

# CEHAPE Awards

Second NGO competition  
rewarding good practice  
in children's environment  
and health



Fifth Ministerial Conference  
on Environment and Health  
WHO European Region  
Parma, Italy, 10-12 March 2010



*Environmental measures to improve children's health*

# Winners

## CATEGORY *Water and Sanitation*

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- 1** *Winner* **Station of Nature Research and Environmental Education, Lithuania**  
*Project* Voluntary monitoring of wells, Marijampolė County  
*School children keep well water safe*

## CATEGORY *Accident Prevention & Physical Activity*

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- 2** *Winner* **Child Accident Prevention Trust, United Kingdom**  
*Project* Child Safety Week 2009  
*A week that makes a difference to children's safety*

## CATEGORY *Air Quality*

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- 3** *Winner* **The Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, the Flemish Agency for Care and Health, and the Flemish Local Health Networks, Belgium**  
*Project* Educational project for primary school  
*Keeping "refreshingly cool" in the classroom*

## CATEGORY *Hazardous Chemicals & Radiation*

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- 4** *Winner* **Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund, Russia**  
*Project* Reducing the risks of lead to children  
*Changing the earth to prevent lead poisoning*



## CATEGORY *Mobility*

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- 5** *Winner* **PORG Volders grammar school, Austria**  
*Project* 'Mobility management – PORG moves'  
*Students promote free public transport*

## CATEGORY *Climate Protection*

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- 6** *Winner* **Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment, Armenia**  
*Project* Sun energy in Armenia  
*Using summer sunshine to boost health and happiness*

## CATEGORY *Youth Participation*

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- 7** *Winner* **Green Light Youth Organisation, Russia**  
*Project* Interactive environmental education and action programme  
*Mobilising youth to keep nature in mind*

## CATEGORY *Schools*

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- 8** *Winner* **Youth of the 21st Century, Tajikistan**  
*Project* Green schools  
*Student environmental management comes to the classroom*

# Environmental measures to improve children's health



The CEHAPE NGO competition for rewarding good practice in children's environment and health has taken place for a second time. Awards will be presented to winners in eight categories on 11 March 2010 at the World Health Organization's (WHO) European Region Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Parma, Italy.

## **How the awards started**

The CEHAPE Awards were inspired by the launch of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) and the Budapest Declaration signed by governments of the WHO's European region in June 2004 during the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. The first competition was launched in 2006 to highlight the progress being made in the countries and the first CEHAPE awards were presented at the WHO inter-governmental mid-term review of progress in Vienna in 2007.

The prize-giving and presentation of the winning projects in Vienna was welcomed by WHO and by many national ministries of health and environment in Europe. This encouraged the organisers: Health and Environment Alliance, Women in Europe for a Common Future, ECOFORUM, and International Society of Doctors for the Environment Austria to run the competition a second time with the presentation of the awards at the WHO Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, Parma, Italy on 11 March 2010.

## **Awards 2010: Showcasing projects to protect children's health**

The theme of this year's ministerial meeting is "Children's Health in a Changing Environment", which reflects well what the entrants to this competition have addressed in their projects.

A total of 114 entries were received from 31 countries in the WHO European region. We were delighted to have a similar number of entries to the 1st CEHAPE awards, and to find the quality of the projects to be much higher this year.

Many more of the participants clearly highlighted how drawing on local expertise and working in partnership with other groups, government and the private sector makes an important difference to achieving goals. Almost all showed how media attention helped raise public awareness and often attracted the interest of policy makers, teachers and other educational experts not directly involved in activities. Many groups also showed how they made their projects sustainable, and indicated how their experience was transferable to other settings or how it had even been replicated by others.

The winning projects are youth associations, women's organisations, schools, institutes and other non-government groups that make a major contribution to improving children's environmental health in Europe.

## **The awards and the wider CEHAPE process**

The first four categories selected for awards reflect the priorities for children's environmental health of the WHO European region.



These four "Regional Priority Goals" in the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) are:

- *Water & sanitation*
- *Accident prevention and physical activity*
- *Air quality*
- *Hazardous chemicals and radiation.*

The four additional categories represent two important and growing challenges and two potential solutions:

- *Mobility*
- *Climate protection*
- *Youth participation*
- *Schools.*

The challenges for Europe are first unhealthy mobility with a trend towards greater use of private road vehicles, increased air pollution and road accidents, and second climate change, which is expected to exacerbate the existing major causes of ill-health in children, such as diarrhoeal and respiratory disease.

The two categories that represent the potential solutions are youth participation and schools. Young people who are active in both schools and youth groups are themselves becoming a major force of energy and change in addressing health problems associated with environmental causes.

In Parma, prizes of a cheque of 1,000 Euros will be presented to the winner in each of the eight categories of the CEHAPE Awards 2010.

This booklet features the eight winning projects. It describes the problem identified by the groups, the activities they conducted and their achievements. All the entrants to this competition are featured on the CEHAPE Healthier Environments for Children website (<http://cehape.env-health.org>).

We thank all those groups who entered the competition and urge them to continue their valuable work.

The winning projects were selected following careful evaluation by more than 20 expert judges. The organisers would like to thank these judges who gave their time and expertise. They are featured on pages 14-15 and further details are also available on the CEHAPE Healthier Environments for Children website (<http://cehape.env-health.org>).

