

“H/L ministry is about coming to a mutual understanding in the church, and stepping over obstacles of culture and language, to walk alongside and learn from each other.”
- A NCCUMC Pastor

“Hispanic ministries need to be given a chance to really be Hispanic ministries, before they become something else because people think that they haven’t worked.”

- A THLCI partner



Dr. Colón-Emeric at Reconciliation UMC in Durham. [Source.](#)

Thriving Hispanic/Latino Communities Initiative

Summative Report 2008 to 2014

Executive Summary



For the Duke Endowment

by the **Center for Assessment and Policy Development
(CAPD)**

September 2014

Overview of the Thriving Hispanic/Latino Communities Initiative (THLCI)

The Thriving Hispanic/Latino Communities Initiative (THLCI) was created in 2008 via a grant from the Duke Endowment's Rural Church program area (TDE) to the Duke Divinity School (DDS). The grant was \$1,260, 000 for the period 2008 through 2014.

Its goal is to develop effective leadership for Hispanic/Latino ministry, using the resources of the Hispanic House of Studies and partnerships with key stakeholder institutions: The Duke Divinity School (DDS), The Duke Endowment (TDE), the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church (NCCUMC) and the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church (WNCCUMC).

This Executive Summary highlights major findings from a summative evaluation of THLCI over the period from 2008 through mid-2014. The full report elaborates on and provides additional evidence for these findings. It also gives a more nuanced picture of the context, and why the program has evolved in the direction it has.

We hope that you will find the information below useful.

Sally Leiderman

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September 2014

Summative Findings

Overall, we conclude that THLCI is doing an excellent job of expanding and strengthening capable leadership to engage more effectively with Hispanic/Latino populations in North Carolina, and within Methodism in North Carolina.

That conclusion is based on three main sets of results:

- 1** The program has leveraged its funds to build capacity for North Carolina Hispanic/Latino ministry among 100 plus people (a conservative estimate of an unduplicated count^a), well in excess of the originally hoped for 12 THLCI Fellows,
- 2** As THLCI intends, the people who are receiving the most intensive supports are already being acknowledged and called upon to provide leadership around Hispanic/Latino ministry. In addition, many of those who received less intensive support found those supports quite powerful and were moved to action based on them, and
- 3** THLCI is achieving these results against a complex set of challenges. Some of these are structural (economic models of Hispanic/Latino churches and ministry) and others are conceptual (different views among stakeholders about what Hispanic/Latino ministry is intended to accomplish and thus, different ideas about how to respond to opportunities).

Context

There were three main contextual factors that influenced THLCI's theory of change and development. First, the population of Hispanic/Latino residents of North Carolina was growing dramatically in the early 2000's. The proportion of Hispanic/Latino people engaged with UMC churches, as members or leaders, was quite small relative to their proportion in the population, and growing at a much slower rate. Additionally, there was a long history of investment in Hispanic/Latino ministry among the stakeholder institutions. Approaches that were aimed at seeding self-sustaining Hispanic/Latino churches led by Hispanic/Latino or Spanish fluent ministers and intending to serve mostly Hispanic/Latino peoples, were often being subsidized outside their own congregational resources. In addition, pastors serving Hispanic/Latino populations often are part-time and/or bi-vocational. Many people within the stakeholder institutions were frustrated by what was viewed as the failure of efforts to create thriving churches with substantial Latino/Hispanic populations or to engage more effectively with those populations in mission and discipleship. They were considering the role leadership might play in addressing these concerns.

a. This estimate is based on the program's influence via Caminantes for Students (46), Encuentro (40), Disciples Making Disciples (24), THLCI Apprentices, Fellows and Scholars (6), DDS Faculty (3), pastors in Pastores Caminantes (15+) and pastors in the Hispanic Pastor's Retreat (30+), taking into account what we know about the people who participated in more than one of these. The total also includes specific Rural Fellows, DS's & others who provided evidence that THLCI was influencing their actions.

At the same time, different stakeholders viewed the framework for H/L Ministry in different ways, pointing to different goals and potential ways of addressing them. Some stakeholders felt that THLCI would be successful if it helped to form leadership that would be able to create economically self-sustaining UMC congregations that were predominantly or exclusively made up of Hispanic/Latino peoples. Some felt that it would be successful if it helped to identify and support the formation of skilled and effective Hispanic/Latino pastors among DDS M.Div. students on an Elder track. Others supported that leadership goal, but wondered if there would be churches willing to be served by these newly formed pastors, or able to pay their salaries. Some felt THLCI would be successful if, in addition to identifying and helping to form skilled and effective pastors who are themselves Hispanic/Latino, it would help build the capacities of a broader group of M.Div. students and a broader group of pastors and congregations, with a heart for Hispanic/Latino ministry, who were fluent or nearly fluent in Spanish but not necessarily Hispanic/Latino themselves.

