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# NEWSLETTER

*International Federation of Environmental Health*

**July 2017**

## **Briefing from Peter Archer, IFEH President Update July 2017**

Hello Colleagues – I am pleased to present this short report on IFEH activities providing an update since my last letter in March this year. Of particular note was the IFEH involvement in UN 2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico. The IFEH was represented by Tim Hatch who has been involved in the course in disaster risk reduction since its inception. A separate report is included in this newsletter from Henning Hansen from EnviNA and an IFEH Vice President.

In March this year I was pleased to attend the European Federation of Environmental Health (EFEH) meeting in Tartu Estonia. The meeting which was held at Tartu Health Care College was attended by 18 people representing 12 different European member organisations. What is interesting to note is the degree of collaboration between the different EFEH members. An example of the work being done was highlighted by colleagues from Norway who talked about their monitoring air quality in kindergartens. It was then apparent that similar studies are being carried out in Finland, Portugal and Croatia and these are all to be compared and discussed by reference to the IFEH SIG on air pollution. It was agreed that Dario Brdarić from Croatia would lead the group. This collaboration reminds of 2017 World Environmental Health Day is on 26th September where the subject is 'indoor and outdoor air quality'.

There is also a report in this newsletter detailing the outcome of this year's Roy Emerson Award which will be presented to the successful undergraduate in Jamaica in October this year. As President I would like to congratulate all 18 entrants for this prestigious award. In particular my congratulations go to this year's winner Zarja Zrinski from Ljubljana University and of course to her professors and lecturers.

This brings me to our next major event, the 2nd World Academic Conference, 'One Health; One Global Environment' in Montego Bay this coming October. I know that plans for the conference are progressing well and our colleagues in the Jamaica Association are working hard to ensure it



all runs smoothly. The last World Academic Conference in Coimbra Portugal was particularly informative and interesting and I'm sure that Montego Bay will be of an equally high standard. The IFEH encourages as many people as possible to attend this year. Full details of the conference are on the IFEH website or by going to <http://www.onehealthconference.com/>. I am delighted to confirm that our Friends at Hedgerow are again supporting the Hedgerow Bursary available for representatives of IFEH member organisations in low income countries to attend the IFEH Council Meeting in Montego Bay on Sunday 22nd October and of course to attend the academic conference.

Colleagues are reminded that the 15th World Congress is in Auckland, New Zealand in March 2018, only nine months away! We understand from colleagues in NZ that arrangements are well advanced and further information is available at [www.ifeh.org](http://www.ifeh.org) or at <http://www.2018wceh.org/>.

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### Roy Emerson Award 2017

Every two years, to coincide with the World Academic Conference, undergraduate students from IFEH Member Countries or IFEH Academic Associate Members are invited to submit an essay on a specific environmental health concern. This year the topic for the Roy Emerson Award was 'International Travel & Health'. Applicants were invited to discuss the implications of International Travel Health and consider available disease information, vaccination, travel health risks including environmental, infectious disease and other associated potential risks, accidental injury and speed of pan-continental transmission including controls to minimise the global public health risks.

This year we received 18 submissions from individual undergraduates representing all continents. This was the highest number of submissions received since the introduction of the award. The four judges were highly impressed by the high quality of both the essays and the accompanying power-point presentations. The results were as follows

Winner	Zarja Zrinski, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Health Sciences, Slovenia
Runner up	Nawa Sitali, University of Zambia, Zambia
Equal 3rd	Zach Dobson, University of Sunshine Coast, Brisbane, Australia, & Anthony Sewell, University of Technology, Jamaica

The winner, Zarja Zrinski from Ljubljana, will attend the IFEH World Academic Conference in Montego Bay, Jamaica in October 2017 to receive the award. All expenses of the successful applicant are met by the sponsorship of the Roy Emerson Award, RIAMS and Highfield ABC. The Board of IFEH are very grateful for the generosity of our sponsors.

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### Air pollution doesn't recognise borders

*Article by Debbie Wood, CIEH's Executive Director for Membership & Professional Development*

Air pollution in the UK used to be a more visible problem due to extensive domestic and industrial combustion of coal. Today the air we breathe is visibly cleaner thanks to legislation and the work of Environmental Health Professionals (EHPs).

