

PEPH Annual Meeting, Bethesda MD, March 8, 2012



Brazilian Immigrant Center Environmental Justice Partnerships

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Founded in 1995, the Brazilian Immigrant Center (B.I.C.) is a community-based organization working to empower Brazilians in the Greater Boston area around issues of access to education, workplace rights and immigration.

Our mission is to unite Brazilian immigrants to organize against economic, social and political marginalization, and to help create a just society.

Our work is done through advocacy, education, organizing and leadership/capacity building.



What We Do

- ✓ Advocate for public policy changes
- ✓ Fight against discrimination and racism
- ✓ Provide workers' rights workshops at BIC and in community settings
- ✓ Offer training in occupational health and safety
- ✓ Mediate labor cases and represent them in court
- ✓ Refer cases to DOL – Wage & Hour Division; and Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, Fair Labor Division; or attorneys
- ✓ Provide free ESOL Classes with a social justice curriculum
- ✓ Organize domestic workers to change Massachusetts labor laws



Health and Safety in the Work Environment

- ✓ Occupational health and safety training is a key component of workers' rights
- ✓ We now offer training in Fall Protection for Residential Construction under the Susan Harwood Program
- ✓ Soon we will start domestic worker OSHA training
- ✓ We have a long history of involvement in OSHA training (e.g., COBWEB project)



OSHA Alliance



Renewed September 2011



April 2006



The Definition of Environment from the EJ Movement includes:

Where people work



Where people live and play



Where people pray



Where people go to school

Project Collaboration for Better Work Environment for Brazilians (COBWEB) in Massachusetts

Partnerships



- OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (photo)
- Granite Task Force (MassCOSH coordinates)
- Fall Protection Task Force (DPH coordinates)
- Workers' Compensation Task Force (MassCOSH coordinates)

Assessment

Research

The COBWEB Project has surveyed more than 550 Brazilian immigrant on health, immigration, and occupational health issues. Below you see a sample survey results.

Are you exposed to the following condition at work?

Condition	% of positive answers
Chemicals and/or Toxic Subs.	53%
Toxic Vapors	28%
Dangerous Machines/Tools	41%
Vibration	31%
Hot Work Environment	41%
Cold Work Environment	33%
Bad Air Quality or Ventilation	24%
Insufficient Lighting	19%
Crowded Workplace	22%
Heavy Lifting	48%
Bad Posture	59%
Violence at Workplace	5%
Driving as part of job	50%

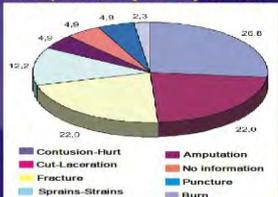
Most common industries where the interviewees work:

- Construction = 29 %
- Food = 20 %
- Domestic Work = 20%
- Services = 14 %

Only 21.5% of the interviewees received any kind of occupational safety information in their jobs.

The COBWEB Project is also developing community based- surveillance on deaths and injuries at workplace

Distribution of 2006 cases of Occupational Injuries by nature.



Source: Brazilian Immigrant Center/COBWEB Project N=41 (preliminary data)

Characteristics of work-related deaths among Brazilian immigrant workers in Massachusetts, 2002-2006.

Name	Date of death	Age	Gender	Occupation	Line of business	Reason of death
A.L.C.	1/8/02	41	male	Laborer	Construction	Struck by backhoe
J.C.P.	3/11/02	36	male	Laborer	Landscaping	Fall from a tree
W.D.D.	4/11/02	33	male	Foreman	Construction	Tractor rollover
C.A.M.	7/2/02	37	male	Laborer	Cleaning	Crushed by heavy stone
L.G.R.	12/13/02	41	male	Laborer	Hvac Company	Fall from ladder
A.A.A.	7/11/03	39	male	Laborer	Construction	Fall from roof
C.G.	2/18/04	18	male	Salesman	Pharmacy	Struck by shoplifter
E.F.	10/9/04	43	male	Roofing	Construction	Electrocution
V.R.	3/13/05	38	male	Granite worker	Granite industry	Crushed by granite slabs
R.R.	3/4/06	27	male	Laborer	Construction	Fall from scaffold
R.S.	9/15/06	59	male	Laborer	Construction	Fall from the balcony

Source: Brazilian Immigrant Center/COBWEB Project

Implementation

Peer Leaders



COBWEB Teen Peer Leaders developed projects that helped they learned about safety and health. They participated in activities such as a campaign against workplace violence and civic participation training. Last Summer, they met the Boston City Man Felix Arroyo to introduce a city proposal against sexual harassment and shoplifting.

Peer Leaders and the Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo

Trainings



Project staff and an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist pilot-tested a Portuguese version of the OSHA 10-hour safety and health in construction curriculum with a group of ten Brazilian roofers.



About 120 construction workers participated in a 1 hour construction safety awareness training held in churches around Massachusetts.

