



CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

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Hi,

A haunting déjà vu overcame me three days ago, when visiting a nutrition program in a very rural area of Khammouane Province, Laos, still part of my volunteering with Health Poverty Action. Several days before this I was leading a nutrition workshop on child malnutrition with the staff. Here, though, in this feeding centre I touched a nine month old boy, totally emaciated with arms and legs so thin he could hardly move them. He was a classic case of marasmus, an extreme form of severe protein energy malnutrition. It was the look in his eyes, though (see final photo), that took me back 40 years to my first ever professional job, operating a nutrition rehabilitation centre in rural Honduras. Those eyes were the same eyes I saw there so long ago, and now again in Laos. It was painful, though hopeful in that concerned people were working with this boy and his mother. But how can we have progressed so little?

This weird sense of history also hit me in another way this week when I read that it was in 1928 when oil industry studies first predicted our present climate crisis, but kept them buried. This irresponsibility, a now recognized moral failure, continues to this day with deception, avoidance, even denial by highly funded and well placed think tanks and lobby groups trying to keep the oil flowing at record rates with giant tax payer subsidies and all its direct threat to our survival. As is beginning to happen, it's time to hold those responsible accountable. And again we watch California burn.

In today's **Planetary Health Weekly** (#44 of 2019) you'll read about some signs of

hope and others of despair, including: how to help the oceans, a giant dark web of pornography, a deadly measles outbreak, Kenya destroying its national parks, GMO fish, green cities, reparations to Indigenous communities, a visualization of CO2 emissions, an explosion at Russia's smallpox facility, billions of birds disappearing, Pepsi bottling plain tap water, more Mekong River problems, Indigenous literature in high schools, the benefits of coffee and more. Please take a look as follows.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



