

University of Massachusetts Boston

From the Selected Works of C. Eduardo Siqueira

2005

Project COBWEB Report

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Available at: http://works.bepress.com/carlos_siqueira/16/

PROJECT COBWEB

A REPORT ON BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN MASSACHUSETTS



PARCERIA/COBWEB

Collaboration for Better Work Environment for Brazilians in Massachusetts

www.cobwebproject.org

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Photos: Project COBWEB, Carlos Moraes/Metropolitan Brazilian News and Luciano Braz/ Bisado.com

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- 1. Overview of Project COBWEB**
- 2. The Team**
- 3. Partners**
- 4. Partnerships**
- 5. Research**
- 6. Activities**
 - A. Trainings**
 - B. Lectures**
 - C. Outreach**
 - D. Youth Group**
 - E. Community Breakfasts**
- 7. Publicity**
 - A. Radio Programs**
 - B. Press**
 - C. Audiovisual Resources**
 - D. Events**
- 8. Conclusion**

Project COBWEB (Collaboration for a Better Work Environment for Brazilians) or Parceria in Portuguese began in 2003 with the combined efforts of the Work Environment Department at the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UMass Lowell), the Brazilian Immigrant Center (BIC) – a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1995 for Brazilian immigrant workers in Boston – the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH), a NGO that fights for the rights of workers in the state, and from two health care centers: the Lowell Community Health Center and the Massachusetts General Chelsea Health Center. This last partner withdrew from the project in 2005.

Between 2003 and 2007, Project COBWEB worked with the Brazilian working community in Massachusetts, particularly in the Eastern part of the state, to promote better health and safety conditions in the work environment. Project COBWEB was financed by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) – an American government agency that has financed other similar projects with the goal of seeking environmental justice for disadvantaged populations in the United States.

Project COBWEB was a research project with community participation that had the following objectives:

- a. Collect data on Brazilian immigrant workers, particularly demographic data, on occupational hazards related to the Brazilian immigrant and on the experience of Brazilians as immigrants in the United States;
- b. Identify the workplace hazards of Brazilians who work as housecleaners and janitors, and in the construction trades (painters, carpenters, roofers and day laborers);
- c. Develop culturally, linguistically, and literacy appropriate curricula and educational materials to disseminate information on work environment hazards to the Brazilian community;
- d. Recruit and train a team of peer-trainers/advocates in teaching techniques and methods to educate low-literacy Brazilian immigrant workers in health and safety awareness;
- e. Design research and policy strategies to minimize occupational health risks associated with Brazilian immigrant worker exposures to hazards in cleaning jobs (e.g. replacing toxic chemical products) and in the construction trades.

Project
COBWEB was
created to
promote
better health
and safety condi-
tions in the work
environment for
Brazilians in
Massachusetts

THE TEAM

C. EDUARDO SIQUEIRA, MD, ScD

Dr. C. Eduardo Siqueira is an assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Sustainability at UMass Lowell. Siqueira was the coordinator of Project COBWEB.



TIAGO JANSEN, MD

Tiago Jansen is an occupational physician who graduated from the Universidade Federal da Bahia and is a doctoral student in the Department of Work Environment of UMass Lowell. Jansen was a research assistant on Project COBWEB.



CLÁUDIA TAMSKY

Claudia Tamsky is a sociologist who graduated from the Universidade Federal do Amazonas. Claudia was coordinator of the youth group on Project COBWEB and a worker health educator at the Brazilian Immigrant Center.



ANDRÉA GOUVEIA BARBOSA, MD

Andrea Gouveia Barbosa is an occupational physician who graduated from the Universidade Federal da Bahia and is a doctoral student in the Department of Work Environment of UMass Lowell. Andrea was a research assistant on Project COBWEB.



THE TEAM

ELISA GARIBALDI, MD

Elisa Garibaldi is a general surgeon and pediatrician graduate from the Instituto de Previdência dos Servidores de Minas Gerais (IPSEMG). Elisa was responsible for outreach on Project COBWEB and a health educator at the Lowell Community Health Center.



HELEN SINZKER

Helen Sinzker is a journalist who graduated from the Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa no Paraná. Helen was responsible for outreach and public relations of Project COBWEB.



MARIANA WAGNER

Mariana Wagner is an Education graduate from Lesley College. She was a community health educator for the project.



FRANCYSLANE MIRANDA

Francyslane Miranda coordinated the youth group and was a manager of Project COBWEB.





UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL

The mission of the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UMass Lowell) is to offer high quality, accessible education and devote a large part of grants and public services to the sustainable economic and social development of the region. As a result, many initiatives such as Project COBWEB are developed in collaboration with community organizations.



BRAZILIAN IMMIGRANT CENTER

The Brazilian Immigrant Center (BIC) is a nonprofit organization founded to strengthen the Brazilians in Massachusetts. The BIC has as its mission to organize the Brazilian community and form leaders to fight against the social, political and economic marginalization of the community.



LOWELL COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

The Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) has a mission of providing quality and culturally appropriate health care to the population of Greater Lowell, regardless of immigration status. The LCHC is committed to improving the health of the community, strengthening each person in order to maximize his or her physical and mental well-being.



MASSCOSH

The Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH) organizes workers, community groups and activists in the areas of health and workplace safety to defend decent and secure jobs, and healthy communities in Eastern and Central Massachusetts. Through training, technical assistance and partnerships, MassCOSH develops leadership to reduce unsafe workplace conditions.

