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Lead Paint Still Sold in a Majority of Countries despite Global Phase-Out Efforts— NGOs Lead the Way to Elimination

(Report)

(Gothenburg, Sweden/Davao City, Philippines) **Enforced lead paint regulation makes a critical difference for eliminating one of the most widespread threats of lead poisoning for children, a new report shows, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a key role in catalyzing national regulations.**

The [report](#), from the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), with data on lead in paint from almost 60 countries, shows that in 25 out of 27 countries that adopted protective legal limits on lead in paint since 2008, these were propelled by the work of non-governmental organizations. Countries without enforced regulations in place had lead paint available on the market posing health risks to children and other vulnerable groups.

A [survey](#) from the World Health Organization shows that lead paint is still not regulated in a majority of countries, despite a [global goal](#) to phase out these paints by the year 2020. As of 31 May 2020, **only 39%** of countries had confirmed that they have legally binding controls on lead paint. In addition, many of these regulations are not protective enough since they include exemptions, lax limits, or are not enforced.

Progress achieved to date is largely due to efforts by NGOs. NGOs have led national campaigns and provided momentum to the process of developing new or strengthened legislations in almost 50 countries in total over the past 12 years. A key conclusion based on the IPEN analysis of more than 3,500 solvent-based paints is clear: **NGOs in collaboration with country stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society, are very effective in supporting country action to adopt lead paint regulations and ultimately eliminate lead paint.**

“It is encouraging to see countries adopting new, strong laws to ban lead paint and the critical role that public interest groups have played in facilitating fruitful collaboration with other stakeholders. NGOs bring a unique citizens’ perspective and experience to the table and have been instrumental in moving the goal of eliminating lead paint forward nationally, regionally, and globally,” said Manny Calonzo, IPEN Advisor, and winner of the [Goldman Environmental Prize](#) for his alliance work in the Philippines with the NGO EcoWaste Coalition.



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This week, during the eighth annual **International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action**, these successes are celebrated and the urgent need for additional action is highlighted through [activities by NGOs](#) in 36 countries.

In Philippines, the Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) conducted a round table discussion on lead safe policy in Davao City. IDIS invited resource speakers from various regional departments such as Commission on Human Rights, Department of Education, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, IPEN, and City Government of Davao represented by Councilor Pilar Braga.

Councilor Braga presented the city ordinance requiring the purchase and use of lead safe paints in constructions and buildings in Davao City. She remembered that the process of drafting and implementing the ordinance was not easy and smooth sailing but she is happy that finally it was passed and approved. Engr. Jason Henderin, Area Inspector of DENR XI also presented the DENR Administrative Order 2013-24 and its updates. He tackled about Republic Act 6969 or the act to control toxic substances and hazardous and nuclear wastes which he highlighted the Chemical Management particularly on Lead. He also specified the products which they prohibit the use of lead. Some of these products are on paint, cosmetics, toys, school supplies, food packaging, etc.

Commission on Human Rights and Department of Education also presented their efforts in supporting the lead-safe campaign. Atty. Junitte Rose Baroquillo shared the CHR's The People's Right to Chemical Safety: A Fifteen-Point Human Rights Agenda. "Everybody, we have to take into consideration the inputs of our environmentalists or people from the medical field when we talk about chemical safety," she said. Mr. Rene Agbayani of DepEd XI also discussed the DepEd order on mandatory use lead safe paints in schools. He emphasized that all paints used on schools are lead free including those donated by different stakeholders during Brigada Eskwela. "We require products that are non-lead paints for the safety of the students," he assured.

Sir Jeiel Guarino, IPEN Global Lead Paint Elimination Campaigner, discussed to the participants about the status of lead laws in global arena. "The IPEN's mission is to have a toxic-free future for everyone in which chemicals are no longer produced or used in ways that harm human health and the environment," he emphasized.

"The use of lead in paint has been banned in many industrialized countries for decades, and cost-effective alternatives to leaded paint ingredients are widely available. Yet children throughout the developing world continue to be exposed to lifelong and irreversible damage due to exposure to lead in paint. This situation is completely preventable. Lead paint needs to be eliminated in the Philippines," said Chinkie Pelino-Golle, IDIS Executive Director.

"Lead paint is one of the most widespread sources of childhood lead exposure and can cause permanent and irreversible brain damage in [children's developing brains](#). Lead paint can cause reduced intelligence quotient (IQ) and attention span, impaired learning ability, and increased risk of behavioral problems. There is no known level of lead exposure without harmful effects and we therefore need concerted efforts to prohibit



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lead in all types of paint,” said Jeiel Guarino, IPEN Global Lead Paint Elimination Campaigner.

In order to accelerate efforts to eliminate lead paint globally within the next five years, the report calls for:

- International agencies to continue providing guidance and information to individual governments seeking assistance in establishing regulatory controls on lead in paint.
- National governments to take steps now to begin developing lead paint regulations in consultation with national stakeholders.
- Paint manufacturers, paint industry trade associations, and paint ingredient vendors to take voluntary action immediately to eliminate lead from all paints.
- Donors to make significant new resources available for global lead paint elimination, with a focus on strategic country actions.

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[IPEN](#) (International Pollutants Elimination Network), the global environmental health network of over 600 organizations in 124 countries, works to eliminate and reduce the most hazardous substances to forge a toxics-free future.

IDIS (Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability), a non-government organization that advocates for the protection and management of life-sustaining watersheds, from ridge-to-reef, in South-Central Mindanao.