

## **Poster 1: Implementing and Assessing a Bilingual Educational Program for Hispanic Nursery Workers in Ohio.**

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The Hispanic workforce is a key component of today's U.S. nursery industry. However, the educational needs of this population have not been addressed. Maintaining a stable workforce is one of the issues for Ohio's nursery owners. The objective of this project was to measure the impact of a bilingual educational program, containing instruction in horticulture and instruction in life skills, in a Hispanic population- investigating which type of training is more important to the stabilization of the Hispanic family. To achieve this objective, during summers 2005 and 2006, an on-site bilingual educational program for Hispanic employees was implemented in seven Ohio nurseries (four in the north and three in the south). Two tests: Rosenberg Self Esteem (RSS) and Index of Family Relationship (IFR) were conducted on the participants before and after the program. An evaluation of the courses was also included. All the participants received the Horticulture trainings (basic anatomy and plant development, pruning and nutrition in woody plants); but only half of the participants received the social skills contents (meeting you and your family's needs in the U.S., social support in your community, and communication). A total of 169 Hispanic workers were trained during the summers of 2005 and 2006. Data from the 2005 season were analyzed using SPSS (©2006 SPSS Inc. Chicago, Illinois).

The analysis showed an improvement in the family relationships, measured by the IFR test, for the participants who received the social skills contents. The results from the RSS test did not show differences before and after the program for the two groups (with and without the social skills training).

The data from the 2006 season have not been analyzed yet, waiting for the completion of the sessions in the south of the state.

We certainly created a positive impact in the Hispanic community. We taught technical and social skills concepts considered useful for this population; at the same time, the workers felt appreciation for their work and language.