

International Mercury Treaty Enabling Activities Program (IMEAP)

Following the signing of the Minamata Convention on Mercury (the ‘Mercury Treaty’) in 2013 and the release of the IPEN Minamata Declaration on Toxic Metals, IPEN expanded its Mercury-Free Campaign and developed a broad program of treaty-enabling activities to be implemented in conjunction with IPEN Participating Organizations (POs). The International Mercury Treaty Enabling Activities Program (IMEAP) is geared toward raising awareness about the mercury treaty while generating data on key thematic elements of mercury pollution to help enable countries to implement the Minamata Convention.

IPEN launched IMEAP in early 2014 and continues to mobilise resources for IPEN POs to conduct activities that support implementation of the mercury treaty¹.

The key objectives of the IPEN IMEAP are:

1. *Preparing for Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Creating synergies between NGOs in developing countries with ongoing UN agency or government-led mercury activities and NGO priority-setting.
2. *Enabling Activities to Prepare Countries for Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Support to NGOs to carry out national and thematic mercury treaty activities.
3. *Communication of Issues Related to Mercury and Treaty Ratification & Implementation:* Global dissemination of project results & south-south collaboration.

The following project forms part of the overall IMEAP activities and contributes to the greater global understanding of mercury pollution issues while providing information that may contribute to Minamata Initial Assessments (MIA) and raise public awareness in preparation for early ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

¹ IPEN would like to acknowledge the financial contributions from the governments of Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, and the Swedish public development co-operation aid through the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and other donors. The views herein shall not necessarily be taken to reflect the official opinion of any of these donors, including SSNC or its donors.

IPEN Mercury Treaty Enabling project - Albania

NGO: EDEN Center (Environmental Center for Development Education and Networking)

Date: 30/06/15

Title of project: Let`s keep control on the mercury around us!

Summary

Albanian NGO 'EDEN Center' (Environmental Center for Development Education and Networking) approached this project from the ambitious angle of awareness-raising on mercury pollution and the Mercury Treaty through youth networks, media and especially social media. EDEN produced a mini-documentary canvassing the views of ordinary Albanians in the city of Tirana, gauging their awareness level of mercury pollution and disseminating information to help inform the public of this hazardous pollutant and global attempts to control its distribution and use through the Treaty process. EDEN also conducted extensive outreach to youth related organisations through its teams of volunteers and social media. Engagement with authorities managing mercury policy issues also proved fruitful, with acknowledgement from authorities that they intend to ratify the Mercury Treaty in the near future and would welcome further awareness-raising activities by EDEN. While it proved challenging for EDEN to gain permission for public presentation of their documentary, they nonetheless held screenings and advertised this resource through social media such as YouTube.

Describe which aspects of mercury pollution you have prioritized for awareness-raising and why it is required.

- ⊕ Negative effects of mercury and how to protect themselves from unnecessary ill exposure to it.
- ⊕ Albanian public have a lack of information on negative mercury effects in their health and environment.
- ⊕ Albania has inherited contaminated sites with mercury pollution from the period of communism.

Describe what levels of awareness exist on mercury pollution issues among the public, regulators, media, industry and government.

During the project implementation it was noted that the level of information among the public was very low and they are saying there is no information related to mercury available. On the other hand, the government is very familiar with all the risks caused by mercury pollution and above all it has a plan to develop a national campaign regarding disseminating information to the public. Although the media has a lot of information, it is lukewarm in disseminating information. Media trends today provide sensational news (political, accidents, where there are victims, etc.) that immediately attract the attention of the public, while when it comes to being a bridge to share information with the public regarding issues such as the risk of exposure to mercury pollution, the media has no particular interest. However, this cannot be generalized to all media because some of the print media (those with environmental and health focus) regularly disseminate information.

Explain what level of information local industries have access to that is linked to the issue of mercury.

We can say that every business in Albania has detailed information on issues that affect the environment and health, but most claim to have no knowledge about mercury.

