



Children's
Environmental Health
Collaborative

unicef 
for every child

A Strategic Partnership for Governments

Summary

The Children's Environmental Health Collaborative, established by UNICEF, World Bank and the UN Environment Programme, stands as a vital multi-stakeholder initiative dedicated to safeguarding the health and well-being of children from the detrimental effects of environmental degradation and climate change. Governments have access to a wealth of resources,

technical expertise, networking opportunities and robust policy support. These benefits empower governments to develop and implement effective children's environmental health programmes, ultimately contributing to a healthier future for their youngest citizens leading to a more productive future workforce and driving economic growth.



Background and purpose

Children's unique physiology and behaviour make them far more vulnerable to environmental hazards than adults. These include their developing bodies, higher metabolic rates, and increased intake of air, water, and food, and behaviours like increased outdoor time and hand-to-mouth activity.

As a result, every year, more than one million children under the age of five die every year due to unhealthy environments. The health, development, and well-being of many more children, including adolescents, is harmed by exposure to dangerous combinations of environmental hazards including climate change.

The vulnerability of children to environmental harm is particularly pronounced in low- and middle-income countries with often higher levels of pollution, increased susceptibility to climate-related disasters and limited access to adequate

health care, water and sanitation and protective measures.

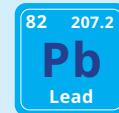
The Children's Environmental Health Collaborative unites diverse sectors and stakeholders to address the complex, cross-border environmental threats – such as air pollution, pesticide exposure, heat stress, and lead poisoning – that jeopardize children's health and development. The Collaborative's mission is to safeguard the health and development of children from the detrimental effects of environmental hazards, including climate change.

The Collaborative operates under the conviction that the most effective protection for children arises when governments take a leading role. By providing a platform for governments to share their experiences, exchange best practices, and learn from one another, the Collaborative fosters a global community committed to prioritizing children's environmental health.



2,000
children

More than 2,000 children under the age of five die every day from health conditions linked to **air pollution**.



50%
of
children

Almost half the children in many low-and-middle income countries are losing their learning and earning potential due to dangerous levels of **lead (Pb)** in their blood.



Half a billion
children

Almost half a billion children live in areas experiencing at least twice as many **extremely hot** days as their grandparents impacting their survival, health and well-being.





Your benefits

As partners, governments gain access to a wealth of invaluable support, including critical resources, specialized technical expertise, vital networking opportunities and strategic policy guidance. The Collaborative enables governments to champion children's environmental health by:

1. Enabling data-driven decision-making to support effective resource allocation

A foundational resource provided by the Collaborative is the [Children's Environmental Health Country Profiles](#). These profiles offer a detailed overview of the specific environmental health risks that children face within a particular country based on global data. With support from UNICEF country offices, several countries (e.g. [Cambodia](#), [Bhutan](#), etc.) are undertaking a children's environmental health assessment to identify priority issues impacting children and to tailor their interventions to address the most pressing local challenges.

2. Unlocking critical intelligence to develop comprehensive and impactful policies

The Collaborative platform offers governments a powerful lens into how environmental hazards uniquely threaten children and, crucially, outlining the precise actions needed for effective protection. The Collaborative's knowledge library provides groundbreaking 2024 reports by UNICEF and its partners – on [Climate Change and Children's Health](#), the [State of the Global Air](#), the urgent call for [Clean Air for Healthy Children](#), strategies for [Protecting Children from Wildfire Smoke](#) and the emerging dangers of [Plastics on children](#).

3. Developing national capacity to address environmental health issues

The Collaborative offers a comprehensive suite of resources and tools to support governments in developing and implementing effective national children's environmental health programmes. These resources include a [knowledge library](#),

[expert video series](#) and [e-courses](#). For example, the UNICEF and WHO interactive course, an [Introduction to Children's Environmental Health](#), has more than 4,300 learners from 166 countries enrolled within its first year of being launched. The Collaborative is increasingly providing assets to support advocacy, social and behaviour change, regulatory action and engaging the private sector.

4. Leveraging technical assistance, expertise and guidance

The Collaborative increasingly offers active support to governments in advancing children's environmental health by providing technical assistance for children's environmental health surveys, setting national targets in priority areas, adopting effective policies and regulations, and building sectoral capacities together with the support from UNICEF's country offices. Additionally, governments have access to participating in accelerator initiatives dedicated to specific topics, such as the [Partnership for a Lead-Free Future](#).

5. Utilizing networking and knowledge sharing opportunities

The Collaborative fosters a global network where governments can connect, share best practices and learn from diverse perspectives. By organizing [forums](#) and facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration, the Collaborative empowers governments to identify successful strategies, adapt them to their specific contexts, and implement more effective and comprehensive solutions to protect children's environmental health.

Joining the collaborative and responsibilities

The Collaborative serves as a powerful catalyst for action, providing a global platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and the dissemination of best practices in children's environmental health. Governments can join the CEH Collaborative by submitting a [written expression of interest](#). Letters should be signed by a senior government representative from the ministry, department or agency that will be participating in the Collaborative (e.g., Minister, Director-General, Head of Department, etc.).

Participation in convenings and events is completely voluntary and there are no formal requirements.

Governments are invited to share expertise, key policy documents and experiences that other governments and partners may benefit from by sending documents to ceh@unicef.org for uploading to the knowledge library. Such an engagement will not only contribute to a healthier and more sustainable future for the country's children but also strengthen global efforts.

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