

Protección en Construcción: The Lawrence Latino Safety Partnership



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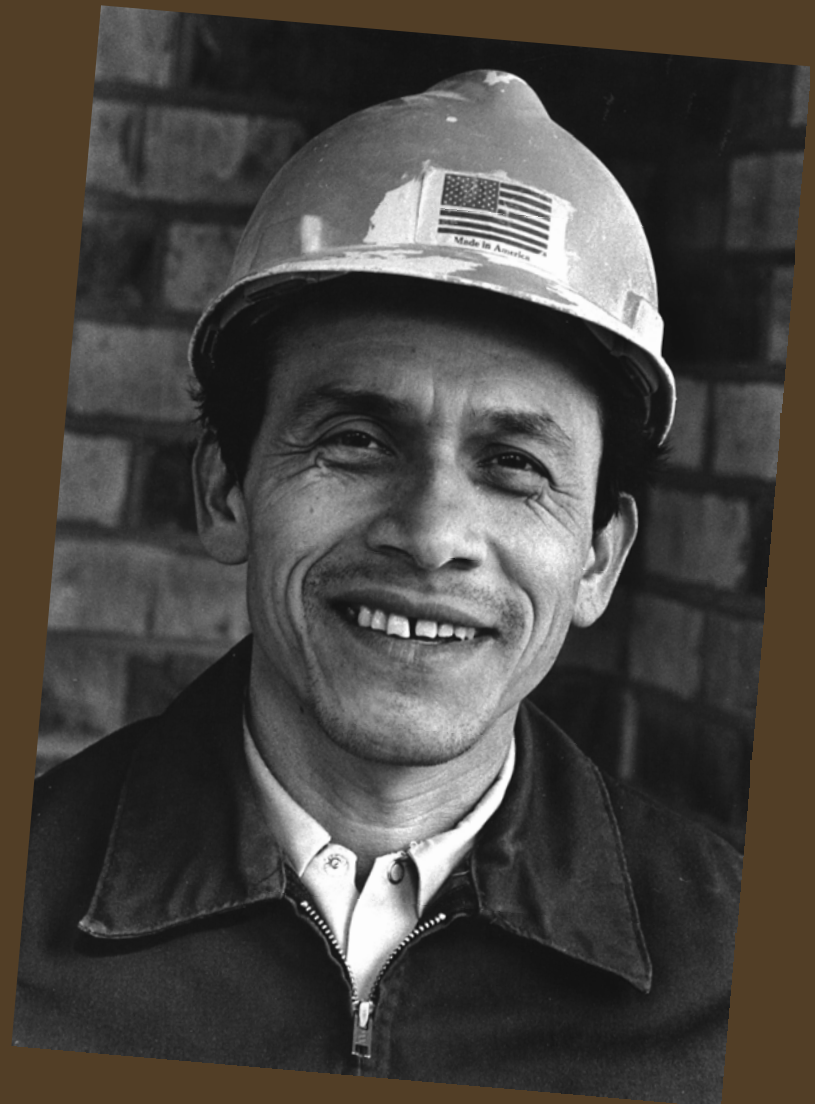
University of Massachusetts Lowell

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Overview

- What is Protección en Construcción (P en C)?
- Assessment strategy and preliminary results from qualitative investigations
- Intervention Concept
- Discussion

What is P en C?

- Community-Based Participatory Research Project to prevent falls and silica exposure among Latino construction workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts
- Partnership model
- Research model:
 - Assessment Phase
 - Cross-over intervention trial with contractors
 - Dissemination, community support for improved conditions

