



# PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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## How to Make a Virus Disappear

For millennia, polio made its way into human communities around the world, seeking and finding hospitable places to live. But in 1988, its fortunes changed: a determined group of people decided to stop it in its tracks, and it began to die off. Since the Global Polio Eradication Initiative began to vaccinate children in every country almost three decades ago, it has become progressively harder for the virus to find unprotected children to infect. Today, it's nearly gone from the face of the earth. The global health community is now closing in on the last remaining strain of the polio virus, with only 52 cases of WPV1 globally so far in 2015.

[Read More on Devex](#)



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## Good News About Climate Change

We all know the bad news when it comes to climate change. What most people don't know is that there is also a lot of good news. In this video we explore some of that good news, like the fact that real solutions exist and that we're already seeing the benefits of them.

[Watch the Three Minute Video on Climate Reality Project](#)







## Ethiopia Could be a Model Country for Tuberculosis Control

The End TB Strategy, which will run until 2030, envisages universal health coverage and social protection, alongside ambitious goals for cutting mortality by 90% and new cases by 80%. Ethiopia's political commitment, along with an army of thousands of health extension workers, is helping it to successfully tackle tuberculosis. Last year, Ethiopia saw around 140,000 cases of tuberculosis, which probably amounts to two-thirds of the total burden. Roughly 90% of patients with drug-sensitive tuberculosis were successfully treated.

[Read More on The Lancet](#)

## How Vietnam Mastered Infectious Disease Control

Southeast Asia is recognized as a hotspot for new viruses. It's where virus hunters go to figure out what to put in next year's flu vaccines. Vietnam's large population of domestic ducks, chickens and pigs makes the country particularly vulnerable. There's a lot of potential contact with human populations. There is also the continued impact of human activity on forests. The forests have been extensively logged, and so the opportunities for wildlife, for instance, to come into contact with domestic animals and into contact with humans are great.

[Read More on pbs.org](#)



## Why Did I Become Involved In the Climate Change Campaign?

The destruction caused by the two devastating earthquakes to hit Nepal in April and May this year demonstrate how inadequately prepared we are to tackle the potential impact of climate change. This year has been significant for campaigners around the world. Thousands have been mobilized to raise awareness of the decisions made throughout 2015 and now the COP21 agreements that will impact our planet and its people.

[Read More on Huffington Post](#)



## Moving Resilience Measurement from Theory to Practice

We all seem to agree that our efforts should be focused on building resilience to disasters. The concept resonates well: taking action before the event should be more effective and important than cleaning up afterwards, after so much damage can be done.

The key question though is not conceptual: At a practical level, how do you prove that what you are doing actually does build resilience when there is currently no empirically validated framework to measure resilience?

[Read More on Devex](#)

## Pakistan Moves to Stop Biodiversity Loss

The rapid loss of trees and vegetation cover in the desert district of Tharparkar, Pakistan of over 1.6 million people has become a key cause of the desert's advance, which has been slowly and steadily devouring scattered pockets of arable soil and natural rainwater harvesting ponds.

Pakistan has framed a biodiversity conservation and protection plan aimed at stemming biodiversity loss, restoring ecosystems and promoting sustainable use of natural resources for the wellbeing of the present and the future generations.

[Read More on IPS News](#)



## New Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Fights to Keep Indigenous Rights in Paris Climate Deal

Indigenous peoples from the Arctic to the Amazon launched a flotilla of kayaks in downtown Paris to paddle their point to "keep fossil fuels in the ground" and to urge state governments to respect their collective Indigenous rights.

Prime Minister Trudeau highlighted the importance of considering Indigenous traditional knowledge alongside scientific analysis.

[Read More on National Observer](#)





## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

**"...let us realize that, for now, we still live in peaceful times. These are anxious times, yes, and the strategic narrative of this century is still being written. But if great or nuclear powers are not at war with one another (something we should avoid at all costs), the sky has not yet fallen. Let us be proportionate and methodical in our behaviour. Let us be generous, including in opening our doors to those in need..."**

Irvin Studin,

Editor-in-chief and publisher of Global Brief magazine (Toronto Star, November 20, 2015)



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## FILM: THE NEW GREEN GIANTS

The last ten years have seen a phenomenal explosion in the organic food movement as it has moved from niche market to mainstream. Today, it is the fastest growing segment of the food industry attracting all of the major food corporations. *The New Green Giants* looks at a number of these new and old organic corporations and shows how they are managing, or in some cases failing to live up to, the idealistic dreams first espoused by the back-to-the-land folk of the late sixties and early seventies.

