



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

BRINGING YOU CURRENT NEWS ON GLOBAL HEALTH & ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS

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WHAT WARMER OCEANS MEAN FOR THE PLANET

Warming oceans take up more space, a process known as thermal expansion, which the study says is likely to raise sea levels by about 30cm by the end of the century, on top of the rise in sea levels from melting ice and glaciers. Warmer oceans are also a major factor in increasing the severity of storms, hurricanes and extreme rainfall. The warming of the oceans is accelerating and is matching the predictions of climate change models, which have shown global temperature rises are likely to lead to extreme weather across the world. A Guardian analysis of those findings suggested that the amount of energy absorbed by the oceans was equivalent to an atomic bomb per second for the past 150 years.

[Read More at The Guardian](#)

See Also: [Warming oceans likely to raise sea levels 30cm by end of century](#)



Credit: Jonas Gratzner/LightRocket/ Getty Images

8 WAYS TO START EASIN' INTO MORE PLANT BASED FOODS

For a potent New Year diet motivator, look no further than last October's doomsday report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. High among its prescriptions for limiting global sea level rise and climate disruption is an advisory for humanity to reduce its collective consumption of animal products by at least 30%. Luckily, it's gotten a lot easier to find satisfying alternatives to meat and dairy products. We've compiled a list of campaigns, mantras, and communities that'll help ease your transition into a *more* plant-based lifestyle. Simply designating a couple days a week for plant-based eating (see Meatless Monday and Freestyle Friday) and/or taking strides to become more intentional about your diet (check out VB6 and OMD) will go a long way toward helping you and your family take a bite out of climate change in 2019. [Read More at Sierra Club](#)



Credit: MIKEORLOV/ISTOCK

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IT'S UP TO CANADIANS TO SAVE THE BOREAL FOREST — AND WE'RE DOING A LOUSY JOB

Early in November, a report in the scientific journal *Nature* made some disturbing observations — especially for Canadians, because the news may have come too late for us to do anything about it. The authors, who include University of Northern BC professor Dr. Oscar Venter, point out that “A century ago, only 15% of Earth’s surface was used to grow crops and grow livestock. Today, more than 77% of land (excluding Antarctica) and 87% of the ocean has been modified by the direct effects of human activities.” And Canadians are one of the last hopes for protecting the limited wilderness areas that remain.

[Read More at The Tyee](#)

Credit: Murray Foubister

CAN THE LAND OF A MILLION ELEPHANTS SURVIVE THE BELT AND ROAD?

Chinese-funded projects in Laos could hasten the eradication of the elephant population. China Railway’s Kunming bureau recently announced that a 36-kilometer long fence will be built along the Singapore-Kunming Railway project to protect wild elephants in southwest Yunnan’s Xishuangbanna region. This is a positive step, but it does little to allay concerns of the railway’s impact on elephant populations along the rest of the 3,900 km track of the Pan Asia Railway Central route. This is particularly so in Laos, where total elephant numbers are now below 1000, and where vehicle collision is only one of many potential threats arising from China’s ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Reversing this downward trend for future generations is dependent on addressing additional challenges that are all likely to become more pronounced under China’s BRI including deforestation, the challenge of habitat fragmentation and human-elephant conflict.

[Read More at The Diplomat](#)



Credit: AP Photo/David Longstreath



Credit: Tesla

WAS 2018 THE PEAK FOR INTERNAL-COMBUSTION CAR SALES?

Electric-car sales are growing. Total car sales around the world are shrinking. "Peak ICE" may already have occurred at the end of 2018. Sales of electric cars in China nearly doubled in 2018, from 405,000 to 793,000, while sales of internal-combustion cars dropped from 18.7 million to 18 million. The same thing is happening in the U.S., albeit not as dramatically. Sales of the Tesla Model 3 almost doubled the number of electric cars sold in the U.S. in previous years.

[Read More at Green Car Reports](#)



A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE AFGHAN COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS PROGRAM

Gender equity can be a neglected issue in health system reforms. In a recent report of the Afghan Community Health Worker (CHW) Program, that considers broader health system reforms in Afghanistan, interesting results arose. Investigators interviewed policy makers, health managers, CHWs and community members in 16 sites. They found that gendered societal norms interact and influence the Afghan CHW program in a dynamic way. Gendered social norms around the division of labour tend to privilege women in terms of access to resources at the community level, but it is men who hold leadership positions that ultimately decide how the resources are to be distributed. Their explicit gender analysis also uncovered how a highly gendered division of health labour provides opportunities for women's empowerment that can disrupt patriarchal role constraints and broader gender inequities. [Read More at National Center for Biotechnology Information](#)

Credit: Dominic Chavez

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE IN INDONESIA: CONCEPT, PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

