Outreach and Environmental Justice Tactics for Connecting with Hispanic Communities

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Objective:
To present two individual case studies of actions taken at Region 3, in Philadelphia, PA, that directly and indirectly target Hispanic audience.

Goal:
To have a conversation to discuss your opinion, possibly new ideas and ways to better this initiative.

Case Study #1:
Environmental Education/Outreach Effort at the Isaac Sheppard Elementary School in Philadelphia, PA.

Why do we do this?
- We do this for the Ugly kids!!!
- This is my friend and was supposed to be my co-presenter.
- Love you Johnny…

Where is this taking place?
- The school is located in the N. Philadelphia area.
- Urbanize area
- A great majority of the community is Hispanics (mostly second and third generation, but also a significant number who has recently come from their country).

Where is this taking place? (cont)
- The school is a center for the community. Many different workshops and activities are done here for the benefit of the community.
- GED, health education, resources and many other activities take place here.
- Not only the student, but also their families are and people of the community are being helped here.
School Statistics:
- Close to 300 students.
- Over 95% are Hispanics.
- Over 20 full time teachers.
- One Principal.
- Has been exceeding in the PSSA for the past five years.

How did our relationship started?
- Our relationship got started on 2010, at the Beyond Translation Forum.
- A community activist, started the dialogue with the Outreach Chairperson at that time.
- She expressed a desire for EPA to partner with the school.

What have we done?
- Facilitate the establishment of a recycling program.
- Construction of an urban garden.
- School photo contest.
- Science curriculum support.

Recycling Program;
- Facilitate the establishment of a recycling program.
- After an initial meeting at the school, it was understood that one of the needs of the school was a recycling program.
- Our in-house contact, referred us to the city of Philadelphia “Keep Philadelphia Beautiful” program.

Urban Garden
- Emotional Connection - Same Page on Vimeo

Urban Garden;
- Another observation for the outreach person during the initial meeting was the lack of any green space in the community.
The main objective for this project was to help maintain a connection between the students (regardless of living in an urban area) and part of the countries were their heritage if from.

The school requested help to Home Depot and they provided 100% of the materials for the construction of the garden and also recommendations to the initial design.

The initial design was done by one of the EPA employees who is an engineer.

This was a cooperative effort between teachers, parents, EPA volunteers and private industries.

Over several Saturdays the garden was finished.

A dedication ceremony was held on May 5th, 2011.
During the 2nd quarter of 2012, we partner again with the school to develop a photo project with third and fourth grade students.

The title of the project was "Things that affect the environment and things that benefit the environment: A 3rd and 4th graders view of his community".

Over two weekends, students from the school, walk with chaperons around the neighborhood taking photos related to the environment.

The themes were what helps the environment and what hurts the environment.

The cameras were supplied to the school by the School District of Philadelphia and developed at the agency.

The photos were exhibited at the USEPA Region 3 lobby, at the Philadelphia School District and at the school.
Science Curriculum Support

- It was developed from an earlier visit to the school.
- The early visit was to talk about water importance, conservation, and pollution.
- The idea was worked on and developed into the Science Curriculum Support initiative.
- For this initiative a Mission and a Vision was developed.

Science Curriculum Support: Mission

- To spark interest in science subjects, especially environmental science.
- To promote environmental awareness of the current situation at a local level and also at a worldwide level.
- To create a strong base of knowledge about environmental science in students.
- Serve as role models of things to achieve in life and professionally.

Science Curriculum Support: Vision

- Established attitude of concern about environmental issues, but with the understanding that solutions are within our reach.
- The solutions to the issues are to be based on knowledge and skills obtained today.
- The tools will help us to identify and solve current and future problems.

Science Curriculum Support: Resources

- Personnel:
  - HEPAC (Outreach Program)
  - Environmental Education Coordinators
  - Others
- Online
  - EPA websites
  - Teachers Associations
  - Others
- Hands on material
  - PIC
  - Watershed Model
  - Water Wheel of Fortune
  - Others

Science Curriculum Support: Concept

- EPA’s educational outreach opportunities for elementary school kids have been somewhat limited, especially among traditionally underserved communities.
- However, the concept of educating younger kids is not new to the Agency, as Region 2 has used a similar approach in their Fed-Kids Program.
- One of the goals of this initiative is to create that environmental awareness and environmental conscience in the children, hoping that it will continue through their life and influence their friends and family.

Science Curriculum Support: Basis

- In 2010, the Science Advisory Board stated that one of the single most important drivers of environmental change is environmental awareness and education.
- On the 2009 Environmental Education Highlights compilation, Environmental Education was recognized as a critical non-regulatory tool to pursue the Agency’s mission.
Science Curriculum Support: How
- Science Curriculum at the school.
- Does it relate to our professional life.
- To choose topics.
- Announce it.
- Front office participation.
- Logistics.

