



PRESS RELEASE

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Campaigners Say “Get the Lead Out for Our Children’s Health” as Filipino Children Join Worldwide Action vs Lead Poisoning

19 October 2014, Manila City. More than one hundred kids and parents today gathered at Rizal Park—the country’s premier national park—at the launch of the weeklong global movement to protect children from lead, a toxic chemical that can permanently damage a child’s brain even at low doses.

Organized by the EcoWaste Coalition, an environmental network for zero waste, chemical safety and public health, the event also marked the release of a European Union-funded report about lead levels in dust obtained from 21 locations in five cities in Metro Manila, including residential homes, day-care centers and preparatory schools where children spend much time, and might be exposed to high levels of lead.

Co-hosted by the National Parks Development Committee, the event commenced the Philippines’ celebration of the 2nd International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action (October 19-25) organized by the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, a joint undertaking by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environmental Programme.

The event saw parents and kids parade around the park, accompanied by youth drummers and campaigners brandishing a banner that said “Get the Lead Out for Our Children’s Health.” The group then assembled at the Children’s Playground to learn about lead poisoning through pep talks and fun games, which highlighted the need to keep the children’s environment safe from lead hazard.

“Our assembly today is in support of the growing local and global action to protect children’s brains and enhance the health conditions of all children by preventing and reducing childhood exposure to toxic lead. Our government, the paint industry, the healthcare sector and civil society are working together to remove lead paint in the market and help create a conducive lead-safe environment for our children and our children’s children,” said Jeiel Guarino, Communications and Policy Officer for the Lead Paint Elimination Project, EcoWaste Coalition.

“Lead exposure at an early age can cause harmful lifelong impacts on a child’s developing brain and impair rapid growth and development, making it crucial for environmental lead hazards such as lead paint chips, dust and soil be reduced, if not carefully eliminated, to protect children from the adverse health effects of lead exposure,” explained Dr. Bessie Antonio, a pediatrician from the East Avenue Medical Center.

The World Health Organization’s report on “Childhood Lead Poisoning” states that “these effects are untreatable and irreversible because the human brain has little capacity for repair, causing diminution in brain function and reduction in achievement that last throughout life.”

The lead dust report released by EcoWaste Coalition, entitled “Lead in Household Dust in the Philippines,” provides examples of lead dust levels in sampled locations, and demonstrates why the use of lead-containing decorative paints is a source of serious concern, especially for children’s health. For instance, the study found two preparatory schools with dust lead levels above the 40 µg/ft² dust lead limit in floors in housing defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a dust-lead hazard, with one prep school registering as high as 110 µg/ft² dust lead level.

“Children are not generally exposed to lead from new paint while the paint is still in the can or when the paint is being newly applied to a previously unpainted or uncoated surface. However, as paint on household surfaces chips, wears and deteriorates over time, lead present in the deteriorating paint is released and contaminates surrounding surfaces. In this way, lead in the paint will end up in the household dust and soil surrounding the house,” the report said.



European Union

This project is funded by the European Union.

Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines

The European Union is made up of 28 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable



The EcoWaste Coalition is a partner organization of the Asian Lead Paint Elimination Project, a



a toxics-free future

IPEN is an international organization promoting safe chemical practices that protect human health

The report concluded with a set of recommendations addressed to various stakeholders. In particular, the EcoWaste Coalition urged the government to:

- Ensure strict compliance and enforcement of the Chemical Control Order on Lead and Lead Compounds, issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which prohibits the use of lead in all types of paint beyond 90 ppm (dry weight).
- Establish strong enforcement measures, including periodic monitoring, to ensure paint companies are in compliance with the lead in paint limit and the specific phase-out periods for leaded decorative and industrial paints.
- Provide incentives to paint companies to swiftly transition from lead to non-lead paint production.
- Require paint can labels with sufficient information indicating the lead content and provide a warning of possible lead dust hazards when disturbing painted surfaces.
- Source only lead safe paints for interiors and exteriors of public buildings and amenities (e.g., parks and playgrounds), government-sponsored housing, schools, day-care centers, medical and sports facilities among others.
- Facilitate training on lead-safe working practices when applying paint to previously painted surfaces.

Given the high lead dust levels found in some preparatory schools, the report further recommended that the Department of Education, along with the DENR, the Department of Health and public interest stakeholders, to embark on an investigative study on lead paint hazards in the public educational system.

The EcoWaste Coalition-led campaign is part of a seven-country Asian Lead Paint Elimination Project by IPEN, a global civil society network promoting safe chemical policies and practices to protect human health and the environment.

The European Union has provided a grant of PHP75 million to IPEN for its three-year project that is concurrently being carried out in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines.

References:

(insert link of the Lead Dust Report from ipen.org)

<http://www.who.int/ceh/publications/childhoodpoisoning/en/>

<http://server2.denr.gov.ph/uploads/rmdd/dao-2013-24.pdf>

Suggested Photo Captions:

GET THE LEAD OUT FOR OUR CHILDREN'S HEALTH: Kids and parents join the EcoWaste Coalition's campaign for children's protection against toxic lead at the launch of the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action in Rizal Park, which aims to increase awareness about lead exposure, publicize efforts to stop childhood lead poisoning, and strengthen actions to eliminate lead paint.

ALISIN ANG TINGGA UPANG MAPANGALAGAAN ANG KALUSUGAN NG MGA BATA: Nakilahok ang mga bata at kanilang mga magulang sa kampanya ng EcoWaste Coalition para sa kaligtasan ng mga bata sa nakalalasang tingga sa paglulunsad ng International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action sa Rizal Park na naglalayong imulat ang kamalayan ng mga tao sa lead poisoning at palakasin ang pagkilos upang itigil ang paggamit ng tingga sa paggawa ng pintura.

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IPEN's Asian Lead Paint Elimination Project is working to eliminate lead in paint worldwide and raise widespread awareness among business entrepreneurs and consumers about the adverse human health impacts of lead-based decorative paints, particularly on the health of children under six years old. The seven Asian countries participating in the project includes Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The project includes periodical testing of lead in paints; information and technical support to small and medium paint manufacturers, distributors and retailers to help them shift from lead-based to no-added lead paint formulations; third party certification and labeling that includes information on lead; consultation with key government institutions to enact a globally-accepted standard for lead in paints; preparation and dissemination of information, education and communication (IEC) materials, as well as awareness-raising activities about lead paint and its subsequent effects on children, public health, and the environment.

IPEN is an international NGO network with 700 participating organizations working in 116 countries that promotes safe chemical policies and practices aimed at protecting human health and environment. **EcoWaste Coalition** is a national network of more than 150 public interest groups working on waste, climate, chemical, social justice and development issues. It envisages a zero waste and toxics-free Philippines and strives to attain such a vision by fostering and supporting activism around priority concerns in line with the people's constitutional rights to health and to a balanced and healthful ecology.

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