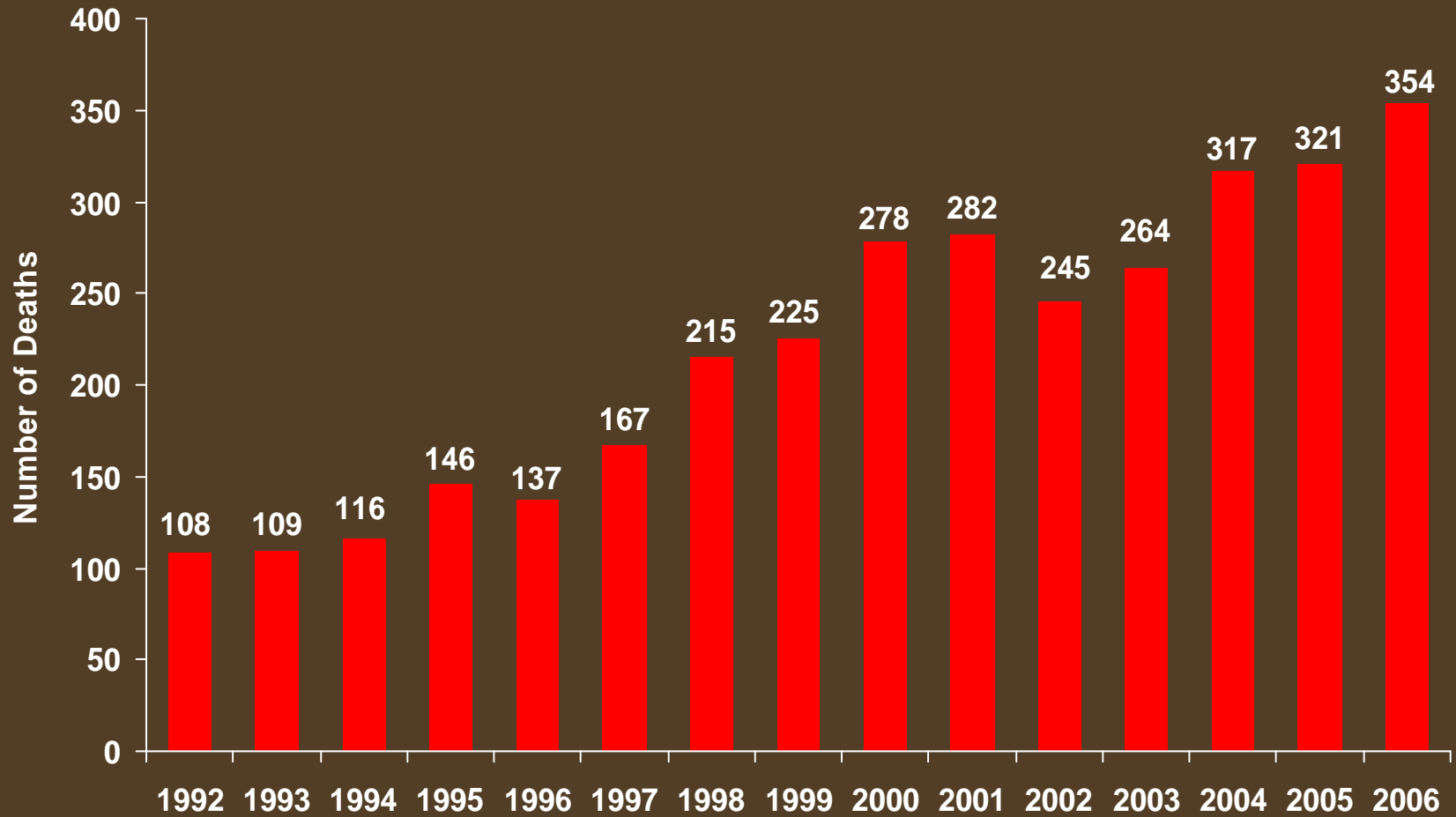
Project Aims

- Understand the reasons for disparate increased risk of injury faced by Latino construction workers
- Develop and test effective organization interventions to reduce fall hazards and silica exposures with contractors who employ Latinos
- Maintain the partnership
- Diffuse what works: raise community standards

Why the need for this project?

- Hispanic construction workers suffer a disproportionate rate of injury and death on construction sites in US
- Falls leading cause of injury and death in construction
- Silica dust: serious, prevalent and a mystery to most
- Opportunity for CBPR approach in Lawrence

Deaths from work-related injuries among Hispanic construction workers (US), 1992-2006



Source: Dong, S (2008). Fatal Occupational Falls among Hispanic Construction Workers. CPWR: The Center for Construction Research & Training.

Community-Based Participatory Research Opportunity

- Committed diverse partners with social capital: resources and relationships
 - Example: OSHA on Spanish language radio
- Hispanics Worksafe project
- Complex problems and complex solutions require participation for real understanding and effective action
- Bilingual project

Project Partners

- City of Lawrence (MA) Mayor's Health Task Force
- Laborers' Local 175 (LIUNA)
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
Department of Work Environment
- JSI Center for Environmental Health Studies: Community Environmental Health Promotoras/Outreach workers

Las caídas en el trabajo de construcción

Dra. María Julia Brunette
Universidad de Massachusetts-Lowell
Febrero 18, 2008



Assessment Activities

- Focus Groups (in Spanish)
 - Workers, small contractors, supervisors, workers' families, residents
- Worker Small Group Activities
 - Risk mapping & “Forum Theater”
- 19 groups, Approximately 75 participants
- Assessment in progress
 - Interviews with larger contractors
 - Survey

Questions...

- Problem definition
 - What factors account for Latino construction workers' greater risk?
- Intervention definition
 - What can be done to improve health and safety on construction sites where Latinos are working?
- Community resources
 - What or who influences conditions on sites?

