



SCALING SOLUTIONS in Latin America

**Support Our Expansion to
Address Lead Pollution**

Pure Earth partners with Latin American governments, universities, health institutions, and communities to identify sources of exposure, reduce toxic pollution, and protect future generations from lead poisoning. Today, Pure Earth works across Colombia, Peru, Mexico, and Brazil. We are seeking transformational funding to scale proven interventions, strengthen national blood lead surveillance systems, improve laboratory capacity, and work toward stronger enforcement systems on consumer products.

We are seeking \$10 million to scale proven solutions in Latin America. Every dollar will be matched through The Audacious Project.

Magnitude and Impact

Lead exposure remains one of the largest and most under-recognized environmental health threats facing children in Latin America, imposing enormous human and economic costs. Despite growing evidence, many countries lack nationally representative blood lead level data and

comprehensive systems capable of identifying, tracking, and preventing lead exposure. Exposure frequently begins during pregnancy, as lead crosses the placenta and can impair fetal brain development. Throughout childhood, even low levels of exposure can reduce IQ, impair learning, and increase behavioral challenges, contributing to lifelong cognitive impairment, reduced educational attainment, lower lifetime earning potential, and, later in life, cardiovascular disease.¹⁻³

The economic consequences are severe. In 2013, the annual economic losses from childhood lead exposure in Latin America and the Caribbean were estimated at \$142.3 billion in lost productivity, equivalent to 2.04% of the continent's GDP.⁴



Solve pollution. Save lives. Protect the planet.

Sources of Exposure in Latin America

The biggest lead challenges in the countries in Latin America where Pure Earth works are contaminated cookware and consumer products (Colombia and Peru), lead-glazed ceramics (Mexico), and unsafe battery recycling and industrial contamination (Peru, Colombia).⁵ Together, these sources expose millions of children and represent some of the most tractable opportunities for reducing lead poisoning at scale.



- **Cookware and Consumer Products**

Consumer product testing conducted by Pure Earth has identified elevated lead levels in metallic cookware, ceramic foodware, paints, and other household products.

- **Traditional Lead-Glazed Pottery**

Lead-glazed pottery remains the most significant source of exposure in **Mexico**. Deeply tied to cultural traditions and livelihoods, glazed pottery can contain lead that can migrate into lead and beverages during cooking and storage.

- **Used Lead-Acid Battery (ULAB) Recycling**

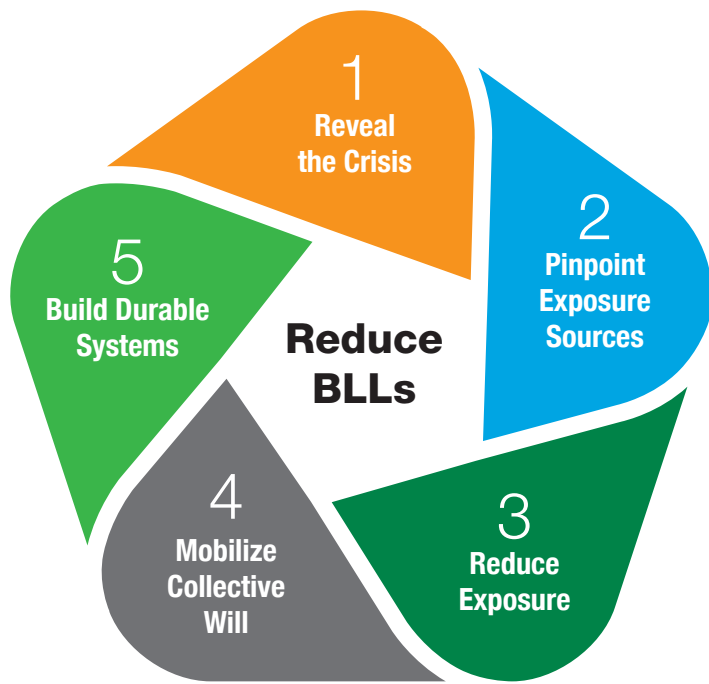
Pure Earth is investigating whether informal and substandard battery recycling is a significant source of lead exposure in **Latin America**. Unsafe dismantling and smelting practices contaminate homes, workplaces, soil, air, and water. While several countries have formal recycling infrastructure, the region still faces challenges related to informal collection, environmental compliance, cross-border battery flows, and lead exposure in vulnerable communities.⁶

- **Contaminated Sites and Industrial Pollution**

Mining activity, industrial operations, waste disposal, and legacy contamination continue to expose communities to toxic pollutants across the region. Through the Toxic Sites Identification Program (TSIP), Pure Earth has identified more than 820 toxic sites across 22 countries in **Latin America** and the **Caribbean**.⁷

- **Food and Agriculture**

Pure Earth's recent analysis of 25 total diet studies quantified dietary lead intake across 46 countries and indicated that dietary lead intake is likely the single largest lead exposure pathway, estimated to be responsible for ~50% of global lead poisoning.⁸ Lead absorbed from the environment into food crops is expected to be a key driver of dietary lead.



