

Magazine

## Are there more poor people now than 200 years ago?

23 September 2015

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Nearly one billion people across the world live in extreme poverty, struggling to survive on the equivalent of about \$1.25 a day. The United Nations aims to lift every single one of them out of this category within 15 years.

It's an ambitious target, and this weekend 150 world leaders will meet to work out how they're going to do it. But is it even possible?

To help you judge, try this quiz, set by the renowned statistician, Prof Hans Rosling:

**Could do better**

Your score:

# 5/6

Your view of the world could do with updating - you're about 30 years behind the times. But don't feel bad, you have scored better than most people. I ask these questions to people all over the world, and most people's score lower than you did. Many stick with the ideas about poverty that they grew up with, and fail to notice the rapid progress that's been made since the 1980s. However, while the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has shrunk – from 85% of the world's population in 1800 to 12% today – the world's population has grown massively. So the absolute number of people living in poverty is the same today as it was 200 years ago, at around 1 billion people. Even so, if recent advances are maintained it is possible that extreme poverty can be eradicated by 2030.

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Take the quiz again?

**Start again**

For more about the facts on world poverty, watch Prof Rosling present *Don't Panic - How To End Poverty In 15 Years* on BBC Two at 20:00 on 23 September - or catch up later online.

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