

From Science to Practice: WECF Best practice of awareness raising for parents, health experts and political decision makers

on hazardous chemicals, especially Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)



Studies show that EDCs play a role in e.g. disrupting human brain development, deterioration of male reproductive health, increased incidence of male and female hormone related cancers, and the increase in cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes. Most vulnerable groups are pregnant women, (unborn) babies and children. WECF calls for a precautionary approach. Chemicals that are known to have negative impact on the hormone system should be phased out and/or substituted. However as long as EDCs are not legally regulated, restricted and banned consumers are forced to take initiative supported by NGOs and science and refuse buying products containing EDCs.

WECF activities on reducing and avoiding EDCs

Content: The mobile App "Giftfrei einkaufen" (toxic-free shopping) released by WECF Germany supports consumers to find non-toxic products in various product groups, such as cosmetics, detergents, renovation products, toys, baby care products. The WECF App is one of the three most frequently used apps on toxic-free shopping in Germany.

Everybody can use the app easily: The buttons PRODUCTS and TOXINS guide you, whether you want to buy toxic-free shampoo or toys. With the app you can compare the displayed ingredients on a product with the list of harmful chemicals provided by the app. So you can easily find out which products you want to avoid. On other product groups, which do not have full disclosure of ingredients, the app gives you general tips how to avoid harmful chemicals.

Target Group: Consumers

Results: In three months the App had 7000 downloads.

Funding: German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency

Project Nesting

Content and main activities: The WECF program "Nesting" aims to inform parents and the health sector about concrete measures to prevent exposure to EDCs and other harmful chemicals. The program is conducted in 10 countries and will expand to Latin America and Portugal soon.

The Nesting project aims at providing new parents, and child health and childcare professionals with precise information and helpful practical advice so that they can make informed choices for healthier products and adopt new practices. Nesting informs via a web platform, trainings and guides, about the quality of the air and environment inside homes and day care centres, and describes the way in which products such as furniture and carpeting, cleaning agents and baby care products can affect indoor air quality, and lead to the exposure of children to toxic substances.

Target groups: Pregnant women, young parents, consumers, child health and childcare professionals

Results: Currently around 7000 visitors per month are using the website, which is at the moment available in eight languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Estonian and Spanish).

Funding: EU Commission, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency, Referat für Gesundheit und Umwelt City of Munich



www.nestbau.info



www.projetnesting.fr

Trainings

Content: WECF provides workshops for parents, child health and childcare professionals, and those who want to become Nesting trainers. Nesting workshops and trainings are a place for discussion and information on topics related to the environment of the newborn (furniture, decoration products, childcare articles, cleaning products, food containers etc.).

People trained by WECF experts on environmental health drive these fun and interactive sessions designed to protect young children and the future of chemical pollution of the indoor environment. This workshop take place in family centers as well as in frame of conferences for health care professionals and in children day care centers.

Target groups: Parents, child health and childcare professionals, and those who want to become Nesting trainers in the future.

Results: In the last 4 years approx. 3000 participants were trained in France, the Netherlands and Germany.

Funding: Referat für Gesundheit und Umwelt City of Munich, French Ministry of Environment, Région Rhône-Alpes, Région Ile-de-France



Nesting training in France



Guides and publications

Content: In frame of the nesting project WECF has published so far information guides in eight languages in order to provide tips to parents on how to choose toxic-free products. The brochures provide concise information on the most common and hazardous substances found in toys, baby care products, bodycare products, do-it-yourself products, textiles, detergents, inform about the potential dangers and give concrete advice on how consumers can play it safe when buying toys for their children. One special guide was created for EDCs. Target groups are parents, child health and childcare professionals. Additionally WECF released the brochure "Breastcancer and the Environment" and "Gestörte Weiblichkeit" (Germany) which refers to the relation between EDCs and Women's Reproductive Health.

Target groups: Consumers, child health, health and childcare professionals, policy makers

Results: Most of the guides are available in English, French, German and Dutch. The Toys Guide is available in 13 languages. The guides can be downloaded from the website www.nestbau.info, www.projetnesting.fr, www.nesting.org. About 200.000 guides and publications had been disseminated at conferences, fairs, workshops since the first edition was released in 2009.

Funding: EU Core, German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Environment Agency, EU Life+, French Ministry of Environment, EEHI

Exhibition on EDCs



Content: WECF has created a touring exhibition on EDCs tailored down to the information needs of health insurance companies and medical professionals. The exhibition explains (in German) what EDCs are, how they interfere with the hormone system and the related health effects, exposure routes, economic costs, and recommendations. The exhibition consists of seven pillars of cubes, and aim to be shown at German health insurance companies, national congresses of the health sector, national conventions of political parties, or in the German Bundestag or federal Parliaments. The aim is to raise awareness on the topic and find new allies for our advocacy work on national and EU level. The exhibition is an innovative tool, which has not been tried in Germany before. The exhibition was shown already in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich.

Funding: EEHI

Advocacy Work



Content: WECF raises awareness about emerging environmental health issues, and signals concerns and problems from society to policy makers. WECF monitors policy developments in the area of nanotechnology, biocides, endocrine disruptors, asbestos, chemicals in products e.g. toys.

Examples:

... at national level: Multi stakeholder Roundtable, Berlin, 2012

... at EU level: Toys testing at European Parliament, January 2012
Participation to NGOs coalition actions, Participation to ECHA Stakeholders meeting, 2013

... at global level: ICCM 3 conference result - EDCs became emerging issue, Nairobi, 2013. Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, May 2013

Target group: Policy makers

Funding: French Ministry of Environment, EEHI, EU Core, German Federal Ministry for the Environment



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