

Challenge, competition, and collaboration in IBO help build biological talent

Poon Kasemsap
IBO Chairman

The International Biology Olympiad (IBO) is dedicated to the proposition that biology is a beautiful and valuable subject. IBO is a competition for secondary school students that tests their skills in tackling biological problems and dealing with biological experiments. Interest in biology, inventiveness, creativity, and perseverance are necessary qualifications of IBO participants. IBO helps member countries build biological talent through challenge, competition, and collaboration. IBO challenges gifted students to expand their talents and to promote their careers as biologists. IBO competition motivates students to maximize their full potential and to try to be the best among their peers. IBO stimulates cooperation among young students and educators from many different countries and helps to improve biology education worldwide.

In 1990, six countries participated in the first IBO in Olomouc, Czech Republic. This year, 59 countries participated in the 21st IBO in Changwon, Korea. Every participating country sends four students, who are the winners of that country's National Biology Olympiad (NBO) competitions. The students are accompanied by two team leaders who represent their country. This paper addresses several issues relating to enhancing and encouraging students to participate in their countries' NBO, as well as a number of barriers that discourage students from participating. Finally, barriers that prevent students from participating in IBO will also be presented.