Project COBWEB supported the original collaboration between BIC, UMass Lowell, MassCOSH and LCHC. The growth of the project's activities allowed new partners to be added to the project and contribute in expanding and strengthening the work.



www.cdc.gov/niosh

- UMass Lowell and NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) co-organized the National Symposium on Safety and Health of Immigrant Workers in 2004, hosted by UMass Lowell. This symposium brought together community and professional leaders from across the country to discuss the causes and solutions to the workplace safety and problems faced by immigrant workers in the United States.



www.osha.gov

- The BIC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) signed an Alliance agreement in April 2006 to conduct Brazilian worker and management trainings in Massachusetts. This collaboration has allowed for much needed and current information to be provided in Portuguese to Brazilian workers and their employers.



www.bphc.org

- The BIC developed a partnership with the City of Boston in 2007 to detect and control lead poisoning in children and Brazilian construction workers.

- The BIC, UMass Lowell, MassCOSH and the Occupational Health Surveillance Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health worked together over the last three years in collecting information on workplace deaths and injuries of Brazilian workers, in the launching of campaigns to prevent them, and when necessary, new laws and regulations to prevent deaths and workplace injuries.



RESEARCH

The Project COBWEB team did field-work in Massachusetts to collect data and information on Brazilian immigrant workers and their families. First, this information was collected at the Brazilian Consulate in Boston from the 8,623 passport applications filled out in the year 2003. Additionally, close to 650 workers responded to a survey entitled “Research on the Workplace Conditions of Brazilian Immigrant Workers.”

Project COBWEB professionals organized the collection and analyzed 145 cases of workplace injuries (also sometimes inappropriately called “workplace accidents”) suffered by Brazilian workers that contacted the BIC to receive assistance on worker’s compensation insurance between 2003 and June of 2007.



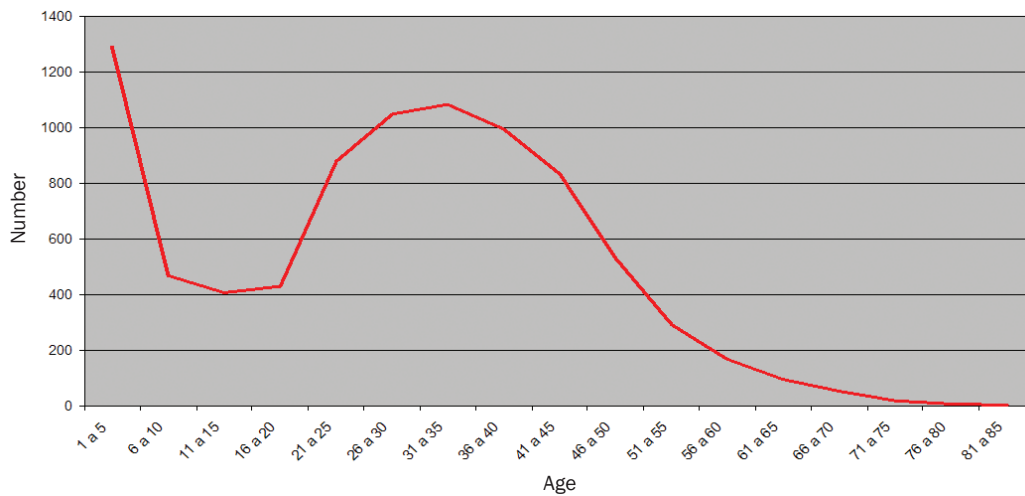


OBTAINED FROM PASSPORT DATA

- Statistics from 8,623 passport forms obtained through the Brazilian Consulate in Boston in 2003
- The Consulate serves all of the New England states
- No personal information was included in the study

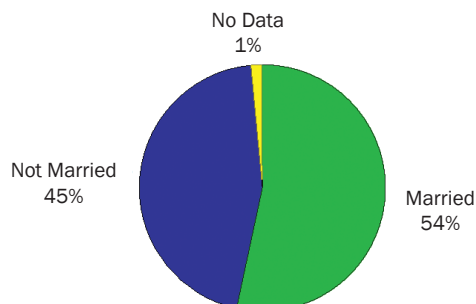
Distributed by Age

Age Distribution – 5 Year intervals

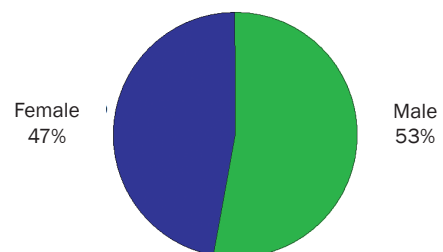


Marriage Status and Sex

Married and Single (15 years of age or older)



