

ABSTRACT

Analysis of the Impact of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Policy
in Five Industrial Sectors in Trinidad, and Tobago

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A national OSH policy was enacted in Trinidad and Tobago in 2004 in response to industrial expansion and attendant increases in occupational risk, and insufficiency of legislative and regulatory protections for workers' health and safety. This research analyses the social and economic impact of the national policy in five industrial sectors in Trinidad, and Tobago, since it was enacted until 2013. It is the first comprehensive examination of the policy's impact.

The two main research questions were: *i.* What has been the variation of the impact of the policy across the Health, Petrochemical, Manufacturing, Construction and Agricultural sectors in Trinidad, and Tobago? and *ii.* How has the OSH regulatory agency addressed the socio-economic impact of occupational safety and health issues in Trinidad and Tobago during the period 2007 - 2013?

Ninety-four one-to-one interviews and 11 focus group discussion sessions involving 76 respondents, and 3000 survey questionnaires were administered during June to November, 2013. Data were analysed based on an integrated OSH and environmental theoretical analysis framework which enabled common interpretation and understanding of the various policy impacts.

Limited health and safety gains and few positive policy outputs were reported across the five sectors and Tobago. The national regulatory agency did not pursue a coordinated policy implementation effort and did not develop an appropriate ideology or sense of mission. This contributed to an underlying and persistent absence of 'real' stakeholder interest in policy compliance. Negative social and economic consequences of accidents and illnesses in terms of their marked effect on the lives and daily activities of affected workers and their families were sizeable, and were generally neglected by employers.

It is prudent and urgent that a re-energized creative approach to policy implementation is adopted, and that essential tools, resources, strategic direction and executive oversight are provided to ensure realization of the policy's intent.

Keywords: Mark Anton Allen; Public Policy; Occupational Safety and Health; Impact Analysis; Sustainable Development; Social and Economic Impact.