

Roundtable discussion summary

Moving from policy to action: Success stories on taking the environment and health agenda forward

Title of presentation: You can't open a can with a hammer! Creating the right advocacy tools to generate commitment for the reduction of child injury in the European Union

Brief description of advocacy campaign or activity:

The European Child Safety Alliance, an initiative of the European Consumer Safety Organisation, focuses on strategies aimed at bringing about reductions in injury-related deaths and disability amongst children from 0 to 18 years of age in the European Union. It works with a network of expert partners and stakeholders from various disciplines involved in child injury prevention. One of the challenges facing the Alliance is increasing the profile of child injury as an important public health problem. Despite the fact that injury is the leading cause of death for children in Europe, is responsible for more deaths than all other childhood diseases combined and is the largest environmental burden for children compared to outdoor/indoor contaminants, water, sanitation and hygienic issues, or lead contaminants, the weight of recognition given it as an issue is lacking.

To inform decision makers (those working in large bureaucracies, making policy and whose decisions have a large impact on a great number of people) about the child injury issue and to provide a clear picture of what we have and what we need in the European Union in simple language, a series of policy documents has been produced. The idea behind these documents is to translate existing evidence into simple succinct and understandable information along with specific recommendations at the European level and the national level – essentially a concrete attempt to produce the right information in the right format for the right person at the right time.

Description of deliverables / outputs:

The four documents I have here to share with you today are:

1. **Parents' Perceptions of Child Safety: A 14 Country Study** – a document aiming to share what voters' are feeling, doing, saying and wanting with respect to child safety
2. **A Guide to Child Safety Regulations and Standards in Europe** – a document that presents and clarifies the current role of regulation in child accident prevention in today's Europe, identifies best practice where regulation doesn't exist at the European level and from that overview identifies a number of priorities for action.
3. **Priorities for Child Safety in the European Union: Agenda for Action** – a document that takes a simply reader friendly and almost 'children's book' approach to providing an overview of child injury in the European Union and makes recommendations for building commitment to the issue.
4. **Children as agents of change: How children have influenced health and environment policy** – a big picture document that looks at positioning children as a part of health and provides an argument as to why it is politically advantageous to invest in them [sprinkled with injury examples to also position child injury within the bigger health arena].

Description of factors making the activity a success:

- Documents have been produced with decision makers as key audience; they are short and succinct evidence based documents that are referenced but with a limited number of references.
- Documents have been produced in partnership which has assisted in distribution; all documents have been disseminated to Alliance partners for further distribution.
- In addition the first two have been sent out the Members of European Parliament with a cover letter and there are similar plans for the second two.
- All documents had a release that included a press releases go out – release events were linked to other events wherever possible.
- The documents are building blocks that build on one-another and together create an overall picture of where we are and where we need to go with respect to child injury in the European Union. They are also building blocks in that they engage additional partners whose vision can take us further with the next step (ANEC example).
- The simple reader friendly children's book approach seems to work (example from Scotland).

Lessons learned:

- Producing documents like these always takes longer than you think.
- The work with these documents to-date has shown them to be useful advocacy tools, however there are many more opportunities to get their full value out of them – resources are always an issue.
- Producing documents in English is clearly a first step – examining options to have them translated into other languages has to be considered if we truly want to have a far reaching impact (Czech Republic and Spain examples).

Contact information:

European Child Safety Alliance
P.O. Box 75169
1070AD Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 20 511 4513
Fax: +31 20 511 4510
Email: secretariatchildsafety@ecosa.org