Describe why you have prioritized a particular group or groups in your community with which to raise awareness of mercury pollution.

The target groups we have chosen to work with in our community are young people. This group was not chosen randomly, but because the young people are the future of a country. The young people of today in Albania have more access to information (like PC, smart phone and internet without limitation); however, despite that access they choose to focus on unnecessary information about celebrities and social network sites which do not provide educational information but, on the contrary, often provide misleading information. We thought that by disseminating information exactly in the target group we could educate the broader community more efficiently. Young people quickly distribute information among themselves, to young sisters and brothers and to their parents. By educating the young people you can educate a wider community.

Describe the methods that you have chosen to raise awareness among the population on mercury issues and why they are of strategic significance.

The methodology that was chosen was based on the commitment of a group of young people to create a documentary regarding the risks posed by mercury and screen it in various neighborhoods of Tirana. Additionally, several lectures on the risk of mercury would be delivered in different high schools in Tirana, and information would be distributed via different social networks and in leaflets.

Our aim through this strategy was the dissemination of information to the broader community through youth awareness of the impact that mercury has on health and the environment.

Describe the level of awareness of the Minamata Convention and the need for early ratification among the public, regulators, media, industry and government.

The Minamata Convention is known only by a few people in the general public, and we can say that the level of information is very low. The small sector of the public who may have any information are those that have relatives employed in areas that receive continuous information on the Minamata Convention. As part of our project we met with policy makers who revealed that the central government has in its plans ratification of the Minamata Convention. They are considering the development of a big national campaign aiming at raising awareness in the general public about the Convention and the risk of exposure to mercury. This has become clear from the engagement of policy makers in the ministries and their inclusion of mercury in one of the articles on the new law of chemicals (it is still in the process of drafting).

Project Outcome:

Describe the activity conducted:

1. Information documentary on everyday life and mercury around us

In the frame of the project activities, in December 2014 we started building up a working group which consisted of the project coordinator, Mrs. Albana Bregaj, and 5 volunteers of EDEN Center which helped develop the scenario of the documentary.

During the period of December and January we worked in making a scenario for the documentary; collecting information, taking photos, approaching normal people and pregnant women in random areas such as in the street, shops, public institutions, etc. Also, we conducted interviews with people from institutions that play an important role in the health and environment society and people who have relevant information about mercury that can be spread to the broad public to understand and learn more about negative effects of mercury and how to protect themselves from unnecessary exposure to it. At this point we began preparing and editing the documentary.²

2. Outdoor activities in different neighborhoods of Tirana

Once the documentary was prepared and ready to be shown to the wider public, the project coordinator developed a plan around which locations the documentary will be shown.

In the project proposal we planned to display this documentary³ in open areas in Tirana. Formal and informal requests were sent to the Tirana Municipality for collaboration in displaying the documentary, but no response from this institution was received. EDEN could not develop this activity in open areas without permission from the City Hall. As a result, EDEN decided to develop the activity in closed areas that promote youth engagement.

The first showing of the documentary took place on 2nd of June at “Qendra Rinore” in Tirana, which is a youth center, created for the youngest children by the Ministry of Social Issues. Around 10 participants were present to see and learn more information about mercury’s negative effects on health and the environment. The second showing took place in the same place at the youth center on the 4th of June, with the participation of 10 children.

The documentary was also shown on the EDEN premises on 1st and 9th of June with the participation of around 40 young people coming by EDEN volunteers and “Cajupi” high school. The last showing took place in the “Kristaq Rama” high school with the presence of around 40 students on 29 of May 2015.

In total around 100 young people watched the documentary about being aware of the effects of mercury. The documentary has also been displayed on the EDEN Facebook page, YouTube and the EDEN website. Part of this activity was also the distribution of the leaflets on the risks of mercury in food to the citizens in different areas of Tirana.⁴

3. Addressing the mercury problem with policy makers

² Please find below the documentary link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-dKgidKAKe>

³ Please find as Annex I photo taken during the activity

⁴ Please find as Annex I photo taken during the activity

In the frame of this activity we held several meetings with the aim of addressing the problems and obtaining the right information regarding the ratification of the Minamata Convention. During the period of January we met Mrs. Evelina Balliu, representative of the Public Health Directorate of Durres district, and a pediatrician.