Infusion Strategy

At this point, it is reasonable to describe THLCI as using an infusion strategy. Rather than constructing an initiative centered mostly, though not exclusively, on formation of Fellows, the THLCI model infuses different subsets of capacities more broadly, and to a variety of groups. THLCI uses this strategy for several reasons. One is an attempt to leverage its resources to influence more people. THLCI was expected to fund and support 12 Fellows over six years (or 2 per year) relative to, for example, the 6 or 7 Rural Fellows TRC was intended to fund and support each year. Another was to address pipeline issues, which made it difficult for the program to attract and retain even that level of Fellows. In addition, THLCI chose this approach to model a different way of thinking about Hispanic/Latino ministry -- one that is everybody's responsibility and to everyone's benefit.

THLCI Strategies, Intended Outcomes and Early Results

Data Sources

Results are based on data collected from 2008 through 2014. Data come from in-depth interviews with the Hispanic Fellows and Hispanic Apprentice and from surveys or interviews with a sample of participants in other core THLCI strategies (Encuentro, Caminantes, Caminantes Pastores and Hispanic Pastor's Retreat). Data also come from interviews with some of THLCI's regional and national partners, and from surveys and multiple rounds of interviews with Rural Fellows, particularly those who participated in Encuentro or Caminantes. See Chapter 2 of the full report for more detail on findings. See Chapter 3 of the full report for lessons learned and potential models of thriving, not shared in this Executive Summary. See Appendix A of the full report for more in-depth discussion of Evaluation Methods.



Caminantes for Students participants. [Source](#).

Findings by Strategy

Figures 1, 2 and 3 together display **key evaluation findings** from THLCI's first phase. They provide additional evidence for the summative findings previously noted.

Figure 1, "Strategies by Expected Outcome" is based on THLCI's theory of change, informed by working sessions with the THLCI's Directors. It lays out the **key capacities each aspect of THLCI programming is expected to infuse**. For example, we know that goals of the Encuentro program are to simultaneously help participants expand their definition of who they consider "my people," expand their vision for Hispanic Ministry, experience models of churches as centers for community development and strengthen participants' Spanish language skills.

Figure 2, "Early Results of THLCI Strategies," goes into greater depth about the goals and methods of some key programs. It also outlines some points about **how each program has been implemented** to date, including the number and type of stakeholders engaged and reported benefits.

Figure 3, "Early Applications of Learning/Infusion," shares some selected stories of ways in which people connected to THLCI are **beginning to apply the framework, ideas and capacities they have learned**. For example, we note that two Caminantes for Students participants are now bringing a new energy to working with the Hispanic/Latino population in the UMC South Carolina Conference.

Participants routinely provide evidence of gaining the hoped-for outcomes for any particular strategy. In addition, across the strategies, interviews provide evidence that participants frequently gain or deepen their sense of responsibility for connecting with Hispanic and Latino people post participation. Many also specifically cite THLCI programs as changing their way of thinking about the importance and practice of vital Hispanic/Latino ministry. Those who seem to be more strongly influenced in those particular ways include Rural Fellows who go on Encuentro, several Caminantes students, stakeholders who participate in Encuentro and Caminantes for Pastors, DDS Faculty who participate in the Course of Study in El Salvador and Lay Missioners and Pastors working in a Hispanic/Latino context who attend the Hispanic Pastor's Retreat.

Figure 1: Strategies by Intended Outcome

Intended Short-Term Contributions									
Strategies	Expand definition of “my people”	Increase Spanish Fluency of Participants	Expand the vision for Hispanic Ministry	Churches as centers for community development	Learning about what is needed for Thriving Hispanic Ministry	Increased capacity for Reconciliation ministry	Increase the number of DDS community members with Spanish skills	Increase the number of UMC leaders and community members with Spanish skills, or the desire to learn Spanish	
DDS THICI related Fellowships and Scholarships									
Hispanic Ministry Fellows	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Acompañamiento Apprenticeship	X	X	X	X	X	X			
H/L Scholars Fellowship			X		X				
Encuentro Program									
Encuentro	X		X	X		X		X	
TRICI Fellows									
Rural Fellows	X		X			X			
Caminantes for Students									
Caminantes for Students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Supports for Pastors working with H/L churches and missions									
Caminantes for Pastors	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Hispanic Pastor’s Retreat	X		X	X	X	X			
Other Strategies of Reach and Influence									
THICI partnerships with other organizations	X		X	X	X	X		X	

