



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT (@GCAS2018)

Last week the PHW Editor attended the GCAS in San Francisco. You can check his tweets at @dzakus and @planetaryweekly and this link below for more information about the Summit's many inspiring and interesting speakers and announcements. It was a moment to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of states, regions, cities, companies, investors and citizens with respect to climate action as leaders and people came together from around the world to "Take Ambition to the Next Level." The GCAS was also a Launchpad for deeper worldwide commitments and accelerated action from countries—supported by all sectors of society—that can put the globe on track to prevent dangerous climate change and realize the historic Paris Agreement. [Read More on Global Climate Action Summit](#)

Photo: Jane Goodall, UN Messenger For Peace
and Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment



Credit: David Zakus

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--|----|
| A Leader In The War On Poverty: Pollution | |
| Latin America's Poor Are In Climate Crosshairs | |
| A Climate Of Racism Increases Wealth Inequality | 2 |
| African Governments To Lead Agricultural Reform | |
| Governmental Illegitimacy And Incompetency | |
| Canada Is Not Doing Enough To Protect Its Children | 3 |
| Small Families: Climate Solutions | |
| California Bills To Promote Zero-Emission Vehicles | |
| Reducing CO2 With Indigenous Land Titles | 4 |
| Quote Of The Week On Politics & Events | 5 |
| FYI#1: Keeping Africa's Mothers & Babies Alive | 6 |
| FYI#2: Internal Combustion Cars Still Waste | 7 |
| FYI#3: Scientists Discover An Ancient Coral Reef | 8 |
| FYI#4: Five Vietnamese In Possession Of Ivory | 9 |
| FYI#5: Consumers On Commercial DNA Testing | 10 |
| FYI#6: Education Cannot Wait Picks Up The Pace | 11 |
| Backpage: Launch Of Cities4Forests | |

HUNGER RISING WITH GLOBAL TEMPERATURES

Climate change is having a negative effect on global agriculture and driving up the number of hungry people around the world, according to the UN 2018 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report. It found that 821 million people -- one in every nine -- were malnourished in 2017 up from 815 million in 2016, and over 150 million children stunted, putting at risk the UN's goal of eradicating hunger in the world by 2030. "If we are to achieve a world without hunger and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030, it is imperative that we accelerate and scale up actions to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of food systems and people's livelihoods in response to climate variability and extremes," say the leaders of the five UN agencies involved. [Read More at CNN](#)



Credit: CNN





Credit: Travis Dove/NY Times

A LEADER IN THE WAR ON POVERTY OPENS A NEW FRONT: POLLUTION

Fifty years after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. started a movement known as the Poor People's Campaign, Dr. Barber has been working to revive it. He is perhaps best known as the architect of the Forward Together Moral Movement protests in North Carolina that opposed voting-rights restrictions and helped defeat the Republican governor in 2016. Now he is making environmental justice, and climate change, a pillar of a modern-day war on poverty. Lower-income communities — especially black, Hispanic and Native American ones — tend to be more polluted and bear more of the burden of climate change than higher-income and white communities, experts say. [Read More at New York Times](#)

LATIN AMERICA'S POOR ARE IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE CROSSHAIRS

A tragic picture emerged of a town that wasn't prepared to deal with a disaster of great magnitude—a disaster that, as Bolivia is ravaged by climate change, is likely to happen again in the future. Five people lost their lives, and 463 homes were damaged. Some were submerged by mud or destroyed entirely. As the community reeled from the impact, people started to ask questions. How had this happened? Could it have been avoided? As experts including hydrologists, agronomists, lawyers, and engineers scrutinized the situation, it became clear that a complex network of factors had combined to cause the devastation. The key to fighting these climate-related disasters is co-responsibility. [Read More at Medium](#)