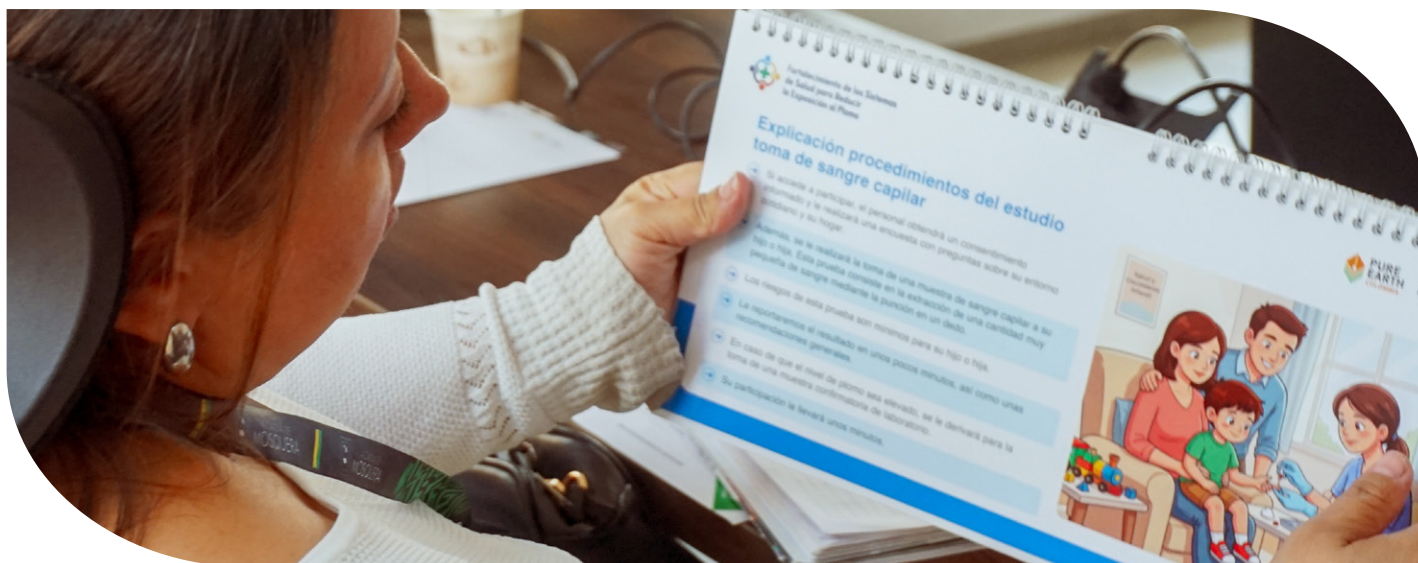
Our 5-Phase Approach

Pure Earth's expansion is guided by a proven 5-Phase Approach. Our regional goal is to create sustainable national systems capable of identifying, preventing, and reducing lead exposure while protecting millions of children and supporting healthier, more productive communities. Unlike short-term projects, our approach focuses on institutional strengthening and government ownership, so that impact continues long after external funding ends.



EXPANDING PURE EARTH'S 5-Phase Approach:

- 1 Reveal the Crisis**
 Implement nationally representative blood lead level surveys and surveillance systems to determine the true prevalence and distribution of exposure.
- 2 Pinpoint Exposure Sources**
 Conduct source assessments, market studies, contaminated site investigations, community assessments, and mass-balance analyses to determine how people are being exposed.
- 3 Reduce Exposure**
 Implement remediation activities, safer manufacturing practices, improved recycling systems, product interventions, and community-based exposure reduction programs.
- 4 Mobilize Collective Will**
 Educate policymakers, health professionals, communities, industry leaders, and funders on the health and economic consequences of lead poisoning.
- 5 Build Durable Systems**
 Embed surveillance, enforcement, prevention, and response systems within government institutions to ensure sustained reductions in lead exposure.



Pure Earth's Footprint in Latin America

• Colombia

An estimated 1.3 million children in Colombia, or 8.3%, are affected by lead poisoning. Lead exposure contributes to approximately 14,000 cardiovascular deaths annually and costs an estimated \$15 billion each year, equivalent to 4.6% of GDP.^{9,10}

Since 2016, Pure Earth has partnered with government agencies, public and private sector, and other stakeholders to identify toxic sites, strengthen national policies, conduct blood lead surveillance, implement remediation projects, conduct rapid market screening, and analyze cookware.

