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# NEWSLETTER

*International Federation of Environmental Health*

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October 2011 Edition

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## Welcome to the October issue of the IFEH Newsletter

The 2011 IFEH Council and Annual General Meetings took place on the 25 and 26 September and were held in Bali, Indonesia. Bali is located in the westernmost end of the Lesser Sunda Islands, lying between Java in the west and Lombok to the east. The island is 3.2 km east of Java and is approximately 8 degrees south of the equator. The largest city is the provincial capital, Denpasar, which lies to the south of the island and the meetings took place in the Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel, South Kuta Beach, on the outskirts of the capital. The invitation to hold the meeting in Bali came from our colleagues in the Indonesia Environmental Health Specialist Association (IEHSA) who made the arrangements locally. On Saturday 24 September an International Summit of Environmental Health students took place at Udayana University, Kuta. A number of attendees at the forthcoming Council meeting made presentations at this highly successful event. It was agreed at the Summit to set up an Indonesian Environmental Health Student Association as a precursor to establishing an international federation consisting of environmental health student associations from around the world. At present any student association can join as an Associate Member but a proposal to establish an Environmental Health Youth Chapter of the IFEH is likely to be presented to the next Council meeting in Vilnius next year. The Council and Annual General Meetings were chaired by Peter Davey, President Elect in the absence of the President who was unable to travel to Bali. The Council meeting, as is the norm, started with presentations from member organisations concerning environmental health issues within their country. Sadly a recurring theme was the current financial problems facing many countries resulting in funding for environmental health being reduced, in some cases drastically. However, there were also many positives, particularly the proposal for setting up of Student Environmental Health Associations to link with one another. Another positive is a proposal to mark the memory of Roy Emerson, the first President of the IFEH, who died at the end of last year. It is proposed that we introduce an award for student environmental health professionals through an essay competition.

A small panel is to be established to set the essay subject and organise the competition with the aim of presenting the first award at the 2014 World Congress. The winner will be invited to the Congress to receive their award.

The Council accepted a bid from the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) to host the 2014 World Congress. The venue has yet to be decided but the Congress will be held in June or July 2014 and will have the theme 'Environmental Health – Many Countries, One Community'. The Council also accepted an invitation from the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) to host the 2013 Council meeting and AGM in May at a venue in the west of Scotland. A call for nominations for President Elect from member organisations is to take place in the next few weeks. Nominations should come from representatives to the Federation who must be supported financially by their own member organisation. The closing date for nominations has been set as the 31 January 2012. The new President Elect will take over in Vilnius, Lithuania in May 2012.

At the Annual General Meeting a motion concerning the use of teleconferencing for delegates to observe proceedings at Annual General Meetings and to participate at Council meetings every year was approved. A further motion to create a full time post for the purposes of driving the Federation's agenda and goals was also approved. Both motions were submitted by the Environmental Health Officers' Association, Ireland. Finally the AGM elected a new Secretary in place of Ray Ellard who stood down at the meeting after five years in office. The new Honorary Secretary of the IFEH is Roderick D House from REHIS. Unfortunately Ray could not attend the meeting to receive the overwhelming thanks of the Council for his dedication to the Federation over many years. Ray is the consummate environmental health professional whose expertise, knowledge and wisdom is in much demand, not only in Ireland, but further afield. During my term as President I enjoyed working with him, both as a friend and as Secretary, and miss our almost daily contact. The good news however is that Ray remains on the Council as one of the EHOA representatives. From all members of the IFEH Council - Thanks Ray.



## World Environmental Health Day

The first World Environmental Health Day was launched in Bali by the Indonesian Environmental Health Student Association on Monday 26 September. The official Proclamation declaring the 26 September each year as World Environmental Health Day was signed. The students then sang a song, written and composed by them the first line of which was 'For what we've seen, will there be a future?' an inspirational song about their environmental concerns and the future of the planet. They plan to record this song in the near future. The IFEH would like to thank all the students for their efforts during the three days of meetings in Bali and also Dr Abdur Rahman and Mrs Titi Sari Renawati for their contribution in the success of the 2011 IFEH Council meetings.

