

The Rutgers University – New Labor Day Labor Intervention Project

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Presented by Carmen Martino
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Research consortium

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Focus of Presentation

- Findings about the needs of Latino construction day laborers in NJ
- Preliminary findings about the impact of the intervention
- Lessons about the how to best meet the health and safety needs of these workers

Project Overview

- Outreach to day laborers in 5 communities
- Curriculum development
- Training peer researchers, organizers, trainers
- Training offered to more than 350 DL—training is ongoing
- Pre and post training surveys, interviews and focus groups

Participatory Elements

- Recruitment
- Input on focus group and survey instruments
- Peer led focus groups/administration of surveys
- Curriculum contents
- Training

Baseline Survey

- Brief four page questionnaire
- Drew on literature, issues that emerged from focus groups, reviewed tested by New Labor members
- Estimated 15 – 20 % difficulty reading, filling out—received 1 on 1 assistance
- First wave, participants in fall training conference

Findings from baseline survey and focus groups:

- Most have no construction experience or training
- Day labor their entry into U.S. labor market
- Typical earnings \$250 - \$350 per week
- Regular work only six months of year
- Roughly 50% have primary education or less
- Little to no English
- Working as day laborer 1 – 2 years

....baseline findings with implications for interventions....

- Aware that their work is hazardous, “acceptable risk” determined in part by how desperate on any given day
- Many have experienced withheld wages or other abuses
- Little access to PPE
- 36 % have been injured seriously enough to stop working for rest of day (last 6 mos)

....baseline findings with implications for interventions – high levels of concern:

- More than 50% report “great concern” about PPE, inability to communicate with supervisor, not having enough training
- More than 70% report “great concern” about exposure to dusts, chemicals, risk of serious back injury

....baseline findings with implications for interventions—taking initiative:

	Often %	Few/Once %
■ Asked to be shown how to perform a task	19	73
■ Talked to boss about a safer way to perform task	24	50
■ Talked to co-workers about a hazardous situation at work	40	48

(n = 117)

....baseline findings with implications for interventions—taking initiative:

	Often %	Few/Once %
■ Tried to find out more about hazards on your own	24	45
■ Refused to perform a task that was too dangerous	16	49
■ Left a job site because the work was so dangerous	15	37

(n = 117)

Findings about training impact (interviews):

Participants at Feb. 07 TTT offered specific examples in safety practices and actions taken post-training—e.g.:

- securing ladder
- requesting PPE or fall protection from supervisors
- talking to co-workers
- refusing unsafe tasks or jobs

Findings about training impact (surveys):

- Follow-up surveys indicate slightly higher use of PPE (more bringing own PPE)
- Increase in self-reported h/s initiatives (talking to bosses/co-workers, trying to find out about hazardous situations on own)

Challenges

- Outreach and organizing quite labor intensive
- Economic imperative experienced by DL's—planning is difficult
- Transience of DL's—follow-up becomes uncertain
- Limited reading skills of some participants: everything takes longer

Elements of project that have contributed to success:

- Partnership with worker center (New Labor)
- Effectiveness of peer to peer trainers, organizers, researchers
- Efforts to build relationships in the targeted communities
- Conversation/assistance broader than health and safety

Elements of project that we believe are contributing to success:

- Training method: Participatory (SGAM) + customized for day laborers
- New Labor organizers believe in the importance of their work: *“When we did the training workshop, everyone was afraid saying nobody is going to talk with me...answer my questions....After the first time, I liked going to the corner because people are interested...I would like any way to help these people learn and know what they need to know.”*

Lessons and new directions

- Hands-on training, e.g. fall protection, ladders, scaffolds, and power tool safety
- Local office in Lakewood provides more flexibility (e.g. it's raining—let's offer a class)

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