

Evaluation of Lead Concentrations in Domestic and Imported Paints, and the Development and Distribution of Educational Materials on Lead Hazards for SAICM Implementation in Cameroon

“The results of our limited sample reveal that much of the paint being applied to schools, daycare facilities, and residential structures in Cameroon contain significant concentrations of lead, ranging up to 500,000 ppm. This situation is of serious concern to children’s health and to workers involved in paint manufacturing, applying paints, and disturbing painted surfaces.”

- Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene, May 2013.



Project snapshot:

The project aimed to protect human health and the environment from the exposure to lead from lead paints in Cameroon. The main focused was ensuring that imported and locally manufactured paints without added lead are available in the market by promoting the substitution of lead in paints, and creating awareness of the health effects of lead exposure among the general public and decision makers. The project involved testing paint samples purchased in seven cities and surveying 1376 paint containers for labeling practices. The findings revealed that 66% of the products tested were lead paint and none of the paint containers surveyed had any warning labels. Delivery of these information helped to address SAICM strategic priorities on risk reduction, governance, knowledge and information.

Results:

- ~ Increased awareness of exposures to lead from paints and other sources;
- ~ Obtained support among governments and relevant stakeholders to seek regulation;
- ~ Elevated lead paint elimination as a priority issue at the national level;
- ~ Paint manufacturers reformulated their products and improved labeling practices and signed an agreement to collaborate to phase out lead paints in Cameroon.
- ~ Henceforth, paint importers are required to submit data on lead concentrations to the ministry of environment.
- ~ Led to the creation of the National Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint as a multi-stakeholder platform for continuous awareness raising and information sharing on lead hazards in Cameroon.
- ~ Catalyzed the formation of a technical committee to develop a national policy instrument to regulate the lead contents of paints to ensure institutionalization and sustainability.
- ~ Follow up activities are currently ongoing under the funding of the Conservation, Food, and Health Foundation, a USA based foundation in collaboration with Occupational Knowledge
- ~ This project is being replicated in seven Asian countries.



Outstanding Civil Society QSP project in African Region