## New IFEH Secretary

Rod House recently retired from Health Protection Scotland where he was employed as a Lead Consultant in Environmental Health. Rod joined Health Protection Scotland (HPS) in 1999 as a Consultant in Environmental Health and in 2006 became Head of Group for Environmental Health, Gastrointestinal and Zoonotic Disease and Travel Health. As a Consultant he provided expert advice and support to National Health Service Boards and local authorities in Scotland over a wide range of environmental issues and non-infectious hazards. Areas covered include air quality, water quality, food safety and occupational health and safety. In addition to providing advice and support, surveillance activities included managing and developing a system to track environmental parameters with the potential to link these to health and food surveillance on behalf of the Food Standards Agency. FSS UK started as a development project in Scotland in 2001 and is now being wholly funded by the Food Standards Agency, and has been rolled out throughout the UK, including Northern Ireland. Through his special interest in Legionella Rod led an Expert Group which developed Guidance on the Identification and Management of Legionella clusters and outbreaks. Rod is a Past President of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland and one of three REHIS representatives to the IFEH Council.

## CIPHI Fundraiser for Water Wells in Sierra Leone

By Peter Heywood

### Immediate Past President

#### Ontario Branch.

Since June 2010 CIPHI has partnered with Plan Canada to raise funds for clean water and improved health in Sierra Leone. Plan Canada is one of the world's oldest and largest international development agencies, working in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty. Not for profit, independent and inclusive of all faiths and cultures, Plan Canada has only one agenda: to improve the lives of children.

The provision of social services still remains a challenge in Sierra Leone, especially in rural areas. The education sector is in dire need of more teaching resources and learning materials for children. There is also a need for improved infrastructure to meet the demand of children who are unable to attend school due to overcrowding and long travel distances. Among the infrastructure needs of schools in Plan Sierra Leone's Bombali Programme Unit, as well as throughout the country, is that of clean drinking water on school grounds, hand-washing stations, and latrines that meet the gender-specific needs of boys and girls. Without such basic infrastructure, school remains inaccessible to a number of children and exposes them to water-borne and communicable illnesses, making learning difficult, and ultimately denying children their basic dignities and rights to education and health. The purpose of this project is to improve access to, and quality of, education and to reduce water-borne illnesses among children and their communities in the area of Bombali.



- Construction began in May 2010 and was kicked off with a ground breaking ceremony. Five out of seven schools to be constructed (in Rosana, Bisongo, Mathene, Kolisokoh and Robarray) are 90% complete. The schools in Mateboi and Mabap are 40% completed.
- Teachers have been selected and will be trained to ensure they are fully competent and motivated
- School furniture, supplies, textbooks, and recreational materials are being procured
- As evidence of their commitment to bringing improved education to their villages, there is a high degree of community participation in the construction process, with some of the women volunteering to carry water for cement mixing and some of the men helping as labourers.

The National Executive Council has committed to raising \$10,000 by December 31, 2011. At the time of this report we have raised \$4104.00. This project is part of a larger partnership in co-operation with Dubai Cares, a philanthropic organization that will match our contribution dollars 3 to 1! The Environmental Health Foundation of Canada, which is the charitable arm of CIPHI has also agreed to match dollar for dollar any donations generated by the members to a total of \$1,000.00 during the balance of 2011.

The money raised thus far has made a positive impact to the community in Sierra Leone. Some of the highlights include:

- A workshop was held with project stakeholders, including members from all beneficiary villages, project partners, district and ward council members, and Plan Sierra Leone staff, to discuss the project, its goals, roles, and responsibilities.
- Four companies were chosen for all construction related activities, which included construction of schools, latrines, and boreholes with child-friendly hand pumps.