What does organic actually mean? Are organic foods really pesticide-free? Why should parents of small children care about pesticides? Do organic fruits and vegetables have more nutritional value? How can a consumer know that they are buying truly organic food? Is there any difference between products labeled 'organic' versus 'natural'? What happens when a mom-and-pop organic food operation turns into a huge corporation? What is the one problem that all successful organic operations inevitably face? Is it realistic to think the world can be fed organically?

[Read More on cbc](#)





## **Beyond Medical "Missions" to Impact-Driven Short-Term Experiences in Global Health (STEGHs): Ethical Principles to Optimize Community Benefit and Learner Experience**

Increasing demand for global health education in medical training has driven the growth of educational programs predicated on a model of short-term medical service abroad. Almost two-thirds of matriculating medical students expect to participate in a global health experience during medical school, continuing into residency and early careers. Despite positive intent, such short-term experiences in global health (STEGHs) may exacerbate global health inequities and even cause harm. Growing out of the "medical missions" tradition, contemporary participation continues to evolve. Ethical concerns and other disciplinary approaches, such as public health and anthropology, can be incorporated to increase effectiveness and sustainability, and to shift the culture of STEGHs from focusing on trainees and their home institutions to also considering benefits in host communities and nurturing partnerships.

Four core principles are proposed to guide ethical development of educational STEGHs:

1. Skills building in cross-cultural effectiveness and cultural humility
2. Bidirectional participatory relationships
3. Local capacity building
4. Long-term sustainability

[Read More on ncbi](#)



## Victory! The End of Fossil Fuels Has Begun

World leaders at the UN climate talks have just set a landmark goal that can save everything we love!

This is what we marched for, what we signed, called, donated, messaged, and hoped for: a brilliant and massive turning point in human history. History delivers moments when the wind shifts, you can smell it in the air. The best of us harness that power, using it to fuel the new path. Like our brothers and sisters in South Africa who won legal equality, LGBTQ members in the United States who won the right to marry the people they love, Gandhi's non-violent movement that gave birth to a new hope for India, we are on the brink of that new, sweet wind.

Let's harness it together, let's fly together under the sail of a common humanity, across the oceans, rivers and lakes that divide us. Let's take the promise of right now and deliver our children a beautiful, safe and clean future.

[Read More on avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org)



# MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hi Reader,

When I look back over the last year, I can only marvel. It has been full of a mix of all emotions; from joy to sadness to hope and bad news, and frustration at the lack of general awareness of many things. But the involvement of tens, and likely hundreds of thousands of people in advocating a change to clean energy sources and health promoting strategies is astounding. Way to go People!

The world changes at a 'dizzying speed,' as Barak Obama has said. We somehow need to make sense of what is going on, to try to be able to make relatively accurate judgments and decisions. This is key. We must all make decisions to give our best shot at contributing to a future world we'd be proud of sharing with our grandchildren.

There have been so many monumental events. But the most monumental is you getting engaged, somehow, somehow, in something to make positive change.

Thanks so much for reading this weekly compendium of global health and ecological wellness news. It is truly an honour and pleasure to have this opportunity to be able to present such interesting stories to you week after week.

We have reached over 700 on our subscription list since we started last March and know that we have to reach many more, especially our upcoming young. It has been a pleasure bringing you this Weekly from many corners of the earth. Please pass on any information you learn here. It is so important to we continue the conversation with our families, friends, colleagues and the general public, however we can and whenever we can.

Let's go into the beautiful holiday season, with peace and love in our hearts and minds, determined that 2016 will be a better year. Let's all, in any way possible, in our circles, in our networks, spread words of goodwill, health and happiness to all we come in contact with.

Merry Christmas from our entire production team: Anna Oda and I with social media support from great Ryerson students. This will be our last issue for 2015; and it's focused on good stories, not the hard sometimes unpleasant reality. We look forward to continue providing you with stimulating news summaries and information on global matters of health and ecology throughout 2016!

**PEACE TO YOU and PEACE ON EARTH**

david







## PEACE ON EARTH

(Saint Gabriel Church, Hawassa, Ethiopia)

**This Newsletter is FREE.**

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