



Chartered
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INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

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Until now I have avoided reporting on the minutiae of management board discussions and decisions because not everyone is interested and anyway if you really want to know you can find the documents on the CIEH ISIG web page.

However, at the recent ISIG management board meeting we discussed ways of determining what members expect of, or want from, the ISIG. The management board is currently made up principally of members who are already active in various forms of international activities, but we are sure there are people out there with other interests or expectations, we just don't know what they are. In the spirit of being inclusive we would welcome your observations and contributions, because we don't want the special interest group to become a loss of interest group.

So if your interests or concerns are in promoting better sanitation or health education or fair trade, eradicating poverty or child trafficking, contributing to sustainable development, combating global warming or any number of other topics, please let us know. Why not start a thread on our facebook site at:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=85855520762>.

A Generic Curriculum for training programmes in Environmental Health in Africa

The African Academy of Environmental Health (AAEH) was launched in August 2008 in Nairobi with the main aim of advancing the science and practice of environmental health in Africa. Since then a lot of work has gone into the development of an international programme on environmental health intended to ensure that irrespective of the location within Africa all environmental health professionals will be educated to the same core curriculum. An article by Dr Koos Engelbrecht, Chairperson of the AAEH, outlining the work carried out so far, should be in the next issue of the Federation's newsletter. The final

curriculum is to be formally launched during the 2nd All Africa Environmental Health Congress which will be held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 24 – 27 May 2010.

Geographical magazine (<http://www.geographical.co.uk/>)

A major issue in many parts of the world is water scarcity and the April issue of Geographical magazine is a special edition focusing on this topic. As humanity's thirst grows, natural ecosystems are coming under increasing pressure. And it's not just developing nations that are affected. As populations grow, climate change continues and agriculture siphons off much of the planet's reserves, water scarcity is becoming a problem for both developing and developed nations. The issue looks at what can be done to satisfy the increasing demand for this ever-dwindling resource.

It visits the Rift Valley of northwest Kenya, where water shortages have historically led to intertribal violence, but where the death tolls are rising again; and Sudan, where there are fears that the resurrection of a 10-year-old plan to increase the flow in the White Nile will lead to the destruction of one of Africa's richest wildlife refuges

It tells of how poor farmers from across northern India were persuaded 30 years ago to relocate to the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, where a huge irrigation programme had made the land miraculously fertile, but now, the canals are being switched off, plunging the region into crisis.

It reports from deep in the Ecuadorian Amazon, where Kapawi Eco-lodge is surrounded by vast tracts of pristine jungle and entirely owned and operated by the indigenous Achuar people, helping to provide them with an income and protect the resource-rich region from exploitation. But for how long? The Stern report said that a lack of clear and enforceable property rights means that forests are often vulnerable to damage and destruction. Loggers can quickly exploit lack of clear ownership and their actions often open up the land for subsequent illegal conversion to farming. Historically there have been violent clashes between landless groups and large landowners, which stemmed from legal ambiguity, conflicting laws made both groups consider they had rightful claims to land and timber. Clarity over boundaries and ownership, and the allocation of property rights regarded as just by local communities, enhances the effectiveness of property rights in practice and strengthens the institutions required to support and enforce them. Over the last 20 years 26 tropical countries have experienced armed conflicts in forested areas, and in some cases timber sales have financed the fighting.

And for the really adventurous among you, if you fancy travelling the length of Australia's Murray River, from source to mouth, by kayak, someone who did it last year describes the essential gear that kept him afloat during his 2,476-kilometre, 76-day expedition.

New Members

It is important to realise that not all our members reside in the UK. Since January we have 36 new members 25 of whom are from Malaysia (*Selamat datang*) where the CIEH accredited the first overseas degree courses in environmental health after discussions with a number of universities and colleges.

The two courses are a BSc Hons in environmental health and safety at Universiti Teknologi MARA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and a BSc (Hons) in environmental health at the Malaysian Allied Health Sciences Academy, also in Kuala Lumpur. This followed a four-day visit by the CIEH accreditation panel and we are sure that ISIG member Steve Cooper, chair of the panel and of the CIEH education and professional standards board, will be delighted at this development.