Figure 2: Early THLCI Results

Program	DDS THLCI related Fellowships and Scholarships	Early Results
<p>Hispanic Ministry Fellows Funding and other supports for a small number of DDS M.Div. students "based on their potential for ministry in a cross-cultural setting that is intentionally inclusive of Latinos" (THLCI's Fall 2009 review)</p> <p>Acompañamiento Apprenticeship Partial funding for a small number of DDS M.Div. students with similar qualifications and potential</p> <p>H/L Scholars Fellowship Partial funding for international students from Latin America to study at DDS, with an expectation they will learn from and teach others while student pastors</p>	<p>Hispanic Ministry Fellows: 2 of the graduated THLCI Fellows are serving UMC churches in North Carolina and 1 is serving a UMC church in another Conference. 1 other THLCI Fellow is on track to be graduated in 12/14, and already serving as a student pastor in a Hispanic/Latino context. These 3 Fellows serving UMC churches in North Carolina are already being tapped for their leadership skills with regard to effective Hispanic/Latino ministry, worship and discipleship.</p> <p>Acompañamiento Apprenticeship: The first apprentice, Federico Apeceña, is in his third year at DDS and working as a Student Pastor at Citywell Church in Durham, NC. THLCI partnered with Citywell to make this a two year appointment. Citywell's approach to Hispanic/Latino inclusion is a model (see Chapter III for more details) that may be replicable, and the appointment of a THLCI apprentice is considered a significant benefit by the church. Two additional apprentices will start Fall 2014.</p>	<p>Encuentro Program</p> <p>40+ individuals have participated in Encuentro in 2008-2014. Participants include THLCI Fellows, TRCI Fellows, at least one TRCI church pastor, now Director of TRCI, DDS faculty and senior administrators, lay people and other pastors. Most consider it "life-changing." 14 clergy who had participated in Encuentro as of 2011 rated the experience 3.93 out of 4.0 in terms of its value for their ministry. Benefits routinely noted include:</p>
<p>A program available to Methodist students, faculty, staff and pastors. Its goals are to expand connection, understanding and a sense of the strengths of Hispanic/Latino people, create parity through the exchange of hospitality and participation in services and missions led by Hispanic/Latino participants, offer first-hand experiences with all sides of immigration issues at the U.S. and Mexican border and encourage an expanded imagination for Hispanic/Latino ministry via encounters with a variety of mission and non-profit work.</p>	<p>Camminantes for Students</p> <p>To date, 46 DDS students have participated in the Camminantes for Students program. Among the benefits reported to us in interviews are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded fluency in Spanish, particularly for worship, as intended • Expanded capacity to integrate culturally relevant music and worship traditions into worship, as intended • Connection to a network of people while a student with an interest in Hispanic/Latino ministries • A weekly opportunity for native Spanish speakers to express themselves academically and theologically in Spanish • A weekly opportunity for Hispanic/Latino students to bring their whole selves to their student experiences among interested and supportive people 	

Figure 2: Early THLCI Results (contd.)