Credit: Jose Luis Quintana/Getty



A CLIMATE OF RACISM: US FEDERAL RESPONSE TO SEVERE STORMS INCREASES WEALTH INEQUALITY

Data show that since 2000, approximately 99% of counties in the U.S. have experienced significant damage from some type of natural disaster, with costs expected to increase significantly over coming years; and how these damages were impacted wealth inequality and accumulation were studied. The study looked at how the families' personal wealth was impacted by natural disasters and recovery efforts, taking into account factors such as age, education, home ownership and county population. The disparate economic effects of federal disaster aid are not coincidental, nor 'acts of God'; they are the result of deliberate actions and the priorities of those that dole out aid. Any effort to remedy income inequality that doesn't first account for and address structural racism and the systemic racial discrimination that sustains the racial wealth gap, will fail. [Read More at Daily Kos](#)



RENEWED PRESSURE ON AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO LEAD AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION



With 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land and a population that is expected to exceed 1.5 billion by 2050, the pressure to transform Africa's agriculture sector to meet the continent's food needs is ever more urgent. The latest Africa Agriculture Status Report, released on the opening day of the African Green Revolution Forum in Kigali, suggests African nations must act now to deliver reforms around access to land and markets, extension services, and private sector investments in order to unlock their agricultural potential. All African heads of state have agreed to Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme and use it as the basis of domestic strategies. However, very few countries have come close to meeting the targets. [Read More at Devex](#)

Credit: CIAT/CC BY-NC-SA

GOVERNMENTAL ILLEGITIMACY AND INCOMPETENCY IN CANADA AND OTHER LIBERAL NATIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH

The welfare state literature on developing nations is concerned with how governmental illegitimacy and incompetency are the sources of inequality, exploitation, exclusion and domination of significant proportions of their citizenry. In contrast, developed nations are assumed to grapple with less contentious issues of stratification, decommodification, and the relative role of the state, market and family in providing economic and social security, also important pathways to health. There is an explicit assumption that governing authorities in developed nations are legitimate and competent such that their citizens are not systematically subjected to inequality, exploitation, exclusion, and domination by elites. In this article, we argue that these concepts should also be the focus of welfare state analysis in developed liberal welfare states such as Canada. Such an analysis would expose how public policy is increasingly being made in the service of powerful economic elites rather than the majority, thereby threatening health. [Read More at SAGE Journals](#)



CANADA IS NOT DOING ENOUGH TO PROTECT ITS CHILDREN

Shockingly, in Canada, the kids are not all right. A study this month shows Canada's children have high rates of suicide, child abuse and infant mortality. One out of every three children experience physical or sexual abuse, which leads to mental illness, addiction and suicide for too many. Right now, Canada has an opportunity to reduce these harms. We can start to change how we think about hitting children. Bill S-206, which would repeal the exception in our assault laws for teachers and parents who use force as a means of correction, has passed second reading. It has been endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association and would allow Canada to fulfil its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada's rates of childhood adversity and its consequences are appalling. [Read More on Pressreader](#)



Credit: Michael Chrisman/Torontoist



SMALL FAMILIES – THE LOW- HANGING FRUIT OF CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Scientists, and non-scientists who listen to them, have known for some time that life on this planet is in imminent jeopardy due to climate change. Why are educational and governmental institutions with the power to sway opinion and action avoiding the opportunity to inspire actions that might make a real difference? To start with, any talk of constraining human population growth remains an intense trigger to audiences across the political spectrum. To some on the far right, such talk is tantamount to suggesting the elimination of the white race. But surely it is time to move beyond kneejerk shutdowns of any and all discussions of modulating our fertility in the face of unprecedented changes to the conditions that support life on this planet. And the complete mainstream blackout of the carbon impact of personal fertility choices should be scrutinized, and challenged.

