattle) Global Classroom: [Online Exchanges and Global Collaborations for Every Classroom](#).
- **Sing With Our Kids** (“[Songs for a Global Village](#)”) - A project of Mercer Islander Nancy Stewart that focuses on the universality of music to connect us all.

If you have other favorites or suggestions to add to the list, please email Carey Moncaster at [carey@pacificvillage.org](mailto:carey@pacificvillage.org).