Our aim was to develop the meeting with a representative of a local government unit (city Durres being one that is very close with Tirana and is the largest city that provides Albania with sea products) in order to impact these institutional units and develop a shared view on the hazards of mercury. On 17th of June we had a meeting with Mrs. Lediana Karalliu (responsible for the sector of Waste and Industrial Accidents, Ministry of Environment) and Mr. Vladimir Beazhani (Minister's Advisor) to address our concerns about the Minamata Convention. After a positive meeting, these officials liaised with the Ministry of Environment (within which the National Mercury Treaty Focal Point was positioned) to suggest they meet with EDEN. On 24th of June we organized a meeting with Mrs. Laureta Dibra (Head of Air, Climate Change and Chemicals Sector). During the meeting Mrs. Dibra informed us about the next steps that the Ministry would be taking. Please see the "Impact on target policies" section of this report for more information related to the meeting.

4. Education lessons in secondary schools⁵

At least 15 educational lectures were planned to be developed in Tirana high schools. Lectures were prepared by the project coordinator with a simple methodology in order to be simply understood by the teenagers.

Initially we contacted the Ministry of Education in Albania with the request for cooperation. Our request was based on receiving confirmation to select five high public schools in Tirana in order to promote our project and develop the lectures. The conclusion was that EDEN did not receive any response to this collaboration and therefore we had no opportunity to work with public schools.

Automatically we started communications with non-public schools, though even with these schools we had difficulties with cooperation. The schools communicated to us that working in such projects required confirmation from the Ministry of Education.

But with our hard work in promoting the project, two of non-public schools accepted the collaboration in this project. Our work in youth awareness began with the high school "Kristaq Rama" on 29th of May. Approximately 21 students gained large and useful information about the impact that mercury has on health and the environment. It is necessary that education starts in the younger generations because in this way we create the opportunity to spread the information more broadly in the community.

Another high school was "Cajupi" and volunteers of EDEN engaged with approximately 23 students on 1st and 9th of June. During the lectures the students were shown the examples of areas contaminated with mercury, and how the community of these areas has reacted and been affected. Information generated from the previous projects we have developed on mercury has been an important resource for this campaign⁶.

⁵ Please find as Annex I photo taken during the activity

⁶ Please find as Annex II the list of participants

Engagement of and impact on Target Groups

Provide detail on your NGOs engagement with the target groups and report the result of the activity on the target groups:

In the project we have involved these target groups:

- ✦ **Young people:** This target group was engaged in working with the documentary and was the group that we selected to receive educational lessons about the risk of mercury. We can say that this target group is one of the groups that the project aimed to influence more. Young people who were briefed on the risk of mercury expressed that such information is very important for them and this information should be offered more frequently in schools from different organizations (governmental or non-governmental). We think that the involvement of youth in the implementation of the project but also in the awareness part was very valuable for the community awareness.
- ✦ **General public:** The information to the general public was distributed through EDEN center website, leaflets, social networks (like Facebook) and environmental electronic newspaper Mjedi Sot. Providing information to this target was difficult due to the fact that some of the project activities did not take place on-the-ground as we anticipated at the beginning of the project implementation.
- ✦ **Directory of Public Health in Durres.** We conducted meetings and exchange of information with them.