We thank the following Ministries for their sponsorship of the CEHAPE Competition and Award Ceremony:

- *Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management - Division on Transport, Mobility, Human Settlement and Noise, Austria*
- *Joint-Interministerial Conference on Environment and Health in charge of NEHAP, Belgium*
- *Ministry of the Environment, Denmark*
- *Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt), Germany*
- *Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany*
- *Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands*
- *Ministry of the Environment, Norway*
- *Ministry of Health and Care Services, Norway*
- *Ministry of the Environment, Sweden.*

We take this opportunity to urge all governments and foundations to invest in programmes which replicate effective and sustainable community projects, such as those highlighted in this booklet, throughout countries of WHO European Region and beyond.

**Genon Jensen,**

*Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)*

**Sascha Gabizon,**

*Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECEF)*

**Hanns Moshhammer,**

*International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) Austria*

# Water & Sanitation



## 1

**Country:** Lithuania

**Project:** Voluntary monitoring of wells,  
Marijampolė County

**Organisation:** Station of Nature Research  
and Environmental Education

**Representative:** Arūnas Balsevičius

**Email:** gtess@mari.omnitel.net

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### *School children keep well water safe*

Piped water is a rarity in rural areas of Lithuania. This means that more than one in four of the country's population relies on drinking water from wells. This water is not always safe to drink. The contamination is both biological and chemical, with high levels of nitrates in the water being a serious concern.

The **Station of Nature Research and Environmental Education** started a community clean up of the water in wells over 10 years ago. Today, student teams from 37 schools in Marijampolė County are gathering water samples from these wells in a project financed by the administrations of Marijampolė County municipalities.

Once the samples are collected and the analysis of the water completed, the school children provide the feedback to the community. They also give information on the health risks associated with different types of water contamination and advice on how households can keep the wells clean and safe.

Special attention is given to wells used by households of families with children.

The sample gathering and information work by the students is ongoing. Each gathering and testing of samples in the project area takes place over the course of three years. To keep the volunteers motivated, the best groups of students are invited on a free annual outing.

In operation over a decade, the project now has available the results of three, three-year cycles of tests. The results show that water quality in the wells is improving. The monitoring and education is producing clear benefits, which is motivating for everyone involved.

Each year, new results are presented at an annual scientific conference. They are also shared with the municipality authorities that fund the project and with newspaper editors and television reporters.



*Investigations at the well  
in the village of Pilviskiai.*

# Accident Prevention & Physical Activity

## 2

**Country:** United Kingdom

**Project:** Child Safety Week 2009

**Organisation:** Child Accident Prevention Trust

**Representative:** Katrina Phillips

**Email:** katrina.phillips@capt.org.uk

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### *A week that makes a difference to children's safety*

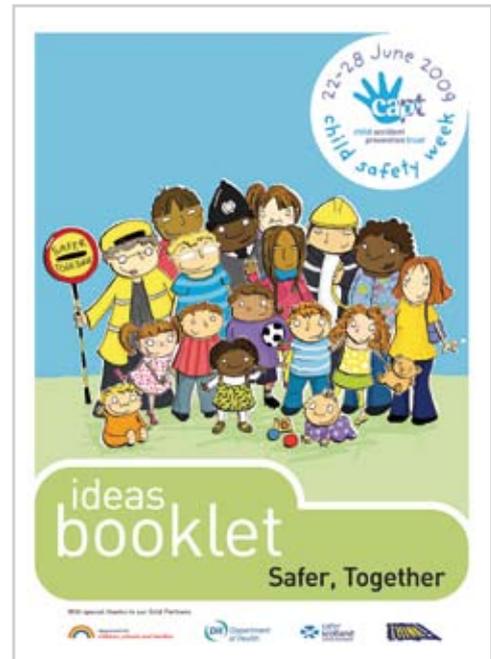
Preventable accidents are the second biggest childhood killer in the UK and a leading cause of disability. At least 100,000 children are admitted to hospital each year with accidental injuries. Children from the poorest families are 13 times more likely to die from accidental injury and three times more likely to be admitted to hospital.

The **Child Accident Prevention Trust** (CAPT) has demonstrated the increasing impact of Child Safety Week. Last year, an estimated 6.5 million people were reached through mail-outs and participation in local events. Media coverage reached almost half of all parents in England.

Local events were made easy to organise because CAPT provides free posters, fact sheets and an "Ideas booklet" with quizzes and games. Community organisations were able to attract mothers and children to take part in light-hearted activities which also conveyed practical child safety messages.

Some groups provided feedback on the materials developed for Child Safety Week 2009. For example, according to the Sure Start Children's Centre in Staffordshire: "Parents enjoy quizzes and will participate freely, it's fun but informative. Great for evaluating where areas of safety are lacking".

A total of 70,000 ideas booklets were distributed or downloaded from CAPT's Child Safety Week website. Nine per cent of the parents surveyed said that they had since



Front cover of the Ideas Booklet "Safer, Together" produced for Child Safety Week 2009 in the UK by the Child Accident Prevention Trust.

taken action to improve child safety as a result of Child Safety Week. The top three things they did were:

- **Practised road safety with children**
- **Moved matches or lighters out of children's reach**
- **Moved household cleaners or tablets out of children's reach.**

Independent market research has also found a high level of awareness of Child Safety Week among the poorest parents, whose children are far more likely to be killed or seriously injured in accidents.