## Paying It Forward

Jason MacDonald and Michael Sidra who are both members of CIPHI recently won the 2010 Stanier Institute Opinion Paper Contest which rewards a position paper by practicing environmental public health professionals. The Stanier Institute/Institut Stanier is a scientifically-minded group committed to development of the public health sciences. The Stanier Institute/Institut Stanier, in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors ([www.ciphi.ca](http://www.ciphi.ca)), invited practicing certified Public

Health Inspectors to submit a feature opinion paper that offered ideas and suggestions that address any issue applied to the present day activities of Public Health Inspectors. The Stanier Institute then awards \$1000 for the opinion paper assessed to be the most interesting and original submission.

Jason and Michael's paper was entitled "Finished Product Inspections Will Not Prevent Hazards: Why the EHO must embrace HACCP to succeed in performing meaningful inspections of Personal Service Settings." As a wonderful act philanthropy, Jason and Michael have donated their \$1000 prize to

"Clinica Verde", a non-profit charitable organization formed to help improve maternal and infant health in Nicaragua.

Clinica Verde, meaning "Green Clinic," is a non-profit charitable organization formed to build and assist sustainable health clinics that improve maternal and infant healthcare, beginning in Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and has one of the highest rates in the hemisphere of both adolescent fertility and maternal mortality. Clinica Verde is helping to fill gaps by promoting socially responsible design and green technologies in the developing world while creating health partnerships with communities in need. Part of the efforts of the Clinica Verde organizers includes the development of basic public health programs such as education to mothers on healthy nutrition, food safety, and eventually water safety and other environmental issues.

Congratulations are extended to Jason and Michael for not only advancing the state of knowledge at home, but applying the broad ideals of environmental justice abroad.

## Scotland's drinking water

The quality of drinking water in Scotland is the best it has ever been, according to a recent report. The annual report by the Drinking Water Quality Regulator (DWQR) on the quality of public supplies during 2010 found that well over 99 per cent of tests on samples complied with strict regulatory standards. In 2010 Scottish Water carried out nearly 324,000 tests on water at treatment works, storage reservoirs and consumers' taps. Of the 155,302 tests on samples taken directly from taps in homes, 99.83 per cent met the standard. This compares with 99.78 per cent in 2009 and 99.14 per cent in 2003, the year after Scottish Water was formed. Compliance tests showed an improvement, significantly for pH (hydrogen ion), colour, iron and Trihalomethanes (THMs). In 2009, THMs levels attracted criticism from the Regulator and improvement this year is welcomed. Consumer satisfaction with the water supply across Scotland has also increased. In 2010 Scottish Water received 20,495 contacts from consumers concerned about the quality of their supplies, compared with 24,168 in the previous year. While this is an improvement, DWQR calls for these numbers to fall even further. Not everyone in Scotland receives their drinking water from Scottish Water. Approximately 150,000 people, three per cent of the population, receive water from a private water supply. The quality of some of these supplies remains of concern, and 18.35 per cent of samples taken from these supplies last year by local authorities contained the E.coli bacterium. Drinking water quality regulation began in 1991 and drinking water quality was monitored by the Scottish Executive and its predecessor before the post of DWQR was created in 2002, at the same time as Scottish Water. The DWQR is independent of Scottish Ministers and ensures that the drinking water quality duties imposed on Scottish Water are complied with. DWQR reviews water quality data from samples taken by Scottish Water and undertakes targeted audits examining all aspects of its operations. The Regulator also supervises local authority enforcement of the Private Water Supply Regulations. Further information is available from the DWQR website <http://www.dwqr.org.uk>.