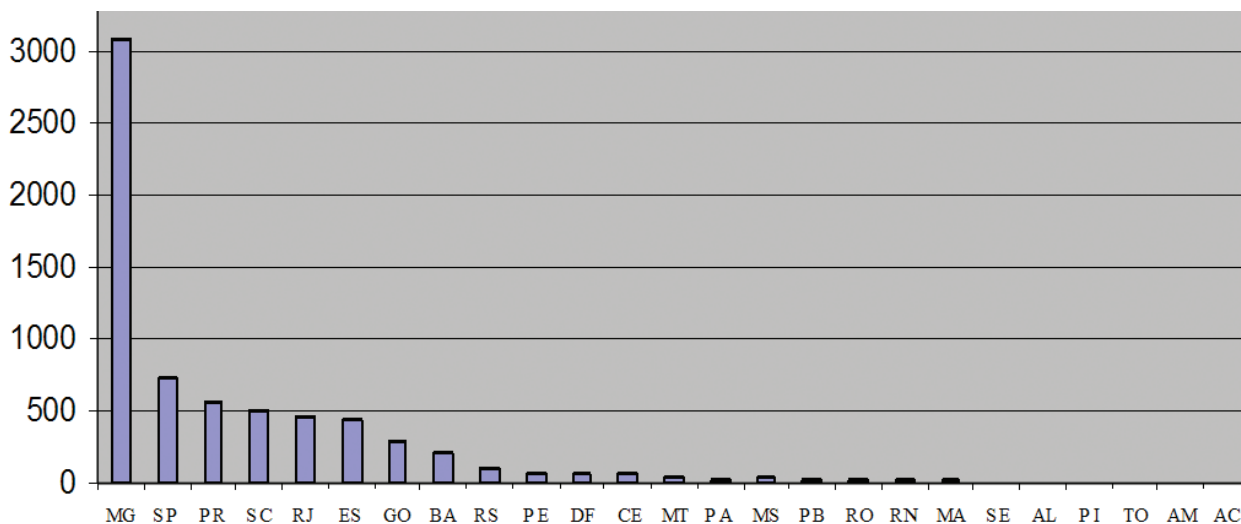
Distribution by Sex



OBTAINED FROM PASSPORT DATA

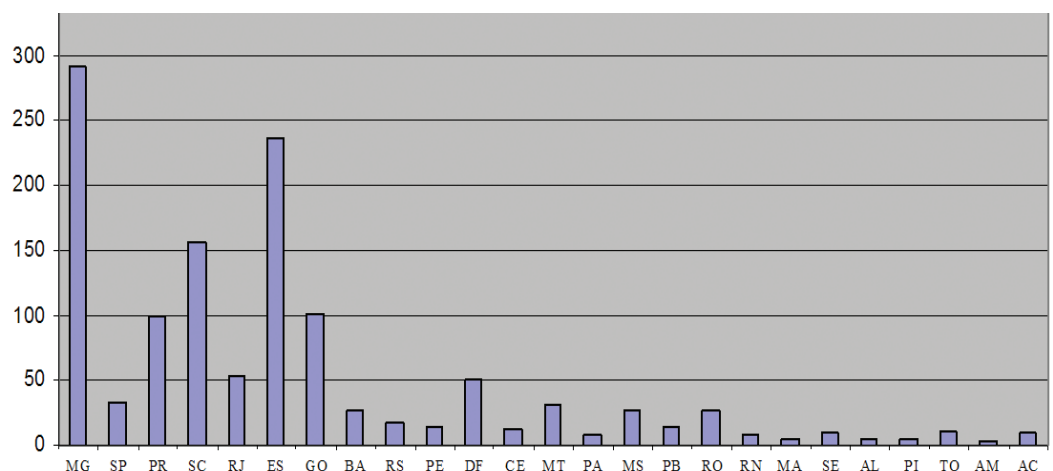


Population by State of Birth in Brazil



Population of state of birth in Brazil divided by the total population of the state of birth

This graph compares the number of immigrants of each state with the total population of the state, in accordance with the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), in order to emphasize the importance of emigration for each state. The graphic demonstrates that emigration carries the most weight in the states of Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Santa Catarina and Goiás.





BRAZILIANS LIVING IN MASSACHUSETTS

There are **356** cities and towns in Massachusetts.

The Brazilians in the study

live in **250** of them.

5,523 live in 19 cities and

3,100 live in the other 231.

MAIN CITIES	
FRAMINGHAM	847
BOSTON	656
SOMERVILLE	619
EVERETT	459
MARLBOROUGH	348
WORCESTER	313
LOWELL	299
HYANNIS	274
MALDEN	272
MEDFORD	208
REVERE	208
MILFORD	198
BROCKTON	157
PEABODY	140
CAMBRIDGE	125
FALL RIVER	117
LYNN	101
HUDSON	91
YARMOUTH	91

Population	Number of Cities
>500	3
200 a 500	8
100 a 500	8
100 a 199	6
50 a 99	13
20 a 49	25
10 a 19	27
5 a 9	42
< 5	126

ACTIVITIES



Project COBWEB developed a large number of activities between 2004 and 2007, among which are:

- Trained hundreds of Brazilian immigrants who work in construction trades and housecleaning in workplace health and safety;

- Conducted dozens of presentations in churches on workers health, always linking health with the life of the immigrant in Massachusetts;

- Published flyers to inform the Brazilian public about the project;

- Promoted meetings with business owners, priests and pastors. Participated in the Brazilian Independence Day festival and in health fairs promoted by Brazilian and American community organizations;

- Organized a group of teenage Brazilians to educate the Brazilian youth and their families on workplace health and safety;

- Promoted three community breakfasts with Brazilian leaders to discuss relevant topics for the Brazilian community, such as the health of the Brazilian immigrant, immigration laws and politics, and civic and political participation of Brazilian residents in Massachusetts.