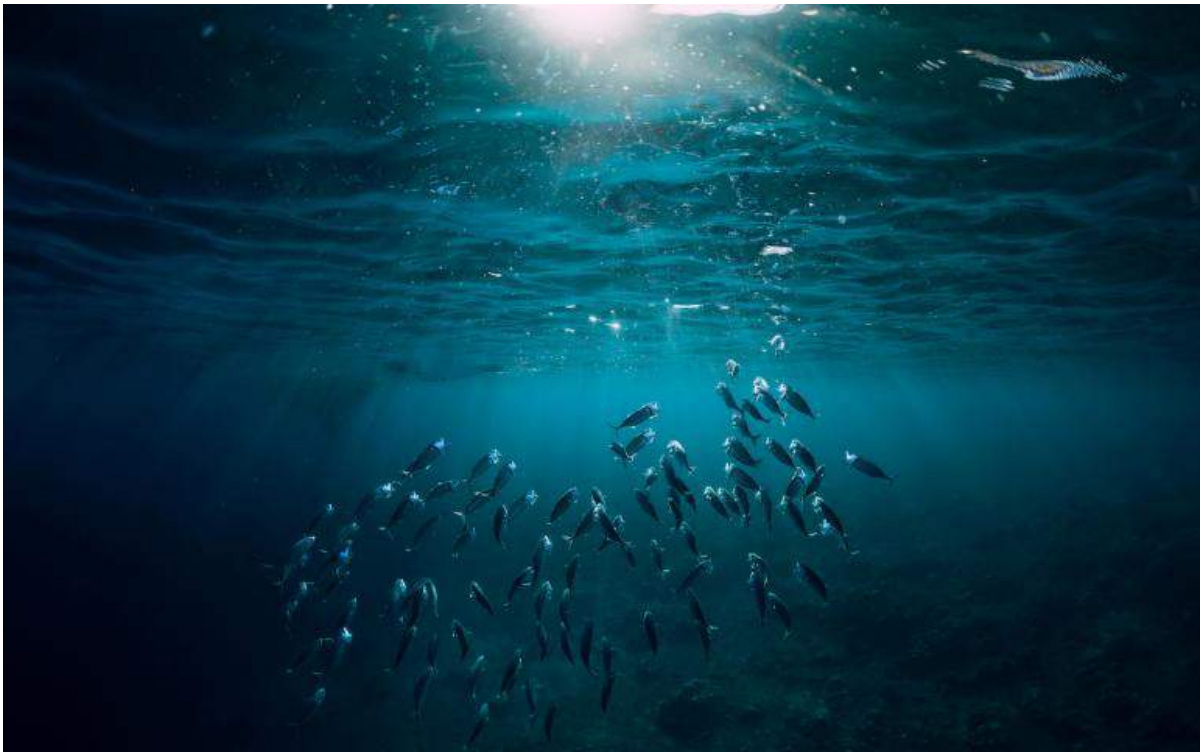
Credit: David Zakus

NUTRITION ASSESSMENT DAY

Phonadee Village, Khammouane Province, Laos

October 28, 2019

The Oceans Need Us. Here's How We Can Help



Credit: NUTURE/ISTOCK

Experts deliver a road map for protecting the world's oceans. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, just recently released, confirmed the dark mood. The ocean, that great enabler of life on Earth, is warming, rising, acidifying, deoxygenating and stratifying. It is just about done absorbing our carbon pollution for us. But, same as with the IPBES report last May, it's important to remember that there are solutions to these problems. The High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (HLP), which includes ocean and climate experts from around the world, released a report on the same day as the IPCC's oceans report, with a list of immediate actions we can take and a forward titled "The Ocean: From Victim to Solution." In it we learn about: supporting ocean-based renewable energy; reforming ocean based transportation; restoring coastal and marine ecosystems; eating lower on the food chain and locally; and storing carbon in the seabed. [Read More at Sierra Club](#)

Feds Take Down The World's 'Largest Dark Web Child Porn Marketplace'



Credits: Jeroen Jumelet / EPA-EFE

Federal prosecutors have filed multiple charges against a 23-year-old South Korean man accused of running what they call the world's "largest dark web child porn marketplace." The now-shuttered English-language site, called "Welcome to Video," contained more than 200,000 unique videos or almost 8 terabytes of data showing sex acts involving children, toddlers and infants, according to the 18-page criminal indictment unsealed here Wednesday, and processed 7,300 Bitcoin transactions worth more than \$730,000. "Most of the users were in their 20s, unmarried and white-collar office workers and first-time offenders, although some were ex-convicts of sexual crimes, including juvenile sex offenders. One possessed as many as 48,634 child porn [files]," the Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) said. [Read More at NBC](#)

See Also: [Media in Laos urged to raise awareness of need to protect children's rights](#)

Measles Outbreak Kills More Than 4,000 In Congo This Year



Credit: Justin Katumwa, AP

More than 4,000 people have died in Congo this year in the world's largest measles outbreak, according to the United Nations children's agency. The Central African nation is also battling an Ebola outbreak that has killed about half that number since August 2018. "We're facing this alarming situation because millions of Congolese children miss out on routine immunization and lack access to health care when they fall sick," said the UNICEF country representative, Edouard Beigbeder. "On top of that, a weak health system, insecurity, community mistrust of vaccines and vaccinators, and logistical challenges all contribute to a huge number of unvaccinated children at risk of contracting the disease." The U.N. agency said Congo's government will launch a vaccination campaign at the end of October to make sure children in every province are vaccinated. [Read More at AP News](#)

See Also: [Merck gets EU panel nod for new Ebola vaccine](#) at Health Economic Times

How Kenya's Push For Development Is Threatening Its Famed Wild Lands



Credit: ADAM WELZ

Kenya is pursuing a plan to build an extensive network of roads, power lines, dams and renewable energy infrastructure. But many of these projects, including wind farms and geothermal facilities, are being constructed in the nation's iconic parks and wildlife areas. Agencies are incentivized to allow infrastructure in protected areas because they get large compensation payments. Corruption is common in infrastructure projects and "bad things happen to those who uncover" it, one conservationist said. Conservation groups warned that one poorly sited wind farm would have a "direct and devastating" effect on rare vultures. Conservationists describe Chinese-funded projects as more difficult to nudge in an environmentally friendly direction. [Read More at Yale Environment 360](#)