[Read More at Below2c](#)

Credit: Overdevelopment, Overpopulation, Overshoot

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

ABOARD HYBRID ELECTRIC FERRY ON THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY, GOVERNOR BROWN SIGNS BILLS TO PROMOTE ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLES AND REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS

During the maiden voyage of the San Francisco Bay Area's first plug-in hybrid electric ferry, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed a comprehensive package of bills aimed at dramatically reducing carbon emissions by boosting the number of zero-emission vehicles and charging stations in California and getting dirty cars and trucks off the road. The signing - included 8 bills that aim to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector, which currently accounts for approximately 50 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions and about 80 percent of smog-forming pollutants. In addition, he helped establish and expand coalitions of partners across the nation and globe committed to curbing carbon pollution, including the Under2 Coalition. [Read More on California Government](#)



Credit: Rich Pedroncelli / AP



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH: REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS THROUGH INDIGENOUS LAND TITLES

Indigenous justice and climate change are closely tied together. Indeed, it is estimated that around 24% of above-ground stored carbon, or 54.5 gigatonnes of carbon, is stored in tropical forests held by communities and indigenous peoples. Protecting indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral lands not only supports their livelihoods, but it can serve as a strong tool for climate mitigation. A 2015 baseline assessment by the Rights and Resources Initiative found that indigenous peoples and communities hold 65% of the world's land. However, only about 18% of all land is recognized as owned by or considered designated for indigenous peoples or communities. To better protect indigenous and community lands, governments should make a greater effort to recognize property rights, yet governments often see indigenous and community lands as effectively uninhabited. [Read More at Climate Institute](#)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

George F. Will, Columnist for the Washington Post

“Because it is politically expedient to sacrifice the future, which does not vote, to the consumption of government services by those who do, America is eating its seed corn.”

[Read more at Washington Post](#)



Credit: Hoover Institution

EVENTS TABLE

| DATE | CONFERENCE | LOCATION | REGISTER |
|----------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Sept. 29th | 7th Annual Action Global Health Network Conference | Ottawa Canada | Early Bird deadline for abstract is July 20th, 2017, e-mail: aghn2017.research@gmail.com for more information |
| Oct. 8th-12th | 5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research | Liverpool England | http://healthsystemsresearch.org/ |
| Oct. 18th | Integrative Health Institute Conference | Edmonton Canada | https://www.ualberta.ca/integrative-health-institute |
| Oct. 25th-26th | Global Conference on Primary Health Care | Astana Kazakhstan | http://www.who.int/primary-health/conference-phc |
| Nov. 6th-13th | Course announcement: The Struggle for Health | Savar Bangladesh | https://iphu.org/en/announcement/iphu-savar2018 |
| Nov. 8th-9th | Workshop: Rules of the Road 2.0 | Washington USA | https://www.cugh.org/events/workshop-rules-road-20 |
| Nov. 15th-19th | 4th People's Health Assembly | Dhaka Bangladesh | https://archive.phmovement.org/en/node/10805 |
| Nov. 19th-21st | Canadian Conference on Global Health (CCGH) | Toronto Canada | http://www.csih.org/en/events/canadian-conference-global-health |
| Mar. 8th-10th | 10th Annual CUGH Conference—Translation and Implementation for Impact in Global Health | Chicago USA | https://www.cugh.org/events/2019-annual-cugh-global-health-conference |



