Partnerships to Reach New Audiences: The Florida Creole GI-BMP Training Program

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ADDITIONAL INDEX WORDS. green industry, urban landscape, water quality, nonpoint pollution

The Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) Training Program is mandatory by Florida statute for those applying fertilizer commercially in the urban landscape. The program promotes landscaping practices that minimize the impacts of nonpoint sources of pollution. Input from industry owners and local University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) extension agents identified Haitian Creole-speaking workers as an underserved audience. A Creole-based GI-BMP training program was developed that included translating class materials, procuring funding, recruiting instructors and building partnerships between Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), UF/IFAS extension agents and specialists, industry owners and University of Florida translators. This resulted in the creation of a Haitian–Creole version of all GI-BMP program materials, the recruitment and training of three Creole-fluent instructors, and the delivery of three training sessions in Haitian–Creole. Five trial Creole GI-BMP classes were conducted in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami–Dade counties, 71 out of 102 Haitian–Creole attendees earned GI-BMP certification; pre-/posttest scores averaged a 38% knowledge gain and 70% passing rate.

The GI-BMP Training <https://gibmp.ifas.ufl.edu> is a science-based educational training program for urban landscape maintenance professionals. It focuses on reducing the sources of nonpoint source pollution resulting from inappropriate landscape management practices to protect the water resources in Florida. In-person classes are six hours long, and at the conclusion, participants are required to complete a certification post test.

While originally initiated in 2002 as a volunteer training program, the new statutory requirement for GI-BMP training provides added significance for the program’s ability to reach target audiences within the landscaping industry. Currently, GI-BMP training is offered in both the English and Spanish languages. However, Florida, especially the southeast counties of Miami–Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach, has a substantial number of Haitians who do not speak either English or Spanish, but many are employed in the landscaping industry and must have the FDAC fertilizer applicator’s license in order to continue performing their jobs. The University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Services estimates that there are 3000 to 5000 Haitians who would fall into this category. Consequently, it is essential that the GI-BMP training program be expanded into the Haitian Creole language, a task that required translation of the current English/Spanish training materials. The target date of 1 June 2014, was chosen to have Creole-language GI-BMP training available.

Because of the technical nature of the GI-BMP training material (e.g., nonpoint source water pollution resulting from nitrogen runoff and leaching; fertilizer loading calculations; irrigation control; and integrated pest management), this project could not rely on simple word-for-word translation. Instead, specific cultural expertise was required in order to develop meaningful Haitian–Creole interpretations of technical terms, phrasing, and concepts for which there are no readily available translations. In addition, these translations had to be developed into both written and audio formats.

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Team Efforts

The GI-BMP program coordinators and extension agents teamed with the University of Florida language department to produce the Creole translation for the instructional materials, which totaled nearly 100,000 words. Stakeholders were consulted to investigate needs, challenges and opportunities to insure success and support within the Haitian–Creole community. Actions included translating materials; procuring $8,000 in funding from FDEP; and building partnerships between Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), UF/IFAS extension agents and specialists, industry owners, community leaders and University of Florida linguistic translators.

This project provided the translation into Haitian–Creole of existing English and Spanish language GI-BMP training materials for use in classroom, online and DVD instruction. These training materials include six scripted/narrated PowerPoint modules, a DVD instruction guide (PowerPoint), six narrated video vignettes, a training manual, test questions/answers (pre-test, module quizzes and the final certification examination) and class/administrative materials (e.g., student registration forms and class-evaluation forms). Local extension agents coordinated teaching events and networked with local communities to build awareness and needs assessment.

Translated materials available online <http://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/gibmp-resources/downloads.htm#creole> include: six (6) in-person and DVD PowerPoints/modules, training manual, speaker notes, video narrations, test questions, class evaluation, and a sample public service announcement (PSA). Three (3) volunteer instructors were trained to deliver the training program.

Results

Seventy-one (71) out of 102 Haitian–Creole attendees earned GI-BMP certification; pre-/post-test scores averaged a 38% knowledge gain and 70% passing rate. Seventy-eight (78) out of 89 responding to the following evaluation:

1. 100% (n = 61) responded YES to the question: My knowledge of the Green Industries BMPs and how they will affect the lawn care industry has increased because of this program.
2. 99% (n = 101) responded to: Which of the following best describes the company you work for:
   - Pest Control Operation 9 (9%)
   - Lawn Care Company 32 (31%)
   - Mowing Service 29 (28%)
   - Irrigation Company 9 (9%)
   - Landscape Design 7 (7%)
   - Municipality 2 (2%)
   - Golf Course/Sports Turf 7 (7%)
   - Sod Farm 2 (2%)
   - Other 4 (4%)

3. 93% (n = 60) responded: I will use the recommended fertilizer rates and methods of application as presented in the GI-BMP manual. Possible answers: (I will, I will not, Not sure, Already do)
4. 91% (n = 57) responded I will inform my clients of the recommendations contained in the GI-BMP manual that apply to their situation. Possible answers: (I will, I will not, Not sure, Already do)
5. Please rate the specific topics that were covered today for both content and presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>47 (81%)</td>
<td>11 (19%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawn &amp; Landscape Management</td>
<td>38 (72%)</td>
<td>11 (21%)</td>
<td>4 (8%)</td>
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<td>Irrigation</td>
<td>39 (75%)</td>
<td>11 (21%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fertilizer Management</td>
<td>43 (77%)</td>
<td>10 (18%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesticide</td>
<td>35 (70%)</td>
<td>12 (24%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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Relevance

Working with underserved audiences is challenging and key factors often have to be overcome in order to provide minority audiences with the materials and training opportunities that meet their educational needs. Using a team approach consisting of state and local stakeholders, the team was able to build the strong ties and productive relationships necessary to deliver the GI-BMP training program now and into the future. Regardless of the target audience’s primary language, the GI-BMP training program seeks to increase landscape professional’s knowledge about landscape design, installation, and nutrient and irrigation management practices. In addition, benefits to workers regarding salary/wage increases and job retention and promotion may be realized. This knowledge is the foundation for meeting state regulatory requirements, minimizing the negative environmental impacts of nonpoint source pollution and ultimately conserving Florida’s natural resources.