3 Billion Birds Across Many Species Have Disappeared In North America



Credit: Matthew Pendelton

Bird abundance in the USA has declined by 30% since 1970. A new study in the journal *Science* shows that while rare birds were recovering, total bird numbers were plummeting, even among some of the most common backyard species. The results of the study are shocking, even for the researchers. In total, bird populations have declined by 2.9 billion individuals, representing a 30% drop in total breeding bird numbers. Lead author Ken Rosenberg, senior scientist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and American Bird Conservancy, says the magnitude of the loss and the number of species involved was unexpected. There's hope that bird numbers can recover if individuals take action and government and conservation organizations make the right investments. "The story is not over," coauthor Michael Parr, president of American Bird Conservancy said in a statement. [Read More at Sierra Club](#)

The Genetic Modification Battle Isn't Over, It's Just Moving To Fish



Credit: The Lempert Report/Youtube

"Wider, appropriate and long-term application of genetic improvement in aquaculture, with a focus on selective breeding, will help boost food production to meet a projected increase in demand for fish and fish products with relatively little extra feed, land, water and other inputs," according to a new UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report. The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is the first global report of its kind and is based on information provided by 92 countries, together representing 96% of global aquaculture production and over 80% of capture fisheries production. FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu says, "It is crucial that we safeguard, manage and further develop the planet's aquatic genetic resources, allowing organisms to grow, to adapt to natural and human-induced impacts such as climate change, to resist diseases and parasites, and to continue to evolve to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and our continued fight for a zero hunger world." [Read More at Winsight Grocery Business](#)

Good News: Unilever Vows To Reduce Plastic Packaging Use By 2025



Credit:Zhang Peng/LightRocket via Getty Images

Unilever has pledged to invest in several alternatives, such as reusable and refillable materials. Its goal is to reduce plastic use by 100,000 tons annually. The remaining reduction will be covered by replacing new plastic with recycled materials. The company also said it will collect and recycle over 600,000 tons of plastic every year. "Our vision is a world in which everyone works together to ensure that plastic stays in the economy and out of the environment," CEO Alan Jope said. "Our plastic is our responsibility and so we are committed to collecting back more than we sell, as part of our drive towards a circular economy." [Read More at NPR News](#)

More Good News: 30 Of The World's Largest & Most Influential Cities Have Peaked Greenhouse Gas Emissions



Credit: shark_749/iStock

Austin, Athens, Lisbon and Venice are the latest major cities to have peaked their greenhouse gas emissions. The world's leading scientists have calculated that global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2020 in order to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. New analysis published ahead of the upcoming C40 World Mayors Summit confirms that 30 of the world's largest cities, representing more than 58 million urban citizens, have now reached this crucial milestone. "The C40 cities that have reached peak emissions are raising the bar for climate ambition, and at the same time, exemplifying how climate action creates healthier, more equitable and resilient communities." said Mark Watts, Executive Director of C40 Cities. [Read More at C40 Cities](#)

See Also: [Asian Metropolises, Including Singapore, Top List Of World's Greenest Commuter Cities](#) at StraightTimes

OPINION

Bill Gates And Two African Billionaires Say Family Planning Is Essential To Africa's Future



Credit: LOREN MATTHEW / AP IMAGES FOR THE AFRICA CENTER

Bill Gates, the second richest person in the world; Aliko Dangote, the richest man in Africa; and Mohammed “Mo” Ibrahim, a U.K billionaire born in Sudan, spoke about ways Africa can reach its potential in the coming decades during a recent event at the Africa Center in Harlem in New York City. As Africa’s population expands, the continent needs to create jobs and keep up with food demand, the billionaires said during a fireside chat at an event called The Future Africa Forum. Ibrahim said there is a controversial topic that can help Africa develop sustainable communities and cities: family planning. The conversation spanned other subjects—from how investment in agriculture and finished product manufacturing could help Africa create jobs and keep money inside the country to how corruption could be reduced by a new generation of leaders. [Read More at Forbes](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

What Would Reparations For Native American Communities Look Like?