# Air Quality



## 3

**Country:** Belgium

**Project:** Educational project for primary school

**Organisation:** The Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, the Flemish Agency for Care and Health, and Flemish Local Health Networks

**Representative:** Sara Reekmans

**Email:** sreekmans@limburg.be



*Children in a Belgian kindergarten watch the indoor air quality indicator.*

## *Keeping "refreshingly cool" in the classroom*

For several years, environmental health workers from the Flemish Local Health Networks had been receiving questions from teachers about how to improve air quality in the classroom. Meanwhile, evidence was emerging that ventilation in schools was often poor. **The Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and the Flemish Agency for Care and Health** decided that it was time to act. Together with the **Flemish Local Health Networks**, they initiated a project called Lekker Fris, or "refreshingly cool" ([www.lekkerfris.be](http://www.lekkerfris.be)).

The first step was to distribute a poster and a flyer about the project to every primary school in Flanders, the Flemish speaking part of Belgium. It provided five simple steps to improving indoor air quality. After a collaborative process to develop the project and its materials, teachers in 15 primary

schools helped in the pilot testing of the project guide and educational materials. Once refined, these materials were made widely available.

Since January 2008, schools have been able to join the project. Teachers receive materials for 3-4 lessons, including crosswords, a song, drawings, a game, and a play, which they say are fun and easy to use. The school borrows a hand-held CO<sub>2</sub> indicator, which children can understand and learn to use themselves. When the air is bad and urgent action is needed, a red light shows; a yellow light indicates poor air quality in the classroom, and a green light indicates that all is well. The project organisers found that once a few schools had started activities, media coverage in newspapers and on children's television attracted other schools to join.

Evidence that the project is a success comes from several sources. First, a recent evaluation by the Flanders government included a small number of primary schools that are taking part in the project. The government report findings suggested that indoor air quality in these schools had improved. At the same time, the teachers have rated the project highly. They say that the children benefit from learning about the importance of ventilation as well as from fresher air in the classroom.

Following requests from secondary schools, the Flemish Institute, the Flemish Agency for Care and Health and the Local Health Networks are now working on a similar initiative for older children.

# Hazardous chemicals & radiation

## 4

**Country:** Russia

**Project:** Reducing the risks of lead to children

**Organisation:** Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund

**Representative:** Petr Sharov

**Email:** psharov@fehealthfund.org

### *Changing the earth to prevent lead poisoning*

Eight years ago, Petr Sharov at the **Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund** looked at research from Bunker Hill in Idaho, USA where action had been taken to reduce lead contamination in the gardens of family homes. Bunker Hill is an area contaminated by lead mining and smelting plants. Knowing that the same problem existed in the mining areas of Dalnegorsk District, he decided to copy the successful US model.

He began work before he had managed to secure full funding for the project. Early activities included mapping the mining areas for lead and cadmium, which were considered to be the two main and most toxic pollutants. In 2007, when full funding became available, medical teams monitored local children for lead levels in their blood and provided information to parents on how to reduce their children's exposure.

However, the biggest task, as in the Bunker Hill clean-up project, was to remove lead-contaminated soil where children play. Priority was given to playgrounds of young children where lead in the soil was measured at over 500 parts per million. Thanks to the efforts of the Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund, the contaminated top-layer soil and sand in seven kindergartens has now been replaced with clean earth. This represents a total area 16,400 square meters.

The benefits for children's health have been encouraging. In 2007, 22% of children in the Dalnegorsk District had blood lead levels over 10 ug/dl (international safety standard). Over the next two years the playground soil replacements and

educational advice to parents took place. By 2009, only 11% of children had lead levels above the safety limit.

The challenge now is to reach families in the town of Rudnaya Pristan – the most contaminated part of the valley. During the first round of activities, the project activities did not reach this area. About 60% of the 500 children living in this community have blood lead levels above 10 ug/dl.

Lead poisoning of children exists in many parts of Russia, Central Asia countries of Eastern Europe. The project was expensive (US\$500,000 over two years) but the findings show that it works. The project would not have been possible without the partnership of Blacksmith Institute and Green Cross Switzerland. The organisers say that it is already being copied by a non-governmental organisation in Kazakhstan. They hope it can also be used as a model in other areas of Russia where there is lead contamination.



*Children are tested for lead levels in their blood.*

# Mobility



## 5

**Country:** Austria

**Project:** 'Mobility management – PORG moves'

**Organisation:** PORG Volders grammar school

**Representative:** Franz Leeb

**Email:** porg-volders@tsn.at

### *Students promote free public transport*

Students at the **PORG Volders grammar school** in the Tyrol area of Austria decided they were fed up with the noise and pollution from traffic on a nearby motorway. They were worried about its effects on their health and unhappy that most of the private cars had only one person in them. They were also angry that public transport was so expensive that it did not provide a real alternative. Mobility needed to be better managed!

A group of "environmentalist" students worked with their headmaster to raise awareness of what needed to change. They asked doctors to come and speak to them about the health concerns related to poor mobility, and a provincial official gave a talk about a new policy which reduced the motorway speed limit in the Tyrol to 100 kilometres per hour.

The findings of a school questionnaire and several workshops were used to provide information for posters about the

project. These were pinned up around the school. Finally, a demonstration by 25 students and teachers was organised, which created quite a stir.

The group from PORG Volders marched from the school on the main road to the nearby town. They carried banners and each wore their own "GehZeug", which is a wooden frame the size of a car - to indicate their message (see photo). The demonstration took up the equivalent space of more than 25 cars and inevitably caused a slowing of the traffic. This attracted the attention not only of the drivers but also of passers-by and the local media. Fortunately, the local police had been willing to support the event.