Risk Mapping



Some of the Preliminary Findings

- Key role of supervisors
 - Safety potential/culture
 - Human relations problems
- Lack of knowledge and equipment in small companies
- Temp agencies
- Importance of planning, preparation
- Fear of job loss/perceived powerlessness

Key Role of Supervisors

- Supervisors' humane and respectful treatment versus disrespectful behavior is very important to the work environment and worker mental health
 - Intimidation and threats are common in the workplace
- Supervisors can either take the time to do the job safely or cut corners and tell people to hurry
 - Some supervisors receive bonuses for finishing a job quickly
- Some Hispanic supervisors pressure workers because they want to demonstrate their abilities to contractors

Lack of Knowledge and Equipment in Small Companies

- Small contractors (especially) lack adequate equipment
- Small contractors lack safety programs
- If no union steward, no one to go to for support
- Small contractors were NOT familiar with silica

Temp Agencies' Role

- Temporary agencies hire people for dangerous jobs
- Temp agencies take no responsibility for worker safety
- Temp agencies don't help workers who get hurt
- Temp agencies (especially) take advantage of immigrants

Fear of Job Loss

Fear of being fired

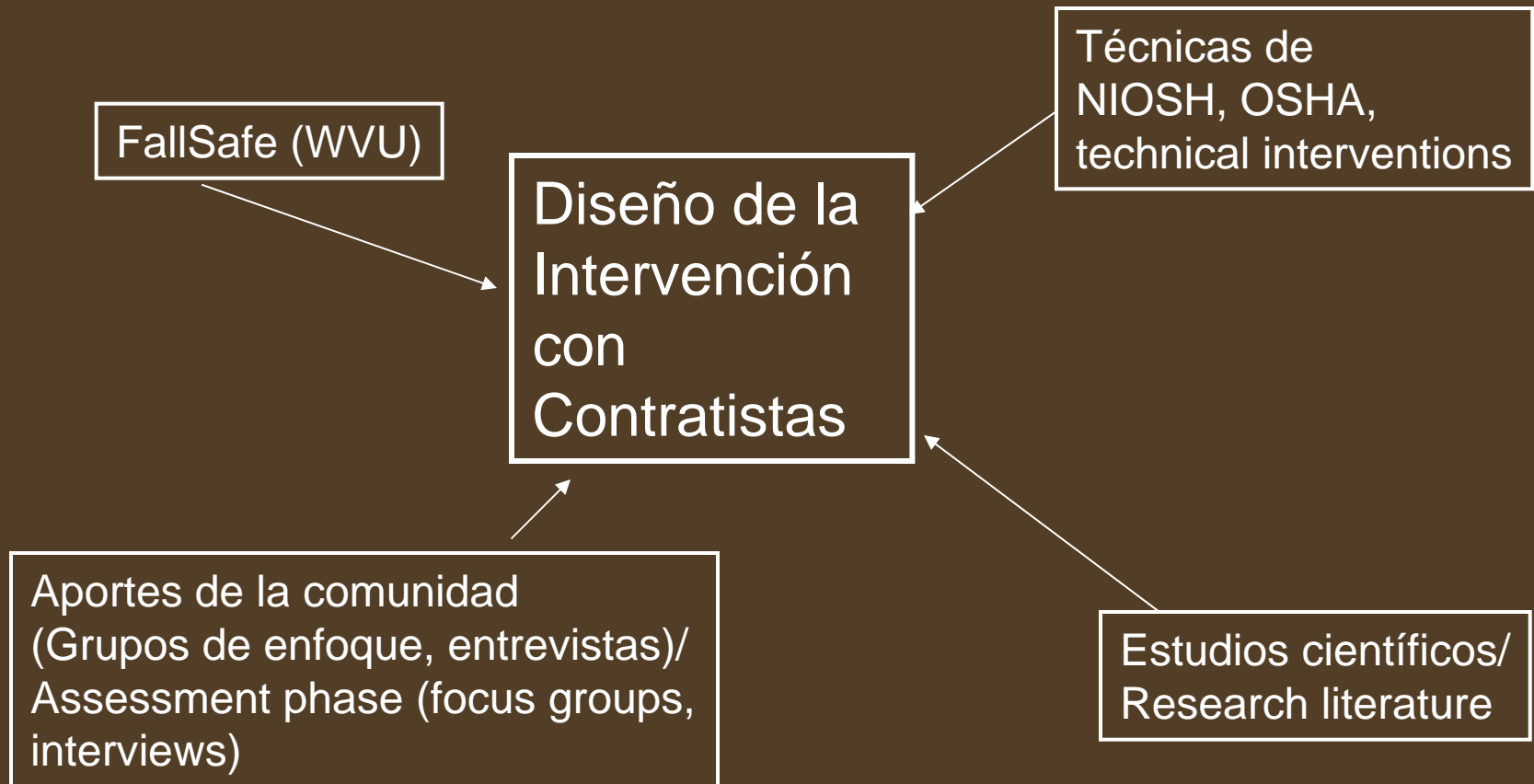
- ...if complain
- ...if take time to do job safely
- ... ask for proper equipment
- ... help others do job safely
- ... report incident
- ... report injury
- ... seen to be injured: “you’re fired if you hit the ground”
- ... refuse overtime

