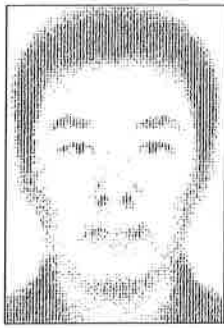


# The "Average" Person on the Planet



In 2010 National Geographic gathered global statistics about the world's 7 billion people to figure out what the "average" person in the world is like. What they determined is that the average human on the planet is male, 28-years-old, and is Han Chinese (one of 9,000,000 Han people in China). According to National Geographic, this average guy is Christian, speaks Mandarin Chinese, and lives in a city under a communist government. He is right handed and works in a service job of some kind, earning less than \$12,000 a year. He does have a cell phone but has no bank account of any kind.

By gathering digital photos of 190,000 Han Chinese men, the magazine morphed the pictures together into the image above to show what the "most average person in the world" looks like. Of course the planet and its people are always changing. National Geographic predicts that by 2030, the "average" human will be from India.

Using what you know about world development, how do you think the "average person on the planet" in 2010 compares in development to people in other countries? Explain your ideas.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Other than being Indian, what other changes do you think are likely by 2030 in terms of the "average human"? Explain your ideas.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# FACES OF POVERTY

"God blessed me with twelve beautiful children but the same God has taken almost all of them away and there is nothing I can do because God knows best. Three I lost in childbirth. Three died young, and within just two years, I lost five to AIDS. As you can see, even this remaining child is very sick and I do not know if she will survive.

Life was always hard for people in Ethiopia where I live. Food is scarce, and clean water is hard to find. On many days the women walk miles for water and twigs to burn for cooking the little food we have. But AIDS has made life unbearable. I am afraid it is my destiny to die a childless mother and there is nothing I can do."



"I am Dukhni Bai. I live in the village of Nevla, India, with my wife, our three children, and my 80-year-old mother. In 2010 my wife became very ill. I took her to the hospital in the village of Ganiyari, and the doctors said she has diabetes. Before she was sick, she worked in the fields, making 40 rupees a day. Now, we must live only on the 50 rupees (less than \$1) that I make. When we both had earnings, we could barely get by. Now we cannot.

Because we are so poor, the government pays for us to have 35 kilograms of rice each month, but that is only enough for two weeks. Before my wife got sick, we used to have two kilograms of rice for the family each day; now we have one. Then we go hungry. Vegetables cost too much. Dal (lentil beans) costs far too much. All we have to eat are small portions of rice with bits of vegetables. It is not enough. Since I work hard, I am always hungry, and I know my family is as well. I am also very sad I cannot afford my wife's medicine. 1,000 rupees a month (about \$20) is a fortune for a poor village family."

"My name is Nodira, which means 'unique' in Uzbek. I am one of five children in a poor family. Every morning, after I recite my prayers, I feed the hens and goats. I have never been to school; it is too far and I could not go inside with my wheelchair. A local teacher used to come and tutor me at home until I finished third grade. Then we moved to another town. My family used to grow cotton, but we could not get by. The government here controls the cotton sales and pays almost nothing to the farmers who grow it. Most are very poor.

Despite the many difficulties my family faces, I am very fortunate. Here in Uzbekistan, children with disabilities are often put into special institutions. I have heard that of the 23,000 children in institutional care, almost 20,000 are disabled like me. I know that I am very lucky that I can still live with my family."





"I am Hosanna. I am fifteen-years-old and a single mother. I found a very young boy, Naitil, alone on the streets after the 2010 earthquake. Now I care for him and he calls me, "Mama." Our real mothers are dead, like so many others in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where we live. Well, we really live outside the city in a shack I made of boards and cardboard I found.

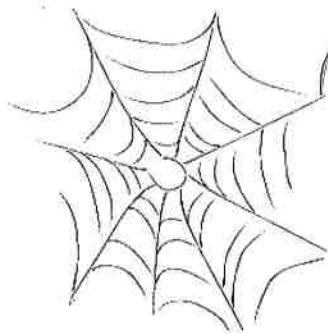
I want to take better care of Naitil but as things are, he wears the same clothes every single day. He tells me that his skin itches all over and he is embarrassed by all the bumps covering him. The dirt in his clothes and all around us rubs his skin raw, but I have no money for detergent or new clothing or shoes. I am afraid that if he cannot get new clothes soon, the dirt will eat away his skin. Open sores are a great danger, as they can easily draw in deadly typhoid fever from the local river. We all know the water is filthy and full of disease, but it is all we have to drink and for bathing."

"My name is Abdul Ayob, and I live in Afghanistan. I live with my fourth wife now, and we are very poor. I have been married three times before, but my wives died in childbirth. Our life here is very hard. We do not have safe drinking water, so many people get sick. And I, like most in my country, cannot read or write.

Most people know that Afghanistan has been torn apart by wars; first with the Soviet Union for ten years and then the Americans for another ten. Many men have been killed in these wars; it is true. But I have heard that our terrible poverty actually kills more Afghans than armed conflicts. It is a sad state of affairs, and things are not getting better for my wife and me, or for the Afghan people.



"I know poverty. Poverty was there before I was born and it is as much a part of life as the blood in my veins. Poverty is not going empty for a single day and getting something to eat the next. Poverty is going empty with no hope for the future. Poverty is when your dreams go in vain because nobody is there to help you. Poverty is watching your mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters die in pain and sorrow because they couldn't get something to eat. Poverty is hearing your grandmothers and grandfathers cry out for death to take them because they are tired of this world. Poverty is watching your children and grandchildren die in your arms and there is nothing you can do. Poverty is watching your children shed tears in their deepest sleep. Poverty is suffering from AIDS and dying a shameful death, and no one seems to care. Poverty is when you hide your face and wish nobody could see you because you feel less than human. Poverty is when you dream of bread and fish you can never see in the light of day. Poverty is when people accuse and even kill you for no fault of your own. I know poverty like my father's name. Poverty never sleeps. It never takes time off."



# A WEB OF POVERTY

**DIRECTIONS:** Poverty has many related causes, making it very difficult, though not impossible, to address. Using what you learned from the readings and your own ideas, create a web to show the causes of poverty and how they link to one another to "trap people in a web of poverty" and keep them poor.

