What are the benefits?

This unprecedented global event involving 1000 cities will result in physical, mental and environmental health benefits, substantial opportunities for small business, and an overall boost in the well-being of participating cities and their citizens.

Many cities worldwide have conducted similar initiatives and continue to do so every weekend. Some of the proven benefits include:

• Cities like Bogota, Cali and Soacha, Colombia, may already be providing their populations with 20% of their recommended weekly physical activity through such programmes.

• 96% of the vendors in one participating city were from the three lowest socioeconomic strata and for 1/3 of them, it was their only source of employment.

• Programmes like these engage the community through volunteerism, providing students completing national service or retired citizens the opportunity to give back to the community.

Through the videos of 1000 lives, we will hear inspirational stories for us all to consider how we as citizens can work together and effect change.

World Health Day is a unique opportunity to focus attention and galvanize governments, civil society and individuals to take action. It is the one day when we can all strive toward a global health goal and have meaningful participation in a global event. On World Health Day 2010 help give voice to our common desire to make cities healthier.

Want to join? Here’s how...

For cities: Sign up and commit to opening public spaces to health for one day during the week of 7 to 11 April 2010. Register at http://www.who.int/whd2010 and tell us what you plan to do.


The 2010 global goal
1000 cities 1000 lives

Be part of a global movement to make cities healthier

World Health Day 2010 will focus on urbanization and health. With the campaign 1000 cities, 1000 lives, events will be organized worldwide:

- **1000 cities**: Cities around the world are called on to open up public spaces to health for one day during the week of 7 to 11 April 2010 – whether it be activities in parks, town hall meetings, clean-up campaigns, or closing off portions of streets to motorized vehicles.

- **1000 lives**: Citizens are asked to provide stories of urban health champions who have taken action and had a significant impact on health in their cities.

Urbanization is one of the greatest health challenges in the 21st century

Urbanization is a trend that is here to stay. In 2007, for the first time in history, over half the world’s population was living in cities. By 2030, 6 out of every 10 people will be living in urban areas.

Take action now to ensure health today and for our future generations.

Urbanization is associated with many health challenges related to water, environment, violence and injury, noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases), unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol as well as the risks associated with disease outbreaks.

Although the threats to urban health are great, the overall picture is far from bleak. Embracing the positive side of urban health goes beyond the roles and responsibilities of government to include the contributions that civil society, community groups, architects, engineers, and responsible businesses can make.

What can we do about it?

The 1000 cities, 1000 lives campaign provides a platform to bring communities together towards a common goal united around health – municipal authorities, civic groups, and individuals. It is also an opportunity for people to enjoy exercise, music and being outdoors with friends and neighbours. Local businesses can enjoy increased sales, and all can enjoy the sense of community the day will bring.

Open public spaces to health.

What is done on World Health Day is up to the creativity, desires, and priorities of each city. Using the streets for free, safe cycling may be fun, but perhaps tai chi, classical or traditional music concerts, or enjoying a 5 or 10-km walk with your mayor, sports stars or other celebrities is more applicable to the context of your city.

Nominate a health champion you know.

Individuals are a powerful force within urban settings, making changes that have enormous health benefits for us all. Do you know someone like this?

- Ohishi is a Japanese boy with asthma who lobbied for two years to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke in his city of Shizuoka.

- Citizens from an informal settlement in India proposed to pick up trash in its alleys, and only needed the municipality to provide a truck.

Through the videos of 1000 lives, we see what can and is being done.

For more information on the types of activities your city can sponsor, see the web site http://www.who.int/whd2010. The 1000 lives stories are available on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/whd2010.