• Peru

According to modeled estimates from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 9.8 million children in Peru, or 80%, have elevated blood lead levels.¹¹ Lead exposure contributes to an estimated 7,700 cardiovascular deaths annually and costs \$13.4 billion each year, equivalent to nearly 6% of GDP.¹²

Pure Earth partners with the Government of Peru to strengthen and implement the national framework for heavy metal control. Currently, Pure Earth Peru is supporting blood lead surveillance for 2,500 children across six regions, conducting environmental sampling to pinpoint

contamination sources, and addressing mercury contamination by supporting small-scale artisanal gold mining practices.

• Mexico

According to Mexico's National Health and Nutrition Survey (ENSANUT), approximately 17% of children ages 1 to 4 have blood lead levels of 5 µg/dL or higher.¹³ Lead exposure is responsible for an estimated 50,000 deaths and costs \$79 billion each year, equivalent to 6.3% of GDP.¹⁴

Since 2008, Pure Earth has worked with artisans, government partners, and communities to replace lead-based ceramic glazes, protect traditional livelihoods, and reduce childhood exposure. The program is active in 16 pottery communities across Morelos, Puebla, and Mexico City, with 30 kilns built or upgraded and more than 90 artisan families transitioning to lead-free production.

• Brazil

An estimated 4 million children in Brazil, or 7%, have elevated blood lead levels.¹⁵ Lead exposure is responsible for more than 50,000 deaths and costs an estimated \$118 billion each year, equivalent to 6.4% of GDP.¹⁶

In Brazil, Pure Earth works with government partners to reduce lead exposure in two states and is engaged with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change on a National Lead Action Plan.



Our Work in Latin America

SPOTLIGHT ON UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Colombia

- Blood lead surveillance of 900 children in six cities
- Conduct home assessments to identify contaminated household products for children with elevated blood lead levels
- Test blood lead levels near battery recycling sites, and teach communities about risks to lower lead exposure
- Pilot a study to test consumer products and develop communication materials for consumer awareness

Peru

- Blood lead surveillance of 2,500 children
- Home assessments for 250 households
- Pilot study to strengthen lead surveillance among pregnant women at health facilities
- Expansion of consumer product interventions

Mexico

- Regional blood lead studies among artisanal communities
- Expansion of lead-free pottery production
- Pilot study to test the effectiveness of reducing blood lead levels by exchanging leaded pottery in homes with lead-free alternatives
- Policy support for Mexico's 2026–2030 National Strategy on lead exposure reduction

Brazil

- Finalization of the National Lead Action Plan with the Ministry of Environment
- Toxic site, community, and market assessments in two states
- Battery recycling (ULAB) mass balance analysis



Transformational Funding Opportunity

Latin America's lead burden is substantial, but the response gap remains significant. Many countries still lack national blood lead surveillance systems, representative exposure data, laboratory capacity, consumer product enforcement systems, and funding for remediation. **Pure Earth's Audacious Project** provides a historic opportunity to combat global lead poisoning at scale by protecting over **500 million** children in at least **20** low- and middle-income countries. This expansion is built upon 25 years of field experience working with governments, and strategic funding partners, including Coefficient Giving, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and the Clarios Foundation.

Now, with anchor commitments from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Audacious Project totaling \$128M of a \$154M initiative, Pure Earth is moving forward with full implementation. Investments at this phase will catalyze high-impact interventions across Latin America, a region where preventable lead exposure continues to undermine health, educational attainment, and economic opportunity.

Of the remaining \$26 million, we request **\$10 million** to support our work in Latin America. Every dollar contributed will be matched through **The Audacious Project**, a TED initiative bringing together some of the world's most influential philanthropists to fund bold, proven solutions.

A major investment in Latin America would allow Pure Earth to:

- Complete surveillance of thousands of children
- Expand in to new geographies
- Accelerate contaminated site remediation
- Reduce exposure from cookware, ceramics, and batteries
- Strengthen consumer product safety systems
- Support national policy reform
- Strengthen long-term government capacity

By combining scientific evidence, practical interventions, policy reform, and government capacity building, Pure Earth is creating a pathway toward lasting reductions in lead exposure and healthier futures for generations to come.

INVESTMENT:
2026–2033

\$154M
TOTAL PROGRAM

\$128M*
SECURED

\$26M
GAP

*Anchor Funding Commitments: Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Audacious Project

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