



a toxics-free future

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**Goldman Environmental Prize Winner Manny Calonzo:
Painting a Brighter Future for Our Children with Lead Safe Paint**

(Stockholm, Sweden): The 2018 Goldman Environmental Prize award to Manny Calonzo for his coalition efforts to eliminate lead paint in the Philippines brings attention to the ongoing threat of lead paint exposure to children in most of the developing world. Lead paint, the greatest single cause of childhood lead exposure globally, can cause irreversible neurological damage. Mr. Calonzo's work to forge partnerships with the public, NGOs, health ministers and paint manufacturers was a winning model in the Philippines and is inspiring similar campaigns to eliminate lead paint throughout the world.

"Together with allies from the public, industry and government, we proved we can rid ourselves of a damaging source of toxic pollution for the good of children in the Philippines. I hope this prize will help reduce lead exposure to children across the planet and paint a healthier future," said Mr. Calonzo.

A long time campaigner for environmental health, Mr. Calonzo, former president and advisor of the [EcoWaste Coalition](#) in the Philippines and leader in [IPEN's](#) global Lead Paint Elimination Campaign, was instrumental in securing the adoption of the first national law banning lead paint production, use and sale in the Philippines. This new law, one of the world's most protective, safeguards nearly 12 million young children from exposure to lead. Lead exposure, even at the smallest amount, can cause lifelong, [untreatable harm](#), including brain damage, harming a child's ability to learn, read, write, and focus in class and participate in society.

"Manny's well-deserved Goldman Prize is a cause for celebration for all those who care about children's health," said Sara Brosché, PhD., IPEN's Lead Paint Elimination Campaign Manager. "The prize will bring international attention to lead paint's profound threat to the children of the world and shines a light on Manny's successful coalition-building campaign model. This strategy was key to the ban in the Philippines and is being used today by NGOs in more than 40 countries, contributing to legally binding laws and mandatory paint standards in 17 countries."

"It is clear that paint companies won't become lead-free by themselves and governments will not take action without coordinated political and market pressure," said Gilbert Kuepouo, PhD., Coordinator of Centre de Recherche et d'Education pour le Développement (CREPD), who was instrumental in achieving a new lead paint law in Cameroon in 2017. "As an advisor to IPEN's global campaign, Manny travels to other regions, and works with and inspires other public

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interest organizations and the private sector to help build coalitions to end lead paint production, sales and use.”

“Manny Calonzo’s campaign to ban lead paint in the Philippines and his development of a third-party certification system for lead-free paint serve as powerful models for how to engage diverse stakeholders to effect meaningful policy change,” said Michael Sutton, Executive Director of the Goldman Environmental Foundation, referring to the world’s first paint certification program, [Lead Safe Paint](#)[®], launched by IPEN in 2015 and harnessed by Calonzo to certify 85% of the paint market in the Philippines. “Manny’s work also serves as a great example for activists in other developing countries who are struggling to address the problem of lead contamination. Thanks to Manny’s work, in partnership with a broad coalition across industries, millions of Filipino children will be spared the profound dangers of lead exposure.”

Dr. Olga Speranskaya, IPEN Co-Chair and 2009 Winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize, said, “The award of the Goldman Environmental Prize to Manny Calonzo helps bring attention to a major environmental health issue. Many organizations around the world are inspired by Manny’s work and follow EcoWaste’s example in the Philippines to eliminate lead paint in their countries so that children are not exposed to lead paint at home or at school.”

"Manny helped spark a global movement to rid the world of lead in paint and protect children's health. With this inspiration and awareness, we will not stop until all existing and legacy lead contamination is finally eliminated," said Pam Miller, IPEN Co-Chair and Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT).

The Global Campaign to Eliminate Lead Paint

“Lead contamination is a preventable scourge on children’s health, their brain development and their future,” said [Dr. Leonardo Trasande](#), an internationally renowned expert on children’s health who estimates the total cumulative cost burden of childhood lead exposure in low- and middle-income countries to be [\\$977 billion international dollars per year](#).

IPEN’s global campaign to eliminate lead paint began in 2008 after [Toxics Link](#), an environmental health NGO in India, found that lead paint was widely sold to the public in India. Thereafter, the IPEN global network arranged paint studies in several countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Shockingly, in every country sampled, most of the solvent-based, decorative enamel paints tested had hazardously high lead content.

Ravi Agarwal, founder of Toxics Link and a founding member of IPEN, states, “This prestigious award to Manny represents a growing awareness of the need for action to protect the children of the world today for our future tomorrow from lead and other toxic chemical threats.”

Lead-based paint contaminating household dust in older buildings is the leading cause of lead contamination in the US and throughout the world. Recent research in [The Lancet](#) concluded

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that 412,000 cardiovascular deaths a year in the US are attributable to lead contamination in adults, ten times higher than previous estimates. Experts anticipate higher impacts in the developing world, where protections are lacking and tropical environs cause paint to erode more quickly.

IPEN's most recent [global lead paint report](#), the largest such report to date, revealed that, of 54 countries, 50 have house paints on the market that contain lead. Forty percent had extremely high levels in more than a quarter of paints analyzed. (An [interactive](#) map illustrating lead in paint on the market in 45 countries can be viewed [here](#).)

In the past ten years local health and environment NGOs have successfully led campaigns and achieved effective, legally-binding laws and mandatory paint standards in 17 countries.

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Editors and reporters: to arrange interviews with Manny Calonzo or to contact leaders of campaigns to eliminate lead paint in other countries around the world, please contact LauraVyda@IPEN.org.

[IPEN](#) is a public interest network of more than 500 NGOs in over 100 countries working for a toxics-free future.

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