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: EVIDENCE TO KEEP AFRICA'S MOTHERS & BABIES ALIVE



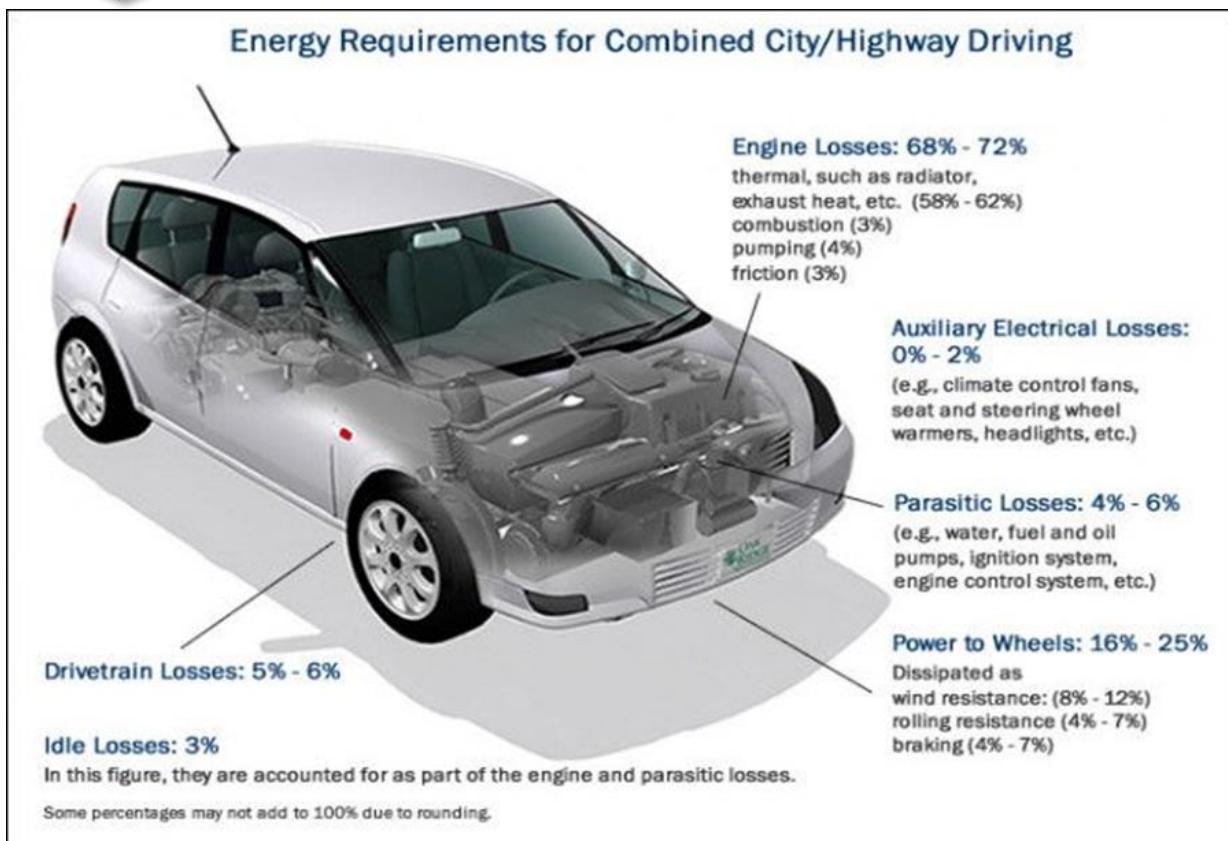
Credit: MamaYe

Evidence has the power to make life-saving changes for Africa's mothers and their babies. When data is accessible and easy to understand, it strengthens decision-making. So then civil society can pressure leaders to act on their responsibilities and commitments. Through this collection, we describe how Evidence for Action - MamaYe has strategically combined evidence with advocacy and accountability activities in six countries, across Africa, and globally. We outline our successes and results, as well as the challenges we encountered and the lessons we learnt. These are the highlights of almost five years of effort from a committed group of individuals, teams and coalitions. The case studies describe numerous examples of decision-makers re-allocating or increasing resources to improve quality of care for women and babies as a result of our activities. We learned that greater use of evidence and higher political will lead to better use of resources only when the decision-makers with the power over those resources are the ones engaged through evidence, advocacy and accountability mechanisms.

[Read more on MamaYe](#)



INTERNAL COMBUSTION CARS STILL WASTE LOTS 70 TO 88 PERCENT OF ENERGY



Credit: DOE/Green Car Reports

The Department of Energy notes that of all the energy splashed into a conventional car's gas tank, only 12-30% actually goes to move the car down the road. Everything else is lost to engine inefficiencies, heat or used to power accessories. How much is lost depends partly on the car and on the type of driving. Engine losses are higher in the city, while on the highway, cars lose more to tire rolling resistance and aerodynamic drag. The Department of Energy states that the figures leave plenty of room for hybrid systems and other advanced engine technologies to improve matters. The factoid did not address the possibility of going all-electric. In a surprising milestone of progress, only 3% of energy is lost to idling, which could be from an increase in hybrids and stop-start systems.

