



ECO ETHICS

KENYA

The Lead Project

Location: Owino Uhuru

Timeline: February – April 2011

Funding: IPEN-ISIP (International POPs Elimination Network- International SAICM Implementation Project)

Objectives: Reduce exposure of vulnerable people to lead; develop awareness on environmental and public health effects of lead; empower community advocates in affected area

About the project:

Lead metal is known to have enormous economical value, especially in the industrial sector. However, research has documented that it can have tremendously disastrous consequences to human health and the environment if not well handled. In humans, overexposure to lead has been linked to disruption of the biosynthesis of hemoglobin with resulting anemia, rise in blood pressure, kidney damage, miscarriages and sperm damage, diminished learning abilities of children, behavior problems in children, and brain damage.

In Kenya, high levels of lead emissions were found to occur in urban areas where there are more industries, fumes from motor vehicles, and large dumping sites. Currently in Owino Uhuru, lead extraction from used car batteries by the nearby Metal Refinery Company exposes workers to lead as well as the community as a whole. There, residents have linked lead exposure to miscarriages and abnormalities in their children including fatigue, diminished learning abilities, weak joints and bones, and reduce senses, among others. Additionally, high levels of lead have been found in three children of the area.

With funding from IPEN-ISIP, Eco Ethics launched a campaign against lead poisoning in order to take the first steps toward reducing lead exposure for the people in Owino Uhuru. In just three months the project accomplished several objectives:

Planning with members of the community

Production of ICT Materials in which 2 banners, 50 posters, and 10 t-shirts conveying messages of the dangers of lead poisoning were distributed to the community

Sensitization Workshop where 31 members of the community learned of the harmful effects of lead and ways in which they can help reduce their exposure to lead

Training of Trainers in which 12 members of the community were trained on relevant environ-

mental laws, management of community initiatives, and development of advocacy campaigns in order to spread this knowledge within the community

Community Organization through the development of the Uhuru Empowerment Group
Campaign for By-Laws and Policy Enforcement where Eco Ethics and other stakeholders inspected the metal refinery

The effects of the campaign have been positive thus far. Results from this first phase will be expanded upon through the following phases, scheduled to begin May 2011.