



PLF Update on Progress, Partnerships, and the Path Ahead

Pure Earth: Our Audacious Idea: Protect 500 Million Children from Lead Poisoning by 2033



Pure Earth's Big Bold Audacious Idea

Last week, Pure Earth was named a grantee of The Audacious Project, receiving a major multi-year investment to help governments in more than 20 countries reduce lead exposure at scale and protect over 500 million children by 2033. We now begin one of the most ambitious global responses to lead poisoning prevention in history. Housed at TED, The Audacious Project is a collaborative funding initiative dedicated to supporting bold ideas with the potential to change the world. This is not simply a grant. It is transformational funding designed to accelerate national action and create effective public health systems that prevent lead exposure before harm occurs.

[**Read the Announcement**](#)

Stanford University: Stanford's Project Unleaded takes on global lead poisoning crisis



[Image credit: Akhil Chandran] Lead, one of the most toxic substances on Earth, has turned up recently in protein powders, apple sauce, and other common food products. The discoveries are reminders that lead exposure remains a threat everywhere, not just in developing countries. "Americans generally think we've solved the lead problem," said Stephen Luby, principal

investigator for Project Unleaded, a Stanford University initiative based at the Center for Human and



Planetary Health working to identify and eliminate major sources of lead poisoning worldwide. “This is fundamentally not true.” Lead exposure kills approximately 5 million people annually and causes permanent brain damage in 800 million children across the globe. It lowers IQ, impairs learning, and costs the world economy over \$1 trillion each year. Yet until recently, the problem received less than 1% of the funding allocated to diseases like malaria or tuberculosis.

[**Read the News Release**](#)

Lead Exposure Elimination Project: Pakistan Follow-up Paint Study Results



A new study reveals that Pakistan has cut in half the share of lead paint on the market since LEEP began its work there. LEEP and the Pakistan

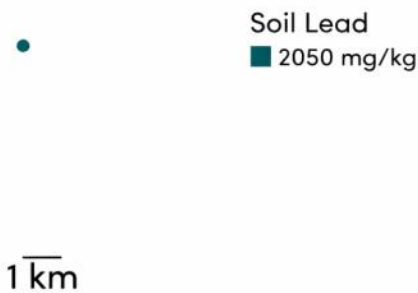
Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), in consultation with Pakistan Coating Association (PCA), conducted the study to examine shifts in how much of the market is still made up of lead paint. The results suggest that the market share of brands selling oil-based lead paint for home use has reduced from approximately 88% in 2021 to 41% in 2024. The progress was driven by major reformulation efforts: eight of Pakistan’s largest brands and 12 medium- and small-sized brands, which previously had high levels of lead, showed no detectable lead in the tested samples. These brands represent about 47% of the market, and the results suggest that they have switched to lead-free following LEEP’s engagement.

[**Read the Blog**](#)

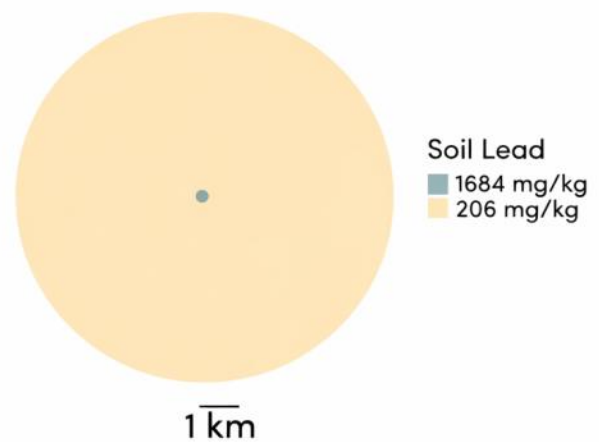


Center for Global Development: Battery Recycling Is a Far Bigger Source of Lead Exposure Than We Thought

Previous Model



Our Model



Policymakers are increasingly interested in tackling global lead exposure. One critical obstacle is that we don't have a clear sense of what the most common sources of exposure are. The single largest use of lead is in car batteries, and unsafe recycling of these batteries is harmful, but we don't know exactly how harmful. Prior estimates suggested battery recycling is only a small part of the problem. However, a new CGD working paper shows that it could account for a third of all lead exposure in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This estimate comes with a lot of uncertainty, with a 95 percent confidence interval spanning from 20 percent to 90 percent of the burden, and an 80 percent confidence interval from 26 percent to 71 percent of the burden. But the bottom line is clear: lead exposure from battery recycling is not insignificant.

[**Read the Blog**](#)



Lead Research for Action: Assessing Lead Exposure Risks from Commonly Used Consumer Products in Malawi