TRAINING

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Construction is one of the largest sectors of the economy that employs Brazilians in Massachusetts and is recognized throughout the world as one of the sectors in which workplace injuries and deaths are most likely to occur. Project COBWEB prioritized Brazilian immigrants to create educational activities with the objective of disseminating the topic “workplace health and safety” and contribute to the reduction of the number of injuries and deaths.

The first step was to get to know the workplace conditions and the risks to which workers are exposed through “cultural conversations” and visits to the job site. Next, a series of presentations were organized in churches in several cities to sensitize the Brazilian population in Massachusetts, especially construction workers, to the problem. It is estimated that the project reached close to a thousand people, of which approximately 800 were construction workers.

The Project COBWEB team began to conduct trainings together with OSHA on the standards and safety practices in construction. The trainings included participatory techniques and exchange of experiences, group discussions, demonstrations of safety equipment appropriate to the specific trades and moreover, the use of role play, video, and photographs to illustrate risk conditions and good practices.

More than 100 workers were trained in different communities in Massachusetts. The project team is training a group of peer-trainers so that they share their knowledge with other workers in new training sessions.



TRAINING

HOUSECLEANERS

The housecleaner is the most common occupation of Brazilian women in Massachusetts. The constant contact with toxic chemicals in cleaning products places these workers at risk and lifting heavy objects can affect the musculoskeletal system, causing back pain and tendonitis.

Project COBWEB trained close to 350 housecleaners to reduce health problems caused by cleaning houses. The trainings took place in eight cities: Lowell, Acton, Peabody, Somerville, Framingham, Allston, Quincy and Cambridge. These training sessions covered the use of non-toxic cleaning products (green cleaners) and instructed the workers on how to avoid back pain and other symptoms caused by incorrect postures, carrying heavy objects, excessive work hours, etc. The trainings included a presentation that was significant for its visual impact. The printed material allowed the housecleaners to take home information such as a list of non-toxic cleaning products, an explanation of worker's rights and brochures from organizations that support immigrants.

During the trainings, the housecleaners listed the main problems associated with their occupation, such as the rising cost of non-toxic products on the market, the limitations in communication with the owners of the houses due to a lack of English skills and the difficulties in obtaining new clients. The cleaning "helpers" also complained about their lack of control to change their own work.

The trainings given by Project COBWEB stimulated the partnership between Tufts University and the Brazilian Women's Group to create a green cooperative of Brazilian housecleaners in Somerville, Massachusetts.

The Green Life cooperative of Brazilian Housecleaners in Somerville was started on December 9, 2006. This initiative was financed by NIOSH and received the support of Project COBWEB. The cooperative, a non-profit organization, distributes non-toxic cleaning products and offers instrumental English classes to the housecleaners. The cooperative also offers training in business administration, workplace safety and health and conducts a marketing campaign to promote natural cleaning products. To learn more about the cooperative, go to its website at www.verdeamerelo.org/vidaverde.



