



EXPORTING POLLUTION: THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE LEADS TO POISONED COMMUNITIES

Participants will better understand:

- trends in pollution export and health effects
- responsibilities to care, respond, and effect change
- practical steps to address global inequalities in environmental risk
- examples of responses to public/environmental health crises

Thursday,
15 October 2015
13:50 – 15:20
Global Health
Workshop 1A

Preview
presentation:

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TERRAGRAPHS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

220 E 5th Street #8866
Moscow, Idaho 83843 USA

terrascriptsinternational.org



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“The path of least resistance leads to crooked rivers and crooked men.”
– H. D. Thoreau

While Europe and the US face economic refugee challenges at their borders, a reverse flight is occurring as commodity production, waste disposal, and recycling are exported to poor countries. Rich countries benefit, enjoying cheaper goods and clean environments within their borders, subsidized by the health of the world’s most vulnerable populations, who are beset with poverty, malnutrition, communicable disease and little health care access.

PROGRAM

13:50- 14:00

Margrit von Braun, P.E., Ph.D.



Introduction: The need to address public health crises in low income countries due to global shifts in production

By presenting trends, focusing on recent real-world projects, and reviewing lessons learned, we aim to provide in-depth discussion and practical approaches to responding to public health disasters resulting from export of environmental risk to low income countries. This broad issue is examined through the lens of lead poisoning. The workshop examines technical, social, and ethical challenges and responsibilities facing public health professionals. Participants will benefit from discussions on global health challenges resulting from pollution export.

14:00- 14:20

Casey Bartrem



An environmental health response to a severe outbreak of childhood lead poisoning in Nigeria: Adaptation of a US Model

In 2010, Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) discovered an outbreak of lead poisoning in remote villages of Northern Nigeria. More than 400 children died in the first 6 months of the outbreak. The subsequent environmental and health response is unprecedented – before children could be treated, environmental exposures had to be stopped. A coordinated environmental and health response model developed at a US Superfund Site was adapted to local culture, religious customs, and resources, engaging national, international and village stakeholders.

14:20-14:40

Simba Tirima, Ph.D.



Lead Pollution in Nigeria and Zambia: Two different remedial strategies and public health outcomes

Two major cleanups of lead poisoning sites employing radically different strategies were undertaken in Africa in 2008-2013. At both sites, exposures to dangerous levels of lead resulted in hundreds of deaths and thousands of poisoned children and adults. The opposing environmental health response approaches yielded different outcomes. This sets the stage for a tragic African experiment.

14:40-15:00

Ian von Lindern, P.E., Ph.D.



Lessons Learned in Environmental Regulation and Remediation: Industry's Agenda, Public Health Battles and the Global Consequences

Despite 50 years of progressive regulations in high-income countries, globally, mineral resources and wastes are produced with more pollution and disease than ever before. Wealthy countries benefit, enjoying cheap goods and clean environments, subsidized by the health of the world's poor. These contaminated sites can be prevented and remediated given health-based objectives, preventative strategies, and local capacity building and implementation.

15:00-15:20

Discussion, Closing



All Workshop Participants