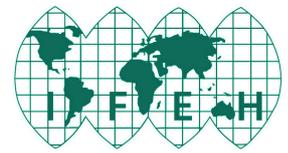
However, major but less visible problems still persists and it's not just the UK that is affected by poor air quality. The fact IFEH is making it the theme of this year's World Environmental Health Day recognises that air pollution doesn't respect borders.

For the past year, CIEH has been vigorously campaigning to highlight to the UK Government and the public that we are standing on the cliff-edge of a public health emergency and something needs to be done now – before it's too late.

CIEH's 'Air Quality Advisory Panel' has been established and immediately, this member-led panel has established an updated policy position on air quality. Further initiatives has seen CIEH join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Air Pollution and we have an Air Quality conference coming up on 12 July.

We have also vocally opposed the UK Government's strategy, which only came about because they were taken to court. The Government has been slow to react, the plans are woefully inadequate and unfairly shifts the burden to solve the problem onto local authorities.

There needs to be a joined-up approach in the UK, led by central Government, if we are ever going to tackle air pollution. A good start would be reducing the number of vehicles that do not comply with EuroVI/6 or petrol Euro 3 standards as a minimum and removing tax incentives on diesel, transferring these incentives to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles and Zero Emission Vehicles infrastructure development.



And if local authorities in the UK are to be successful in coming up with “novel and innovative solutions”, central Government needs to provide appropriate levels of financial support, while assisting with plans to help councils provide better provision and incentives for sustainable travels plans for people to access towns, cities and workplaces via the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

At CIEH, we are fully committed to IFEH's campaign for this year's World Environmental Health Day. EHPs across the globe are in a unique position to have a central role to tackle air pollution and our members are doing some great work to improve air quality in their local areas.

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### **World Environmental Health Day 26 September 2017**

Theme for the 2017 World Environmental Health Day: **Indoor & outdoor air quality**

The choice of this theme is very relevant as on 6th March 2017 Margaret Chan, Director General WHO launched a worldwide campaign to tackle air pollution as the ‘major public health issue of our generation’. WHO states that poor quality air affects more than 80% of the world's population.

All IFEH members are encouraged to make a real effort this year to promote WEHD as we anticipate that the health impact of poor air quality will now escalate year by year. We leave it to individual MOs to decide how to approach World Environmental Health Day; for some they will concentrate on indoor air quality, perhaps the use of inappropriate fuels for cooking and heating or the impact of other forms of pollution such as second hand smoke. The promotion of existing projects such as AirTEXT in London might be an attractive approach.

Please keep the IFEH webmaster informed of progress when planning your projects for this year's WEHD, (Henning Hansen - [henning.hansen@ifeh.org](mailto:henning.hansen@ifeh.org)).

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### **IFEH participation at the United Nations' 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun, Mexico – May 22 - 26**

*Article by Henning I. Hansen and Tim Hatch*

The International Federation of Environmental Health participated in the UN 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) 22-26 May as an organising partner with the [United](#)

[Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction \(UNISDR\)](#). The Congress was hosted by the Government of Mexico. The IFEH was by the UN invited to put forward an Official Statement to the Congress.

The IFEH Statement with the full support of the IFEH BOD and the IFEH Committee on DRR has been submitted to the UN (UNISDR). Look up the IFEH Official Statement: [http://www.ifeh.org/unisdr/IFEH\\_Official\\_Statement.pdf](http://www.ifeh.org/unisdr/IFEH_Official_Statement.pdf).

The IFEH Statement is noted in annex to the UNISDR official outcome document – Chair's Summary.

Look up further information about the UN 2017 Global Platform for DRR: <http://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform>

The IFEH at the UN Conference in Cancun was represented by Mr. Tim Hatch, who was also in attendance for NEHA (USA) as well as being a representative for the EH Disaster Management Course together with Dr. Peter Davey, Griffith University, Brisbane Australia (hon. Vice President IFEH). The course that the IFEH is endorsing through our memorandum of understanding. <http://www.ifeh.org/ehdm>

Leading up to the conference, IFEH was engaged in the planning of the Conference as a partner with the UNISDR by:

Mr. Henning Hansen, Hon Vice President IFEH – regarding Science and Technology on DRR  
Mr. David Dyjack, CEO NEHA – regarding Health and Disaster Risk Reduction

In December 2016 Henning Hansen participated, invited by the UNISDR, to give inputs to what should be the main outcome/priorities by the Conference. The answer to this from Henning Hansen was that the Conference should underscore the importance that all nations, having signed the Sendai UN DRR treaty, should stand up to their responsibility and by 2020 have implemented national strategies on Disaster Risk Reduction. Afterward it turned out to be the main priority for the UN Conference in Cancun. (With or without the inputs by the IFEH – but we did hit a vital nerve!)

