



ANNUAL REPORT : 2009

Since its inception, Earth Policy Institute (EPI) has laid down a roadmap—Plan B—for saving civilization. It has continued to refine Plan B and to support it with the latest scientific data. Human behavior changes either in response to new information or new experience. EPI disseminates new information through various publications to guide the process of change.

The first seven months of this year were dedicated to research: data-gathering, analysis, writing, and fact-checking *Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*. Once the book was sent to its publishers, the Institute shifted its focus to outreach as well as working on a number of other major research topics.

EPI's success to date is due not only to the quality of its research but also because it provides an overall plan of what can be done. It produces books because there is a network of publishers to translate them into the world's major languages, which gives the media and political leaders in each country access to the material. It also produces Plan B Updates, Eco-Economy Indicators, Book Bytes, and other materials that are short, timely, and accessible. Because EPI's uniquely global vision often allows it to see trends that more specialized organizations cannot, its research generates attention.

THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Due to their massive data-gathering and broad-based analyses, Institute researchers noted in late 2008 the tremendous advances that had been recently occurring in the renewable energy sector. No one was putting the pieces together or reporting on what this meant. EPI realized this was a major shift and thus advanced the timing for the release of *Plan B 4.0* in order to highlight this and other important global advances.

Often subsequent editions of a book go through minor alterations, adding new data and new examples. Each edition of Plan B, however, has taken a fresh look at our global problems and solutions. *Plan B 4.0* is no exception. The initial six chapters from the previous editions were updated and condensed into three chapters describing the major environmental problems and likely consequences should they continue in business-as-usual.

Chapter 1 was fueled by an article Lester Brown wrote, which was published in the May issue of *Scientific American*. In the article, he discussed how food shortages

could be the weak link to bring down civilization. He noted that the biggest threat to global political stability is the potential for food crises in poor countries to cause government collapse. Such crises are brought on by rising demand and ever worsening environmental degradation. This argument became the focus for *Plan B 4.0* as to why the world needs to cut carbon emissions 80 percent by 2020. Every trend affected by climate change adversely affects the world's already precarious food production.

The subsequent seven chapters outlined how this can be achieved with existing technology. Chapters 4 and 5 on energy efficiency and renewable energy underwent the greatest metamorphosis as researchers uncovered new data on the pace and scale of the energy transformation quietly underway in the world. The exhaustive data-gathering effort by the research team anchored the book with indisputable facts.

The research for the book inspired a series of articles, one of which became a piece in the Outlook section of the *Washington Post* on September 20. In "On Energy, We're Finally Walking the Walk," Lester noted that the United States has entered a new energy era, ending a century of rising carbon emissions. This dramatic 9 percent drop in carbon emissions over the past two years—and the promise of further huge reductions—gave the U.S. a surprisingly strong position for asking for greater reductions. A subsequent Plan B Update detailed the decline in carbon emissions in the United States.

Interest in the UN Conference on Climate Change taking place in Copenhagen spurred an Update in early November on how the Copenhagen conference is really about food security. Released via teleconference while Lester was in San Francisco on the first leg of a two-week, eight-city book tour, this piece garnered media attention.

EPI has weighed in fairly significantly regarding the climate change conference. When in London launching the UK edition of *Plan B 4.0*, *The Guardian* asked Lester to write a commentary on the forthcoming conference and Plan B. A number of other papers carried this piece. On November 22, the *Washington Post* did a special pre-Copenhagen Outlook section, including a piece by Lester entitled "A Hotter Planet Means Less on Our Plates" and a large half-page map entitled "Renewable energy coming to a neighborhood near you," which was derived from Chapter 5.

Roll Call, a specialized Capitol Hill publication, asked EPI to contribute to their special issue on climate in the run-up to Copenhagen conference. Interestingly, Bill Clinton also contributed an article which referenced EPI's renewable energy and job creation analysis. *The Ecologist*, a UK magazine, carried an interview with Lester where he talked about the conference, and a number of major environmental websites, like Treehugger and Grist, carried columns by Lester.

Since the completion of *Plan B 4.0*, the research team has been researching topics where the Institute can make a difference with its unique interdisciplinary and integrated global analysis. Early in the year, it released a Plan B Update on how the United States is closing the door on building new coal-fired power plants. Janet Larsen released an Update, "Inferno on Earth," where she showed the link between climate change and an increase in wildfires. She noted that as temperatures rise, the earth becomes hotter and drier—ideal conditions for fire. In fact, from the 1970s to early

2000s, “the share of total global land area experiencing very dry conditions doubled from less than 15 percent to close to 30 percent.”