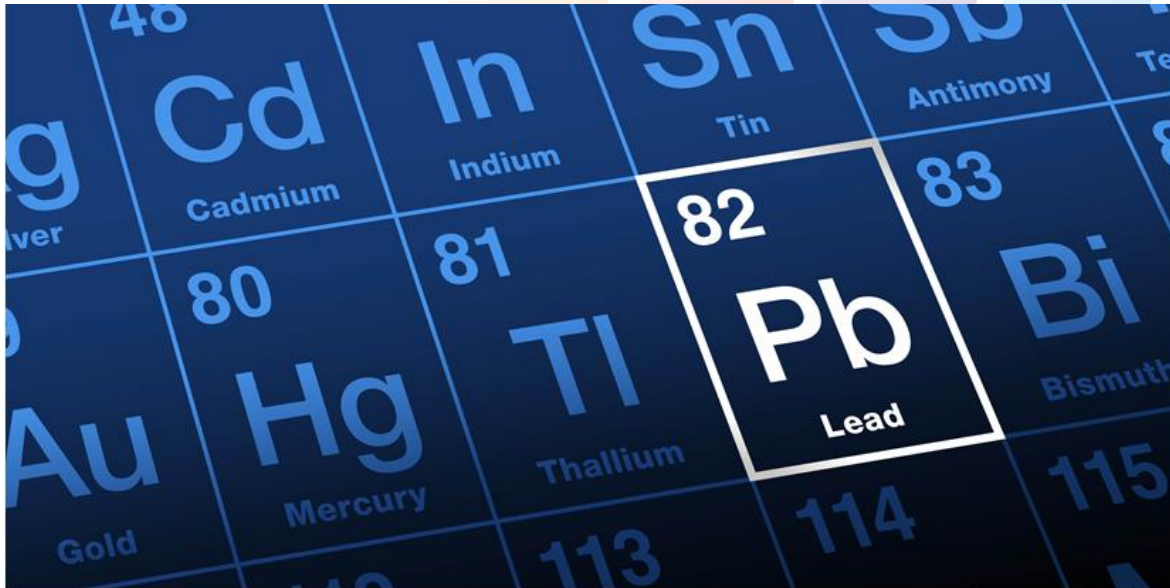


Lead poisoning remains a major but poorly characterized public health challenge in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). An estimated half of children in LMICs have elevated blood lead levels (BLLs), yet dominant exposure sources are often unknown. From February-September 2025, Lead Research for Action (LeRA) conducted a market-based lead content study in Malawi to assess lead exposure risks from commonly used consumer products. This study aimed to identify consumer products that may substantially contribute to lead exposure in Malawi.

[**Read the Report**](#)



Featured Research and Resources



- UN Environment Programme: [Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint](#)
 - Global Development Incubator: [Partnership for Battery Action \(Pb Action\)](#)
 - University of Michigan: [Cumulative lead exposure linked to increased Alzheimer's and dementia risk, U-M study finds](#)
 - Brown University: [Childhood lead exposure associated with increased depressive symptoms in adolescence](#)
 - BMJ Public Health: [Association between potential lead exposure assessed using a screening questionnaire and aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Jakarta, Indonesia: a cross-sectional study](#)
 - The University of Utah: [Banning lead in gas worked. The proof is in our hair](#)
- Environmental Defense Fund: [Lead pipes that deliver drinking water are a major health threat](#)
-

What We're Reading and Listening To!

- From Togo First: [Lomé hosts 23-nation workshop on lead paint regulations](#)
- From UNICEF Bhutan: [Nu 18Million worth of equipment handed over by UNICEF for a lead-free Bhutan](#)
- From the Examination: [Nigeria closes factories linked to U.S. auto industry amid lead poisoning inquiry](#)
- From the Star, Kenya: [African governments meet in Nairobi to fast-track lead paint regulations](#)
- From the Asia News Network: [Millions of Nepali exposed to lead in toothpaste, sindoor, and eyeliners](#)



- NBC News: [Harmful chemicals lurk in extensions and braiding hair marketed to Black women, study finds](#)
 - Governing: [Unsafe Levels of Lead Found in Half of New Orleans Playgrounds](#)
-

Upcoming Events

Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly

18-23 May 2026

Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly will be held on 18–23 May 2026 in Geneva, Switzerland and will include a discussion of draft global action plan on lead mitigation to be developed in consultation with Member States, relevant United Nations specialized agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

[Learn More](#)

UNITAR: THE UNITED NATIONS CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT STUDY PROGRAMME

18 - 22 May 2026 | 13 - 17 July 2026

During the upcoming year, UNITAR is pleased to deliver its 5-day in-person United Nations Chemicals and Waste Management Study Programme in Geneva. This flagship field visit offers participants a unique opportunity to engage directly with the global institutions shaping international chemicals and waste policy, while gaining first-hand exposure to multilateral environmental governance in a UN hub.

[Learn More](#)

Second Annual Research Conference on Global Lead Exposure

3-4 June 2026

The Center for Global Development is hosting its second annual Research Conference on Global Lead Exposure. The conference will convene researchers, policymakers, and implementers, all working to stamp out global lead poisoning.

[Learn More](#)

Key Links

- [PLF Resource Library](#)
 - [Toolkit to End Childhood Lead Poisoning](#)
 - [PLF Partners](#)
 - [Join the Partnership](#)
-



Do you have new resources, stories, or updates to share that are driving progress to end childhood lead poisoning? Please email us at leadfreefuture@unicef.org with your news, upcoming events you'll be attending, and any opportunities for collaboration. Let's keep building this community together—we look forward to hearing from you!

The Partnership for a Lead-Free Future is the first ever global partnership to drive attention and resources toward ending childhood lead poisoning. The PLF Secretariat, housed at UNICEF, aggregates knowledge, connects partners, and coordinates global action to a lead-free future for every child. Learn more about the PLF: www.leadfreefuture.org

LEAD Group Model National Lead-Safety Policy now in PLF Resources Library

In February 2026, The LEAD Group's "Lead Safe World - Model National Lead Safety Policy" was added to the PLF's Resources Library at <https://www.leadfreefuture.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library/lead-safe-world-model-national-lead-safety-policy>; accessible via <https://www.leadfreefuture.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library>

www.leadfreefuture.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library



Resource type

POLICY

Source

The LEAD Group Inc

Geographic area

Global

The Policy was originally web-published in July 2023 at both www.leadfreefuture.org/events-and-resources/knowledge-library and

https://leadsafeworld.com/LANv21n4_Model_National_Lead_Safety_Policy_and_2023_VAP.pdf