Latino Construction Laborer Occupational Safety and Health Project

Rutgers OTEC
New Labor
NJ Laborers Health and Safety Fund
LIUNA-NJ Local 1030

Funded through the Center to Protect Workers Rights NIOSH Research consortium
Project Team

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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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Few/Once</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asked to be shown how to perform a task</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to boss about a safer way to perform task</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to co-workers about a hazardous situation at work</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 117)
...baseline findings with implications for interventions—taking initiative:

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

(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)