

MAKE IT FAIR

What do you do when your mobile phone stops working? Or your computer breaks down? Every year, **WE THROW AWAY UP TO 50 MILLION TONNES OF UNWANTED ELECTRONIC WASTE – E-WASTE.** That's enough to fill one million trucks that would stretch half way around the entire globe if they were parked end to end.

IT'S A SHOCKING AMOUNT. But what is even more shocking is what happens to this e-waste that is **FULL OF HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC CHEMICALS.**

Only 25% of the electronic gadgets we throw away each year are disposed of properly. Some e-waste ends up in Europe's landfill sites or incinerators. But **MILLIONS OF TONNES ARE EXPORTED ILLEGALLY AND DUMPED IN AFRICA AND ASIA,** with a devastating impact on the environment and on people's health.

In Ghana, children as young as eight are working for up to 12 hours a day breaking up old computers and salvaging what they can from these toxic e-waste dumps. Without any protective clothing, they are **SUFFERING SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM THE EXPOSURE TO HIGHLY TOXIC CHEMICALS.** For this, they earn \$1 on a good day, and sometimes nothing at all.

This illegal dumping of e-waste is **NOT ONLY DAMAGING CHILDREN'S HEALTH, IT IS ALSO SQUANDERING THE EARTH'S RESOURCES.** Yet if our old mobile phones and laptops are disposed of properly, many of the precious metals can be recycled and reused. **HIGHER RECYCLING RATES WOULD MEAN THAT FEWER NEW RESOURCES WOULD BE EXTRACTED FROM THE EARTH.** And there would be less long-term damage inflicted on our planet.

FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP MAKE IT GREENER AT WWW.MAKEITFAIR.ORG



"I have been wondering why they send their electronic garbage here. Do the children in Europe also stop school to go and break computers and television sets for money?"

PAA KWESI, 17, GHANA

BROKEN COMPUTERS, WASTED LIVES

Every morning at 6am, 16-year-old Ibrahim Harun heads to the vast electronic waste dump in Accra, Ghana's capital city. He spends 12 hours a day in this toxic place, breaking up old computers with rocks. With his bare hands, he pulls out the aluminium and copper wires, then burns them over open fires to extract the copper. The rest of the components are dumped into the river or in nearby fields.

ON THE VERY BEST DAYS, IBRAHIM EARNS AROUND \$1. "Sometimes I make nothing for almost a week and I have to ask my friends for food," he tells us. He has been working at the dump since he was eight years old.

Ibrahim's 25-year-old brother had been working at the dump for almost 12 years when **ILLNESS FORCED HIM TO STOP.** "Now when he coughs, he spits out sputum with blood," says Ibrahim. **"THE DOCTOR SAID HE HAS CANCER."**



IBRAHIM

"I DO NOT HAVE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING," says Ibrahim. "I have scars all over my hands and legs and these are the results of cuts from the e-waste glass from the monitor and other sharp metals." "I am very careful and try as much as possible to avoid inhaling much smoke," he says. **"BUT I DO HAVE HEADACHES AND I GET TIRED WHEN I RUN AND I CANNOT PLAY FOOTBALL AS I USED TO.** I get tired very quickly and have to pant for breath."

Yet in spite of the very real dangers, **BOYS LIKE IBRAHIM RISK THEIR LIVES TO EARN A FEW DOLLARS A WEEK AT THE DUMP.** Ibrahim is working to support his sister through school. **BUT HE DREAMS OF SOMETHING BETTER.** One day, he would like to save up enough money to buy some tools and become a welder – and make himself a better life.

"PEOPLE IN EUROPE DO NOT CARE ABOUT US so they ship their garbage here to us," he says. "The people in Europe should **SEND US BOOKS NOT USELESS COMPUTERS** that do not work but create health problems."

"We are exposed to all sorts of hazards, the smoke from the burning wires is dangerous. It made my brother sick," says Ibrahim.

GREEN LIFECYCLE OF A MOBILE PHONE



IT FACTS

IN 2007, MORE THAN 1.1 BILLION MOBILE PHONES AND 250 MILLION COMPUTERS WERE SOLD AROUND THE WORLD. THESE MASSIVE SALES WILL CREATE A HUGE AMOUNT OF WASTE IN A FEW YEARS.