The school head master in charge of the project admits that the project has not managed to reduce transit traffic through the Tyrol. However, fewer students and teachers are using private cars. The school has seen an almost 50% increase in numbers arriving by bicycle, which has required an extension to the cycle parking area.

At the same time, newspapers and radio stations have reported on the project. The media discussion has allowed grievances about the high cost of travel on public transport to surface. More students, teachers and members of the public are talking about the problems caused by unsatisfactory policy on mobility and transport. They hope it will encourage local policy makers to act.

*Students at the PORG Volders school in Austria held up private cars and lorries to protest against local transport policies. The school banner reads: 'PORG Volders moves!'*



# Climate protection

## 6

**Country:** Armenia

**Project:** Sun energy in Armenia

**Organisation:** Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment

**Representative:** Elena Manvelyan

**Email:** office@awhhe.am

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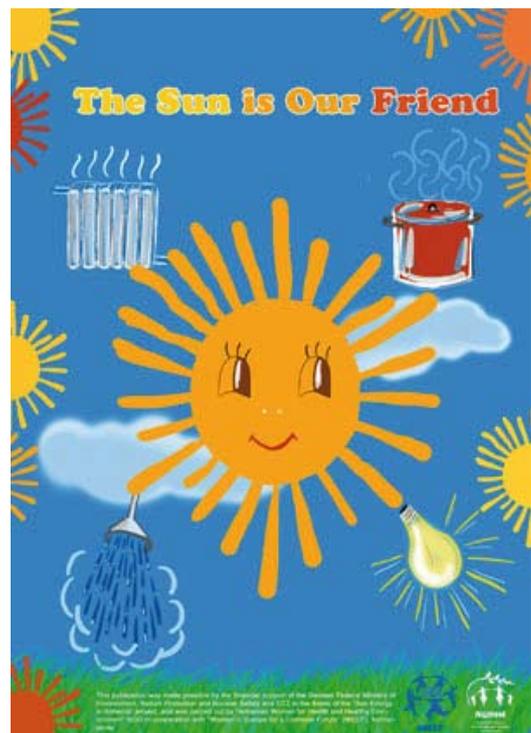
### *Using summer sunshine to boost health and happiness*

Coughs, colds, bronchitis and other respiratory diseases are a major threat to the health of small children in Armenia. With harsher winters predicted as a result of climate change, the situation is set to worsen unless energy for heating and hot water becomes more cheaply and easily available.

**Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment** have found a solution to what they call the "energy poverty" that will be associated with climate change in rural communities, namely solar energy.

Although winters are cold, Armenia has 2,500 hours of sunshine per year – a resource that the group has shown can be used to create energy cheaply. The women's organisation has worked with solar energy experts to set up an innovative and decentralised solar energy panel and plant at the kindergarten in Solak village. The total project cost was 3,000 Euros.

The new plant saves the kindergarten money and means that hot water is more available all the year around. Funds that would have otherwise gone on gas, wood and animal manure bills for the open fire are no longer required. The children's health benefits because unhealthy fumes from fire, including those created when plastics burn, are reduced.



*Poster reminds children that the sun is creating the power for their showers, heating, cooking and lighting.*

More hot water has made life at kindergarten much more comfortable when winter temperatures fall very low. The children are healthier and happier. Teachers and kitchen staff also benefit, and a sense of hope has been created in the entire community. The project has shown that communities can act to counter the erosion of living standards associated with climate change. As part of a follow-up project, the families of some of the children have had their own solar plants installed at home.

# Youth participation

## 7

**Country:** Russia

**Project:** Interactive environmental education and action programme

**Organisation:** Green Light Youth Organisation, Vladivostok

**Representative:** Irina Fedorenko, Evgeniya Soboleva

**Email:** phedorenko@hotmail.com

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## *Mobilising youth to keep nature in mind*

Young people in Russia do not always know enough about the importance of the natural environment for their health and well-being. The problem for the organisers of this project was that those in authority who do know about these issues are not always ready or have the capacity to share the information.

The **Green Light Youth Organisation** in Vladivostok embarked on an interactive environmental education programme 18 months after Irina Fedorenko returned to Russia inspired by her visit to the World Youth Congress in Canada in August 2008, where she gained the support of "Be the change" (BTC) fund and Peace Child International. With her friend Evgeniya Soboleva and with help from the city youth department, the project brought together seven schools and three universities in an impressive series of activities that draw on the expertise of university professors, environmental organisations and local government officials.

Between March and June 2009, 12 student trainers from the NGO "Trainers Union" completed courses on "The natural environment as a way of thinking". They then went into four schools and talked to more than 500 children. This prompted a whole range of activities.

For example, with the help of the Students Council of Far Eastern University and Vladivostok city administration, 200 students took part in rubbish clearing projects in a park, a forest, mountain area and at a waterfall. Once the sites were clear, the young people shared information with interested onlookers and installed waste bins.



*School children hold up their drawings about recycling in a programme organised by the Green Light Youth Organisation in Vladivostok, Russia.*

In the Far Eastern State Technical University, a paper recycling system was set up. On the campus, student brigades who work on the Russian railways in the summer, known as "provodnik", also helped with project activities. They constructed bird houses in trees around the university buildings to remind students of the disappearance of species.

On 6 June 2009, a festival of photos and videos called "Look... Environment by youth" was held in Vladivostok State University of Economy and Service where young people shared their reflections on environmental problems and possible solutions. A total of 82 certificates were awarded to the most active participants in project activities and eight letters of appreciation were given to experts who had provided advice to the project.