Credit: Cumberland County Historical Society

There is an ongoing conversation around the concept of reparations and what it might look like for Native American communities in the 21st century. The legal system has consistently been used to limit the rights of Native American communities. For example, in 2010, a law imposing a stricter statute of limitations in civil lawsuits directly impacted our Native American leaders. The Native American community advocated fiercely for its return for over 50 years, and with the help of LaDonna Harris (Comanche) and her husband, Oklahoma U.S. Senator Fred Harris, it was returned to the Taos Pueblo by an overwhelming 70-12 Senate vote. It's amazing to see candidates use some of these examples from history when discussing reparations for Native American communities. Hopefully it will not take another 50 years or another lawsuit to help our elders and communities see justice. [Read More at Daily Kos](#)

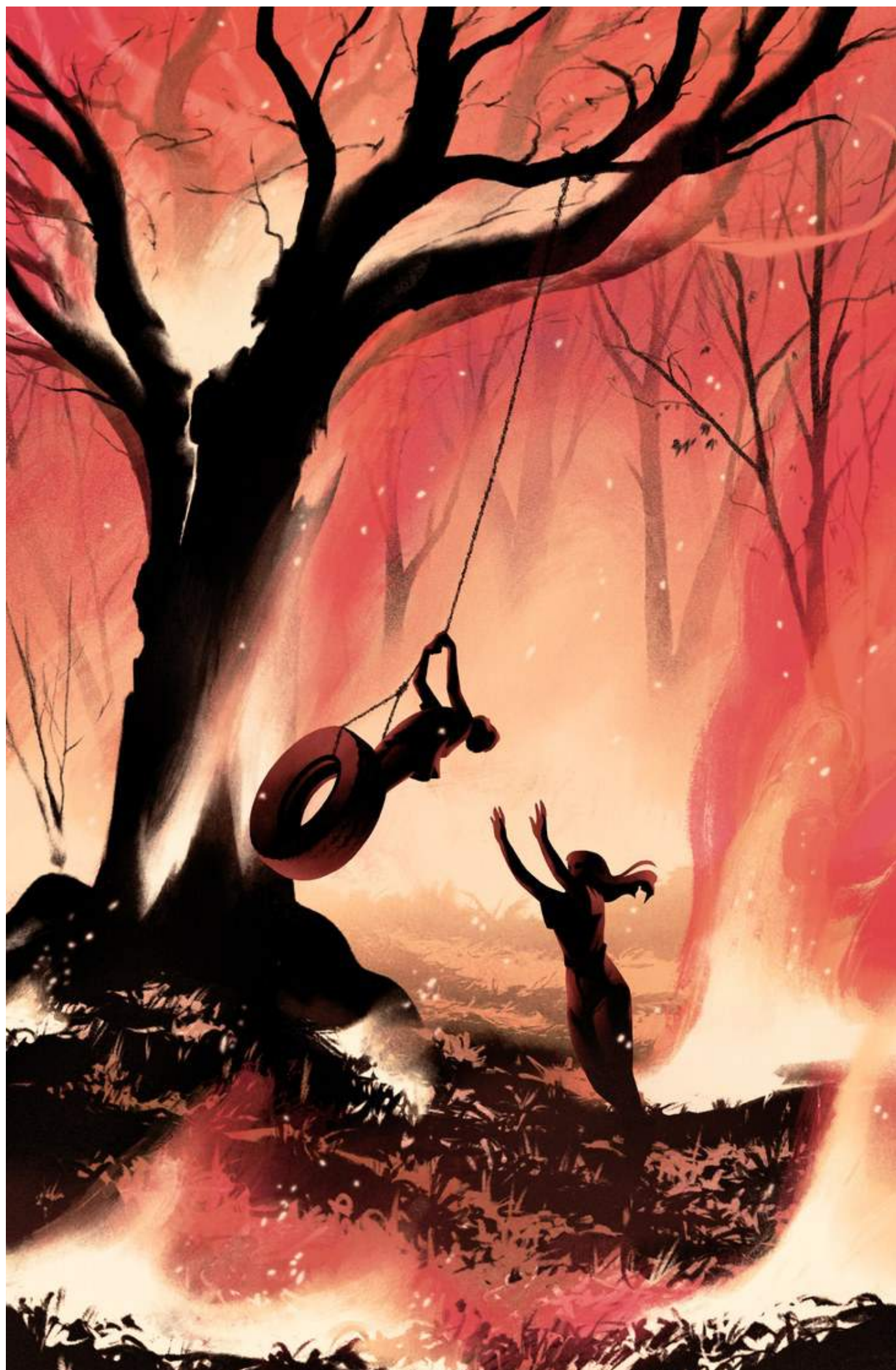
SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

