



Puerto Rico as a gateway for safety and health training in South América

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Who are we?

- We are the Institute of Environmental Education (INEDA) of Universidad Metropolitana (UMET) of Puerto Rico.
- UMET is one of 4 universities that make up the AGM University System, a 60 year old private educational institution with more than 40,000 students in Puerto Rico and in Florida.

Who are we?

Cont.

- Within UMET, we are part of the School of Environmental Affairs (SEA).
- INEDA, is (among other things)
 - an HWWT Center (2000)
 - the AOTC site in PR (2003)
 - an HDPT Center (2005)

INEDA as an HWWT Center

- Operating since 2000 and until July 30, 2009, we have offered ...
 - 38 HAZWOPER 40-hour courses (441)
 - 41 HAZWOPER 08-hour (474)
 - 06 ORC (241)

INEDA as an HDPT Center

- Operating since 2005 and until July 30, 2009, we have offered ...
 - 31 OSHA 510, 500, HAZWOPER 40-hr., 7600 and 5600 courses to a total of 470 participants

INEDA as the AOTC site in PR (2003)

- Operating since 2003 and until July 30, 2009, we have offered ...
 - 113 courses (1,415), 9 of these courses have been taught abroad:
 - 3 in the US Virgin Islands
 - 2 in the Dominican Republic
 - 2 in México
 - 1 in Peru, and
 - 1 in Colombia
- (We have another course scheduled for November in Colombia)

Our practice in PR

- At the HWWT (2000)...
 - We are competing with unsupervised private providers who pay little or no attention to QC teaching issues.
 - Our participants are both from the public and private sectors. Most of them are technician level staff.
 - Our HWWT training staff is possibly the best qualified and experineced instructing team we have.
 - Currently, we teach more refresher courses than initial ones
 - Now we are establishing alliances with health professional associations to beef up recruitment.

Our practice in PR, Cont.

- As AOTC, PR (2003) ...
 - Participants come mostly from private sector both as employees or private consultants.
 - Regularly are college graduates in technical fields
 - Finding good and versatile instructors remains one of our most challenging tasks
 - PR is a small country and with a increasingly diminishing business community. We need to find participants.
 - An increasing number of foreign participants are coming to take our courses. Immigration laws keep out a substantial # of them.
 - Foreign participants com from the private sector, are college educated and have lots of professional experience.

Our practice in PR, Cont.

- At the HDPT (2005)...
 - Participants come from state and municipal agencies represented in the interagency emergency response committee.
 - Some of them come from NGOs whose organizational mission is to help out in disaster response operations.
 - Participants seem to have lots of practice but limited academic experience.
 - Hard to reach (weather conditions, high turnover, precarious working conditions, etc.)
 - Very enthusiastic and dedicated group

Our practice abroad, USVI

- Our first of the island clients were from the USVI. We did 3 courses in St. Croix and St. Thomas in association with the UVI. Small groups made unviable to maintain operating there. We approached OSHA Caribbean Office to keep operating there by sharing expenses. Months later I found UVI Cont. Ed. Department had been given OSHA Consultan status. Clients came mostly from public utility companies and from private business such as hotels, construction companies and even a diary operation. No more courses were carried out at UVI by AOTC, PR.

Our practice abroad, México

- A Mexican student of ours introduced us to CMIC, the Mexican Council of Construction Industry with local chapters all over Mexico, a promising contact. A CMIC local chapter, Coatzacoalcos in Veracruz, called us to do an OSHA 510. We went and did it. 27 people showed up. They were from Fluor and PEMEX. Fluor was selected to build an extension of PEMEX refinery and lack of understanding between the parts blocked progress. PEMEX referred to its safety law and Fluor to its safety policy. At the request of Fluor the course was scheduled to develop a common language.

Our practice abroad, Dominican Republic

- We went to the DR invited by EATON Electrical, a client of ours in PR with operations in a “Zona franca” outside Santo Domingo called Haina. We held an OSHA 511. Most attendees came from USA companies operating in that country such as Hanes, Corning, Eaton itself and a few others, as well as local occupational safety and health consultants. One of them, early this year, invited us to do an Industrial Hygiene course. For some of her clients.

Our practice abroad, Perú and Colombia

- An OSHA 510 was carried out in October 2008 in Lima. 21 participants, all of them from private companies participated in the course.
- The first week of September 2009, we did an OSHA 510 in Bogota in association with a local company involved in designing fall protection personal protection equipment. 13 participants from different parts of the country participated.

Lessons learned from the experience I

- Puerto Rico it is viewed by some Latin American countries as friendly and attractive territory to participate in OSH training. Its language and culture seem to play an important part of this trend.
- USA immigration law is an obstacle to some of our potential participants.
- Although cheaper than USA, Puerto Rico is considered an expensive destination for most potential participants from LA.

Lessons learned from the experience II

- We began receiving participants from various LA countries: DR, Nicaragua, El Salvador, México, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Perú, and also from the USA
- Some of our foreign participants became our promoters in their respective countries.
- Our participants value the institutional experience of the USA and Puerto Rico in OSH, as well as becoming trainers of OSHA Outreach Program . Even Cuban professionals wish to take our courses.

Lessons learned from the experience III

- Some of our participants view Free Trade Agreements between their respective countries and the USA as professional opportunities for them down the road. They want to be prepared.
- USA companies that operate in LA seek local professionals who know both local and USA OSH legislations.
- Puerto Rico has lost in the last three months 25,000 state jobs. This will have an adverse impact on the number of courses and participants we will have this FY.

Lessons learned from the experience IV

- Our training activity in LA countries may help us ease the logical decline in courses and participants we may endure as a result.



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Thank you!
Questions?