Science Curriculum Support:
- Topics
  - Water
  - Air
  - Sound
  - Scientific Method
  - Soil
  - Rocks and Mineral
  - Trees
  - Measurements
  - Electricity
  - Others
- Resources
  - Personnel
  - Books
  - Internet
  - Youtube.com
  - School
  - Coloring Books
  - Pencils
  - Erasers
  - Others.
- Subjects
  - Social Science
  - Biology
  - Ecology
  - Physics
  - Math
  - Chemistry
  - Engineering
  - Technology
  - Anything we present

Science Curriculum Support:
- Stormwater Runoff: 4th grade presentation:
  - We really enjoyed our experience at the Isaac Sheppard school.
  - We reinforced the lesson with a hands-on activity that the students seemed to enjoy.
  - The majority of the students were interested in the topic; some posed questions and others appeared to already have some knowledge of the issue of water pollution and shared examples of how they can help prevent it.
  - The students were eager to participate in the activity and seemed to understand how water pollution effects the water ways and drinking water they use every day. (Brittany Smith, WPD)

Science Curriculum Support:
- Experiences:
  - My personal experience on the outreach activity with the Sheppard School students is that this is a great opportunity to foster their interest to science and to understand how important it is to protect our environment. The other benefit that I see from our participation is that this activity complements the Sheppard School’s science curriculum with some hands on experience. The student were very interested on the subject matter and actively participated in the presentation. (Francisco Cruz, WPD)

Science Curriculum Support:
- Experiences:
  - Participating at the Sheppard School Project has been a very rewarding experience. I think that what we do will be significant to many kids that didn’t understand why it is so important to learn and understand what they are studying. Unfortunately, many of the knowledge acquired throughout the school years comes with no explanation on the side to let students understand the importance of that piece of knowledge. Through this project EPA puts the pieces together to give a meaning to their knowledge. We show to them how all the things they are learning are used by scientist in the real world. (Cindy Santiago, HSCD)

Science Curriculum Support:
- Students drop various forms of “pollution” (i.e. garbage, soil, dark food coloring to represent oil, dish detergent, etc.) into a fish tank filled with clean water at the front of the classroom. At the conclusion of the activity, the students could see how polluted the water had become after each person contributed some form of pollution.
  - The goal of our lesson was to demonstrate that even though one person’s pollution may seem insignificant, when everyone’s pollution is washed into the same waterway, it makes a big difference. (Brittany Smith, WPD)
Science curriculum Support:

- Experiences:
  - Children have the tendency to believe that everything has already been discovered and explored, but science is always evolving. By participating in this project I have had the chance to get into some of their minds to give them a hint of how much they can do or reach if they decide to become scientists in the future. It also gives them the chance to interact with real scientists, which I believe makes a difference when it comes to making them understand that normal people can do big things. (Cindy Santiago, HSCD)

Science Curriculum Support: Photos

Science Curriculum Support:

- What is next?
  - Continue our relationship with the Isaac Shepard School.
  - Try to help them organize a Science Day and a Science Fair and another Photo Project.
  - Adding a second school to the HEPAC-BEPAC group.
  - We’ve started conversations with the Julia de Burgos School; K-8th grade, our approach is going to be different toward the older kids at the school.
  - The model is being replicated with success by APAC in our region and they have started their relationship with a predominantly Asian school in South Philly

Break

We’ll take a ten minute break:

Case Study #2:

Lehigh Valley Brownfield Sustainability/EJ Workshop
December 6th, 2012
Lehigh Valley, PA
How did this project came to be?

- This was Brownfield Outreach lead effort, with the collaboration of HUD personnel.
- It was a two part workshop where the first part was a presentation about grants both by EPA and HUD.
- The second part was about Environmental Justices and Outreach to the Hispanic Community.
- The audience was compromise of developers, academia and local government officials.

Topics discussed:

- Overview of Environmental Justice (EJ)
- How to Identify EJ Issues
- Brownfield's and their connection to EJ
- EPA's view on EJ
- Hispanic and Environmental Justice
- Case Study Example
- Group Exercise

Overview of Environmental Justice

- What, where, who and when?
- Roles
- How

How to identify EJ Issues

- Environmental Risks
- Social Issues (demography)
- Disproportional Environmental issues
- Process issues,( language, culture, attitudes)
- Investments (benefits, economical, cultural and others)

Brownfield's and their connection to EJ

- What are Brownfield’s
- EPA and Brownfield’s
- Locations of Brownfield’s
- Advertising

EPA’s view on EJ

- How are we involve?
- Tools and resources EPA uses
Hispanics and EJ
- Issues & perceptions
- Engagement
- Public Participation
- Identification

Case Study
- Riverfront South Site, Bethlehem, PA
- Population affected of 60,000
- [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/succes/bensalem_pa.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/succes/bensalem_pa.pdf)

EPA's Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Model

Resources:
- Success Story:
  - [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/succes/bensalem_pa.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/succes/bensalem_pa.pdf)
- Planning Guidelines to EJ for PA DOT:
- EPA Brownfield page:
  - [http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/)
- Connecticut Dep. of Energy and Environmental Protection: EJ Public Participation Fact Sheet:

Resources for the participants:
- A list of resources was put together for the participants.
- Thos resources included literature for them to read and get more knowledge of the topic and actual resources like entities, groups, organizations in the area as well as general ideas who to partner with to get the information to the public,

What were my Observations;
- Very well intention people.
- Very homogeneous audience
- Lacking a real strategy on how to reach out to the Hispanic population,
- Cultural sensitivity need to be address.
Recommendations:

- To work on more than just the language.
- Understand cultural differences.
- Reach out of your comfort zone.
- Use resources at your availability.
- Understand your target area and population.

Questions or Comments: