

3. COLLABORATION WITH WHO AND OTHER UN INITIATIVES

3.1 The WHO Healthy Environments for Children initiative (HEC)

Awareness of the environmental risks to children's health is relatively low in Africa, despite this Region bearing the greatest burden of ill health from environmental hazards. As a contribution to increased levels of awareness of environmental risks, WHO-AFRO has requested the Centre to develop a package of information materials on Children's Environmental Health, for distribution to countries across the African continent, for adaptation as appropriate, to suit local conditions.

The Centre has initiated a process to design the required material and provide these to WHO-AFRO in an electronic base format suitable for country level adaptation to suit local conditions. The target groups for the materials are parents, teachers and others who care for children. Given that a large proportion of the target audience will be people

with relatively low levels of literacy, it is vital that any materials produced will be graphic and easily understood.

The packages will include 30-second video and radio clips, as well as fact sheets and posters. The topics for the development of information packages are:

Diarrhoeal diseases from exposure to unsafe water and poor sanitation; exposure to indoor air pollution; environmental tobacco smoke; malaria; helminthic infections; lead poisoning; food Safety; pesticides; poor housing; unintentional injuries; noise; the importance of hand washing; the unique vulnerability of children to environmental hazards.

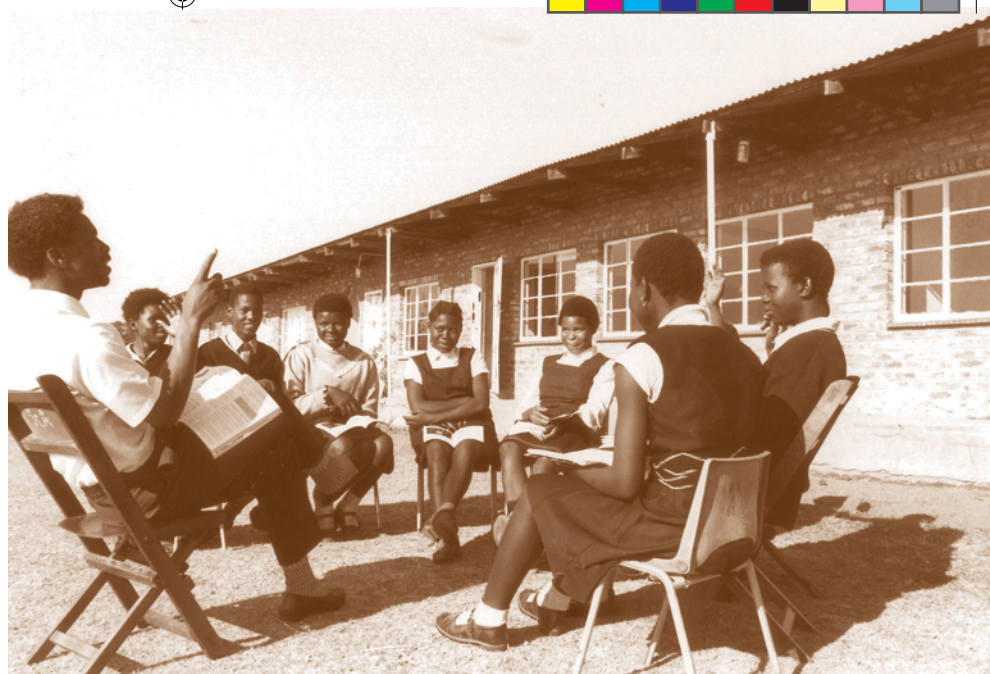
Individuals or teams have been appointed to develop fact sheets and identify the key messages for each topic. This exercise is also being used as a vehicle for student experiential training at the UJ's Department of Anthropology and



Development Studies, who will be working on malaria, pesticides, helminthic infections and environmental tobacco smoke.

Arrangements have been made with the Allen Jefthas, responsible for photography at the MRC Graphics Division to provide assistance with obtaining visuals (still and moving images) as necessary, and secure editing services for the video clips.

On approval by the internal project team, drafts of the materials will be pilot tested and amended, and then submitted for review by an international panel, including members from WHO-AFRO, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Selected materials will be translated into French for distribution to Francophone countries.



3.2 Participation in the WHO Social Determinants of Health Meeting

Angie Mathee and Liz Thomas have been invited to participate in the second meeting of the Knowledge Network on Urban Settings (KNUS). This meeting is an initiative of the WHO Centre for Health Development (WHO Kobe Centre),

and falls under the umbrella of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) that was launched in February 2005. Professor Andre Swart represented the Centre at the first KNUS meeting held in Brazzaville from 27 to 29 July 2005. The second KNUS meeting will take place on Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 1 to 4 November 2006. The objectives of the meeting are:

To review and critique the draft thematic papers of the Knowledge Network on Urban Settings.

To build consensus around key recommendations that will be made to the CSDH.

To develop and propose strategic directions for sustaining global action on social determinants of health in urban settings.

Liz Thomas has been part of the drafting team for the key papers and Angie Mathee has been invited to participate as a plenary panellist as part of the process of reviewing the key papers on (1) the living environment and (2) the design of housing and shelter programmes.



A Sample Poster drafted by a UJ student group

3.3 Participation in a WHO Meeting to develop Guidelines on the Diagnosis, Prevention and Management of Lead Exposure/Poisoning in Children

Following receipt of a package of our lead exposure/poisoning information materials, Dr Jenny Pronczuk of the World Health Organization (HQ) invited Angela Mathee to participate in an international meeting to development harmonized guidelines on the Diagnosis, Prevention and Management of Lead Exposure/Poisoning in Children.

A tentative date for the meeting, which will take place in Munich, Germany, has been set for the first week of December 2006.