

CASE STUDY

Implementation of the *Guidance on organizing an advocacy or awareness-raising campaign on lead paint in Georgia*

Georgia

The project organizes awareness-raising activities using the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidance on organizing an advocacy or awareness-raising campaign on lead paint.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the project is to:

1. raise awareness about lead paint in society and the government, informing all parties about its health effects, alternatives, replacement strategies and financial aspects;
2. advocate with policy-makers to develop laws, regulations and technical guidelines to address lead paint; and
3. utilize best practice guidance for conducting advocacy and awareness campaigns, with identified outcomes, development of an action plan and initiation of steps from the guidance.



Project Overview

Context

After the association agreement with the European Union (EU) in 2016, Georgia was obliged to meet necessary EU requirements, including elimination of lead-containing paints.

Since lead paint is still manufactured, distributed and used in Georgia for different purposes, there was a need to undertake several reviews of the legislation and to develop technical guidelines and regulations on how to stop the use of lead-containing paint and replace it with safer options.

To enhance the national capacity to eliminate lead paint, Georgia has implemented the *WHO Guidance on organizing an advocacy or awareness-raising campaign on lead paint*. The Guidance includes five steps corresponding to the specific outcomes of: (a) the campaign, (b) the audience, (c) deciding what information to present, (d) the communication methods and channels and (e) practical steps in an organization.

Approach

The Guidance has been implemented given the gaps and needs to be assessed before planning national activities on lead paint. While implementing the strengthening capacities on a national level, involvement of stakeholders, governmental bodies (health, environment, customs, regional development, justice, etc.), industry and customers were considered. The guide was translated and adapted for national use and used for planning the awareness campaigns. The implementing organization – the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) – initiated a series of activities related to lead paint and has developed substantial experience in coordinating the involved parties, including manufacturers and retailers.



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Results

The main result of adapting and using the Guidance was more effective communication among authorities, policy-makers, industry and the public. It accelerated the process for completing the draft regulation.

Stakeholders, following the Guidance, suggested several improvements for the proposed technical regulations, and a draft regulation on how to eliminate lead paint was developed.

Feedback and understanding from consumers and other stakeholders were enhanced, leading to Georgian society becoming more conscious and informed about the dangers of lead paint, its sources, and ways to avoid it. The NCDC accomplished this by setting up a hotline and website to receive relevant follow-up information.

After publishing the results of a countrywide survey on the levels of lead in the blood of children in Georgia, the number of referrals to medical professionals and clinics were increased.

Lessons Learned

Adapting and implementing the Guidance provided a helpful step in successfully enabling the elimination of lead paint. In spite of different challenges – among others, the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic – the implementation process succeeded.

A significant yet challenging issue was communication with affected manufacturers and retailers. The identification of the “single overarching communication outcome” (SOCO), conducted based on the Guidance, helped to focus the campaign and keep it on track. Moreover, following the steps described in the Guidance enabled the campaign to successfully achieve its main goals: effective communication with government and policy-makers, along with customers.

Recommendations

Based on the Georgian experience with implementing the Guidance on organizing an advocacy or awareness campaign on lead paint, the recommendations are to:

- *adapt and implement the Guidance as it helps in preparing and conducting successful campaigns to eliminate lead paint;*
- *consider using the Guidance more widely for campaigns on related issues other than elimination of lead paint;*
- *identify the stakeholders and their needs and expectations so as to facilitate communication and ensure common understanding when taking actions on the national level; and*
- *make an effort to communicate with different stakeholders to enable effective preparation and implementation of guides or regulations, and to prepare effective national campaigns.*

The case study was authored by National Center for Disease Control & Public Health of Georgia. The named authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this publication.



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