

AIHA-NCS Developing World Outreach Initiative
3rd Meeting: Cal/OSHA Office, Room 1301, 1515 Clay Street, Oakland, CA
June 12, 2006
5:05PM-6:20PM

Meeting Minutes

Present: Patty Beach, Garrett Brown, Audrey Cunningham, Perry Gottesfeld, Diana Harrington, Rich Hirsh, Rachael Jones (scribe), Nimmi Kovali, Pearl May, Colleen Thornton, Natalia Varshavski, David Zalk

Documents Distributed:

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Summary of MHSSN activities in developing countries
3. Sub-committee B Response Update
4. WHO Declaration on Workers Health

Sub-Committee Reports & Plans:

Sub-committee A: Natalia reported that the resource survey has been input into Survey Monkey. Rich and Patty identified some problems with the logic of the survey, and will give their findings to Natalia. In the next week Natalia will finalize the survey, and send it out to the entire committee for comments. Further changes will be made, and then Rich will send it to the Board for approval. The review/approval process will be completed before July 11, when a new Board – which doesn't yet know about the DWOI – convenes. Sub-committee A anticipates having members of the AIHA-NCS complete the survey over the duration of the summer.

Sub-committee B: Colleen reported that the response to initial inquiries has been varied, as detailed in the handout. A list of unassigned names remains, and these will be assigned through e-mail. It was affirmed that the goal of sub-committee B at this point is to throw the net wide, and then work from the self-selected respondents. This process will continue throughout the summer under Colleen's capable direction.

Other Capacity Building Efforts

In response to Colleen's request, Garret, Perry and David reported on their experiences with capacity building.

Garret described the activities of the MHSSN as falling into five categories: (1) training, (2) provision of information, (3) technical assistance, (4) facilitation of communication, and (5) public education to raise awareness of global health issues. The details can be found in Garret's handout. Garret also briefly described the efforts of corporations (primarily directed towards the promotion of professional organizations) and the AIHA International Affairs Committee.

Perry Gottesfeld, of Occupational Knowledge International (OKI), described two successes that his organization has had with their grant-making initiative. When OKI published a request for proposals (\$2000 grants) on the internet, he observed that many of the applicants were able to identify hazards in their community, but could go no further. The first success that Perry described involved the assessment of silica exposures in the stone crushing industry in India. OKI was able to persuade laboratories in the US to analyze the silica samples *pro bono*, and after demonstrating significant over-exposure, funding was obtained from USAID for a pilot study of a water spray dust-suppression system. Now, the dust-suppression system has been installed at 41

mills, and OKI is trying to conduct post-installation monitoring. The second success was about environmental pollution from a smelter in Peru. OKI facilitated the collection of dust samples at the site, demonstrating pervasive metals pollution in homes and schools. When the smelter proposed pollution controls to the Peruvian government, OKI, at the request of the local activist group, compared the proposal with the controls installed on smelters owned by the same company in the US, and demonstrated that the controls were not comparable to those in the US. When asked what has not worked very well for OKI, Perry reported having had a difficulty when partnering with an individual, in this case a university professor, rather than a NGO.

David reported that the ACGIH International committee is funding only four of fifteen applications for the FOHS grants (\$1000-2000), and suggested that some of the unfunded applications may be appropriate for the DWOI. He noted that unsuccessful grants had not been well thought through, or were for things like bookshelves, rather than books. Just returned from a meeting of the WHO Collaborating Centers for Occupational Health in Stresa, Italy (sounds like fun!), Dave was very excited about the preliminary WHO Workplan 2006-2010 that details ~150 projects tied to the WHO Collaborative Centers related to occupational health. Some of these projects are funded, and some have sufficient staff/expertise, and some have potential of transfer... some projects are ripe for assistance from the DWOI. One project he is particularly excited about is a mentoring program with M.S. students at the university in Chennai, India. The industrial hygiene program at the university is just starting, and their goal is to have enough trained industrial hygienists to be self-sufficient within five years. In the meantime, the university is seeking mentors to communicate with students via e-mail and provide technical advice for their theses. David also circulated copies of a Declaration on Workers Health, signed at the meeting.

Discussion

Many present at the meetings, including myself, found the reports exciting because there are so many things that need to be done, some of which are within the capabilities of the DWOI. My impression is that there is general excitement about the DWOI providing mentoring services, and a hope that this could lead to more specific or more involved assistance.

There was an informal consensus that we need to determine our priorities. Not only do we need to identify the resources of the AIHA-NCS, we need to determine what types of groups are we interested in working with. For example, do we want to work with a group that has some connections with say, the WHO Collaborating Centers, and therefore a "proven record of success," or do we want to work with a group that lacks such connections or record?

Discussion also focused on how we could break into the networks described by Garret, Perry and David. David offered to make introductions to participants in the WHO Collaborating Centers. It was concluded that fitting into the networks will be easier when we know what we can and want to do for an organization.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, September 7, 2006 at 5PM at the same location. Rachael will preside at this meeting as Natalia will be touring the refineries of the world, and Nimmi will serve as scribe. In July, Natalia will circulate an update via e-mail.