Intervention Framework

- Organization intervention: change the conditions on construction sites that lead to falls and silica exposure
- Participating contractors get coaching and a certification they can market
- Two phase cross-over intervention: some get falls first, some silica, then switch
 - Three assessment points
 - Site audits of exposure conditions
 - Other assessment methods of progress, attitudes, etc. by contractor, supervisors, workers

Diseño de la Intervención

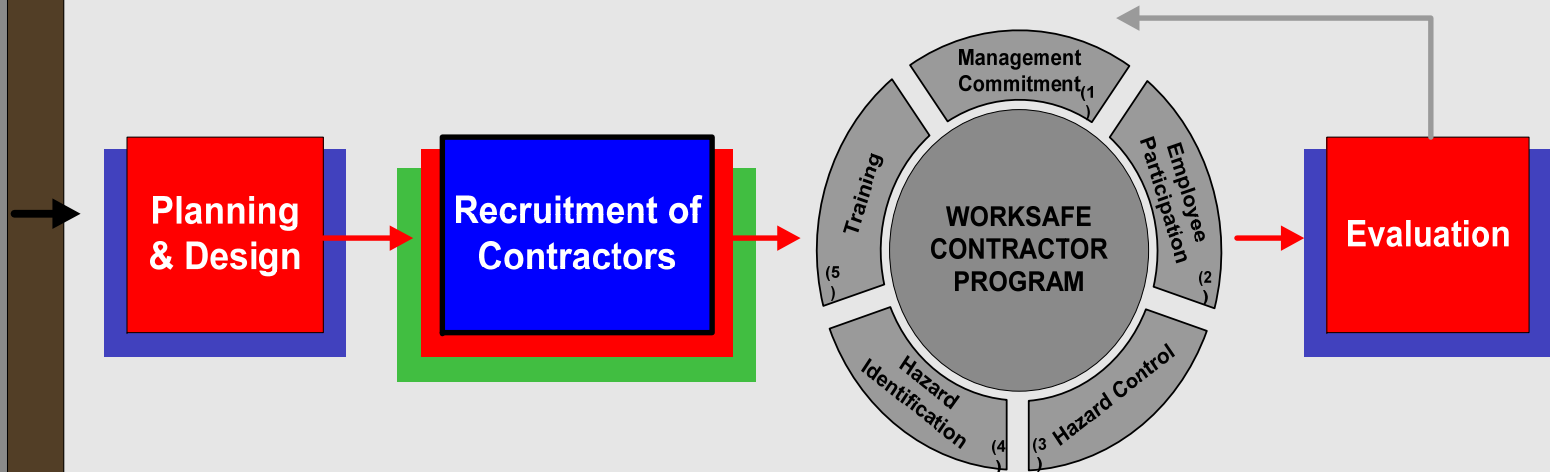
Intervention Design



ASSESSMENT PHASE (Year 1)

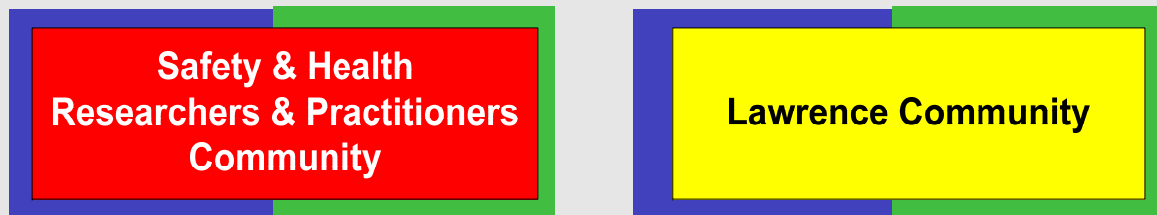
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF OUR ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVENTION

Contractor-driven intervention



DISSEMINATION: "PROMOTING & SUPPORTING WHAT WORKS"

Process conducted at two levels: Community-level & S&H research-level



Intervention Committee

Steering Committee

Outreach Committee

Networking Committee



Tailoring Good Practice with a Focus on Hispanics

- Management Commitment:
 - Explicit policy: “Workers are encouraged to report unsafe conditions and we will not fire, threaten with deportation, etc. workers who do”
- Training:
 - Training SUPERVISORS in HR (how to get what you want without yelling) and “cultural competency”/anti-bias
 - Train the trainer: Tool box talks

Discussion

- Why are Latino construction workers at greater risk?
 - Less important: Language barriers
 - More important:
 - Poor treatment and greater exposure to hazards coupled with low empowerment and limited experience
 - General poor conditions in residential construction, small companies
- Don't try this at home!

Thanks,
questions?