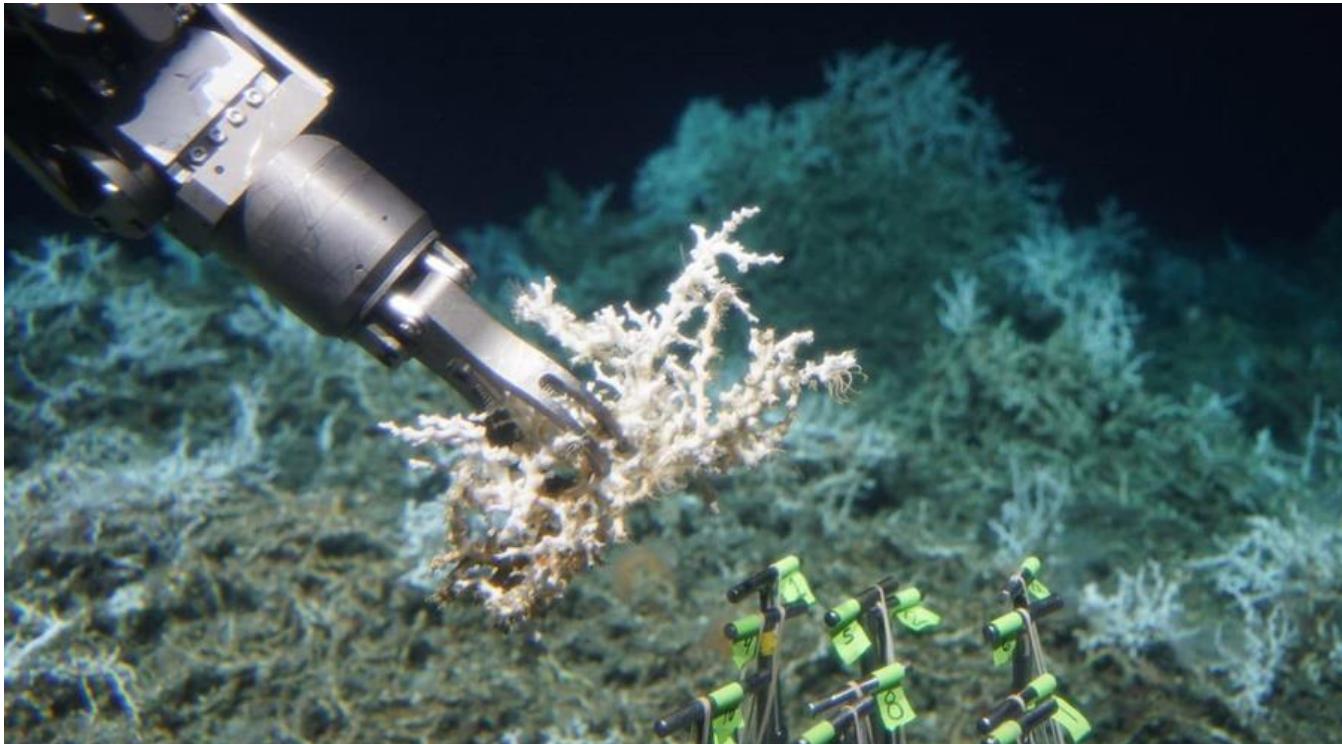
Heat losses through the radiator and the tailpipe add up to 58-62% of the total losses while driving a gasoline-powered car. Other losses include parasitic engine loads such as water, fuel, and oil pumps (4-6%) and friction, lash, and other losses in the drivetrain (4-6%). Eventually, the remaining power delivered to the wheels is used to dissipate wind (8-12%), or overcome rolling resistance at the tires (4-7%). A further 4-7% gets lost to braking, one of the few measures drivers can control.