Responding to reader demand, in March the team released a *Plan B 3.0* presentation (in both PowerPoint and PDF). The presentation received exceptionally positive feedback on the type of information and the professional format. Using the new data in *Plan B 4.0*, the research team updated the presentation, which had also translated into French and Spanish, and released it in early November. Response to this presentation showed up in a one-day near-record number of website hits.

Throughout the year, especially while immersed in the research effort for *Plan B 4.0*, it released 20 Book Bytes, which created significant attention. In addition, two releases went out highlighting the data backstopping the numbers in *Plan B 4.0*. On the horizon for December are Eco-Economy Indicators on wind power and ice melting and a Plan B Update on the shrinking U.S. automobile fleet.

THE OUTREACH EFFORT

The Institute recognizes that it will take an enormous dissemination effort to guide the global transition to a Plan B economy. The stakes in the battle to save the planet are high. Thus, EPI promotes its analyses through a combination of its worldwide network of media contacts, publishers, and the Internet. Press teleconferences are also convened to draw special attention to a topic. Additional outreach efforts go into speaking engagements, direct mail and electronic sales promotions, and its website.

Publishing and Book Releases

EPI's books are the foundation for reaching its global constituency. Publishing in all of the world's major languages broadens the Institute's reach. Thus far, the Institute's books have been published in 27 languages. Major languages (more than 50 million speakers) include English (three publishers: US & Canada, UK & Commonwealth, India & South Asia), Arabic, Chinese (two publishers: Mainland and Taiwan), Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Marathi (India), Polish, Portuguese (Portugal and Brazil), Russian, Spanish (Latin America and Spain), Thai, Turkish, and Ukrainian. Other languages include Bulgarian, Catalan, Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Romanian, Slovenian, and Swedish.

Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization was launched at an international press teleconference on September 29, 2009. Coverage on the book included Reuters, ABC News, Clean Skies TV, E&E television, Science News, InterPress, and a number of electronic news sites including Climate Progress, Celsius, ClimateWire, Grist, Huffington Post, Oil Drum, Technorati, and Treehugger.

Radio coverage included Science Friday, NPR's Environment Report, Free Forum on KPFFK, BBC Business Report, Gary Null, Earth Beat, and Healthy Planet with Sherry Beall. One of the more interesting interviews was between Lester Brown and David Roberts of Grist posted on Bloggingheads. Showing the adaptability of web technology, the two were connected by phone and recorded their side of the 1-hour

interview via web cam. Links to these and other interviews and articles are posted on the EPI in the News webpage.

In November, Lester was on a two-week book tour giving 17 presentations, 14 interviews, and numerous meetings in eight cities: San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, Boulder, and Ft. Collins. Minnesota Public Radio taped and is streaming the presentation from the University of Minnesota, as is Alternative Radio for the University of Colorado Boulder talk. Of special note is that C-Span Book TV taped the 1.5-hour University of Chicago presentation and aired it twice over the Thanksgiving weekend.

This tour occurred a week after Lester (1) launched the Portuguese edition in Brazil where, in addition to interviews with all of Brazil's major papers, he taped *Rodo Viva*, a popular 1-hour roundtable with media and scientists, (2) spoke at the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in Addis Ababa, in addition to meeting with the President of Ethiopia, and (3) launched the English edition of *Plan B 4.0* in London.

Janet spent several weeks in Europe in late November/early December, speaking at a conference of European journalists in Viterbo, Italy, sponsored by GreenAccord; a pre-COP15 symposium on Energy, Climate Change and Global Food Security symposium by the University of Copenhagen; and an NGO event during the first week of COP15, before heading to Istanbul to give the plenary lecture at the EcoCity World Summit.

Media Outreach

EPI works closely with the world's major news organizations. Since it began operation in May 2001, EPI has generated over 22,000 news clips. Institute researchers have been interviewed on some 400 national and international radio and television networks (excluding local radio and television stations), such as the BBC World Service, Voice of America, CNN International, and Al Jazeera.

Among the magazines carrying articles by the Institute this year are *Scientific American* (as noted above), *Mother Earth News*, *New Scientist*, *Ode*, *The Futurist*, *USA Today*, and *Population Press*. Recent op-eds, commentary, and articles have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The Ecologist*, and *Roll Call*. Institute researchers were interviewed for documentaries on topics such as the mining of tar sands, population, climate change, high-speed rail, the environmental effects of war, and the future of our Earth.

As noted above, the U.N. Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen created its own media buzz with reporters calling in to get EPI's thoughts on the conference, the Institute weighing in with op-eds and commentaries, and even with Janet attending the early part of the conference and providing media interviews.

Miscellaneous & Special

A few special events occurred in 2009. The first was a special 90-minute documentary broadcast in January 2009 by NHK, Japan's leading broadcast network. The documentary was based exclusively on a lengthy interview with Lester about Plan

B. The program was aired several times in January, resulting each time in a dramatic jump in sales of *Plan B 3.0* in Japan.