Popular Education



Project staff has helped produce the short film "My Dream, Our Reality" based on a play developed by staff and community members. The popular theater group "Ponto de Partida-USA" filmed it last year. The film has been shown in several Brazilian churches in Eastern Massachusetts to generate discussion about health and safety and life problems faced by Brazilian immigrant workers. A "Photovoice" quilt has also been displayed in several churches and community events to help educate Brazilians about workplace health and safety hazards perceived by Brazilians who work in the service sector. A manual describing all the training activities conducted to train the popular theater group was also produced.

Communication and Dissemination

Newspaper Columns



COBWEB staff has written a weekly column in local Brazilian newspapers for more than two years now. Since August 2005 the articles have been published in the "A Notícia" every Tuesday. A total of 109 columns were written so far covering a variety of occupational health and safety subjects and immigrant issues, among many other topics.

Radio Shows



The show "Radiola Brasil", broadcast by the UMass Lowell radio station, WUML, 91.5 FM, airs every Tuesday from 11 AM to 12 PM for about three years now. It is a show in Portuguese that conveys much information and Brazilian music to Brazilian immigrants who live in Northeastern Massachusetts. The show can be accessed on-line at:

www.wuml.org & www.cobwebproject.org

"Radiola Brasil" was broadcast 160 times by mid-October 2006. Starting in August 2006, the COBWEB project has also participated in the radio show "Centro do Imigrante no Ar", an initiative of the Brazilian Immigrant Center. The "Centro do Imigrante no Ar" is a call-in show broadcast every Monday through Wednesday from 7 PM to 8 PM at WDJL 1300 AM, reaching the Greater Boston and Southeastern Massachusetts. It can also be listened at www.iadm.net. The COBWEB staff runs the program every Monday.

Media Coverage

Newspapers



The COBWEB project is now a reference in Massachusetts for Brazilian immigration and occupational health issues. It provides information for more than 14 Brazilian ethnic newspapers, such as "Metropolitan", "A Notícia", "The National", "Comunidade News", and "Brazilian Times." In addition, several major newspapers in Brazil, such as "Folha de São Paulo", "O Globo", "Corraio Brasileiro", and "Estado de São Paulo" have interviewed project staff and published reports on activities of the COBWEB project. American newspapers, including the "Metrowest Daily News", "Boston Globe", "Boston Herald", and "The Wall Street Journal" also reported on the health and safety of Brazilian immigrants.

Radios

- WUML (Lowell)
- WBUR (Massachusetts NPR station)
- Rádio Eldorado (Brazil)

Websites

- www.cobwebproject.org
- www.bbc.com
- www.bisado.com

TVs

- Globe International
- Record International
- Bandeirantes (Brazil)
- Bate-Papo com a Shirley (Brazilian TV show broadcast in the Comcast channel in Stoughton, MA)



Engaging workers in the community or, Back to Hull House in the 21st Century

- ✓ To address workplace health issues faced by Brazilian immigrant workers in construction and housecleaning in Eastern Massachusetts at the community level.
- ✓ To deal with places where adult Brazilian immigrant workers work, live, and pray by discussing worker health issues without creating artificial or bureaucratic barriers, i.e., every artist has to be where the people are (Milton Nascimento's song).
- ✓ To adopt diversity of methods that took us where Brazilian immigrants were (comedy, popular theater, media, videos, photovoice, etc).
- ✓ To find sustainable solutions that reduced exposure to chemical hazards as well addressed social justice concerns (Vida Verde Housecleaning Cooperative).

Seu (Mr.) Zé- A Brazilian Comedian



MEDIA- Radio Show at WUML



Brazilian Coop Vida Verde (Green Life)

- ✓ Supported by another Environmental Justice Grant through Tufts University.
- ✓ Founded in December 2006. It is related to the Brazilian Women's Group (BWG).

✓ Groundwork laid out by training conducted by Project COBWEB staff and the housecleaners who volunteered at the BWG.



Products of Housecleaner Coop Vida Verde (Green Life)



Effects of Social, Economic, and Labor Policies on Occupational Health Disparities

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THE MAURICIO GASTÓN INSTITUTE FOR LATINO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Key Federal and State Occ. Safety and Health Laws and Policies

- ▶ OSH Act
- ▶ Mine Safety and Health Act
- ▶ EPA – FIFRA and HAZWOPER
- ▶ Wage and Hour Laws - FLSA
- ▶ Worker's Compensation Laws
- ▶ NLRA- Collective Bargaining Rights
- ▶ Immigration Laws and Policies

Key Federal and State Occ. Safety and Health Laws and Policies

- ▶ Health Insurance (PPACA)
- ▶ Paid Leave

Long Story Short ...

- ▶ All these federal and state laws and policies have had positive effects in reducing occ. safety and health disparities, but all also still have limitations and gaps that need to be addressed if we want to reduce these disparities in the future.

