

## PHILIPPINES

### PHASING-OUT POLLUTING FUELS IN MANILA

*The Manila Lead-Free Coalition has evolved in the space of two years from a local campaign to phase-out the use of polluting leaded fuel in the city to a nationwide Partnership for Clean Air, covering the entire range of clean air issues. Its sustained campaign for raising public awareness to smoke belching has emphasised the links between urban energy use, pollution, health, and even global climate trends.*

Air pollution in Metro Manila is among the worst in the world. One of the major sources of air pollution is vehicle emissions, in particular the use of leaded fuel by the many cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, and motorised tricycles that congest its streets. To address this problem, the Philippine Congress, with wide support from civil society groups, passed the Clean Air Act of 1999 which mandated, as a first priority, the complete phase-out of leaded gasoline by January 2001.



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In February 2000 a workshop was held to work out a campaign for public awareness, understanding and acceptance of the Clean Air Act in Metro Manila. With over 150 participants from government, business, civil society and development NGOs, the workshop led to the 'Lead-Free Coalition'. The campaign planned by the Coalition set out to inform motorists on the lead phase-out and reassure them that vehicles can function safely on unleaded gasoline. Even more significant, it explained the connection between fuels used and 'smoke belching', to create an awareness of the links with poor health, especially in children (by 1994 the cost of health damages due to lead pollution in Metro Manila was US\$64 million). The intensive campaign lasted three weeks and was carried out through a wide range of media - television,



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poor, in the high-risk exposure group, a suggested solution is the use of 'social soap operas' to work on their collective conscience.

Despite such setbacks, the success of the campaign has been such that, after the Metro Manila phase-out, the Coalition has evolved into the Partnership for Clean Air, expanding its work to all aspects of clean air and including 91 additional member organisations working to facilitate further clauses of the Clean Air Act. A training program on public awareness campaigns is being developed and institutionalised within a university in the Philippines. The initiative is also in the process of being replicated in Indonesia and Vietnam.



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posters, fliers, stickers, and activities. It served as the starting point to a phased program of awareness-raising activities over three years.

Some resistance was initially encountered from vehicle manufacturers and motorised tricycle operators due to concerns about the capacity for all vehicles to switch to unleaded fuel, and the higher cost of unleaded gasoline. The federation of tricycle operators and drivers filed a temporary restraining order to stop the phase-out. However, after dialogue with the Coalition and road tests for tricycles running on unleaded gasoline, the federation was convinced to drop the case. Such opposition could have possibly been avoided had the Coalition included this key transport interest in the discussion from the very beginning. Being out of the loop, the tricycle sector was vulnerable to misinformation and apprehension.

Another barriers faced by the Clean Air Act is corruption. A common system among motorists, including public transport vehicle drivers, is to bribe enforcers, undermining the effectiveness of the campaign. Since enforcers who accept bribes are themselves among the targeted audience of the working



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The Coalition's approach of public campaigns for raising awareness highlights the importance of basing any technical environmental measures in a wide social understanding - and they have gained extra ground in this through their ability to tackle ever wider issues, bringing in more partners and gaining more experience along the way.



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