

## Silent Suffocation of Children in Africa

**Access to new resource related to solving global environmental problems added to the PMWL**



Resource provided by [Grace Chebet](#)

8 August 2020 – Kisumu, Kenya – Access to a new resource has been added to the PM World Library (PMWL) related to solving global environmental problems. The new resource is titled “[Silent Suffocation in Africa: Air Pollution is a Growing Menace, Affecting the Poorest Children the Most](#)”, a report by Nicholas Rees, Amy Wickham and Yoonie Cho, Published by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in 2019.

One of the biggest threats to children globally is air pollution. Air pollution is also a growing challenge in Africa. Research points out how it can impact a child’s development as it can threaten their survival, make them sick, cause them to miss school and suffer from chronic infections that affect them well into their adulthood. Children are uniquely vulnerable to air pollution as they are in the process of growing and developing. Even pregnant women are susceptible to toxins contained in the air. Death from outdoor air pollution in Africa has increased by almost 60% while the ones due to indoor air pollution are decreasing. With growing fossil fuel use, air pollution is likely to continue to get worse unless there’s a transition to a more sustainable path of growth. Due to data gaps the full extent of the health impacts and epidemiology of air pollution to children in Africa is not known.

Children’s airways are smaller and they breathe twice as fast, taking in more air per unit of body weight than adults. Air pollution has been shown to impact children’s growing brains. Ultrafine pollution particles are so small that they can enter the bloodstream, travel to the brain and damage the blood-brain barrier which can cause neuro-inflammation while the ultrafine magnetic can cause neurodegenerative diseases. Others can damage areas in the brain critical in helping neurons communicate affecting the child’s development. A young child’s brain is more vulnerable as it can be damaged by a smaller dosage of toxic chemicals compared to an adult’s brain.

Ground level real-time measurements are required as they improve public awareness helping people to customize their behaviors and actions to both reduce air pollution as well as their exposure to it. This monitoring is useful in identifying sources of pollution, shaping public health policy, and even informing the community level action and interventions that target the most affected.

To access this new resource, go to the solving global environmental problems section of the library at <https://pmworldlibrary.net/solving-global-problems> click on clean air-pollution reduction, scroll down to resource. Free access, but please consider registering and supporting the PMWL.

*This new resource provided through the PMWL university research internship program; [to learn more, click here](#)*

**For PMWL Post**

Rees, N., Wickham, A. and Cho, Y., (2019): **Silent suffocation in Africa: Air Pollution is a Growing Menace, Affecting the Poorest Children the Most.** United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), June. Available online on [https://www.unicef.org/media/55081/file/Silent\\_suffocation\\_in\\_africa\\_air\\_pollution\\_2019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/55081/file/Silent_suffocation_in_africa_air_pollution_2019.pdf) ([Chebet](#))

Where to post in the library: <https://pmworldlibrary.net/clean-air/>