An estimated 2,000 young people have taken part in these environmental measures of the project in the Far Eastern region of Russia. Irina Fedorenko believes that each has gained some "real life" knowledge of nature, its relationship to our health, and the importance of small, individual actions. One thousand 12-17 year-olds have received training on sustainable development including: choosing healthier food; keeping the environment clean; and healthier lifestyles for themselves and their families.

# Schools



## 8

**Country:** Tajikistan

**Project:** Green schools

**Organisation:** Youth of the 21st Century

**Representative:** Umidjon Ulugov

**Email:** umed.ulugov@youth21.tj

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### *Student environmental management comes to the classroom*

Conditions in schools in Tajikistan are not always as good as they should be. Classrooms are often untidy and cold in winter. But the **Youth of the 21st Century** organisation in 18 schools in Dushanbe has changed all that in a project that is fully self-sustaining. Little wonder it has won the political support of Tajik's education and environment ministries.

Activities are organised with the support of Green Patrol, a youth movement with 16,000 members operating in 70 schools. The project began by introducing an interactive, computer-based manual. The main themes in this "textbook" are the environment, healthy living, leadership and voluntary activity. In a collaborative process, it was decided that schools

in the project would be rated allowing them to compete against each other.

The students work individually on the contents and activities outlined in the book. They then organise activities, such as clean-ups of classrooms and outdoor spaces, low-cost school heating, free distribution of boiled water, and the creation of posters to inform and decorate the classroom walls.

The project has achieved a substantial reduction in diarrhoeal disease and although other health benefits have not been formally measured, parents have thanked the project team for what they perceive as a reduction in cases of flu.

The students are proud of their achievements and of becoming managers of their own environment. By selling plastic and waste paper to local recycling companies, many schools have created a fund to cover their costs. On average, each school has earned the equivalent of US\$1,200.

During 2010, another 100 schools are expected to join the project. In addition, the interactive textbook will be featured in a Ministry of Education report on informal education.

*School children have the chance to learn school and environmental management skills from the "interactive book" used in the Green Schools project in Tajikistan.*



# The award judges

*Here is a brief introduction to the children's health and environment experts who generously gave their time to act as judges in this competition. We take this opportunity to thank them all.*

## CATEGORY 1 *Water and Sanitation*

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### **Thor Axel Stenström**

is a microbiologist at the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control, an expert at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and professor at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences.

**Contact:** [thor-axel.stenstrom@smi.se](mailto:thor-axel.stenstrom@smi.se)

### **Ralf Otterpohl**

is a university professor in civil and environmental engineering and director of the Institute of Wastewater Management and Water Protection Management, Hamburg University of Technology (TUHH), Germany.

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### **Mihaela Vasilescu**

is a senior scientist at the Institute of Public Health Bucharest, Romania. She is vice-president of EURACHEM Romania and president of the NGO "Environment and Health", a member of WECEF.

**Contact:** [mihaelavasilescu@clicknet.ro](mailto:mihaelavasilescu@clicknet.ro)

## CATEGORY 3 *Air Pollution*

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### **Peter Helms**

is head of the University of Aberdeen, Department of Child Health, UK. He served as Chair of the Respiratory and Allergy group of the European Commission's SCALE initiative that formed part of the EU's response to CEHAPE.

**Contact:** [p.j.helms@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.helms@abdn.ac.uk)

### **Nino Künzli**

is Professor of Public Health and the Chair of Public Health at the Medical School of the University of Basel. He was supported by Laura Perez, PhD, a researcher at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute in Basel.

**Contact:** [Nino.Kuenzli@unibas.ch](mailto:Nino.Kuenzli@unibas.ch)

### **Hans-Guido Mücke**

is air quality and health manager at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Air Quality Management and Air Pollution Control (WHO'CC) at the Federal Environment Agency, Berlin, Germany.

**Contact:** [hans-guido.muecke@uba.de](mailto:hans-guido.muecke@uba.de)

## CATEGORY 2 *Accident Prevention & Physical Activity*

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### **Hanns Moshhammer**

is a university teacher at the Medical University of Vienna working in the field of environmental health. His main research fields are environmental and occupational epidemiology. He is president of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE, [www.isde.org](http://www.isde.org)) and of the Austrian ISDE affiliate (ÄrztInnen für eine gesunde Umwelt, [www.aegu.net](http://www.aegu.net)).

**Contact:** [hanns.moshhammer@meduniwien.ac.at](mailto:hanns.moshhammer@meduniwien.ac.at)

### **Lilian Corra**

is a paediatrician/neonatologist in Argentina. She founded the Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA) and is co-founder of the International Network on Children's Health Environment and Safety (INCHES).

**Contact:** [cisde@arnet.com.ar](mailto:cisde@arnet.com.ar)

## CATEGORY 4 *Hazardous Chemicals & radiation*

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### **Gerd Oberfeld**

is a general practitioner working in public health department of the Salzburg region, Austria. He specialises in environmental health e.g. epidemiology, air pollution, water pollution, noise, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation and health effects. He is director of the postgraduate course in environmental medicine and spokesperson on environmental medicine at the Austrian Medical Association.