## New rules for tobacco sales

Scottish retailers intending to sell tobacco have been reminded that they have until 1 October to sign up to a new national register. Under the new Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act, retailers must register to sell cigarettes. More than 5,000 have already signed up. The Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010, passed by parliament last year, contains measures aimed specifically at reducing the attractiveness and availability of tobacco to under 18s. As well as the introduction of the Scottish Tobacco Retailer Register it bans the display of tobacco and related products in shops, bans the sale of tobacco from vending machines, makes it an offence for under 18s to purchase tobacco, makes it an offence for adults to buy tobacco for under 18s (proxy purchase), gives trading standards officers powers to issue fixed penalty notices, and gives courts the power to ban retailers from selling tobacco where they have continually broken the law. It will be illegal for retailers to sell tobacco products if they are not registered on the Scottish Tobacco Retailer Register by 1 October 2011. Further information is available from the Scottish Government website [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk).

## Africa Academy for Environmental Health – Looking to the Future

The AAEH ([www.ifeh.org/afa](http://www.ifeh.org/afa)) recently held a five day penultimate workshop in Cape Town bringing to a close their DelPHE 3 project funded by the British Council. The 18 objectives of the project were extremely ambitious and over three years looked to establish the Academy, improve the quality and consistency of environmental health training, recruit new members and increase collaborative research to name just a few of the planned activities. With the completion of the generic African curriculum for degree programmes in environmental health with a married quality assurance system, new networking systems for African institutions and academics, development of eLearning programmes, collaborative research and professional capacity building being just a few of the achievements, the Academy has much to be proud of in its infancy. A full report of the AAEH activities under DelPHE 3 will be published in the Environment and Health Journal in the near future.

Delighted to have members from West Africa on board for the first time, the workshop welcomed 2 new country members in Ghana, Nigeria. The group also welcomed colleagues from Uganda and Namibia to their first EXCO meeting. The AAEH membership is now comprised of 16 academic institutions from 13 countries. The workshop also looked to the future of the Academy and how the organisation can move forward and remain sustainable after such a good start. It was agreed that the Secretariat will now be based at the University of Malawi – Polytechnic and further information on our activities and membership can be sought from the Chair Dr Koos Engelbrecht ([EngelbrechtJC@tut.ac.za](mailto:EngelbrechtJC@tut.ac.za)) or Professor Tony Grimson ([agrimason@poly.ac.mw](mailto:agrimason@poly.ac.mw)).

## Malta Association of Environmental Health Officers

The Malta Association of Environmental Health Officers (MAEHO) recently organised its Annual Summer BBQ for all EHOs, ex-EHOs and students EHOs. The BBQ was sponsored by MAEHO and was free to all EHOs. The BBQ was held at the Bahar ic-Caghaq Caravan site right at the water's edge. The event was very well received with over 50 people attending. The cooking of some 150 pork sausages, 50 beef burgers, and some 30 Beef steaks and 30 Chicken Breasts was carried out by the aptly hands of Hadrian Bonello assisted by Aaron Simpson who had earlier carried out all the preparation and marinating of the food.

This event augured well for the association which this past two years passed through a bad spell due to the recent global recession.



**Aaron Simpson, left, and Hadrian Bonello - would these guys pass a routine inspection?**

## IFEH 12th World Congress – 21st-27th May 2012

The Council of the IFEH would encourage all member organisations and others interested in environment and health to attend the next World Congress in Vilnius next May. Anyone interested in presenting a paper or registering should note the following deadlines.

### Deadline for abstract submission:

15 February 2012

### Early bird registration until:

1 March 2012

### Help keep us up to date.

The lack of up to date information concerning changes that take place within Member Organisations seriously affects the operation of the Federation. It is essential that we know who the IFEH representative is from your organisation, also the name of the Chairman/President and Secretary together with contact details. It is even more important that we have up to date information during the handover from Ray Ellard to the new Honorary Secretary. All the information is placed on the website and we know that this is a source of information for many agencies. So please check your entry on the website and let us know of any changes as soon as possible.

**Finally** the next edition of the Newsletter will be published in January 2012 . If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send it to me by the first week in December. My thanks go to Tracey Morse, Phi Phan , Tom Bell, Andrew Forteath and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.