WHO Bulletin

Thanks to Rob Couch for informing us that the WHO Bulletin is free and often features EH related articles. Some of the references are quite good too, some important peer reviewed papers on EH interventions and their effectiveness. Go to:

<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/88/2/09-075424.pdf>

The John Snow Society is a great way of meeting some of the UK's leading international EH researchers and policy makers once a year in the Soho pub adjacent to the pump:

<http://www.johnsnowsociety.org/>

International Health Links Funding Scheme

The North West Region CIEH has successfully applied for a Project grant of £15,000 for 2 years to improve post qualification and in service training of Environmental Health professionals in Zambia. It will address skills gaps through a range of interventions, including dissemination of best practice and enhancing health promotion/education skills. We will carry updates on progress in future editions.

The next round of applications for project grants has a deadline of 30 May, although start-up grants of £3000 (to support the development of new and young links) are also available and can be submitted at any time.

Funded by the UK Department for International Development and Department of Health, IHLFS is jointly managed by THET and British Council. For more information go to: www.britishcouncil.org/learning-healthlinks.

Climate change

Climate change is a big issue at present, and possibly far into the future if not in perpetuity. The nature of International involvement, for many, means travelling from place to place, not necessarily internationally, but locally too and there are now serious moves to offset that travel by climate friendly carbon credits.

Carbon credits are like certificates that represent a reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Projects that prevent the generation of greenhouse gases or remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere earn these credits, which can in turn then be "sold" to other businesses and individuals to "offset" the emissions they generate. One carbon credit is the equivalent to a saving of one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Some air travel companies (Virgin and Qantas for example) have their own schemes where your money goes to tree-planting, methane-flaring and energy efficiency projects, but it could be argued that these are too simplistic and don't take into account all the effects of travel on the environment.

You can take steps to address your carbon emissions right now. First you need to calculate the emissions you release from driving your car, your air travel, and the electricity you use in your home, then calculate how many carbon credits you need to offset your emissions. There are online calculators that make it easy for you to make a difference in just a few clicks.

If you are really serious you can also use the calculators to measure and offset flights, car trips and electricity associated with an event, such as a conference, birthday or wedding celebration or honeymoon.

When you buy carbon credits, you're in effect putting renewable energy back into the power grid to replace the energy from fossil fuels that you have used.

Most of us do our best to address global warming by switching off lights and appliances, reducing our waste and walking or cycling more. But the global average emissions for an individual remains 5 tonnes a year, rising to 28 tonnes in countries such as the US and Australia.

You don't need to buy credits if you reduce your carbon emissions, and you can do that in many ways - Buy renewable energy in the first place. Drive less. Turn off lights and switch to compact bulbs. Insulate your home and body. Open the window, turn off the air conditioning. Switch off standby. Conserve water. Fly less. Use alternatives to electricity. Buy efficient appliances. Dry your washing outside. Choose a hybrid, biodiesel or fuel-efficient car. Work from home. Pay bills online. Own just one refrigerator. Eat lower on the food chain. Buy local. Green your event. Buy recycled and 'vintage'. Check your tyre pressures regularly.

The RIBA Knowledge Community

Thanks to Mike Noyes for the following information.

The RIBA Knowledge Community for Development and Disaster Relief was successfully launched at a drinks reception, held at the offices of Penoyre&Prasad, London, on 31st March 2010.

The evening included inspirational guest speakers and was delighted to note a very enthusiastic response from over 100 Academics, Architects, Engineers, International Development Professionals, Students and other specialists who attended the event.

The initiative aims to encourage collaboration between the built environment and international development industries.

- Online and face-to-face networking
- Interactive problem solving
- Precedents for innovative design and construction
- Publish and access resources and academic research
- Putting research into practice
- Network to mobilise and respond to disasters
- Sharing best practice and lessons learnt

You can register to be part of the ongoing series of events and online discussions at: www.riba-knowledgecommunities.com

RedR Training Event

At the time of writing the *SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RELIEF WORKER?* event on May 19th was filling up nicely and approaching maximum numbers. If you are interested you can still contact Tony Bride (tony.bride@cityoflondon.gov.uk) or phone 020 7332 3588 to be put on a waiting list for a possible repeat event later, when administrative details have been discussed.

In the meantime, if you have colleagues you think may be interested, why not encourage them to join the ISIG?

Got some news you would like to share with colleagues? Contact the Communications Secretary, Barrie Whitehead at bw@rochdaleuwh.co.uk