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Cover photo: Happy Caribbean Children
(Photo: **Hutter**)

CEHAPE BEST PRACTICE AWARD

On the way from Budapest 2004 to Italy 2009 this Intergovernmental Midterm Review (IMR) meeting in Vienna 2007 stands out for several reasons. For the first time parties to the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) are obliged to report on their national implementation of the plan. On occasion of this first high-level meeting after Budapest also the NGO community had its first opportunity to meet in a larger group. This meeting of the European NGO community was facilitated by the generous financial support of the Austrian Ministry of Environment for which we want to express our gratitude.

The NGO community does not come to Vienna with empty hands. The improvement of our children's environment for a better health of the future generations is not the sole job of governments but needs the active involvement of civil society. What could better demonstrate this truth than a selection of Best Projects that have been established all over the WHO European Region!

Therefore we called for a submission of projects in one of 5 categories, the first being the 4 Regional Priority Goals (RPG) of the CEHAPE:

- RPG I: Reducing gastrointestinal disorders with safer water and adequate sanitation
- RPG II: Protection from injuries and increased mobility to combat obesity and reduce accidents
- RPG III: Reducing respiratory disease and asthma by improving indoor and outdoor air quality
- RPG IV: Protection from hazardous chemicals and physical and biological agents to reduce disease, and last but not least:
- Youth participation category: Involving young people in environment and health issues.

More than 70 projects from all over Europe were submitted and an international jury of experts was invited to rank them. The selection of the 3 best projects per category was by no means an easy task. Too diverse were the fields and topics each project dealt with, too different the settings and the budgetary and geographical scope.

But in the end we feel confident that the jury decision brought about a fine selection of 15 projects that illustrate the broad variety of possible approaches to a healthy environment for our children. Again we have to highlight the support of the Austrian Ministry of Environment that donated a prize for the top 5 projects and funded the travel costs of the project representatives. Also this supplement of the Austrian environmental health journal "Oekobiotikum" is funded by the Austrian ministry.

Although this supplement focuses on the 15 best projects of the CEHAPE Award it is intended to reach further. The 15 projects should be seen as an example for what could be achieved when governments and civil society co-operate in a common goal based on the valuable guidance of the WHO European Office, as was laid down in the "Table of Actions" from which all the selected projects draw their inspiration.

The NGO community, by definition, will never be content with what has been achieved. But now is the time to celebrate the recent achievements before we gather our resources for the necessary next steps. May the fruitful co-operation continue!

For ISDE Austria (ÄrztInnen für eine gesunde Umwelt) as the local NGO organisers

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