The analysis drives home the difference that driving on electricity can make. [Read More on Green Car Reports](#)





SCIENTISTS DISCOVER AN ANCIENT GIANT CORAL REEF — 150 KILOMETRES LONG — HIDDEN OFF THE COAST OF CHARLESTON



Credit: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

An enormous series of coral reefs that, combined, are nearly the length of Delaware have been discovered off the coast of Charleston, NC. Scientists say it may have been growing on the ocean floor for as long as modern humans have been on the planet. The find was made as part of Deep Search, a five-year project to explore the sea off the coast of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, including deep-water coral reefs and mounts, massive submarine canyons, and cold-seep communities that rely on the energy from natural gas rather than sunlight to fuel productivity.

The goal of this whole project is to discover new, fragile habitats and make them priorities for management plans in case the area is opened up to drilling.

[Read More at The Washington Post](#)





FIVE VIETNAMESE HELD IN ANGOLA IN POSSESSION OF IVORY



Credit: Alex Hofford / EPA

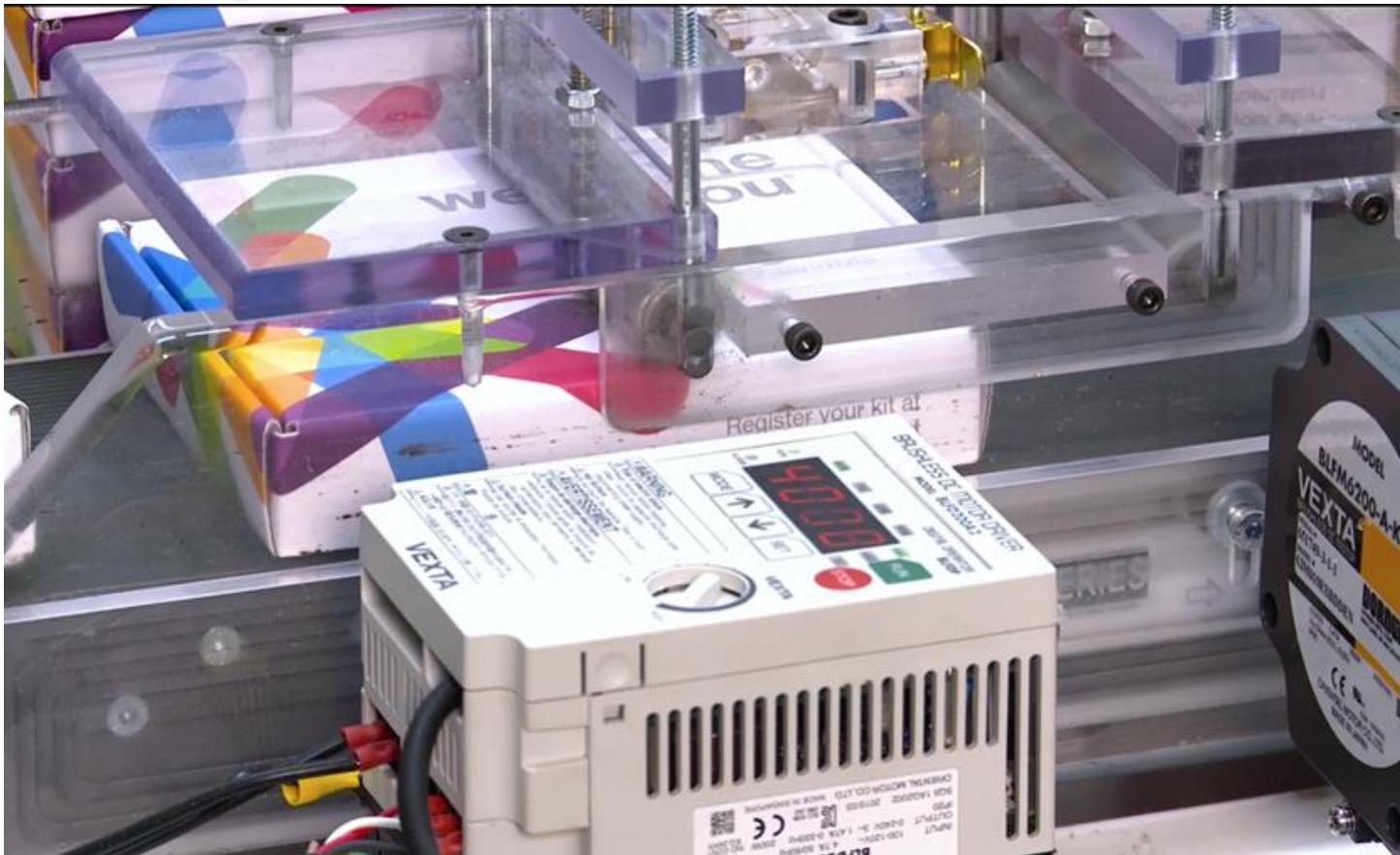
Following the arrest of five Vietnamese citizens for trafficking in ivory, the Angolan Criminal Investigation Service presented more than two tonnes of miscellaneous products, including 535 kilograms of raw ivory and 263 kilograms of worked ivory, 895 kilograms of pangolin scales and 10 kilograms of medicinal plants, all protected Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The destination of these products was Vietnam, though not likely their final destination. Of the four detainees, two were preparing to embark for Vietnam in possession of four suitcases, containing 20 kilograms of rhinoceros horns, which were concealed in packs of toys, lamps and various fruits, protected with steel blades, to check the x-ray at the airport.