### **Why is this important to the IFEH**

It has been estimated that disasters in the 10 years period 2005-2015 Globally have caused: 700,000 deaths, 1.4 million injured, 23 million homeless, 1.5 billion affected, € 1.2 trillion

economic losses – and the figures seem to be increasing.

Environmental health is a core discipline when it comes to recovery from disasters and EH is also a core discipline when it is about reducing the risk of disaster and preventing and mitigate effects of disasters/hazards, be that natural hazards or man-made hazards. In fact EH is very relevant in all aspects of the Disaster Risk Management cycle: Prevention; Reduction; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.

The IFEH has put together an IFEH DRR Committee, which is chaired by hon. Vice President Henning I. Hansen and with broad representation from all IFEH Regional Groups and it includes the IFEH President Peter Archer. Its mission is to promote and facilitate engagement in all IFEH Regions and to promote co-operation between EH professionals and the Scientific Communities and to distribute information about DRR and to do this in partnership with international bodies as the UNISDR.

The average attendance figures were ~5,000 individuals representing dozens of countries. There were concurrent sessions, working groups and panel discussions daily. The inclusion of the Sendai Framework was the focal point for nations and local governments alike. Many outcomes were proposed but the inclusion of universities and students in the planning as well as the environmental health component in the implementation were key take-aways. IFEH was represented in pre-conference workgroups as well as an active participant in the panel on DRR. A major focus of the DRR committee was that the most important lesson learned from past disasters is the need to act in a preventive way - acting on time is good, but being preventive is essential. Natural hazards do not recognize neither political borders nor government decisions. They affect the poorest, the most vulnerable. The 2017 Global Platform allows the international community to address ways to reduce risk and advance together on practices related to prevention.

#### Brief report from the 2017 UN Conference; Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction



*Main auditorium just prior to the opening session on May 24, 2017*

During the opening ceremony, speakers highlighted the steadily increasing awareness of the relevance Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which has led to a reduction in losses. DRR has benefited from the contribution of science, early warning systems, and growing political commitment. Progress achieved so far has been outstanding, however a rapidly warming planet may wipe out such outcomes and prevent the international community from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ninety percent of major disasters are climate-related and action that addresses the interlinked challenges of disaster risk, sustainable development and climate change is a core priority.

Those disaster effects on human health are almost always environmental. IFEH and environmental health professionals had a voice at the GP in Cancun. The inclusion of EH in this effort must not be taken lightly and IFEH will continue to be involved in the UN committees and this effort as it moves toward 2020 and beyond.



Tim Hatch (l) and Dr. Peter Davey (r) at the UN Global Platform for DRR on May 24, 2017

The Conference was the first Global Conference as a follow-up to the Sendai Conference 2015 at which the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#) emerged which has since been adopted by the UN General Assembly.

**The official outcome documents:**

*The Cancun High-Level Communiqué – Ensuring the resilience of infrastructure and housing* as of 24 May 2017 can be found on the UN based website:

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53439\\_thecunhighlevelcommuniquofof24may2.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53439_thecunhighlevelcommuniquofof24may2.pdf)

*The Chair's Summary, Cancun, 26 May 2017, From Commitment to Action*

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53989\\_chairssummaryofthe2017globalplatfor.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/53989_chairssummaryofthe2017globalplatfor.pdf)

It is worth noting the highlighting of the importance that by 2020 – less than 3 years from now – it is expected that all countries who has signed the Sendai Framework Agenda have elaborated national and regional strategies on disaster risk reduction – and further more it is highlighted that the UN will monitor the implementation – and also using the word “action plans” – which is very close to what we did highlight in Geneva in December 2016.