Program	Early Results
<p>Opportunity to participate in Encuentro and Caminantes</p> <p>Network connections with House and Ismael Ruiz-Millan (THLCI Director and Rural Fellow)</p>	<p>Because many Rural Fellows were encouraged to participate in early THLCI activities, and because current THLCI Director Ismael Ruiz Milan was a TRCI Fellow himself, there are strong connections between the two programs. Graduated and appointed TRCI Fellows have been working in their current positions on outreach to Hispanic populations, and on advocating for greater inclusion of H/L ministry at the Conference and local level.</p>
Supports for Pastors working with H/L churches and missions	
<p>Caminantes for Pastors</p> <p>Modeled after Caminantes for students, Caminantes Pastores is designed to train interested UMC pastors in skills for H/L ministry, including Spanish language, cultural awareness and relevant historical and theological background.</p>	<p>Caminantes for Pastors</p> <p>To date, 13 Pastors have participated in Caminantes Pastores; this number includes 5 TRCI Fellows. As noted above, pastors rate the experience very highly. They also report the same range of benefits from participation.</p>
<p>Hispanic Pastors Retreat</p> <p>The goal of the Hispanic Pastor’s retreat is to foster connection and provide a space for spiritual renewal for Pastors serving in Hispanic/Latino contexts. Themes of the retreat have included Pastoral Care, Wesleyan Emphasis, and Multi-ethnic Ministry.</p>	<p>Hispanic Pastor’s Retreat</p> <p>There have been three Hispanic Pastor’s Retreats to date; the most recent was held at Lake Junaluska in April 2014. At that conference, 19 Pastors attended - 10 from NNCCUMC and 9 from WNCCUMC. Participants with whom we spoke credit the retreats for creating a stronger feeling of connection among Pastors serving Hispanic and multi-ethnic congregations, which is a position that many describe as isolating. The choice to actively include both conferences, and to locate the third retreat in Western North Carolina was appreciated by WNCCUMC participants in particular.</p>
Other Evidence of Reach and Influence	
<p>THLCI and the Hispanic House of Studies partner with a number of groups also engaged in Hispanic/Latino Ministry. These partnerships are generally intended to share, learn more about or implement strategies based on what is known about best practices of effective Hispanic/Latino ministry.</p>	<p><i>Some examples of the fruits of these partnerships include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebration and certification of 24 lay missionaries dedicated to Hispanic/Latino ministry. The lay missionaries completed a training program (Disciples Making Disciples) offered by THLCI and other partners. The celebration and certification was a visible part of the 2014 NCCUMC Annual Conference. - Increased energy and collaboration in the Western North Carolina Conference around Hispanic/Latino Ministry. About half of the participants in the most recent Hispanic Pastor’s Retreat are from the WNCCUMC. - Collaboration between the leadership of THLCI and the General Board of Global Ministries has led to increased visibility for THLCI’s work at the regional and national levels.
<p><i>Some of the partnerships and connections part of this strategy include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with the NCCUMC • Consultation and engagement with pastors, DS’s and Rural Fellows within the NCCUMC and the WNCCUMC • Partnerships with National UMC Organizations • Partnerships with other centers with DDS (Reconciliation and TRCI) 	

Figure 3: Early Applications of Learning/Infusion

Participants	Work w/ THLICI	Activity/Application	Selected Quote
DDS Students			
A Former TRCI Fellow and NCCUMC Pastor	Participated in 3 Encuentro trips; Member of Caminantes for Students;	Working on a ministry with the Migrant Farmworker community near the church	<i>Over three years, I developed a friendship with them that started because I felt this conviction, where God was speaking to my heart, where you are called to love your neighbor as myself. I couldn't do that from inside of my house. I had this strong, spiritual drive to go and say hello to my Hispanic neighbors.</i>
Members of the South Carolina Conference	Participated in Caminantes for Students	One member co-leads a Refugee and Immigrant Rapid Response Group One member is on the Board of Congregational Development and Board of Connectional Ministries	<i>I never imagined myself as an advocate. I understood the role of Pastor as preacher and teacher, visiting the sick, being with those that would need care. I didn't fully understand what it would mean to advocate until I was pastor of a mostly undocumented congregation. I saw families separated, people deported, abused by a system that was broken. My role became advocating for those that didn't have a voice.</i>
A Former TRCI Fellow and NCCUMC Pastor	Participated in 1 Encuentro trip	Working on developing a more multicultural approach in the church; working to increase mission work with poorer Hispanic neighbors	<i>I think it was in learning the courage to engage folks in conversation. Before I went on the trip, I would have thought of ministry as a working for kind of relationship. Now, I want to know your name, where you're from, who your family is. I want to know your story. That's the beginning of a deepening relationship. Now it's about striving towards being with that person.</i>
Staff and Faculty at DDS			
Professors at DDS	Taught at the Course of Study in El Salvador	Developing curricula to emphasize Hispanic theological practice and homiletics; Encouraging students to study Spanish Applied for a grant to develop homiletic practice in Spanish	<i>I would say that it has been impressed upon me the importance of this work, and of theological education supporting these ministries and also to learn from them. These are vital and alive congregations in many instances. It's not just about us teaching them, but about what we can learn from them. I've learned about the importance of engaging with pastors that don't get on our campus, for language reasons or other reasons. You learn about the struggles and the huge challenges that a lot of the pastors face, the bi-vocational character of the pastors. I'm in the early stages.</i>
Other UMC Pastors in North Carolina			
A Pastor working in a multicultural church in the WNNCCUMC	Attended 1 Hispanic Pastor's Retreat	Studying Spanish Reaching out to HL Pastors in the region for connection Actively promoting a multi-ethnic approach in the church (not begun by work with THLICI, but aided by it)	<i>The retreat was wonderful. When I signed up, I thought it would be very narrowly focused on Hispanic ministry, but what I heard there was totally perfect for me, because the guest speakers point was doing Hispanic ministry in the context of multi-ethnic ministry—it had everybody in mind... We all recognized one another and appreciated one another's efforts, and we felt really as one in this effort. The whole atmosphere was very uplifting. It was wonderful.</i>