Impact on target policies

Define the target policies and the result of the NGO activity on the target policies:

One of the impacts of this project was to influence policy makers regarding the signing and ratification of the Minamata Convention. Since Albania is one of the states that has signed the Convention, our meeting with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) was based on getting information related to the progress toward ratification. We aimed to be informed about the working plan of the Ministry in relation to the way that will lead us to its ratification. On 24th of June we had a meeting with Mrs. Laureta Dibra, who is the Head of Air, Climate Change and Chemicals Sector. We discussed implementation of our projects related to areas contaminated with mercury. We provided a broad overview of the activities that were developed with the awareness of the community and also we mentioned the national report drafted in 2013 with the help of IPEN and Arnika Association for Soda-PVC plant hotspot. Mrs. Dibra informed us that the MOE had plans to ratify the Convention. She highlighted that ratification is a long and hard path which would need expertise, human resources, financial costs and, most important, a large awareness campaign for the community. She mentioned the fact that the MOE saw the opportunity to apply for grants through UNDP in order to develop the process of ratification.

Outreach to Stakeholders: Record the key stakeholders and sectors that were engaged in this activity, and any potential to develop further involvement with these stakeholders:

Ministry of Environment Forest and Water Administration: This governmental institution was involved directly in our project. We have established contacts with them and they

communicated that they are open to a future collaboration in order to develop awareness-raising campaigns for the general public, but also by providing their expertise. Face-to-face meetings will follow this initiative.

Deliverables, outputs and/or products:

- ✦ Risks of mercury documentary
- ✦ Lessons on mercury
- ✦ Public awareness-raising leaflets

Communication Efforts: Describe efforts to communicate this activity to the media and/or general public. Please include media coverage and/or photos or visuals.

During the project we have published data for the project at our website:

<http://www.eden-al.org/index.php/en/news/214-le-te-mbajme-nen-kontroll-merkurin-rreth-nesh>

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153116508827561.1073741882.319334287560&type=3&uploaded=9>

Communication with National or Local Authorities

Indicate any communication to or coordination with your National Mercury Treaty Focal Point, or any other national or local authority related to mercury management regarding your Activity:

Yes we have communicated with the National Mercury Treaty Focal Point in Tirana. Mrs. Laureta Dibra is the National Focal Point for the Treaty and is the person who we can refer these issues to in MOE. The aim of the communication is explained in the preceding paragraph "Impact on target policies".

Mercury Treaty Focal Point: Provide the name and contact details of your National Mercury Treaty Focal Point.

Mrs. Laureta Dibra, Head of Air, Climate Change and Chemicals Sector,
Ministry of Environment
E-mail: laureta.dibra@moe.gov.al

Recommendations, from a public interest, NGO perspective, on reducing and eliminating human sources of mercury:

- ✦ A large public awareness campaign for the general public and close cooperation with governmental institutions to tackle this issue more widely and with more responsibility.

What, if anything, changed from the original plans and why?

Three activities were changed:

1. In the project we planned to display this documentary in open areas in Tirana. A request letter⁷ and further formal and informal communication was undertaken with the Tirana Municipality for collaboration, aiming to approve the display of the documentary. However, there was no response from this institution. EDEN could not develop this activity in open areas without permission from the City Hall. Thus EDEN decided to develop the activity in close areas that promote youth engagement.
2. Developing the lectures in public high schools was another objective of our project. Initially we contacted the Ministry of Education in Albania with the request for cooperation⁸. We planned to select five high public schools in Tirana in order to promote our project and develop the lectures. The conclusion was that EDEN did not receive any response about this suggested collaboration, and therefore we had no opportunity to work with public schools. Automatically we started communications with non-public schools. However, we had difficulties with cooperation. These schools communicated to us that in order to work on such projects we were supposed to receive confirmation from the Ministry of Education. With our hard work we finally concluded to work with 2 schools, one public and one non-public.
3. Signing the Minamata Convention: In November 2014 Albania signed the Minamata Convention. At this point we had a meeting with the Mercury Treaty Focal Point in Albania to promote the results of the project in order to influence the ratification of Convention.

Resources on mercury: Please list websites, databases, reports, academic researchers, laboratories, etc. that you are familiar with.