IN EUROPE, EVERY ONE OF US THROWS AWAY MORE THAN 15 KILOS OF E-WASTE EVERY YEAR.

BETWEEN 20 AND 50 MILLION TONNES OF E-WASTE ARE THROWN AWAY EACH YEAR AROUND THE WORLD.

IN EUROPE, ONLY 25% OF THE 8.7 MILLION TONNES OF ELECTRONIC WASTE IS COLLECTED AND DISPOSED OF PROPERLY EACH YEAR – IN SPITE OF REGULATIONS INTRODUCED IN 2005 TO ENFORCE THE COLLECTION OF E-WASTE.

PRODUCING A NEW COMPUTER WEIGHING JUST A FEW KILOS, ON AVERAGE, USES: 1,500 LITRES OF WATER; 5.300 KWH OF ENERGY; 240 KG OF FOSSILE FULES; AND 22 KG OF OTHER CHEMICALS. TOGETHER THAT MAKES 1,8 TONNES OF RESOURCES – THE WEIGHT OF A RHINO.

Tapping into urban gold

You don't expect to find gold buried on every street corner. But old mobile phones and computers contain a treasure trove of gold, platinum and other precious metals. The amount in each individual phone is tiny, but together the millions of mobile phones sold in 2007 alone contained 29 tonnes of gold. The great news is that more than 95% of the gold and other precious metals can be recycled by specialised companies. However, it is important that the gadgets are recycled in a professional way and not illegally shipped to other continents.

But the big problem is that the recycling rate is low. A 2008 international study by Nokia revealed that only 3% of people recycle their mobile phones. Nearly half of our old phones are kept hidden away at home and never used again.

So, instead of plundering gold resources in Africa and Asia, it's time we saved our precious resources by tapping into our very own source of urban gold contained in our mobiles. All you need to do is take your old mobile phone back to the shop where you bought it. Or take it to a recycling centre in your town.

GUIDE TO GREENER ELECTRONICS

If you want to find out how green your mobile phone manufacturer, computer company or game producer really is, then **VISIT THE GREENPEACE WEBSITE:** www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/electronics/how-the-companies-line-up.

Environmental campaigners Greenpeace have ranked electronic companies according to how well they are dealing with environmental issues. In the last three rankings, Nintendo and Microsoft were rated at the lowest level. Greenpeace also rates the "greenest" laptops, desktop computers, televisions and mobile phones. But sadly **EVEN THE GREENEST ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS STILL HAVE SOME WAY TO GO** before they are truly environmentally friendly.

So, why not write to the companies that make the electronic gadgets you use and ask them to go greener? **IF LOTS OF PEOPLE PUT PRESSURE ON THE COMPANIES THEY WILL HAVE TO LISTEN.**

TURN OVER TO FIND OUT MORE

MAKE IT GO GREEN

There's a new buzz word going around the electronics industry – and that's "Green IT". The problem is that some companies think it's enough to call themselves "Green" if they simply offer energy saving products or services. But makeITfair doesn't think that this is green enough!

There are plenty of green innovations by electronics companies – some are looking into the reduction of toxic chemicals, others into energy efficiency, longer lifecycles or recycling. But the key to making a comprehensively greener product is to combine innovation in each of these individual areas as well as taking action into the mining of metals and the production phase.

And this is where you come in. If young consumers demand really green products, it will convince the electronics giants that there is a demand out there for environmentally friendly products that aren't ruining our planet – and damaging people's health for generations to come.

Look out for more makeITfair leaflets on different aspects of the electronics industry – and join the makeITfair campaign at

www.makeITfair.org



WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT TO OUR E-MAIL ACTION:

- TAKE YOUR E-WASTE TO THE LOCAL COUNCIL OR RETURN IT TO THE STORE!
- USE YOUR GADGETS FOR LONGER OR UPGRADE THEM – ESPECIALLY YOUR COMPUTER OR LAPTOP!
- DO NOT: THROW IT IN THE NORMAL BIN



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This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Commission. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of SOMO and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Commission.

PRINTED ON FSC PAPER
March 2009

GRAPHIC DESIGN: JUST FAIR NL