Another very special event occurred on June 18 when the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center presented a "Portrait of Invention" program concerning Lester's life and work featuring a dialogue between Marc Pachter, former Director of the National Portrait Gallery, and Lester.

Jim Garrison (State of the World Forum) is running with the Plan B flag. He organized a conference in Brazil in August that resulted in the country initiating a campaign to reduce carbon emissions 80 percent by the year 2020. While a number of government, business, media leaders, and civil society embraced the challenge, Curitiba is the first city to commit to it formally. Amazonian governors are committed to reducing deforestation by 80 percent by 2020. Globo, one of the world's largest media networks, is running public service ads to inform Brazilians about the escalating dangers of climate change. It also plans to distribute lesson plans and materials to some 7,000 schools across Brazil to educate students about climate and the environment. Jim continues to push Plan B and is organizing a conference around it that will take place February 28-March 3, 2010, in Washington, D.C.

The last is in process: the two-part documentary for PBS on Plan B. Being produced by Hal and Marilyn Weiner of ScreenScope, whose series "Journey to Planet Earth" is a regular feature on PBS. The show is currently planned for airing in the fall of 2010.

Website

EPI's revamped website was launched in mid September in time for the release of *Plan B 4.0*. The site highlights dynamic features such as the Data Center with its rich source of information on population, health, natural systems, climate, energy, transportation, food, agriculture, and the economy. The Publications section allows users to quickly find analyses on a wide range of topics. Looking for *Plan B* in another language? Just check out the Translations page. The "What You Can Do" page is in response to the many queries on this subject. Website activity leaped with the release of this new site.

The new site incorporates Web 2.0 tools to facilitate a rapid deployment of its releases, data, and other research. These tools enable readers to receive EPI's releases, podcasts, and news via its public and media listservs (containing 18,000 and 1,900 addresses), RSS, Twitter, and Facebook. Podcasts are available for Updates, Book Bytes, and teleconferences.

RSS feeds are for EPI's releases (Updates, Book Bytes, and Indicators), podcasts, and blog. RSS subscribers for EPI's releases and blogs number some 10,000 and 8,000, respectively. Twitter followers receive on average two posts per business day. Followers are increasing daily since this service was established in September. Currently over 341 followers and 47 groups receive postings. EPI's Facebook fans receive information on and also interact with each other regarding EPI's research. This site on average has two posts per week. A number of people from this fan base of some 1,000 interact on each post.

EPI's blog, a new feature in the revamped website, involves readers in the personal side of the Institute. For instance, one posting described an initiative underway in Brazil to adopt Plan B—cutting carbon emissions 80 percent by 2020. Another highlighted a trip Brown made to Sao Paulo to launch the Portuguese edition of *Plan B 4.0*; to Addis Ababa to address the International conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, where he also met with the President of Ethiopia; and to London to launch the UK English edition of *Plan B 4.0*.

In addition, EPI has regular columns on some notable environmental blogs including Treehugger, Grist, Sustainablog, Environmental News Network, Green Press, and Save the Planet Central. These columns are regularly reposted on other sites by moderators or fans, thus strengthening EPI's outreach. This is in addition to the other bloggers and news websites that regularly post the Institute's releases.

When Googling for issues on which EPI works, the Institute is often at the top of the list due in large measure to the over 100,000 links to its website.

EPI's publications and data are clearly a major attraction. Unique in publishing, EPI posts its publications online for downloading the day of release, allowing free global access. Book chapters are posted in PDF. Through November some 62,000 PDFs of *Plan B 3.0* were downloaded either as the full book or individual chapters. The first full month since the release of *Plan B 4.0* saw nearly 4,500 downloads. In addition, previous editions of *Plan B* along with EPI's other books are frequently downloaded, reinforcing the value of this free service. Complementing the downloading of books, the PDF "Time for Plan B," our 8-page 4-color summary, has been downloaded some 15,000 times. The Plan B 3.0 presentation (in PowerPoint and PDF) that was released in March has been downloaded over 10,000 times, while the Plan B 4.0 presentation just released in November has seen some 2,000 downloads.

FINANCIALS

Total income for 2009, including publication sales, royalties, honoraria, interest, grants, and gifts, came to just under \$800,000. Earned income covered 27 percent of expenditures of just under \$1 million.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the major issues facing humanity today and providing a comprehensive global solution is something no other organization is offering. By a comprehensive strategy exploiting media outreach and Web 2.0 tools, EPI encourages actions that can be taken at all levels of society. As Lester Brown says in *Plan B 4.0*, "We don't know how much time remains. Nature is the timekeeper but we cannot see the clock."