Teaching Needs A Transformation. For Indigenous Kids With A History Of Heartache, These Small Changes Led To Big Gains



Credit: Making Progress

What does it mean to decolonize education? In the first part of her Atkinson Fellowship series, Shree Paradkar visits a school in Edmonton where changes in staffing, attitudes and even furniture are helping boost the graduation rates for Indigenous students. Education Without Oppression - the 2018-19 Atkinson series - examines the continuing marginalization of Black and Indigenous students in Canada. It analyzes the challenges and breakthroughs nationally in Canada and in the cities of Baltimore, Md., Lucknow, India; and Napier, New Zealand. [Read More at The Star](#)





Credit: Leonardo Santamaria

Quote Of The Week

“There is infinite hope,” Kafka tells us, “only not for us.”

From: What If We Stopped Pretending?

Read More at The New Yorker

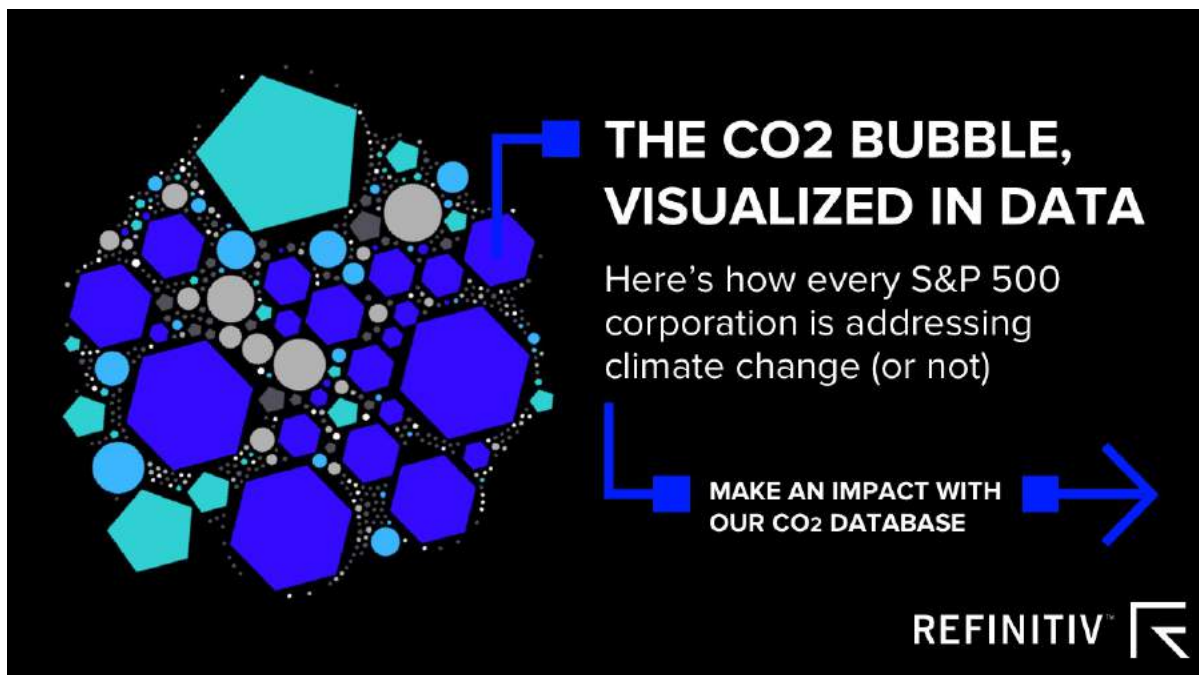
Upcoming Events

- November 4th -5th: [International Conference on Global Healthcare](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Experts Meeting on Healthcare and Nursing](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Summit on Healthcare and Nutrition](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 13th - 14th: [World Congress on Mental Health](#) (London, UK)
- November 22nd -24th: [2nd International Symposium on Community Health Workers](#) (Dhaka, Bangladesh)
- February 19th - 20th, 2020: [2nd World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit](#) (Paris, France)
- March 31 - April 2, 2020: [World Public Health Nutrition Congress 2020](#) (Brisbane, Australia)
- April 6th -7th, 2020: [17th World Congress on Paediatrics and Neonatology](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- April 18th -20th, 2020: [CUGH Conference 2020: Global Health in a Time of Worldwide Political Change](#) (Washington, D.C., USA)