TRAINING

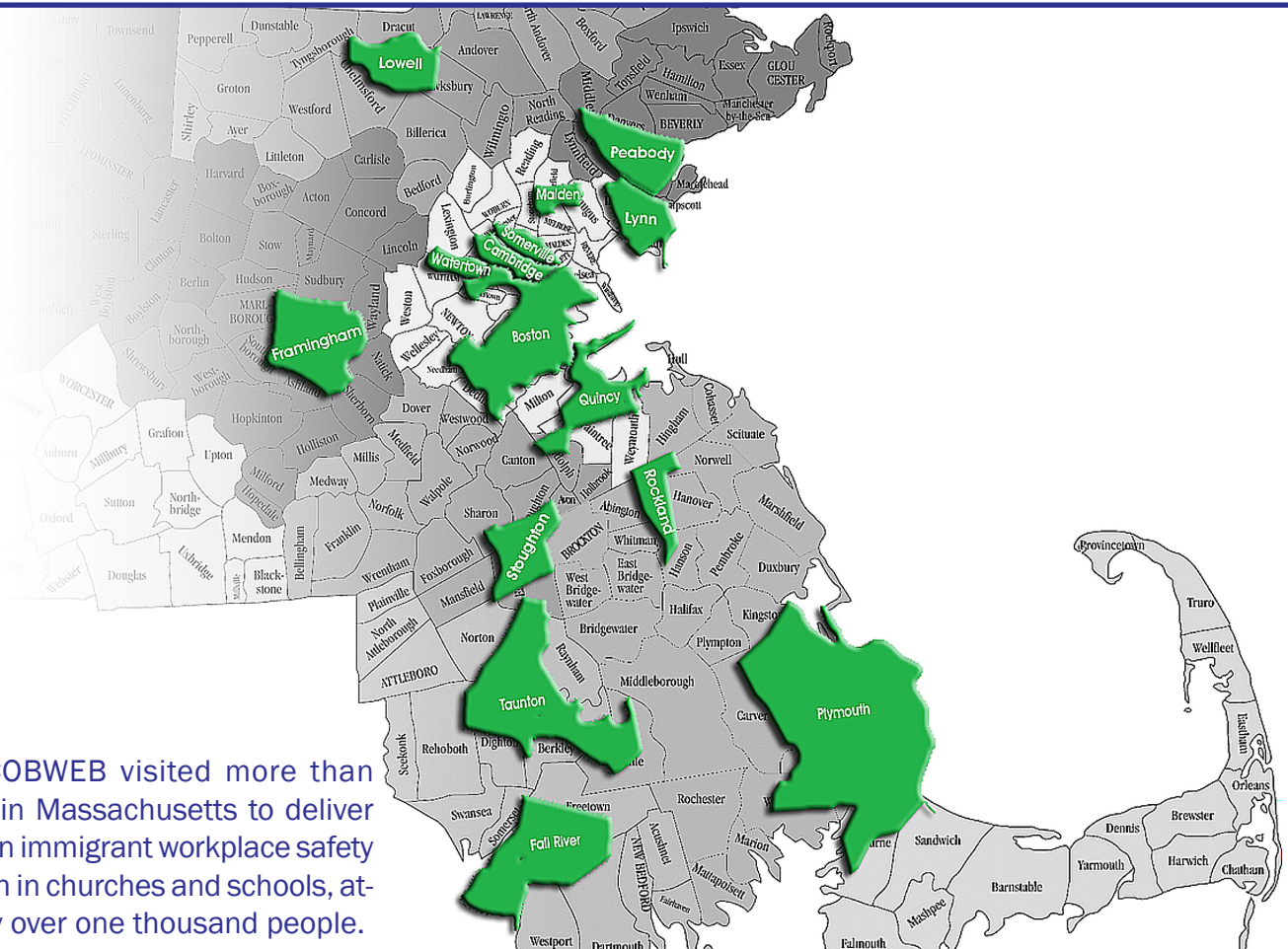
LEAD



The partnership between the “Lead Poisoning Prevention Program” of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and the BIC was the direct result of the work that Project COBWEB developed in the last four years to improve the well-being of Brazilian workers in Massachusetts.

A grant from the BPHC enabled the BIC to administer educational talks for construction workers and painters and the residents of Allston and East Boston, alerting them to the danger of this “invisible enemy” that can cause serious harm to the health of adults and children. The partnership performs blood testing in adults and especially children under the age of 6 to test for lead poisoning.

LECTURES



Project COBWEB visited more than 15 cities in Massachusetts to deliver lectures on immigrant workplace safety and health in churches and schools, attended by over one thousand people.

BRAZILIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVAL

Project COBWEB participated in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 Brazilian Independence Day Festival, which has taken place for more than a decade. In this traditional event within the Massachusetts Brazilian community, the team promoted the activities of the project and distributed information on workplace safety and health.

FLYERS

Flyers with information on the project and worker rights were distributed across the entire state of Massachusetts.



Trabalhador, ter boa saúde física e mental é fundamental!

Atenção! O Projeto Parceria alerta:

Ficar doente diminui a capacidade de trabalhar.

Visite sempre o seu MÉDICO! Um exame anual é indicado em todas as idades, principalmente para pessoas com histórico familiar de doenças.

Além disso, fique atento aos riscos no trabalho. Você tem o direito de recusar serviços que coloquem a sua vida em perigo.

Evite situações perigosas e só faça aquilo que tenha certeza que é seguro.

www.cobwebproject.org

COBWEB
Collaboration for Better Work Environment for Brazilians

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COBWEB - PARCERIA
Saúde e Segurança

Trabalhe com saúde e segurança

COBWEB
Collaboration for Better Work Environment for Brazilians

ORDEN E PROGRESSO

Projeto Parceria



O Projeto Parceria, COBWEB em inglês, é a colaboração entre a Universidade de Massachusetts em Lowell, o Centro do Imigrante Brasileiro, o Centro de Saúde de Lowell e MassCOSH (Coalizão de Massachussets para Segurança e Saúde Ocupacional).

Nosso objetivo é prevenir acidentes, lesões temporárias e permanentes e doenças físicas e mentais no ambiente de trabalho. Para isso, orientamos e treinamos o trabalhador imigrante brasileiro, visando aumentar a compreensão sobre os direitos e os riscos no trabalho em Massachusetts. Quanto mais seguro e saudável o ambiente de trabalho, melhor para todos: funcionários, empregadores e sociedade.

Objetivos do Projeto Parceria:

- Treinar e educar o brasileiro para prevenir lesões, doenças e mortes no trabalho.
- Orientar e conscientizar a comunidade brasileira sobre o direito de ter saúde e segurança no trabalho.

JUNTE-SE A NÓS!

Atividades

Comunidade

Realizamos palestras sobre saúde e segurança no trabalho e treinamentos específicos para as profissões mais comuns entre os imigrantes brasileiros. Nessas treinamentos conversamos sobre os problemas na saúde do trabalhador, o que nos permite oferecer soluções práticas de acordo com a necessidade do trabalhador imigrante.

Pesquisa

Estudamos as condições de saúde e segurança no trabalho dos imigrantes brasileiros em Massachusetts. Você está convidado a participar respondendo a uma entrevista anônima e confidencial. Entre em contato conosco pelos telefones no verso.

Grupo de Teatro

O grupo "Ponto de Partida - USA" conscientiza, através da arte, a importância de ter saúde e segurança no trabalho. Dessa iniciativa, surgiu o curta-metragem "Sonho meu, Realidade nossa" que desperta discussões em suas exibições.

Grupo de Jovens

Um grupo de quatro adolescentes está aprendendo quais são os direitos trabalhistas e quais as leis que protegem o jovem trabalhador. O objetivo é que o grupo repasse esse conhecimento para outros adolescentes. Como parte desse aprendizado, eles já estão desenvolvendo junto com jovens da MassCOSH uma campanha contra a Violência no Trabalho.