**Contact:** [gerd.oberfeld@salzburg.gv.at](mailto:gerd.oberfeld@salzburg.gv.at)

### **Dr. Tony Fletcher**

is a senior researcher and lecturer at the Public and Environmental Health Research Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. He contributed to the International Agency for Research on Cancer evaluations of carcinogenic agents and European Union-funded programmes of risk assessments of chemical contaminant exposures in water

**Contact:** [tony.fletcher@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:tony.fletcher@lshtm.ac.uk)

More details about each of the judges can be found on the CEHAPE Healthier Environments for Children website: <http://cehape.env-health.org>

## CATEGORY 5 *Mobility*

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### **Roelof Wittink**

is director of I-CE – Interface for Cycling Expertise, an international non-governmental organisation. It aims to strengthen the position of cycling and cyclists in order to contribute to societal goals, such as poverty alleviation, health, and climate protection.

Contact: [roelof.wittink@cycling.nl](mailto:roelof.wittink@cycling.nl)

### **Angela van der Kloof**

is a mobility consultant at Mobycon, an independent research and consulting company in traffic, transport and urban and rural planning.

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## CATEGORY 7 *Youth participation*

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### **Reka Prokai**

is a former CEHAPE youth delegate with a degree in agricultural engineering. She took part in the Budapest Ministerial Conference in 2004 and was a youth delegate on the CEHAPE Task Force 2006-2007.

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### **Stephan Böse-O'Reilly**

is assistant professor at the Institute of Public Health, University for Health Sciences, Hall, Austria. He is the secretary of the International Network Child Health Environment and Safety (INCHES) and Chair of the German Network Children's Health and Environment.

Contact: [stephan.boeseoreilly@umit.at](mailto:stephan.boeseoreilly@umit.at)

### **Cosima Pilz**

is an Educator and Mobility Consultant at the Styrian Centre of Environmental Education (Umwelt-Bildungs-Zentrum Steiermark) in Austria. She is coordinator of the CEHAPE process in Austria on behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

Contact: [cosima.pilz@ubz-stmk.at](mailto:cosima.pilz@ubz-stmk.at)

## CATEGORY 6 *Climate protection*

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### **Peter van den Hazel**

is a medical doctor and environmental health specialist.

He is chair and founder of INCHES - the International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety, and Vice President of the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL). He is a board member of the Dutch Association of Environmental Medicine and the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE).

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## CATEGORY 8 *Schools*

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### **Aymeric Blanchet**

has been the Director of the French Air Pollution Prevention Association (APPA) since 2008 where he has contributed to the development of an integrated approach to air pollution and climate change in public policy and raised awareness among stakeholders of the health impact of indoor air pollution.

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### **Nita Chaudhuri**

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# HEAL in action

## Protecting children in Europe through advocacy and educational tools



**The Health and Environment Alliance** (HEAL) aims to make better known that the consequences of a polluted environment are far worse for our children than for ourselves as parents and adults. Children

absorb a greater proportion of what they eat and the air they breathe than adults, and have longer lives ahead of them to endure the effects.

We have both projects and materials specifically focusing on children's health.

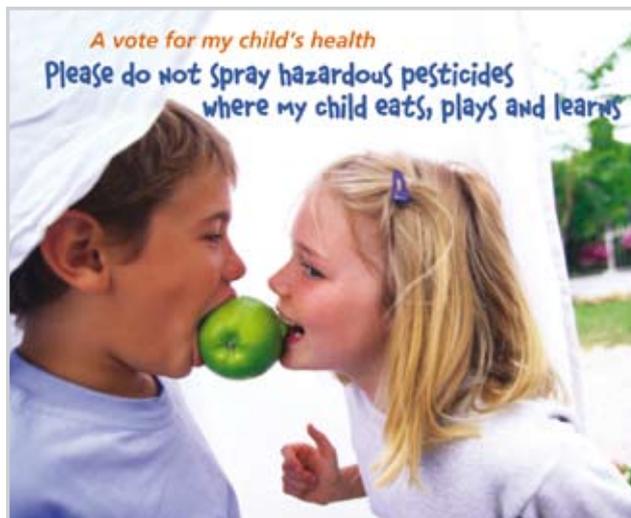
### Fun fact sheets

For children themselves, we have a series of colourful, educational fact sheets about climate change and the quality of outdoor and indoor air. A chirpy pixie called Elf explains to 5-11 year olds about breathing, our lungs and air pollution with the help of quizzes, games and colour-in drawings. These sheets were developed with the help of scientific evidence from the European Respiratory Society and in partnership with the European Lung Foundation (ELF), from whom the "Elf" character gets his name. The leaflets are available in eight languages.

*Fact sheets: "Dirty air and your lungs"(outdoor air); "Dirty air indoors and your lungs"; and, "Climate change and your lungs". All fact sheets available in English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian and Spanish. Adult versions of the fact sheets are also available. Full details and download available at: <http://cehape.env-health.org>*

### Comic strip stories

A comic strip book on hazardous chemicals and health has been created for teenagers and young adults. "Choosing our Future" with stories that focus on children's exposure to hazardous chemicals, untested chemicals and human infertility, "chemical cocktails" and cosmetics, and pesticides use in agriculture is available in three languages (English, French and Dutch). It aims to build awareness and



HEAL's postcard urged local authorities to act.

increase action to break the links between harmful chemicals in our environment and their effects on our health. It has been used in youth workshops and is particularly popular in educational institutes, schools and youth groups.

### Stopping unnecessary pesticide spraying

Our advocacy work during recent revisions of European pesticide legislation called for avoiding pesticide spraying where children play. Our postcard to local authorities in Europe called for unnecessary "cosmetic" spraying of pesticides to be stopped. Going pesticide free wherever possible helps to protect children's health.

