



STEMBoost Newsletter

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Santa Clara Regionals

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From March 7th to the 12th, the Santa Clara County Regional Tournament was held through an on-campus satellite format. A few events were held after school each day. To ensure honesty, all participants of a given event started their tests at the exact same time. However, due to COVID-19 event modifications, device events were changed to trial events and were not counted towards the overall score. [image]



The Kennedy Gold Team performed outstandingly, placing 1st with an extraordinarily low score of 23 points, the lowest score that has been recorded in at least the past 5 years of this tournament. Kenedy Gold also scored first place in 19 out of 24 total events. The state tournament will be held in a similar format at the beginning of April, so stay tuned for the results!

Fun Fact

Which country does the world's quickest human calculator reside in? (See answer in the back)

The Global Wealth Gap and Eco-fascism

Ryan Li

There is no doubt that the global human population is increasing. In fact, the UN projects that the population will soon exceed the 8 billion mark on Earth, reaching 8.5 billion humans in 2030 (1). Most of this population growth is expected to occur in developing countries, with South Sudan, Burundi, and Mali being a few examples. The primary reason for the high population growth in these countries is due to the high birth rate, as well as a large proportion of the population being young. For example, 47.01% of Mali's human population was under 14 years of age in 2020 (2).

In the midst of the global climate change crisis, it is very easy to place the blame for excess greenhouse gas emissions being released into the atmosphere, increased habitat destruction, and elevated species extinction on the large population increases within developing countries. However, the data tells a different story. Within Oxfram's 2020 report on carbon inequality, the nonprofit along with Stockholm Environment Institute found that the world's richest 10% contributed to 52% of cumulative carbon emissions from 1990-2015, compared to the world's bottom 50% in terms of wealth releasing only 7% of the cumulative carbon emissions in the same time period. An even larger disparity can be seen with the richest 1%—only 63 million people—emitting over double the cumulative carbon emissions produced by the poorest 50%—3.1 billion people—from 1990-2015 (3).

The drastic wealth divide between the people living in developing countries and people living in developed countries is able to explain the very large gap between the carbon emissions from developing and developed countries. With more money to spend, people in developed countries are able to purchase a lot more products—such cars, electronics, and furniture—all of which release greenhouse gasses during the production process. Yet, some people from these developed countries have decided to place the issue of anthropogenic climate change purely on the rapidly expanding populations of developing countries. This has spiraled into a dangerous movement coined eco-fascism.

At its core, eco-fascism justifies using population controls, such as mass-killings of the poor in both developing and developed countries, to solve the issue of natural resources becoming limited for the rich. In fact, two perpetrators of two mass shootings in El Paso and New Zealand in 2019 stated very clearly their justification for their acts of terrorism in the form of hatred of immigrants, overpopulation, and environmental degradation (4). Not only is eco-fascism downright terrifying, but it also ignores the fact that the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions and the resulting environmental damage is caused by the rich themselves. In a way, the people within developing countries are being used as scapegoats by the rich, detracting from the main cause of climate change.

A far more ethical and rational approach to combating anthropogenic climate change would be for those who are financially capable—such as the rich—to invest in creating new technologies that can run on renewable energy sources, and to phase out existing technologies that are commonly used in developed countries which still run on fossil fuels. Rather than wasting precious time that we have before the damage caused by climate change is truly irreversible for all ecosystems on Earth, we need to collaborate together to transform developed countries into sustainable and carbon-neutral areas, and then finally assist developing countries in adopting these sustainable technologies as their populations continue growing.

Works Cited:

1. “Global Issues: Population.” United Nations, Accessed 10 April 2022. Web. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/population>.
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3. Gore, Tim. “Confronting carbon inequality.” Oxfam International, 21 Sep 2020. Web. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/carbon-emissions-richest-1-percent-more-double-emissions-poorest-half-humanity>.
4. Shukla, Nikita. “What is Ecofascism and Why It Has No Place in Environmental Progress.” Earth.org, 17 Aug 2021. Web. <https://earth.org/what-is-ecofascism/>.

Answer: India; Neelkantha Bhanu Prakash, winner of the Mental Calculation World Championship in the London Mind Sports Olympiad, possesses the ability to calculate math functions extremely quickly.