- April 24th - 26th, 2020: [PEGASUS IV Migration - Climate Change - Sustainable Development](#) (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA

The CO2 Bubble: Visualizing Carbon Emissions And Climate Activism Of Every S&P 500 Corporation



Susie Refinitiv

For our study, we sampled the 500 largest corporations listed on the New York Stock Exchange — a.k.a. the S&P 500. The operation of these 500 companies accounts for **over 2.1 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year**, which is roughly **32% of all US greenhouse gas emissions**. The entire Amazon Rainforest absorbs 2.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ per year. No S&P company is carbon-zero yet, but a few are close in operating emissions. Conversely, just 18 companies account for half of the 2.1 billion tonnes of operating CO₂ that the S&P generates. Only 85 S&P companies are currently on track with the US's Paris Agreement pledge.

[See More at Quartz](#)

FYI #2

Explosion Reported At Russian Facility Storing Smallpox



Credit: Gevende / iStock

The blast was strong enough to blow out windows. Smallpox is ostensibly a health problem of the past. Very recently, a gas canister exploded at the Vektor center, a biological research lab in Koltsovo, Siberia, during scheduled repairs. Koltsovo's mayor Nikolai Krasnikov told Russian news agency *TASS* that no biohazard substances were involved in the explosion and that the incident doesn't present a threat to the

nearby community. Still, as long as those living samples of smallpox exist, there's a chance the virus could once again find its way into the general population — meaning it might be a problem of the future as well as the past.

[Read More at Futurism](#)

FYI #3

Pepsi Admits That Its Aquafina Bottled Water Is Just Tap Water, Coca-Cola's Dasani Is Next



Credit: Shutterstock

In a shocking reveal, the Pepsi corporation admitted that its Aquafina bottled water is not purified water or spring water, but simply plain old tap water. The company will

now be forced to change the labeling of the brand to reflect that it is just tap water. PepsiCo representative Michelle Naughton said in a statement, "If this helps clarify the fact that the water originates from public sources, then it's a reasonable thing to do." The corporate accountability group, True Activist, is now looking to Coca-Cola's Dasani bottled water for false advertisement. However, Dasani denies that their product is just tap water. "We don't believe that consumers are confused about the source of Dasani water. The label clearly states that it is purified water," Coca-Cola spokeswoman Diana Garza Ciarlante said.

[Read More at True Activist](#)

FYI #4

'Our River Was Like A God': How Dams And China's Might Imperil The Mekong



When the Chinese came to the village of Lat Thahae, perched on a muddy bend of a Mekong River tributary, they scrawled a Chinese character on the walls of homes, schools and Buddhist temples. No one in this isolated hamlet in northern Laos could read what it said. But the character means “demolish” — the fate of hundreds of communities along Asia’s great river reduced to a single foreign word. Cambodia’s largest dam to date is the \$800 million Lower Sesan 2, on a feeder of the Mekong. Its Chinese-built turbines began turning last December, flooding five villages as the reservoir filled. Today, the spire of a Buddhist pagoda protrudes from waters that have inundated the village of Srekor. Former residents travel by boat to rescue belongings from flooded homes, where stalled clocks mark when the waters arrived. Mr. Hun Sen, who presided over the dam’s inauguration, called complaining villagers “radicals.” In the resettlement community, villagers mourned the loss of a river that sustained them for generations. “Our river was like a god to us,” said In Chin, a resident. “It makes me sad that we killed it.”

