

# **FINAL REPORT ON SITE VISIT OF LABOUR DELEGATION FROM ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES TO HRSDC, WINNIPEG**

**October 19th- 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009**

The Department of Labour, St. Vincent and the Grenadines received funding under the RIAL Cooperation fund to participate in an on-site visit to the HRSDC central office in Winnipeg, Manitoba in October 2009. The main aim of the mission was to observe the implementation of the intervention model to be able to adapt it to St. Vincent in an effort to strengthen the inspection mechanism within the Department of Labour. The participants were Bernadine Dublin, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Jonathan John, Senior Labour Officer, and Cherry-Ann Delpheche, Labour Officer.

## **1) Brief description of activities**

The tour began on Tuesday October 20, 2009 at the HRSDC Central Region Office in Winnipeg. The team was warmly welcomed by Mr. George Rohulich, Labour Operations Manager, OHS and other members of staff. The team was given an overview of the Intervention Model. This briefing session touched on the various stages of the intervention model. The main presenter was Mr. Rob Miles, Technical Advisor, Occupational Health & Safety and Regional Safety Officer. The session also included information on the legislative framework in Canada and highlighted the distinction between federal and provincial jurisdictions. There was also input from other safety officers.



*Briefing session at HRSDC office in Winnipeg*

A coffee break followed the overview, during which we had the opportunity to interact with the general HRSDC staff. Following this we given a brief history of the workplaces to be visited and apprised of the various stages that each institution was at currently in the application of the model. During the afternoon we had an opportunity

to observe the assessment stage in operation at Trimac Transportation with Health and Safety Officer, Mr. Phillip Edwards.



*Delegation from St. Vincent and Safety Officer, Phillip Edwards with member of the safety committee at Trimac Transportation*

On Wednesday, the follow-up and appraisal stages of the model were observed when we had the opportunity to visit Stony Mountain Penitentiary Woodwork Shop in the morning and the CP Rails field operation during the afternoon under the guidance of Health and Safety Officer, Mr. Bryan Zachary.



*Delegation in safety clothing at CP Rails*

On Thursday we had a very interesting visit to the Royal Canadian Mint with Phillip Edwards. The tour concluded with a final session which included overviews of Canada Labour Code parts II and III and information on the work of the fire protection services of the labour programme.

## **2) Main results and findings**

There were several lessons learnt:

- 1) The importance of 'buy-in' and employer commitment so that the voluntary and collaborative process can be successful.
- 2) The intervention model can be implemented at minimal cost to the government because it does not require provision of training for the employers. It only requires providing businesses with information and technical assistance to implement the safety plans at the workplace.
- 3) The follow-up process is built into the model which allows for monitoring to ensure the successful implementation of the plan.

## **3) Next steps**

The Department of Labour would try to develop a modified intervention model on occupational safety and health and approach the most at risk businesses to implement internal safety plans. Our first approach would be to target businesses in manufacturing and agricultural sectors to assess their openness and/or readiness to implement such plans. The aim being to show business that creating safe workplaces would not only benefit the employee but would improve productivity and hence benefit the employer as well.

The regulations governing inspection of workplaces with respect to occupational safety and health are outdated since they have been on the book since 1955. However, the government is currently trying to upgrade its laws on OSH based on the Caricom model legislation. The proposed legislation gives joint responsibility to the Department of Labour and the National Insurance services (who is responsible for workmen's compensation) for OSH issues.

## **4) Evaluation of the activity**

The objectives of the cooperation were fulfilled since we were able to observe the intervention model in all its stages in a very practical way. We were able to visit workplaces with health and safety officers responsible for implementing the model and witness firsthand the interaction between managers and workers and the safety officers during the various stages of the application of the model.

## **5) Additional comments from the providing institution**

Please see summary report by Rob Miles (below)

## **The Labour Program Welcomes Representatives From St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

The Central Region of HRSDC Labour Program was pleased to host a three person delegation from the Ministry of Urban Development, Culture, Labour, and Electoral Matters in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) in the Caribbean. The group came to Winnipeg, MB on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to learn first hand about the Labour Program's Intervention Model for occupational health and safety. The Intervention Model is the Labour program's preferred method of service delivery for high risk employers and targeted industries. The Model represents a collaborative approach to achieving compliance with the Canada labour Code, Part II and its pursuant Regulations.

Labour Operations Manager OHS, George Rohulych extended a warm welcome to the group on behalf of Director, Arlene Forsyth who was unable to join them and wished everyone an enjoyable and productive week. The group, pictured below, spent their



Left to right; Health & Safety Officer Bryan Zacahary, Senior Labour Officer (SVG) Jonathan John, Deputy Labour Commissioner (SVG) Bernadine Dublin, Acting Program Advisor Rob Miles, Labour Officer (SVG) Cherry-Ann Delpesche, Health & Safety Officer Philip Edwards and Acting Technical Advisor OHS Jeannette Chaput.

first morning receiving a brief overview of the legislative framework in Canada and the distinction between federal and provincial jurisdictions. An outline of the framework of the Intervention Model and details of the Appraisal, Assessment and Follow-up Stages were presented. The group also had discussions on targeting & selection of work places and performance measurement.

A short coffee break in the morning, with all Labour Staff, presented the opportunity for open conversation and an appreciation for cultural differences. Once they received information regarding the company profiles involved in their visit, the delegates were dressed in warm clothing and safety footwear kindly provided by the Central Region, and were off to Trimac Transportation Systems to observe the Assessment Stage applied in the field.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day saw the group conduct the Follow-up Stage at an interesting facility - Stony Mountain Penitentiary Wood Shop in the morning. The Appraisal Stage was conducted at CP Rail's Field Operations in the afternoon. The afternoon was also spent touring CP Rail's Diesel Repair Shop, which was found to be quite impressive.



Labour Officer (SVG) Cherry-Ann Delpesche and Labour Operations OHS Manager, George Rohulych participate in an overview of the Labour Program's Intervention Model.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the group had the opportunity to visit a light manufacturing environment in the morning - the Royal Canadian Mint. The visitors were surprised to learn that the coinage for St. Vincent & the Grenadines and over 70 other countries were manufactured there. In the afternoon the group was presented with overviews of the Canada Labour Code, Part II - Occupational Health & Safety and Part III - Labour Standards as well as a presentation on the Fire Protection Services work of the Labour Program. Special thanks to Health & Safety Officer - Philip Edwards, Labour Standards Inspector - Sheri Parent and Manager Fire Protection Services - Gilles Bazin respectively. A final discussion on the Intervention Model and opportunity for questions and answer closed the day and brought the week to an end.

Although some last minute changes were necessary, the group was able to see all three Stages of the Model applied at three different employers and across a wide variety of industries.

The delegation began the long trip home the following morning and has since returning, expressed their gratitude and appreciation for what they consider a productive and successful trip.