Mídia

Rádio: Toda terça-feira o Rádio Brasil vai ao ar das 11 horas ao meio-dia pela WUML 91.5 FM (www.wuml.org). O ouvinte participa ao vivo em uma programação de música brasileira e bate-papo.

Jornal: Na coluna do "A Notícia" informamos os direitos do trabalhador e abordamos temas constantes no dia-a-dia do imigrante.

Direitos no trabalho



Todo trabalhador, independente do estado migratório, está protegido pela lei de Massachusetts. Sendo assim, além de ter o direito de receber salários e horas extras, o brasileiro deve exigir saúde e segurança no trabalho.

Em caso de acidentes e doenças relacionados ao trabalho, a lei do Estado garante o seguro de Compensação do Trabalhador. Quer dizer, em caso de lesão ou doença as despesas médicas do trabalhador são pagas pelo seguro obrigatório do patrão.

Caso já tenha vivido uma situação assim e não teve o seu direito respeitado, procure o Centro do Imigrante Brasileiro. O benefício é retroativo até quatro anos.



Venha Participar

COBWEB
Collaboration for Better Work Environment for Brazilians

Funded by HRH e #9250212988

Financiado pelo Instituto Nacional de Clínicas de Saúde Ambiental

local de trabalho

ALERTA DE SEGURANÇA

Programa de Saúde Ocupacional, Departamento de Saúde Pública de Massachusetts

Dois brasileiros, faxineiros de um restaurante, foram feridos no trabalho ao serem atacados por um ladrão armado. Um deles morreu.

Em maio de 2004 dois trabalhadores brasileiros foram vítimas de uma tentativa de assalto no restaurante em que trabalhavam. Um dos trabalhadores, de 35 anos, foi fatalmente esfaqueado e o outro, 27 anos, ficou ferido. Após o fechamento do restaurante, os funcionários ficaram a limpar quando o ladrão atacou o brasileiro de 27 anos. Ao ver a cena, o trabalhador de 35 anos tentou socorrer o colega e levou uma facada fatal.

Você tem direito a ter saúde e segurança no trabalho!

Tudo trabalhador tem o direito à saúde e à segurança no trabalho: cidadãos e não-cidadãos, imigrantes documentados e não-documentados. Os empregadores têm que seguir os regulamentos de saúde e segurança ocupacionais.

Seu empregador tem que:

- Fornecer um local de trabalho isento de riscos sérios e visíveis.
- Treiná-lo como trabalhar com segurança em contato com produtos químicos (com os que você usa e com os que estão próximos a você).
- Assegurar que você tenha e use ferramentas e equipamentos seguros e com manutenção apropriada.
- Cobrir todos os funcionários com o seguro de "Compensação do Trabalhador". Esse é uma lei estadual que fornece benefícios médicos e financeiros aos trabalhadores que se machucam e adoece no trabalho.

Para mais informação

Projeto Parceria - toda orientação em português
Tel: (617) 783-8001 ext. 3; Tel: (978) 934-5147
www.cobwebproject.org

Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health (MassCOSH) ajuda trabalhadores com problemas de saúde e segurança no trabalho.
Tel: 617-625-7233 ext. 10 www.masscosh.org

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): órgão do governo que atua das questões de riscos graves.
Tel: 617-555-9960 www.osha.gov

Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA): administração a Compensação dos Trabalhadores.
Tel: 617-727-4900 ext. 410 www.mass.gov/dia

SEMPRE: Se você precisar de interpretação, peça por um logo que falar a chamada.

Você tem o direito de pedir informação sobre saúde, segurança e proteção no trabalho. É ilegal aos empregadores demiti-lo por esse motivo.

Departamento de Saúde Pública de Massachusetts, Programa de Saúde Ocupacional
210 Washington St., 8º andar, Boston, MA 02108-4358, Tel: 617-624-6612 Fax: 617-624-5866

Junho 2005

Rua da Fala Brasileira, Português Brasileiro

Edição 05-05

YOUTH GROUP



The teenage group was an initiative that emerged from the concern of including Brazilian youth in the problems related to workplace health and safety and transforming them into leaders in their communities capable of teaching other young workers.



The G.U.M.B.W.E.B. (Geração Um e Meio for a Better Work Environment for Brazilians) was the first teen group that participated in this program. Edson, Marlon, Nathalia and Wanessa became involved in trainings and awareness campaigns on the conditions of work of teen immigrant workers, particularly Brazilians.



Renan, Carolina, Roberta and Leonardo comprised the new team called Youth COBWEB. They continued the work started by G.U.M.B.W.E.B. aimed at working youth, such as the campaign against Violence in the Workplace, which resulted in new Child Labor legislation in Massachusetts.



The MassCOSH teen group and Project COBWEB teens developed joint actions for the benefit of adolescent/young workers by visiting legislators and media outlets, and participating in conferences to defend those young workers who face discrimination in the workplace but are unaware of their rights.

The teen group of Project COBWEB had an excellent opportunity to show their skills, tenacity, and concern for problems they face in the work environment. What they learned through Project COBWEB will serve as an example for many youth regarding the importance of community involvement in the day-to-day life of the Brazilian immigrant.

COMMUNITY BREAKFASTS

Project COBWEB participated in three Community Breakfasts to engage Brazilian community leaders in the discussion of important issues facing Brazilians in Massachusetts.

