



JEUNES VOLONTAIRES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT
CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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ISIP/IPEN-JVE PROJECT REPORT 2010



A vertical banner with a red background. At the top is a white triangle containing a red skull and crossbones. Below this, the words 'DANGER' and 'MERCURE' are written in large, bold, red and black letters. The background of the banner shows a dental procedure, a mercury spill in a pan, and several batteries. At the bottom, the text reads: 'SAUVONS NOTRE BEAU PAYS DU MERCURE' and 'TOUS POUR UNE COTE D'IVOIRE SAINE ET SANS POISON'.

The project "Be conscious of mercury effects" by JVE Côte d'Ivoire had a goal of informing the public about mercury in their daily lives and led a campaign on the dangers of this toxic metal.

To accomplish this mission and come to ban mercury and reduce its import, three major activities were undertaken.

The first activity consisted of making contact with the target communities. We therefore sent letters to the governing authorities of the Ministry of Environment, computer scientists, doctors, dentists, and manufacturers of paints.

The best strategy we have adopted well to get the message about the dangers of mercury has been to make it through our main target: children and youth. So we contacted the largest association of children and youth, ASCCI (Association of Catholic Scouts of Côte d'Ivoire), which counts among its membership more than 14,000 young people. We gave the leaders of this organization the agreement to conduct the campaign with children and youth in different cities.

The second project activity was the organization of a workshop and training session for professionals who use and are in constant contact with mercury. This 1st Mercury Training Workshop took place within the University of Cocody and brought together computer scientists, factory paint users, doctors, dentists, technicians, and medical imaging employees- in short, occupations that handle mercury in their work. Several NGOs working on issues of POPs were present (IPROCEL, ISE-POP) and also two focal points for SAICM- Mr Bibi Samuel and Mr Raphael Zadi Dacoury from the Ministry of Environment.

Altogether seven papers were made regarding the classification of mercury contamination of the sources listed in Côte d'Ivoire and in the world. The use of mercury was also discussed, and the dangers it poses to the environment and health were presented to the 48 participants of the workshop. A leaflet was produced as a result of these communications and was distributed at the end of the work. It will also be used for the awareness-raising campaign (the third activity).

With the aim of sensitizing the population, the National Awareness Campaign project theme was "Together for the Ivory Coast without Mercury." The Campaign was planned to raise awareness for a month, with ten thousand children and young people in seven towns of the



At the end of the campaign, we estimated that the actual number reached was 6,000. The towns visited were Maferé, Dabou Issia, Daloa, Abidjan, and Adiaké Jacqueline.

From 1 August to 12 September 2010, we sent teams for awareness-raising and community mobilization on the ground. The coordinating team officials also made visits for coordination. Gadgets, pamphlets and t-shirts were produced and distributed to the target partners. Additionally, programs were created, booths were set-up, contests were carried out and films were shown in the course of the Campaign. The films were unfortunately not on the mercury issue, but on environmental protection in general. The reason for this was because we did not manage to locate films on the subject among NGOs or authorities here in Cote d'Ivoire.

The Campaign enabled many young people and children to learn and be informed about mercury and its ill effects on health and the environment. Also at JVE, many volunteers have had their capacity built on this theme, which was quite new to some members of the association. So we can say that this project has enabled the strengthening of capacity of members of the organization. For the Campaign, posters were also produced and distributed to different audiences.



The final activity undertaken for the project was the press conference. It was held Wednesday, October 13, 2010 at the Conference Hall of the Ministry of the Environment, 12th Floor of Tower D. It should be noted that this activity was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and SAICM Focal Points (Mr. Zadi and Mr Bibi).

The purpose of this press conference was to present to the press the results of this project executed by JVE Côte d'Ivoire. From the results, it appears that:

- 30% of the population is aware of the existence of mercury. Indeed, the public knows that mercury is a chemical element found in some products such as thermometers and sphygmomanometers.
- 95% of the population does not know the sources of mercury. Indeed, they ignore the natural and anthropogenic sources of mercury releases.
- 95% of the population is unaware of the harmful effects of mercury on health as well as on the environment.
- 100% of the population wants to know the methods of disposal and / or mitigation of mercury and its effects on health as well as on the environment.
- 100% supports the substitution of mercury-containing products (cosmetics, fluorescent bulbs, paints, paper pulp, etc.).
- 100% is for the elimination of mercury in hospitals.

This result allows JVE Côte d'Ivoire to make the following recommendations (involving three levels):

- At the government level:

- Disseminate information on mercury and its harmful effects to the entire population through extensive information campaigns and awareness-raising.
- Create a legislative and regulatory framework to regulate imports and use of mercury and products containing it.
- Create a legislative and regulatory framework for a rigorous application of methods of treatment of mercury waste.

- At the level of NGOs:

- Create a synergy of information and awareness on the issue of mercury
- Develop policies monitoring and evaluation of campaigns

- At the population level:

- Take the time to learn about mercury and its effects as well as products containing mercury
- Limit use of products containing mercury

- Take precautions for efficient handling of products containing mercury
- Sort household waste prior to removal

At the end of this activity the civil society organizations that were present expressed the wish for JVE to continue listening to their needs and meet their requests for support on the control of chemical safety issues.

The Ministry of Environment, via the SAICM National Focal Point, reiterated his wish to work with JVE to benefit from its expertise and work on regulatory legal acts in the field of chemicals management. JVE hopes to integrate his proposals in these texts on the elimination of mercury for the benefit of environmental protection and the human health of children and youth.