In the Chair's Summary (link above) it is notable to mention that in the annex section “Statements – Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Non-governmental Organizations, Private Sector and Stakeholder groups” that the **International Federation of Environmental Health** is listed as one of the important organisations that have put forward a formal statement to the UN 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; IFEH is being heard – but in hand with continued influence

goes commitment and hard work. The IFEH has in this area now a very good platform for taking this even further and over the coming month and years and through our Academic World Congress in Jamaica 2017 and over the Auckland IFEH World Congress 2018 we will do so. But much work is needed as well in between of our World Congresses. And we are looking very much forward to this process.

*All interested individuals from IFEH member organisations, associated member organisations and member universities are welcome to join the IFEH LinkedIn Special Interest Group on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction*  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8513708>  
 or contact [henning.hansen@ifeh.org](mailto:henning.hansen@ifeh.org)

**Updates for the 15th IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, March 2018 Auckland**



The registration for the 15th IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, to be held in Auckland, New Zealand from 20 to 23 March 2018 is open.

The registration form can be found in the website.

<http://www.2018wceh.org/registration/registration/>

## **Practical and personal experience. Water for kids project in Uganda**

*Article by Torben Hald, EnviNa Board Member*

During my vacation in East Africa I got the opportunity to visit a project in Uganda sponsored and driven by Water for Kids.

The purpose of the project is water protection and to establish local water supplies and toilets as well as teaching local people in general hygiene.

I watched how to change a local water supply from an open sump to a closed reservoir.

Primarily the local people who are enjoying the improvements did the work.



I also attended an establishment of a new well where the local people carried out the digging but a local plumber who had been trained in England carried out the finish. After the initiation the well was entrusted to the local people and a hygiene training was performed. Local ambassadors have been appointed to ensure that the well continues to work, as well as trying to raise funds for ongoing maintenance.



We also visited a hospital where rainwater was collected in a container, filtered and then used in the hospital.

As part of the project the water quality is monitored approximately 4 times a year. If a high bacterial content is detected, the test is redone and the local people are informed that the water should be boiled. The reason for the exceeded threshold is investigated and mitigated.

We also attended several schools and educational institutions to deliver training materials.

The project participation provided a unique opportunity to run projects based on local conditions. To secure local responsibility interaction with local authorities and NGO as well as local people is critical to gain a future-proof and sustainable solution.

For me it was a very fruitful professional and personal experience. My normal way of thinking and problem solving was challenged due to the given and quite different conditions.

## **General information to members**

The Federation works to disseminate knowledge concerning environmental health and promote co-operation between countries and member organisations.

Sharing of information between members are important.

The IFEH website offers several options for knowledge sharing – one of the opportunities is to take part in the IFEH special interest groups. The groups covering 16 different professional fields – drinking water, food safety and security, waste, public health etc. Look at the website for more information <http://www.ifeh.org/sig/index.html>.

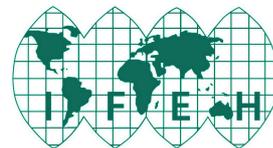
## **Professional networking**

Another way to share information is through the IFEH Facebook group ([facebook.com/ifeh.org](https://www.facebook.com/ifeh.org)) or LinkedIn ([linkedin.com/company/ifeh](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ifeh)).

## **Twinning arrangements**

Exchange between members of IFEH

There is an agreement between the national associations within the IFEH, opening the possibility for members of the national associations to swap office and chair for a period of up to two or three weeks.



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It is highly recommended by the IFEH Council, that members of a National Association within the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) take the chance to see how the environmental health work is carried out somewhere else in the World.

Look at the website for more information <http://www.ifeh.org/twinning/index.html>.

### **IFEH Magazine/Journal and newsletter**

Environment and Health International is the journal of the International Federation of

Environmental Health. The magazine is published twice a year.

Members are invited to submit short articles or executive summary from longer articles that can be published in the Magazine.

Also small news items are welcome for both the Magazine and this newsletter.

Articles for coming issues of the magazine please send to Kathryn Young E-mail: [kathy.young@dit.ie](mailto:kathy.young@dit.ie)

Small news items for the newsletter please send to Jesper Ø. Christensen - [pro@ifeh.org](mailto:pro@ifeh.org).