



**GLOBAL
LEAD EXPOSURE**

1 billion

children with elevated
blood lead levels

(>5 µg/dL)

(IHME 2023)

99%

of lead poisoning cases
occur in low- and middle-
income countries

(IHME 2023)

765 million

IQ points are lost among
children 0–5 years old

(World Bank 2019)

\$6 trillion

annual cost due to
lead exposure (USD)

(World Bank 2019)

3.5 million

annual deaths due to
lead exposure

(IHME 2023)

20%

of the learning gap
between rich and poor
countries may
be attributable to
lead poisoning

(CGD 2023)

Bloomberg Philanthropies Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiative

PURE EARTH GLOBAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

About the Initiative

The Bloomberg Philanthropies Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiative was launched in 2025 to reduce lead poisoning in low- and middle-income countries. Working with partner organizations, the Initiative aims to build upon existing efforts by collaborating with governmental agencies in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America on this issue.

As an implementing partner of the Initiative, Pure Earth will assist governments in developing institutional capacity, programs, and policies to effectively and sustainably assess and mitigate the main sources of lead exposure. In addition to Pure Earth, implementing partners include the CDC Foundation, Lead Exposure Elimination Project, Resolve to Save Lives, Vital Strategies and the World Health Organization.

Pure Earth's Role in the Initiative

About Pure Earth

Pure Earth is a global leader in improving public health and development outcomes by reducing exposure to lead and other toxic pollutants. We work closely with governments to embed evidence-based, sustainable solutions into public systems at the national scale. By translating data into action and pairing technical expertise with local partnerships, Pure Earth designs and delivers practical interventions that reduce poisoning risks, strengthen public response systems, and support long-term health and economic progress.

Program Activities

As an implementing partner of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Lead Poisoning Prevention Initiative, Pure Earth aims to work with governments in countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America to improve their ability to assess lead exposure sources, identify priorities, and design and implement source-specific exposure mitigation efforts. These include the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites, regulatory actions on contaminated consumer products, and policy recommendations for safer industrial practices.

This program builds on our decades of experience tackling lead pollution through source assessments and toxic site cleanups. Pure Earth teams have identified nearly 5,000 toxic sites across 50+ countries, analyzed 5,800+ consumer product samples for lead contamination in 25 countries, and assessed lead exposure sources in 750+ homes of lead-poisoned children across 6 countries. Each year, our technical and research experts publish standardized protocols and guidance on site investigation, source analysis, and cost-effective interventions, and majorly influence global and country strategies, normative guidance, and standards.

Under the Initiative, Pure Earth will work with governments and partners on:

National Planning

- Establish Lead Technical Working Groups and formal government partnerships
- Develop lead-specific national roadmaps and Action Plans

Lead Exposure Source Identification and Assessment

- Undertake national and sub-national lead exposure source assessments
- Carry out market assessments of consumer goods
- Map and assess lead-contaminated sites
- Assess priority households of children with elevated blood lead levels to identify and address sources of lead exposure

Risk Prioritization and Exposure Reduction Interventions

- Prioritize risk mitigation efforts in collaboration with governments and partners, such as remediation of toxic sites, regulatory actions on contaminated consumer products, and reform of unsafe industrial practices

Systems Strengthening

- Provide the tools and training needed to build national and sub-national government capacity for ongoing risk mitigation and interventions, ensuring long-term sustainability

Opportunity Fund

- Provide small grants to support strategic, short-term projects that advance local understanding of lead poisoning, prevention and mitigation interventions, and policies

Background on Lead Poisoning

Lead exposure remains a significant public health challenge in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where it disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly children. In these regions, lead contamination is often linked to poorly regulated industrial activities, the use of lead-based paints, and the widespread use of lead in consumer goods such as batteries, spices, cosmetics, and cookware.

According to IHME's 2023 Global Burden of Disease estimates, 1 billion children worldwide have blood lead levels exceeding 5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL), the level at which the World Health Organization urges countries to take action. Half of all children in LMICs have elevated blood lead levels. Small amounts of lead in blood can cause irreversible harm to nearly every system of a child's body, leading to developmental delays, cognitive impairments, anemia, as well as organ damage and cardiovascular disease later in life. Despite increasing awareness of the dangers of lead, inadequate detection, regulation, and enforcement of safety standards, along with limited resources for prevention and treatment, continue to exacerbate lead as a major public health issue in many LMICs.

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**Bloomberg
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Prevention Initiative**