From 1960 to 2001, the centralised health system of Indonesia made gains as medical care infrastructure grew from virtually no primary health centres to 20,900 centres. The centralised one size fits all approach did not address the complexity and diversity in population density and dispersion across islands, diets, diseases, local living styles, health beliefs, human development, and community participation. The UHC system grew rapidly and covers 203 million people, the largest single-payer scheme in the world, and has improved health equity and service access. With early success, challenges have emerged. This Review describes Indonesia's innovative UHC initiative along with a roadmap required to meet sustainable development goals by 2030. [Read More at The Lancet.](#)



Credit: Josh Esthey/The World Bank



HUMAN TRAFFICKING REACHES 'HORRIFIC' NEW HEIGHTS

Nearly 25,000 cases of human trafficking were reported to United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2016, up from approximately 20,000 in 2014 and 17,000 in 2013. They caution that the increases may reflect more trafficking, or, alternatively, greater reporting by authorities, or perhaps a combination of both. At greatest risk are children traveling alone, often after having been separated from families and communities in the course of the conflict. The majority of victims are trafficked within their own countries or regions. Some progress is being made in combating trafficking. Almost every country in the world has passed legislation to criminalize human trafficking, though more attention needs to be paid to protecting the victims. [Read More at National Public Radio](#)

Credit: Shazia Rahman/Getty Images



CAREER GUIDANCE FOR KIDS IS OUR BEST HOPE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF have argued that children and youth are perhaps the most powerful weapon we have to restore planetary health and yet they are underutilized. Loris Malaguzzi, an Italian educator who pioneered a transformative approach to early childhood education, talks about the concept of the “Hundred Languages of Children,” meaning they have multiple ways of seeing the world. It is we, the adults, who are limited in our ability to understand. Thus, it is our responsibility to learn their many languages. This evidence points to the fact that career guidance and education in secondary schools may be a missed opportunity. While teachers’ training is a key consideration for improvements in career guidance and education, the students’ experience could also be improved by making required career courses more personally meaningful. [Read More at The Conversation](#)

Credit: AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY:

'YOU CAN TASTE IT': ROAD SALT MAKING TORONTO AREA RIVERS, STREAMS AS SALTY AS SEAWATER

Scientists warn high chloride level in Toronto area waterways is damaging ecosystem, wildlife and ground water sources. The salt is damaging the ecosystem, beginning to infiltrate ground water supply and has the potential to kill sensitive species. "It's really quite worrying," Carl Mitchell, an associate professor of environmental science at University of Toronto, said in an interview. Recent advances in testing technology have made it possible for scientists to track water quality in real time. During winter months, when road salting happens, chloride levels in streams consistently exceed 5,000 mg/l. Large private properties, such as big-box stores with big parking lots, contribute to the problem as well. "It's building up...It's suffocating fish." [Read More at CBC News](#)

See Also: [Salt, Chloride levels in Sudbury's Ramsey Lake reaching critical levels, water groups warns](#)



Credit: CBC



SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS:

THE LAND ENRICHES THE SOUL: ON CLIMATIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE, AFFECT, AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN RIGOLET, NUNATSIAVUT, CANADA

For Canada's Inuit populations, the landscapes surrounding communities, and practices such as hunting, fishing, trapping, foraging, and travelling to cabins, contribute greatly to human health and well-being. While numerous studies examine the physical health impacts of climate change, few consider the affective implications of these changes, and the subsequent impacts on the emotional well-being of Inuit populations. From data gathered through a multi-year, community-driven project in Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, Labrador, Canada, it is evident that the emotional consequences of climate change are extremely important to Northern residents. Participants shared that these changes in land, snow, ice, and weather elicit feelings of anxiety, sadness, depression, fear, and anger, and impact culture, a sense of self-worth, and health. [Read More at Science Direct](#)

Credit: Ouranos

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Multisector action is vital. We must look beyond healthcare & act on the social, political, economic & environmental determinants of health”

Rachel Fadi El-Jardali, Professor of Health Policy and Systems, American University of Beirut.

[Read More at Twitter](#)



Credit: American University of Beirut

EVENTSTABLE

| DATE | CONFERENCE | LOCATION | REGISTER |
|--------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| Feb 23 – March 4 | Third Canada-Guatemala Knowledge Exchange | Guatemala | https://www.horizons.ca/blog/2018/8/1/mnch-apply-now-third-canada-guatemala-knowledge-exchange |
| 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 |
| Mar. 20th -22nd | 2019 Climate Leadership Conference and Awards | Baltimore USA | https://www.climateleadershipconference.org/ |
| Apr. 30th- May 2nd | Public Health 2019 (CPHA) | Ottawa Canada | https://www.cpha.ca/public-health-2019-program |
| May 13th - 15th | Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CSEB): 2019 Biennial Conference | Ottawa Canada | https://cseb.ca/conferences/2019-conference/ |
| May 22nd-24th | 3rd International Integrative Nursing Symposium | Galway Ireland | https://www.integrativenursingsymposium.com/ |
| June 10th-21st | 5th McGill Summer Institute in Infectious Diseases and Global Health | Montreal Canada | http://mcgill-idgh.ca |
| June 14-16 | North American Refugee Health Conference | Toronto Canada | https://facmed.registration.med.utoronto.ca/portal/events/reg/participantTypeSelection.do?method=load&entityId=1469515 |



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SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: DIGITAL STORYTELLING HAS POTENTIAL WITHIN GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH



Credit: Mama na Mtoto

Last year in Tanzania, Mama na Mtoto launched a Digital Storytelling pilot to study how Digital Storytelling could be an effective research and dissemination tool in a global health context. Between April and August, staff and volunteers from the Mama na Mtoto Field Office created digital stories based on their personal experiences regarding maternal, child and reproductive health.