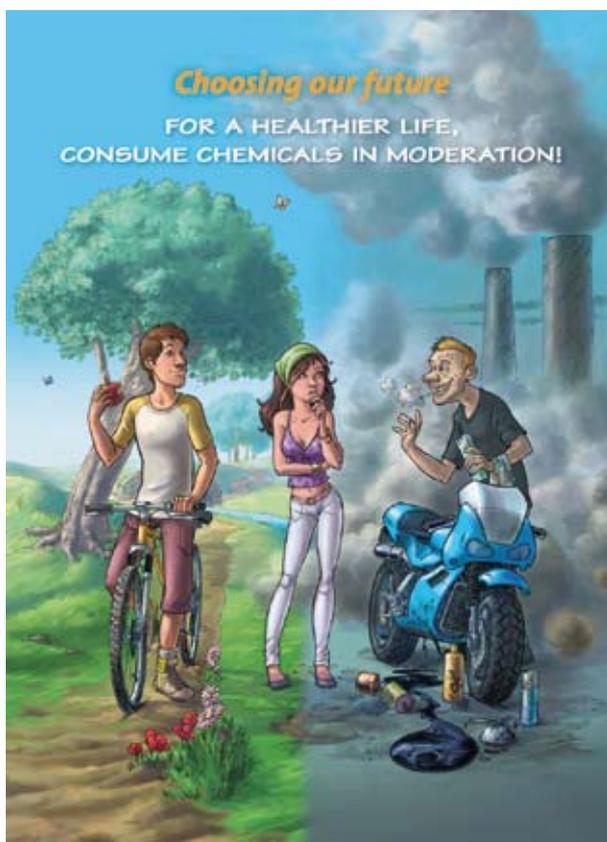
Recently, our Sick of Pesticides campaign has looked at the use of weed killer and insecticide spraying in schools. We began by producing a short guide on pesticides used in schools. We surveyed local authorities about which pesticides they were using in schools and the measures they took to avoid risks to children's health. The survey found that at least four potentially cancer-causing pesticides are being used.

*UK pesticides survey: "Pesticides - a toxic education? A survey of pesticides in UK schools", available at [www.pesticidescancer.eu](http://www.pesticidescancer.eu). See also *Pesticides in schools: short guide*.*

### Sharing the best

HEAL makes every attempt to share good examples of children's health and environment projects, particularly from our member organisations, many of whom focus on children's environmental health. For example, HEAL's Vice President, Peter van den Hazel is Chair of the International Network on Children's Health Environment and Safety (INCHES).

As well as co-organising the CEHAPE Awards, our website, "Healthier environments for children" provides information on dozens of "case studies" of different projects in many European countries. The website provides key information for non-governmental organisations about the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) and is linked to the World Health Organization's official CEHAPE website section.



The comic strip book "Choosing our Future" helps to answer the question: How does continual exposure to man-made chemicals affect our health?

Genon Jensen, HEAL's Executive Director, is the official representative for health non-governmental organisations on the committee that steers the Environment and Health Ministerial Process.

CEHAPE "Healthier environments for children" is at: <http://cehape.env-health.org/>

## Prize-winning youth video

HEAL's experimental short film made by young people in five countries was screened during the WHO Ministerial Conference in Budapest in 2004. This participatory video project gave very young and older youths in Belgium, France, Hungary, Russia and the UK an opportunity to speak about how the environment is affecting their health – and to tell policy makers what should be done about it. The video entitled "It's our world, Our future too: Young people's voices on environment and health priorities" won the Children's Environmental Health Recognition Award from the US Environmental Protection Agency in 2006.

*The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) aims to promote a healthy environment for healthy people. It represents a diverse network of more than 60 groups representing citizens', patients', women's groups, health professionals, and environmental advocates across Europe. Working at the European level, HEAL focuses on chemicals, pesticides, climate change, air quality, mercury, children's vulnerabilities and many other aspects of EU policy that are relevant to people's health and the environment.*

# WECF in action

## Protecting children through safe "nesting" and safe toys



**Women in Europe for a Common Future** (WECF) puts great importance on protecting children because they are the most vulnerable members of society. All of us share a responsibility to protect children from harmful

pollution, which can cause long term, sometimes irreversible, physical and mental damage. Our aim is to ensure that children can grow up in a healthy environment - without being exposed to hazardous chemicals in their food, toys and environment – so that their brains and bodies can develop to fullest potential.

Protecting children will help reduce the incidence of chronic diseases, reproductive problems and behaviour problems – and even cancer, the incidence of which has grown tremendously over the past decades.

WECF has two major projects that concentrate on improving children's environment. They are the Nesting project and the Safe Toys Coalition.

### **Project "Nesting"**

When expecting a baby, you start wondering, planning and questioning. Things are changing and exciting times are ahead. Everything should be ready for the child. The baby should feel snug and safe in her or his new home, the nest. Project Nesting ([www.projectnesting.org/](http://www.projectnesting.org/)) provides support to parents who want to choose renovation materials, furniture and baby-products that are safe and healthy for their newborn child. The project aims at providing new parents and professionals in child health and childcare with precise information and helpful practical advice so that they can make informed choices for healthier products and adopt new practices.

Nesting informs, via a web platform and training sessions, about the quality of the air and environment inside homes and in day care centres, and describes the way in which products such as furniture and carpeting, cleaning agents and baby care products can affect indoor air quality, and lead to the exposure of children to toxic substances.