Implications and Recommendations

Based on the findings, and the context of Hispanic/Latino ministry in Methodism in North Carolina, we note the following:

An infusion model makes sense, and to get the most “bang for the buck” it would help if stakeholders would address together some of the conceptual and structural challenges.

The infusion model is **consistent with best practices** for effective leadership of Hispanic/Latino ministry as described by, for example, the National Plan for Hispanic and Latino Ministry (General Board of Global Ministry of the United Methodist Church). THLCI’s approach also models a vision of Mestizo that includes capacities for both blended and separate service and engagement with Hispanic/Latino North Carolinians. It does not assume that leadership for Hispanic/Latino ministry will come exclusively, or even primarily, from people who are themselves Hispanic or Latino. This approach thus offers Conferences and other stakeholders many more potential leaders, and more opportunities for many types of missions and churches, including some that are likely to be more sustainable.

It is important to continue sharing a nuanced understanding of population trends.

A deep understanding of the **constant and generational changes in Hispanic/Latino population and circumstances within North Carolina** is key to planning for the future of Hispanic Ministry. Some of the leaders and stakeholders we spoke with emphasized this point as a reason not to focus solely (or perhaps at all) on separate, dedicated Hispanic Ministry, led in Spanish. While separate, dedicated missions or church plantings may be an effective approach in the short term, they note that historically, second and third generation individuals show much less interest in being segregated into separate programs. In the future, THLCI will need to work to help leadership address these different and changing populations.

There are a number of ways to grow and deepen the impact of the Infusion Model, many of which THLCI anticipates.

At least one of the potential model churches we describe in Chapter 3 of the full report (CityWell UMC) provides examples of ways of building confidence and **lay capacity** around inclusion of Hispanic/Latino peoples within UMC congregations. As is true for TRCI, there is a role for the Conferences, DDS and TDE to support/training for lay people to understand ways of being more fully inclusive, and to understand walking with, not charity for, Latino/Hispanic communities. We were told capacity building around “inclusion” for lay people could also serve as the groundwork for shifting church identities, as churches became less insular and more multi-cultural and/or more multi-racial or multi/ethnic. And, as is almost always the case, given itinerancy, involvement of lay people encourages the sustainability of those shifts.

There is also an opportunity to bring **existing leaders of Hispanic Ministries** to the table more to share the knowledge that they have about the communities, and about ways to better integrate separate Hispanic Ministries into church decision-making and life.

Some additional supports and partnerships are needed from the two North Carolina UMC Conferences.

To create an opening for Hispanic ministry of the kind being promoted via the infusion work, **the Cabinets and Boards of Ordained Ministries** may want to better understand and value the capacities being developed through THLCI, with a goal of finding ways to make a place for these gifts in a larger number of churches, serving a wider variety of members.

There are also some capacities that could be included or strengthened.

One example is how pastors can meet spiritual and mission needs that involve landowners, employers and farm workers, particularly when some are church members and differ on **immigration, wage rates and other issues**.

Additionally, it is promising that some multi-ethnic and Hispanic/Latino churches have begun to do **racial equity trainings**. We hope that this work will continue in the future, with increased support and involvement from THCLI.

As more churches begin to embrace and attempt to implement inclusive and multi-ethnic principles, particular understandings can be important. As reported to us, key ones, **particularly for groups just beginning to reach out or looking for innovative ways of reaching out**, could include:

- Acknowledging the often unspoken fear of talking with and being in fellowship with people who don't speak English, or whose English skills are not strong.
- Examining biases and assumptions about undocumented people being criminals/untrustworthy.
- Finding a way to acknowledge existing power dynamics in the community.
- A more nuanced understanding of diversity within the Hispanic community.
- Adjusting to life patterns of people with different schedules.
- Embracing the activist history of Methodism, and making it a point of current pride.