<http://www.unep.org/chemicalsandwaste/Metals/Mercury/tabid/434/Default.aspx>

<http://www.eden-al.org/OldWeb/media/Raporti%20nderkombeatre1%281%29.pdf>

<http://www.eden->

[al.org/OldWeb/media/Raporti%20kombetar%20i%20Shqiperise1%281%29.pdf](http://www.eden-al.org/OldWeb/media/Raporti%20kombetar%20i%20Shqiperise1%281%29.pdf)

<http://www.atmos-chem-phys.net/10/5951/2010/acp-10-5951-2010.pdf>

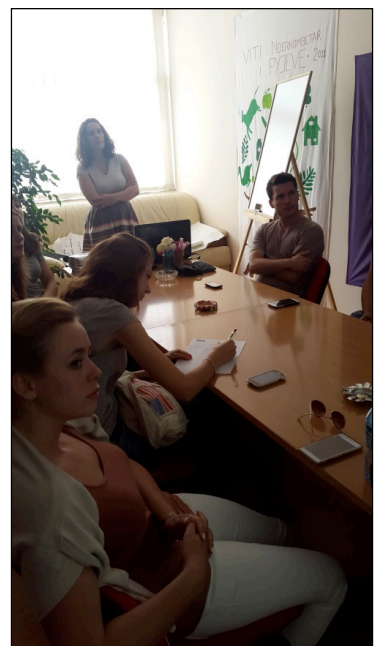
http://www.htap.org/meetings/2008/2008_04/Presentations/07-04-08/1%20-%20Session-1_PIRRONE.pdf

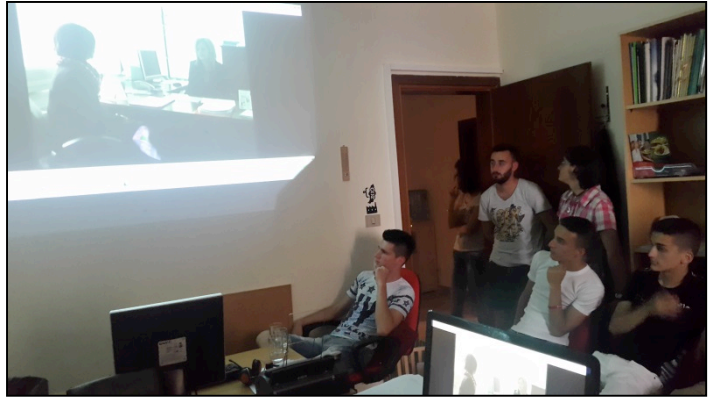
Annex 1 - Photos taken during the lectures/ during the documentaries / during distribution of the leaflets.



operation to the Ministry of Education










Annex 2 – List of participants (provided to IPEN)

Annex 3 - Communication with government institutions

 Qendra Mjedisore
për Zhvillim
Edukim dhe Rrjetëzim

Tiranë, më 26 /01/ 2015
Nr. Prot . 5/2015

Drejtuar : Znj. Arjola Byzyka
Drejtores, Drejtoria Arsimore Rajonale e Qytetit Tiranë

Nga: Qendra EDEN

Subjekti: Kërkesë për marrje leje për zhvillimin e leksioneve informuese në Shkollat e Mesme Publike të Tiranës

Qendra EDEN është një organizatë mjedisore, jofitimprurëse, jopolitike, që synon të kontribuojë në zhvillimin e qëndrueshëm dhe të një mjedisi të shëndetshëm përmes informimit, edukimit dhe ofrimit të shërbimeve në partneritet me aktorët e interesuar.

Qendra EDEN është duke zbatuar projektin “**Le të mbajmë nën kontroll Mërkurin rreth nesh!**” mbështetur nga Rrjeti Ndërkombëtar për Elemenimin e Ndotësve Organik të Qëndrueshëm (IPEN) me bazë në New York, USA. Ky projekt ka një periudhë kohore prej 5 muajsh Nëntor 2014-Prill 2015.

Ky projekt ka për qëllim të informojë publikun e gjerë rreth rreziqeve që shkakton Mërkuri në produktet ushqimore dhe produktet kozmetike.