[Read More at New York Times](#)

FYI #5: AUTUMN READING

The Health Benefits Of Coffee: Everything You Need To Know



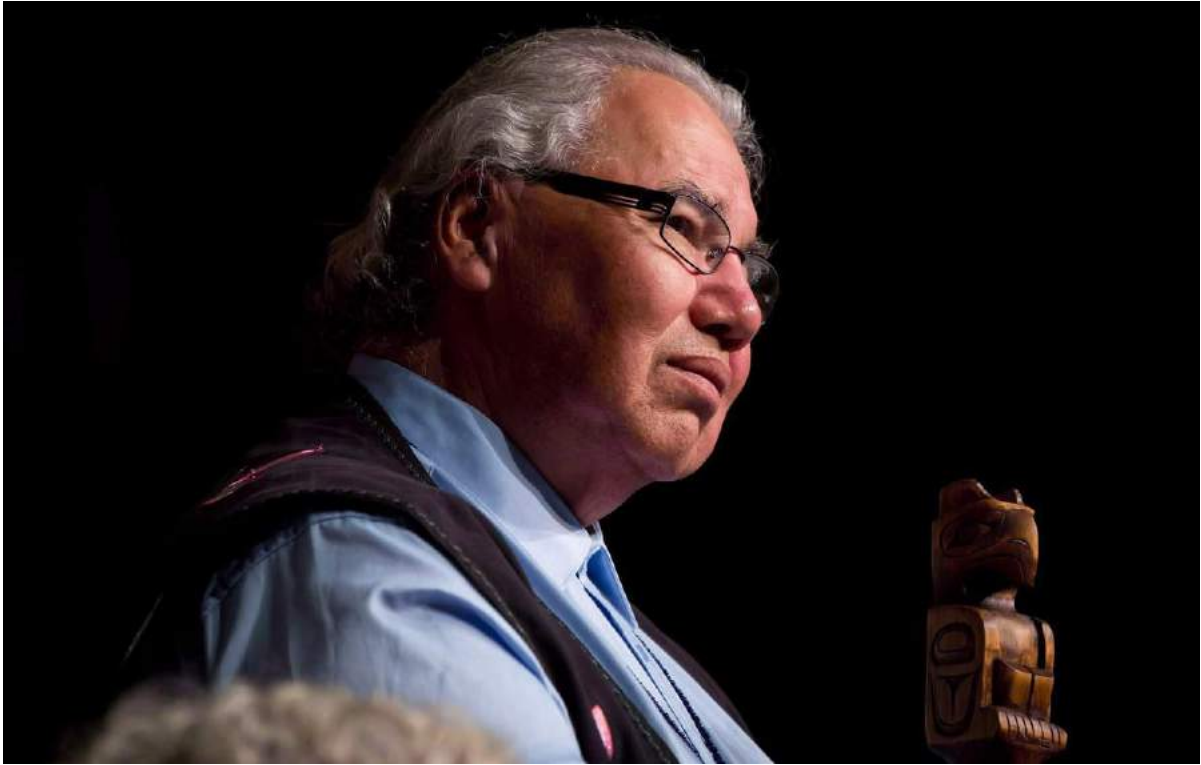
Credit: GETTY IMAGES

Your daily caffeine fix has surprising health benefits — but how you drink it makes a difference. Peta Bee asks the experts what we should be ordering. Our thirst for coffee has increased massively over the past decade. About 95 million cups a day are drunk in the UK, about 25 million more since 2008, according to the British Coffee Association. There are nearly as many ways to drink it, from milky latte to nitrogen brew. “The coffee bean is a good thing, a natural thing,” says Ian Marber, a nutrition therapist. “It contains 500 plant components and lots of beneficial antioxidants, and has been the subject of hundreds of scientific studies that encouragingly show it can be beneficial in our diet.”

[Read More at The Times](#)

FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

Why Don't All High Schools Teach Indigenous Literature?



Credit: DARRYL DYCK / THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Duncan Campbell Scott. Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs, in 1920 made attendance at residential schools compulsory. "I want to get rid of the Indian problem," the aforementioned Scott said when making residential schools compulsory for Indigenous children. "Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill."

[Read more at The Star](#)









Credit: David Zakus

PROMOTING HEALTHY CHILDREN

HEALTH POVERTY ACTION AND DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICE NUTRITION PROGRAM

PHONADEE VILLAGE, MAHAXAY DISTRICT, KHAMOUANNE PROVINCE, LAOS

OCTOBER 28, 2019



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PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

Publisher and Editor: Dr. David Zakus
david.zakus@utoronto.ca

Production: Eunice Anteh & Aimée Bouka

Social Media: Evans Oppong

Website: Gaël Chetaille

CONTACT US TO COMMENT OR SUBSCRIBE AT:

planetaryhealthweekly@gmail.com

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