

2012 Lush Training Prize Winner: InterNICHE, UK

1. Could you describe who you are and what you do?

InterNICHE is the International Network for Humane Education. We are an NGO, working internationally to enhance education and training in the life sciences through curricular transformation and the replacement of harmful animal use.

There are three distinct, but related, fields in education and training. The first is education *about alternatives* for students and society in general. The second is education and training at the secondary, university and professional levels, *realised through the use of alternatives*. The third is training in alternative techniques *within research and testing*, such as specific *in vitro* technologies.

The specific focus of InterNICHE is the second field: The ethical and effective acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes in medical, veterinary medical and biology education and training.¹ This demands full replacement of harmful animal use — that is, of dissection of purpose-killed animals, animal experiments, and other instrumental animal use. It gives students and trainees access to humane and innovative alternative tools and approaches that reflect best practice.

2. Why were you nominated for the Prize?

InterNICHE philosophy and practice accord with the Lush Training Prize background paper. Both stress the importance of humane education, effective training and awareness, in supporting the successful implementation of alternatives.

Some critical thinking and sensitive students avoid the life sciences altogether, because of harmful animal use. Others are penalised, if they don't conform. More may become desensitised through harmful animal use, a process that erodes the skills and qualities of empathy, compassion and respect for life. Ultimately, the professions lose good scientists and good skills.

In contrast, re-assessing the curriculum and implementing humane learning methods allow better meeting of teaching objectives. The alternatives can also obviate the negative lessons of the hidden curriculum of harmful animal use, and help avoid the process of desensitisation. The pathway from humane education to

humane science is then clearer. Graduates and trainees whose critical thinking, emotional and ethical literacy, and sense of responsibility, have been validated and nurtured, rather than dulled, are better prepared for careers in humane science. InterNICHE's understanding of these challenges and opportunities helped lead to its nomination.

3. Why did you win the Prize?

Alternatives are increasingly being implemented, and the growing momentum means that they are already the norm for many teachers and trainers. InterNICHE is playing a unique role in this process internationally. A broad multicultural network of empowered campaigners builds alliances directly with teachers and others, provides practical resources, and hosts events to facilitate *replacement* and implement the alternatives.

InterNICHE provides multi-language information resources, online academic and alternatives databases, alternatives libraries, seed funding, outreach, conferences, and training events. In winning, special reference was made to InterNICHE projects and outreach across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union.² Some projects have associated examples of thousands of animals replaced, and in the case of dissection in zoology teaching in India, many times more.

4. What difference has winning the Prize made to your contribution to the goal of *Replacement*?

InterNICHE has always focused on *replacement* only. In education and training, *full replacement* is feasible and desirable, and examples of practical classes involving only alternatives can be found for all disciplines. As the Three Rs have limited relevance to the pedagogical field, we have redefined alternatives for education and training as being *replacement* only.³

We have also broadened the definition beyond non-animal tools, such as models, manikins, simulators, software and virtual reality, to include ethically-sourced cadavers and clinical learning opportunities with animal patients. The vision and task of *full replacement* of harmful animal use still remain, and the Lush



Nick Jukes (centre) demonstrates the breath and heart sounds simulator on veterinary training manikin 'Critical Care Jerry', in Chile, 2012.

Training Prize has further strengthened our conviction that creative solutions to ethical and practical challenges can always be found.

5. Could you outline how your work overlaps with current government ethical policy?

The wide availability of alternatives, and examples of humane education and *replacement* already achieved at universities across the world, demonstrate that no harmful animal use is necessary. Individually or in combination, alternative tools and approaches are superior in terms of meeting teaching objectives and of student and trainee performance. As by law, alternatives should be used where possible, ethics committees should disallow requests for all harmful animal use where it still continues. The InterNICHE Policy defines and describes in detail all aspects of the use of animals and alternatives in education and training.⁴ In order to enhance quality, we suggest moving beyond the Three Rs for education and training, to a more realistic focus on *replacement*. Statistics should also include animals used for dissection at university level, but body donation programmes should be widely established to ensure that no animals are killed for the purpose. We also propose a full ban on all animal use at secondary education level.

6. What does winning the Prize mean to your organisation?

The Lush Training Prize acknowledges the importance of implementing alternatives for students and trainees, and the role of humane education in supporting the transition to humane science. Receiving the prize is a validation of the InterNICHE vision of *100% replacement*, and of the practical achievements of InterNICHE National Contacts, Partners and other volunteers, in making this vision real. It also recognises our approach of exploring the multiple positive impacts of alternatives, and of finding common ground with teachers upon which to build collaborative *replacement* activity. The financial reward has provided more freedom to the network, with the opportunity to support some important projects and events across the world.

¹ Jukes, N. & Chiuia, M. (2003). *From Guinea Pig to Computer Mouse: Alternative Methods for a Progressive, Humane Education*, 2nd edn, 520pp. Leicester, UK: InterNICHE.

² Jukes, N., Bhavsar, R., Bhavsar, S., Maroueva, E., Ngonyo, J., Ponce, S., Schirmer, C. & Schmidt, A. (2011). Alternatives seminars and multimedia exhibitions: Global outreach and support for humane education initiatives. *ALTEX* **28**, WC8 Abstracts, 235. [Poster.]

³ Jukes, N. & Martinsen, S. (2008). Three's a crowd: The 1R of replacement for education and training. *AATEX* **14**, Special Issue, 291–293.

⁴ Martinsen, S. & Jukes, N. (2008). From policy to practice: Illustrating the viability of full replacement. *AATEX* **14**, Special Issue, 249–252.