Në kuadër të këtij projekti EDEN dëshiron të organizojë leksione në lidhje me rrezikshmërinë e Mërkurit me nxënësit e Shkollave të Mesme Publike të Tiranës.

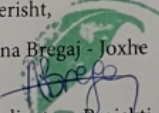
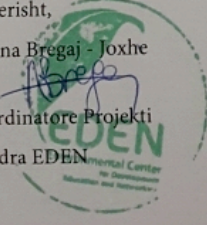
Leksionet do të kenë një informacion interaktiv ku do të shfaqen përveç informacionit ndërgjigësues dhe informues për të rinjtë por jo vetëm, do të shfaqen dhe shëmbuj të zonave të kontaminuara me Mërkur në Shqipëri dhe se si komuniteti i këtyre zonave ka reaguar.

Gjithsej do të zhvillohen 15 leksione (3 leksione/shkollë) përgjatë muajit Mars 2015 dhe mendojmë ti zhvillojmë gjatë orëve të lëndës Kimi, Biologji ose në orët ekstrakurikulare.

Me qëllim përmbushjen e këtij misioni, Qendra EDEN ju drejtohet me këtë kërkesë për zgjedhjen e 5 (pesë) Shkollave të Mesme Publike në Tiranë dhe marrje leje për zhvillimin e leksioneve informuese.

Për më shumë informacion ju lutem mos hezitoni të kontaktoni në albana.bregaj@eden-al.org; ose tel. 42 227615.

Duke ju falenderuar paraprakisht, shpresojmë në marrjen e një përgjigjeje pozitive nga ana juaj!

Sinqerisht,
Albana Bregaj - Joxhe

Koordinatorë Projekti
Qendra EDEN 

EDEN – Qendra Mjedisore për Zhvillim, Edukim dhe Rrjetëzim
Rr. Bogdani, Pall. 7 katësh, K.4, Ap.33
Tirana – Albania
www.eden-al.org
eden@eden-al.org

Tiranë, më 26/02/ 2015

Nr. Prot . 5.1/2015

Drejtuar : Drejtorisë së zhvillimit dhe kontrollit të territorit

Nga: Qendra EDEN

Subjekti: Leje për zhvillim aktiviteti

Qendra Mjedisore EDEN është një organizatë jofitimprurëse, jopolitike, që synon të kontribuojë në zhvillimin e qëndrueshëm dhe të një mjedisi të shëndetshëm përmes informimit, edukimit dhe ofrimit të shërbimeve në partneritet me aktorët e interesuar.

Qendra EDEN është duke zbatuar projektin "Le të mbajmë nën kontroll Mërkurin rreth nesh" mbështetur nga Rrjeti Ndërkombëtar për Elemenimin e Ndotësve Organik të Qëndrueshëm (IPEN).

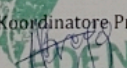
Ky projekt ka për qëllim të informojë publikun e gjerë rreth rreziqeve që shkakton Mërkuri në produktet ushqimore dhe produktet kozmetike.

Në kuadër të këtij projekti do të zhvillohet shfaqja e njëdokumentari me një kohëzgjatje prej 20 minuta me qëllim ndërgjegjësimin e qytetarëve mbi rrezikshmërinë e Mërkurit si dhe do të shpërndahen materiale informuese.

Me qëllim përmbushjen e këtij misioni, Qendra EDEN ju drejtohet me këtë kërkesë për leje për shfaqjen e këtij dokumentari në zonat e mëposhtme :

1. Liqeni Artificial-Diga
2. Qendra e Tiranës-Rrethrotullimi
3. Rruga Pedonale
4. Vëllezërit Frashëri
5. Stadiumi Dinamo
6. Sheshi Straus

Qendra EDEN ju falenderon për bashkëpunimin e deritanishëm me Bashkinë Tiranë dhe shpreson në një bashkëpunim në vazhdimësi!

Sinqerisht,
Albana Bregaj Joxhe
Koordinatorë Projekti

Qendra EDEN

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