The first breakfast took place in 2005 at UMass Lowell and discussed the health of the Brazilian immigrant. The second workshop took place in Allston in 2006 and debated U.S. immigration policies. The third occurred in Everett and discussed civic participation of Brazilians in American politics.

The events had the participation of the Brazilian press in Massachusetts, priests and pastors from several churches, representatives of the cities of Lowell and Boston municipal agencies, and representatives of non-governmental organizations that offer services to Brazilians, such as the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) and One Lowell.



PUBLICITY



Project COBWEB made continuous efforts to advertise its activities and objectives to Brazilian immigrant workers residing in Massachusetts.

Project COBWEB staff wrote more than 150 weekly columns in Brazilian newspapers in Massachusetts, participated in more than 200 weekly radio programs and were interviewed dozens of times by local and Brazilian journalists.

All available methods of communications were utilized to reach Brazilians: radio, newspapers, photographs, Internet and television programs. Although the target audience of the project was the Brazilian immigrant population in Massachusetts, a number of Brazilian and European media outlets – such as Folha de São Paulo, O Globo, TV Bandeirantes and BBC Brazil – covered the project.

Project staff gave lectures and presented work on the project in several universities and conferences in the United States and abroad, including Spain and Brazil.

After four years of continuous work in disseminating information, it can be confidently stated that Project COBWEB managed to reach thousands of Brazilian immigrant workers.



Massachusetts, Junho de 2007



Especialistas alertam que é preciso ter cuidado na hora de escolher um advogado
Pág. 6



CIB: 12 anos de luta por uma comunidade forte

Págs. 8 e 9



www.braziliancenter.org

Jornal do Centro do Imigrante Brasileiro

Ano 01 Edição 01

Senado coloca projeto na gaveta e atrasa reforma migratória



Trabalhador ganha na Justiça direito à compensação



RADIO PROGRAMS



RADIOLA BRASIL

For more than four years, Radiola Brasil has been on the air on WUML 91.5 FM, an UMass Lowell radio station, on Tuesday mornings between 11 am and noon. Radiola Brasil carries Brazilian music and talk-radio discussion on interesting topics related to Brazilian workers in Massachusetts, combining entertainment and information. The program can also be heard on the internet at www.wuml.org and www.cobwebproject.org.

Starting in February 2006, Adriano Sagas, a listener of the show, became one of the hosts of Radiola Brasil.

CENTRO DO IMIGRANTE NO AR

In August 2006, Project COBWEB became part of the Brazilian Immigrant Center radio program called “Centro do Imigrante no Ar” (“Immigrant Center on the Air”). The program goes live Monday through Wednesday from 7 pm to 8 pm on WDJR 1300 AM, reaching Greater Boston and Southern Massachusetts. The show can also be heard on www.iadm.net.

Listeners participate in the shows by asking questions and giving their opinions on a variety of subjects related to the program. The show interviews specialists on many topics of interest to the Brazilian community.



Project COBWEB staff wrote weekly columns for two and a half years in Brazilian newspapers in Massachusetts, covering a variety of topics on worker health and safety, immigration, among other relevant topics for the community. The columns were published in the “Brazilian Times” from September 2004 to July 2005; in “A Notícia” from August 2005 to October 2006; and in “The National” from November 2006 to May 2007.

Readers contacted the Project COBWEB staff through emails and by telephone to learn more details on the column subject matters. One of the readers of “A Notícia” indicated that she saved all of the Project COBWEB articles. Dilma, a housecleaner, said that before reading the articles, she had never realized that an undocumented individual has rights as a worker – and even less the risks to which she is exposed.

The newspaper editors also showed interest in covering the topics addressed in the columns in greater detail.

Project COBWEB became a point of reference on Brazilian immigrants in Massachusetts for the Brazilian print and broadcast media in the United States and Brazil, the media in the U.S. and other countries.

Below see who covered the project:

- Boston Globe
- Boston Herald
- Metrowest Daily News
- Lowell Sun
- Folha de São Paulo*
- Correio Braziliense*
- O Globo*
- A Notícia**
- A Semana**
- Brazilian Times**
- Metropolitan Brazilian News**
- National**
- Comunidade News**
- Brazilian Journal**
- Revista Bate Papo**

*Published in Brazil

**New England community newspapers



AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES

PONTO DE PARTIDA – USA

The theater group “Ponto de Partida” was created in December 2005 by a group of volunteer actors that use diverse forms of artistic expression – theater, cinema, photography and fine arts – to teach and learn about workplace health and other relevant themes to the Brazilian immigrant community.

The actors even dressed as clowns to say that, “Yes, all workers have rights and should be protected, regardless of their immigration status! Even the circus has workplace health and safety standards.” Currently, the group is filming a movie on domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

PLANETA BRASIL

The first generation of youth in Project COBWEB participated in Planeta Brasil, on Globo International TV in 2004. The program discussed worker’s rights, such as having safe workplace conditions.

TV TALK SHOWS

Project COBWEB staff participated in the community television program “Bate Papo com Shirley,” shown on Comcast local television outlets in Massachusetts and on the show “Eye on U” on Lowell community cable television.

AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES



PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice was the methodology chosen for people in the Brazilian community to show the reality of the work environment through photos taken by the workers themselves. The photos represent the way in which each worker perceives the world around him or her. Whoever views these photos sees a snippet of reality selected by the “photographer”. This technique allows participants to produce knowledge that leads them through a process that strengthen themselves.