Since its launch, 50,000 visitors have used the website, which is available in eight languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Latvian and Spanish). More languages are being added every year. Other activities involve training and workshops for parents and childcare professionals.

In 2009, Project Nesting conducted the "test your nest" campaign in five EU countries in partnership with the French national consumer protection institute (INC). Parents were offered a unique opportunity to test the air quality in their baby's room. A test kit was provided to families in France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the UK. Following specific testing guidelines, parents were able to test for pollutants such as formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

The testing process was both reliable and very simple. The testing samplers made available in the kit were placed in the baby's room for a period of seven days and then sent to a certified laboratory where the results were analysed. The INC reviewed the findings and published the results in its monthly magazine: 60 Millions de Consommateurs (60 million consumers). The individual test results were also sent to all the parents who participated.

The findings of the "test your nest" action showed that the project is making nurseries safer for babies. The air quality in the baby's room was best in homes where parents were informed about good ventilation, and who were making an effort to regularly open the windows to ventilate it.

## Safe Toys Coalition

WECF has set an objective for a world free of toxic or unsafe toys and is leading a coalition of international NGOs to make this aim achievable.

The coalition intends putting the issue of hazardous toys on the international agenda and working closely with partners on better legislation for safe toys as a way to help ensure a healthy future for our children.

Millions of children worldwide are still exposed to toxic contaminants in toys. Despite repeated declarations that substances such as lead, plastic softeners (phthalates) or formaldehyde can adversely affect health, they are still found in toys.

The toy industry does not give much attention to this fact. "It's distressing to know that profit is made at the expense of children's health," says Alexandra Caterbow, WECF's toys expert and co-founder of the Safe Toys Coalition. "Many of the substances found in toys, which are shown to affect health, are simply not necessary."

Organisations from different countries have joined the Safe Toys Coalition to help ensure that, in future, toys can no longer harm children but only give joy. The Coalition will advocate for safe toys worldwide through a dialogue with industry, politicians and consumers.

The Safe Toys Coalition has drafted a joint statement which includes a call for a further revision of the EU Toys Directive. The Coalition believes that this is needed to push retailers

to move towards safe and toxic-free products – so that all our children will benefit. Toys are products that form a global market. It should be regulated and globally secure.

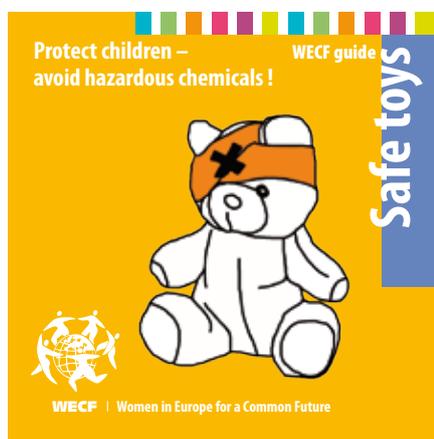
*More Information on the Safe Toys Coalition:*  
[www.wecf.eu/english/articles/2009/12/toystraining-munich-2009.php](http://www.wecf.eu/english/articles/2009/12/toystraining-munich-2009.php)

*WECF Safe Toys Guide (in 17 languages) is available here:*  
[www.wecf.eu/english/publications/2009/publications-toysguide.php](http://www.wecf.eu/english/publications/2009/publications-toysguide.php)

## Why are children particularly vulnerable?

**Children are much more sensitive to exposure to toxic chemicals than adults because of their larger skin surface in proportion to their weight, their higher respiratory volume and their increased metabolic rate. Consequently, they absorb proportionately more hazardous chemicals than an adult. At the same time, their immune and nervous systems are still developing.**

**Children are exposed to a variety of hazardous chemicals from many different sources. Hazardous chemicals can be found in cosmetics, furniture and other everyday products. Even the smallest amounts of hazardous chemicals are sufficient to harm the development of a child – sometimes with lifelong consequences. The increasing allergy and cancer rates demonstrate this.**



*WECF has published a Toys Guide in 17 languages which provides tips on how to choose toxic-free toys.*

*Women in Europe for a Common Future – WECF – was created in 1994 following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to give women a stronger voice in sustainable development and environmental policy, with the aim of balancing environmental, health and economic perspectives, WECF strives for a Healthy Environment for All.*

# Helping children's health in Europe: achievements of the winning projects

- Drinking water from wells in rural Lithuania is safer to drink thanks to Station of Nature Research and Environmental Education Station.
- An estimated 6.5 million people received information on preventing child accidents and injury during Child Safety Week 2009 organised by the Child Accident Prevention Society, UK.
- The Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and partners have been so successful in helping to improve indoor air quality in kindergartens in Belgium that plans are underway to extend the programme to secondary schools.
- The number of children with lead in their blood above internationally recognised safety limits has been halved thanks to the work of the Far Eastern Environmental Health Fund, Russia.
- Students and teachers at the PORG Volders grammar school in the Austrian Tyrol have given a message to local authorities and to the public that greater mobility and better health could be achieved if public transport were less expensive.
- A village school in Armenia now generates hot water from solar-powered electricity, cutting the school's power bills and improving the classroom environment, thanks to Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment.
- The work of the Green Light Youth Organisation in Vladivostok has resulted in 2,000 young people taking small, individual steps to improve environment and health.
- A substantial reduction in the number of students suffering from diarrhoeal disease is just one of the results of a programme in schools in Tajikistan where Youth of the 21st Century are offering school management and environment training.

## Organisers of the Awards

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