

Report 37: Environmental Health Education as an Intervention and Prevention Strategy

Convener: Bono Sen

Brief History: EH education has been done only on an ad hoc basis and through the grants program and EHP. It should be a cross-institute priority.

Discussion Highlights:

Recommendations:

- NIEHS needs to make EH education and engagement a priority, and devote appropriate resources to it. There needs to be a strong commitment from top leadership that education is a priority and an integral part of the NIEHS mission of “dissemination.”
- NIEHS needs to define EH education broadly to include K-16, informal education, engagement, internal education (NIEHS staff) and more, which goes beyond the current OSED.
- NIEHS needs to develop an EH education strategic plan that coordinates efforts across the institute, interagency, with local/state and NGO partners and makes use of the successful models of other agencies.
- NIEHS needs to partner with educational experts who are working to create an EH literate society (starting young) and including NIH OSE, Dept. of Ed, and other agencies.
- Internal education needs to be strongly encouraged and supported so that all NIEHS employees understand the mission and broadly the work of the institute so that they can be informal champions/educators/ambassadors outside the institute. This needs to be incorporated into the culture of the institute and incentives given for people to learn what others outside their immediate group are doing.
- Choose several EH topics on which we have a substantial body of knowledge and work with professionals to develop EH education campaigns to a variety of stakeholders and making use of all available technologies (social media, webinars, workshops, direct relationship building), and including evaluation components to demonstrate the effectiveness and for further refinement.
- Important to educate and partner with state and local health and environment officials and their constituencies.
- Develop opportunities/programs/details/rotations in EH education for internal staff, particularly young scientists.
- Leverage models from other agencies for effective education and engagement.
- Work to educate at federal and other levels to get “Health” into the initiatives/considerations of priority activities in sustainability, climate change, global health, environmental protection, public health, economics, etc. Integrate a One Health approach to our education/messaging.

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