According to Wang and Redwood Jones*, the Photovoice is “an interactive health strategy in which people use cameras to document their own health and workplace reality. As the participants become involved in a process of group critical thinking, they probably will fight for changes in their community using the power that is contained within their own photos and stories to communicate with the appropriate authorities”.

The photos selected by the group that participated in the photovoice were incorporated in a quilt and used to trigger conversation among Brazilian immigrant workers on workplace health and safety. An OSHA inspector collaborated with the project and actively participated in these dialogues.

*Photovoice Ethics
Wang CC, Redwood-Jones YA
Health Education and Behavior, 28 (5): 560-572, 2001

AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES



“SONHO MEU, REALIDADE NOSSA” – “MY DREAM, OUR REALITY”

The documentary “My Dream, Our Reality” produced by the group Ponto de Partida-USA, is an adaptation of the piece “The Other Side of America” by Mariana Wagner, which was based on real life events. The video’s scenes revolve around the hard reality of the Brazilian immigrant worker in the United States, in which the lack of training and complete lack of knowledge of the worker about his or her rights result in cases of injuries, illnesses and even workplace deaths.

“My Dream, Our Reality” was shown in churches, community meetings and universities. The showings were followed by discussions and presentations on workers’ rights. The viewers identified with many scenes in the film that reflected the central message: “Stop, Think! There is no work worth more than your life!”.

“O INIMIGO INVISÍVEL” – “THE INVISIBLE ENEMY”

The website Bisado.com attended the workshops on lead poisoning prevention and produced a documentary that was shown on Bisado.com called “O Inimigo Invisível” (“The Invisible Enemy”). Internet navigators became interested in learning more on the subject and to find out where they could be tested for blood lead levels.

AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES

INTERNET

The Project COBWEB website contains information on its programs and partnerships, research results, weekly columns, as well as links related to topics on worker health and safety in the United States. This bilingual website – in English and Portuguese – is a source for workers who want more information on the subject matter, and for journalists and other interested parties who want to know more about the situation of Brazilian workers in Massachusetts.





CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

The Project COBWEB team participated in several conferences and seminars during the four years of the project. The following are a few examples:

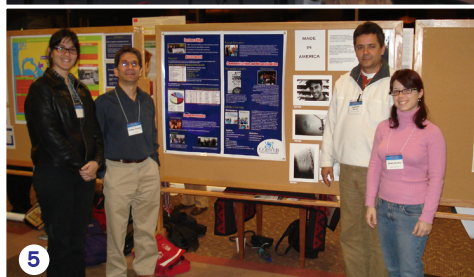
In September 2004, in collaboration with NIOSH, it held the national symposium “Improving the Health and Safety of Immigrant Workers” at UMass Lowell (Photo 1).

In March 2005, Project Parceria presented a paper at the national conference “Brazilian Immigration to the United States” held at Harvard University (Photo 2).

It participated in a panel on Brazilian immigration at the “XXVI Latin American Studies Association (LASA)” held in San Juan, Puerto Rico (Photo 3).

In October 2006, Eduardo Siqueira presented the project for professors and students of UMass Lowell as part of the program “Salon” (Photo 4).

It also participated in October 2006 in the “Annual Environmental Justice and Community-Based Participatory Research” grantee meeting, funded by two U.S. government institutes, NIOSH and the NIEHS, held in North Carolina (Photo 5).





CONCLUSION

As this publication indicates, Project COBWEB conducted a large number of activities to place the subject workplace safety and health within the daily lives of Brazilians living in Massachusetts. Project staff tried to work together with priests, pastors, community leaders and Brazilian journalists, in addition to Federal and state government agencies, to educate Brazilians about their rights in the workplace.

Our contacts with thousands of Brazilians in the last four years assure us that little by little topics such as workplace injuries, rights of undocumented workers, worker compensation for work-related injuries and illnesses, among others, became part of the daily conversation of Brazilians. We did not achieve all that is needed, but we believe that we contributed much for this topic to emerge with its due importance. Hundreds of workers were trained and some of them started to train other workers about workplace safety and health. Our hope is that community members continue to move forward to make sure that workers come back home every day the same way they left home, sane and sound.

The BIC incorporated the topic of health and safety as an integral part of Brazilian workers' rights. During the four years of the project, the BIC participated in campaigns against violence on retail jobs, for improvements in the way the Department of Industrial Accidents serve undocumented workers, for improvements in safety in companies that cut granite and marble. In other words, the BIC started to represent more forcefully and with more knowledge the interests of Brazilian workers in improving their working conditions, though we are in a period that is very difficult for immigrants, who have been persecuted and abused in the workplace.

Project COBWEB staff would like to thank the collaboration of all that helped us in this journey, who were not few. We think that the joint work of the partners created solid foundations for us to change the work of Brazilians for the better, with much less injuries and suffering. It was worth it!!! The struggle continues!!!



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Consulate General of Brazil in Boston
20 Park Plaza, Suite 1400
Boston, MA 02116
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www.consulatebrazil.org

Brazilian Women's Group
569 Cambridge Street
Allston, MA 02134
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www.verdeamarelo.org

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
105 Chauncy Street, #901
Boston, MA 02111
Tel: 617-350-5480
www.miracoalition.org

Departament of Industrial Accidents
600 Washington Street, 7th Floor
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1-800-323-3249
www.mass.gov/dia

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
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www.maps-inc.org