



Blacksmith Institute Update: December 9, 2008

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Blacksmith in the news:

Work Begins to Turn "Dominican Chernobyl" into Children's Playground

Clean up work has begun at Haina in the Dominican Republic, one of the world's most polluted hot spots, where some experts believe that the population has the highest level of lead poisoning in the world. Working with local government officials, the Blacksmith Institute is digging up soil, contaminated with massive amounts of lead from an old automobile battery recycling smelter, and moving it to a safe storage location. Fresh soil will be laid down to make the land ready for conversion into a community playground. Blacksmith currently has five technical experts on the ground managing the clean up, which is slated to be completed by the end of the year.

Counterpart Funding Committed for Clean Up of Arsenic Site in China

Local counterpart funding has now been assured for a project to stabilize arsenic waste on an abandoned mining site in Baiyizhai village to reduce contamination of rivers flowing through Wenshan County in Yunnan. The waste, high in arsenic content, remains after over four decades of mining operations, which ceased around 2002. Site work is expected to commence shortly.

Blacksmith Launches Its First Artisanal Gold Mining Project in Indonesia

Blacksmith Institute is supporting Kalimantan-based NGO YTS as it continues groundbreaking work initially undertaken by the Global Mercury Project. This project provides occupational health training for miners as they use retorts and other simple technologies to protect themselves and the environment from mercury vapors while extracting gold from ore. This training initiative is one of many Blacksmith hopes to implement in Indonesia, as mercury use by the artisanal mining community here is one of the highest in the world.

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