

**Koko-Kolo Island**  
**A Hypothesis Testing Simulation**  
**Ted Ward**  
**(with revisions by John Snarey)**

**Requirements for Playing**

Group Size: Six to twenty-four players plus the game manager.

Materials:

- One envelope marked “Koko” containing four “Koko Confidential Instruction Slips” and eight “Koko” name tags.
- One envelope marked “Kolo” containing four “Kolo Confidential Instruction Slips” and eight “Kolo” name tags.
- One envelope marked “U.S.” containing four “U.S. Confidential Instruction Slips” and eight “U.S.” name tags.

Space and Seating: Ideal seating would consist of three circles of chairs or cushions, each circle being in a different corner or section of the room. The open central floor area will be used during the playing of each round and the three circles will be used for team huddles.

**Pre-Briefing**

The game manager reads the material under the headings Game Plot, Game Structure, and Game Goal aloud to the group. (Or, print the sections and distribute them to the group to be read before game play begins.)

Game Plot: Three teams, representing visiting North Americans and the two major tribes of Koko-Kolo Island, engage in friendly encounters. The major desire of the North Americans and the tribal nationals is to better understand why the others behave as they do. Even the two tribes of the island have never come to understand each other.

Game Grouping: Divide the total group into three teams. Each team should be as equal as possible in terms of number of players and the balance of men and women in each. Assign each team a part of the room for their group meetings. Give each group their envelope. Tell them to pin on their name tags and study their confidential instructions. Allow five minutes for this activity.

Game Structure: The game plan consists of a series of “plays” and “huddles.” Each playing round lasts *four* minutes followed by a huddle of *two* minutes. I will call “play” when you are to begin each round in the central playing area. I will call “huddle” when you are to return to your circle.

During each round, any individual who wishes to ask a question of a member of another group walks about with her fist clenched under her chin. When a person is willing to answer a question he places his hand on the wrist of a person who is giving him the cultural clue that she wants to ask a question. *No other talking is allowed during a round.* A person may freely

change his or her intent to ask a question to a willingness to answer after each interaction, but a second question may not be asked and the hand on the wrist must be maintained until the question has been answered. These are important traditions of the Koko-Kolo tribe's people.

Game Goal: The team that correctly identifies the two peculiar factors in the communication of the other two teams wins the game. During any huddle, any team that believes it has identified the two factors in any other team proclaims, in unison, "We understand them." At that point, a representative from the two teams involved meet together with myself; the "hypothesizing" team member shares his or her hypothesis with the representative of the "understood" team who evaluates the hypothesis. He or she must respond by saying either "no" or "you win." If either hypothesis is in error, he or she must say "no." He or she cannot indicate that only one is correct, even if it is. The game manager also evaluates the hypothesis and advises the representative of the "understood" team; but, the final decision should be left to the representative.

The penalty for an incorrect hypothesis is that the team must then concentrate on the team other than the one they thought they "understood." No team can ask for verification of more than one set of hypotheses during each huddle.

Questions: Ask the participants if any have questions before beginning play.

### **Simulation Play**

The cycle of the game is *four* minutes of "play" or interaction followed by *two* minutes of "huddle."

### **Debriefing**

- Have each team reveal their hypotheses.
- Ask each team to describe the research tools they used to discover information and form their hypotheses. (Tools could include participation observation, interviewing, and so on.)
- Have several of the participants share their most significant observation in terms of the hypothesizing process. (Responses could include takes a long time, constant readjustment or revision, and so on.)
- You, as game manager, may wish to make additional comments to objectify their behavior during the game.

### **Instruction Slips**

Duplicate the instruction slips for the individual teams. Each group receives four identical slips in an envelope regardless of how many are playing the game.

#### **Koko-Kolo Island: A Hypothesis Testing Simulation** **Confidential Instructions: Koko Tribe**

*Ask:* You are curious about money and signs of wealth. You always ask questions that relate to the idea that others have more wealth than you do.

*Answer:* Members of the Koko tribe don't like to answer any questions that are personal. If you are asked any question about yourself (where you live, where you have been, what you have done, and so on) you respond by changing the subject immediately.

#### **Koko-Kolo Island: A Hypothesis Testing Simulation** **Confidential Instructions: Kolo Tribe**

*Ask:* When you ask questions you must begin by complimenting something about the other person, then ask anything you wish.

*Answer:* As a member of the Kolo tribe you must respond to questions by exaggerating. (Your people have discovered that when others ask questions they are more pleased with exaggerated answers and, of course, you like to make people happy.)

#### **Koko-Kolo Island: A Hypothesis Testing Simulation** **Confidential Instructions: U.S. Visitors**

As is true of many Americans, you are "nosy" and "forward."

*Ask:* When you ask a question, always use the word "you."

*Answer:* When you answer a question, always use the word "we."