[Read More at Observador](#)





WHAT CONSUMERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMMERCIAL DNA TESTING



Credit: 23andMe

Consumer genetic testing has come under greater scrutiny. Consumers are sometimes surprised by the many ways genetic information can be used. Earlier this year, police in California disclosed they tracked down a suspect in a decades-old string of serial murders with help from the genetic information of a distant relative, which was available in a public database. Investigators have applied similar methods to solve other old criminal cases. Testing companies make it easy to send in a DNA sample (usually saliva) and get back genetic glimpses of where a person's ancestors may have come from; possible health risks; or interesting connections between someone's DNA and quirks like personal preferences for wine or the likelihood of having a unibrow (and its thickness).

Consumers also worry that the results of testing might be used to discriminate against them when trying to get insurance. There are federal and state laws that govern different aspects of genetic testing, but not all apply to consumer companies or cover all forms of insurance. Genetic counselors and privacy researchers advise people to read the companies' policies carefully.

[Read More at Wall Street Journal](#)



EDUCATION CANNOT WAIT PICKS UP THE PACE



Credit: Louiza Ammi / European Union

A fledgling fund dedicated to making sure children caught up in humanitarian crises get an education is off to a strong start, having exceeded its initial fundraising targets, and is about to launch three multi-year programmes in Uganda, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. In March, the Education Cannot Wait fund (ECW), first mooted during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, celebrated its first year of operations. During that time, the fund has started work in 16 conflict-affected countries to support quality education for more than 650,000 of the world's hardest to reach young people. Despite massive need, funding for education in emergencies has historically been low, totaling just 2% of all humanitarian aid in 2013. The annual funding gap is estimated at \$8.5 billion. But money is not the only issue; there are also major challenges in coordinating national and international groups, governments, and humanitarian and development actors when it comes to tackling these unmet educational needs.

[Read More at Devex](#)



HOW TO JOIN **Cities4Forests**

Visit our webpage: <https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/cities4forests>

Talk to Craig Hanson: craig.hanson@wri.org



PILOT PROJECTS
co-create a better world

REVOLVE

Launch of Cities4Forests
At the Global Climate Action Summit
San Francisco, CA
September 13, 2018

Credit: David Zakus

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