Limitations to using DS were identified. For one, there was an inadequate selection of appropriate stock media available. “Most stock-image models are light-skinned, and imagery tends to be from a western context,” says University of Calgary intern Natasha Hoehn, who also noted the lack of suitable Creative Commons music. She recommends taking the time to capture original content for future projects.

[Read More at CanWaCH](#)



MODIFYING HABITS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: A STUDY OF REVOLVING DOOR USAGE ON THE MIT CAMPUS



Credit: Econlife

This field experiment investigated effects of a descriptive norms-based sign combined with five footprint sticker decal prompts directing individuals to help save energy by using a revolving door, as opposed to a swing door, to exit a mixed-use building. Researchers found that the percentage of individuals using the revolving door increased in both conditions (weekday and weekend day) after they implemented the sign and decals.

Notable considerations in creating descriptive norms-based signage to encourage environmentally responsible behavior in mixed use buildings are discussed. Revolving doors have been shown to decrease energy requirements substantially in both summer and winter.

[Read More at MIT](#)



PAYS TO BE GREEN: HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET PAID TO RECYCLE PLASTIC BOTTLES IN THE UK



Credit: Iceland

Deposit scheme is now being trialled in bid to tackle plastic waste problems. Shoppers at one Iceland store are the first in the country to get cashback from their plastic bottles. Richard Walker, Iceland Managing Director, said: "The vocal support Iceland has received since announcing our intention to eradicate plastic packaging has shown us that there is a huge public will to tackle the scourge of plastic.

"There are 12 million tonnes of plastic entering our oceans every year so we feel a responsibility both to tackle the issue of plastic packaging, as we are doing with our own label products, and to give our customers the power to make a difference themselves." Similar schemes are already running in other countries including Germany, Norway and Sweden.

[Read More at The Sun](#)



THE DEATH OF VENICE? CITY'S BATTLES WITH TOURISM AND FLOODING REACHES CRISIS LEVEL



Credit: Stefano Mazzola/Awakening/Getty Images

Venice may have a centuries-long history of cultivating tourism, devising crowd-drawing events such as the annual carnival, the Biennale international art exhibition and a star-studded film festival, but the advent of mass tourism has left it struggling with how to deal with the near-constant hordes who trudge around its precious sites, through its famous 11th century basilica, over the Rialto bridge, and along its maze of winding *calle*.

The influx is a blessing for the local council's coffers but a scourge on the city's fragile monuments and environment. It goes without saying, however, that Venice's troubles are not limited to tourism. The city is also endangered by recurring *acque alte*, or high waters. On 6th October last year, three-quarters of the city was hit by the worst flooding in a decade. Rain poured for almost 24 hours, with strong winds raising the water to 156cm above the normal sea level – a record reached only five times in the history of the city.

[Read More at The Guardian.](#)





UN HEALTH CHIEF ORDERS PROBE INTO MISCONDUCT



Credit:: Salvatore Di Nolfi/keystone via AP, File

Last month, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told staffers he had instructed the head of WHO's office of internal oversight to look into the charges raised by emails. A WHO statement issued after an AP story was published said the agency was "aware" of such allegations and has "zero tolerance for misconduct or discrimination of any kind."

The statement said Tedros has "championed openness, transparency and diversity" since he became WHO's chief. However, critics doubt that WHO can effectively investigate itself and have called for the probe to be made public. "People have known about these problems for a long time...But nobody wants to talk because they're afraid." [Read More at AP News](#)

See Also: [UN surveys sexual harassment, union says problem is broader](#)



LEGO IS GIVING SESAME WORKSHOP \$100 MILLION TO HELP EDUCATE REFUGEE CHILDREN



Credit: Ryan Donnell

The Lego Foundation, Sesame Workshop, and nonprofit organizations are teaming up to help refugee children process their traumatic experiences through play. The initiative plans to launch play-based learning programs for children below the age of 6 in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Bangladesh. Syrian refugee children are at risk of missing out on education whether they're forced into child labor in Lebanon or enter child marriages in Jordan.

In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugee children who fled religious persecution in Myanmar are banned from receiving a formal education. The educational program will not only teach children basics like the alphabet and numbers, but will also help cultivate the social and emotional development they need to deal with their trauma.

[Read More at Global Citizen.](#)



Celebrating PEACE, HOPE and TOLERANCE
On the Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
Toronto, January 15, 2019



Credit: David Zakus

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