Exclusions and Limitations of Federal and State Social, Economic, and Labor Laws and Policies

- ▶ Agricultural and Domestic Workers
- ▶ Tipped Workers (restaurant workers, taxi drivers, day laborers)
- ▶ Public Sector Workers
- ▶ Immigrant Workers
- ▶ Misclassified Workers- Misclassified as Independent Contractors
- ▶ Limited or Lack of Enforcement, Funding, and Accountability

Local and State Efforts that May Reduce Occupational Health Disparities

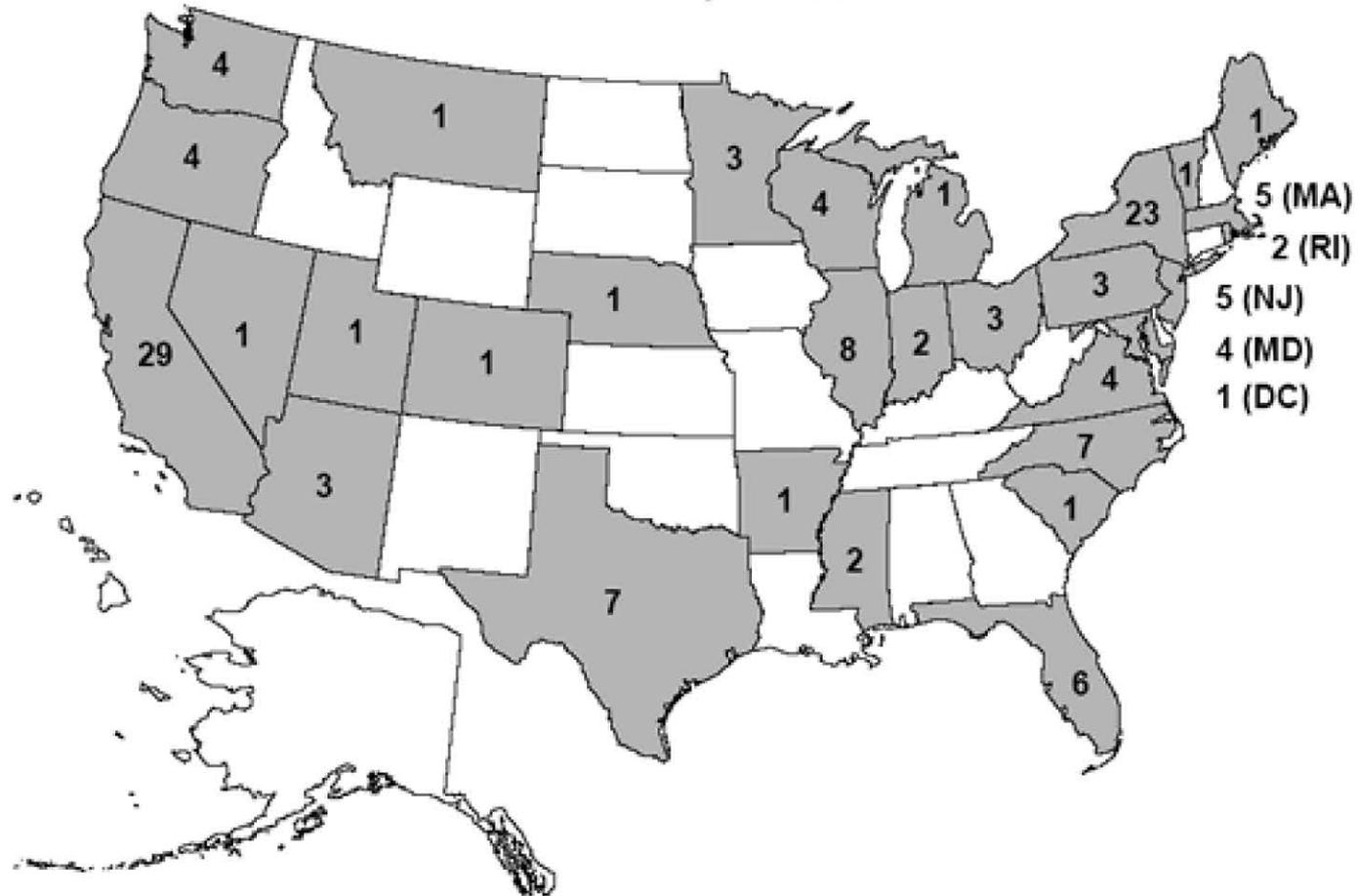
- ▶ Living Wage Laws
- ▶ Wage Theft Legislation
- ▶ Community Benefit Agreements
- ▶ Local Hire Policies
- ▶ Coordinated and Targeted Enforcement Efforts by Different Government Agencies (e.g. New York, Michigan, Massachusetts, California)

Local and State Efforts that May Reduce Occupational Health Disparities

- ▶ Occupational Health Care Services for Marginalized Populations
- ▶ Worker Centers and COSH Groups

FIGURE A

Worker centers by state, 2005



Source: See appendix for the names and locations of these 137 worker centers.

