

PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND POLICY ISSUES IN THE LATINO COMMUNITIES OF THE DEEP SOUTH

ASSESSMENT
REPORT



**LATINOS
THE DEEP
SOUTH**

Executive Summary

The Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership Institute (DdLSLI), a project of the Latino Commission on AIDS (the Commission), is a space for emerging community leaders to enhance and develop leadership skills in order to impact local, state and federal health HIV/AIDS policies affecting Latinos in the Deep South. In its first year, this institute aims to become an ongoing initiative in the Deep South, taking place each year with a different set of emerging leaders. Prior to the start of the DdLSLI, the Commission conducted a survey in order to gain a deeper understanding of the state of leadership in the Latino community, as well as current policy issues facing the community. In addition, a follow-up interview was developed to gain a more nuanced understanding of results found from the survey. The current report summarizes the findings of the survey and interviews, as well as presents suggestions on how these findings may influence the present and future cycles of the DdLSLI.

Eighty-one respondents completed the survey and of those 81, 11 participated in a follow-up interview. Respondents represented North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Washington, DC – most of them target states for the DdLSLI. A majority of the survey respondents (n=68) had previously participated in community organizing efforts and as such, shared their thoughts on leadership based on experience.

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the success of their past organizing efforts. Importantly, they tended to ascribe successes to factors internal to the organizing process, and failures to external factors. They recognized long-term commitment and consistent support from allies as conducive to organizing, and structural barriers (i.e. lack of education) as hindrances. They also offered ideas for the structure of future organizing efforts and the issues they should tackle. To follow up on the respondents' discussions of previous community organizing experiences, the interviews further explored characterizations of particularly effective and particularly poor leadership. Again, the importance of leaders' long-term commitment and connections in the community emerged as paramount, along with personal characteristics.

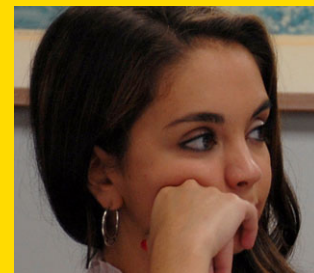
Survey respondents considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in describing how community organizing in the Latino community around HIV/AIDS prevention currently looks in their states. They also rated the effectiveness of leadership in their Latino communities and offered suggestions for developing that leadership, including training opportunities, resources, and recruitment of new leaders. Recognizing the centrality of accurate information to collaboration and community organizing, the interviews explored the ways in which policy developments (especially around immigration and HIV) are communicated through networks and organizations in the Deep South. Interviewees reviewed their efforts to take action on policy developments, starting with bringing people together to disseminate information, persuade individuals, and persuade legislators.

Finally, both surveys and interviews explored the priority issues that affect HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for Latinos in the Deep South. In both sets of responses, immigration policy and its many ramifications on the lives of Latinos took precedence. In addition, structural issues and the current political climate such as a lack of support for the Latino community from elected officials, a lack of educational opportunities, and a lack of adequate access to healthcare in detention centers, emerged as paramount. Most survey respondents (80%) were at least moderately optimistic about the potential for community organizing to address these issues.

Additionally, survey respondents identified issues that they felt that could be address through community organizing. The four most selected issues were: lack of educational opportunities for Latinos; lack of provider networks whose work bridges different fields pertinent to health disparities for Latinos in HIV/AIDS; pervasive stigma surrounding HIV among the Latino community; and inadequate amount of bilingual/bicultural healthcare providers serving the Latino community. Correlation statistics were conducted to assess which issue areas were both high priority and could be addressed through community organizing. The issues that showed the strongest correlation between priority and appropriateness of community organizing as a method to address the issue were the following: lack of support for the Latino community from statewide elected leadership; lack of educational opportunities for Latinos; lack of provider networks whose work bridges different fields pertinent to health disparities for Latinos in HIV/AIDS; pervasive stigma surrounding HIV among the Latino community; and lack of access to adequate healthcare for migrants living with HIV in detention centers.

Interviewees distinguished the potential for organizing the Latino community from organizing the mainstream (non-Latino) community. They looked to connections and positive inter-community links as ways to support these efforts. Additionally, interviewees often commented that the sense of control around immigration and HIV policies was different based on the community: the Latino community, the mainstream community, and the provider/academic community. Finally, interviewees addressed the degree of control that communities feel about policy developments that impact them, again differentiating between the Latino community and the mainstream community.

Several conclusions are presented about the ways these findings can be used to inform the DdLSLI as it continues to engage and train Latino leaders in the Deep South. The conclusions center on ways to develop emerging leaders' voices, skills, and networks toward an even stronger community organizing platform for the Latino communities in the Deep South.



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The findings in this report are to not be widely disseminated without the expressed written consent of the Commission. Correspondence should be addressed to Miriam Y. Vega at mvega@latinoaids.org

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Introduction

In April 2011, the Latino Commission on AIDS (the Commission) launched the first Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership Institute. Named after Dennis deLeon, former president of the Commission and a tireless advocate on behalf of Latinos, people of color, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community, and other marginalized populations, the Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership Institute (DdLSLI) is a space for emerging community leaders to enhance and develop leadership skills in order to impact local, state and federal health HIV/AIDS policies affecting Latinos in the Deep South. The institute is a platform to promote participatory and honest dialogue about how to address the pressing structural issues affecting Latinos in the Deep South. In its first year, this institute aims to become an ongoing initiative in the Deep South, taking place each year with a different set of emerging leaders. The 2011 Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership Institute took place from April to September 2011 and focused on leaders in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Louisiana.

Prior to the start of the DdLSLI, the Commission conducted a survey in order to gain a deeper understanding of the state of leadership in the Latino community, as well as current policy issues facing the community. In addition, a follow-up interview was developed to gain a more nuanced understanding of results found from the survey. The current report summarizes the findings of the survey and interviews, and presents suggestions on how these findings may influence the present and future cycles of the DdLSLI.

Methodology

In December 2010, the Commission designed a survey to assess the current state of leadership in the Latino community in the southern states, as well as current issues facing the community. Multiple team members were involved in the survey construction, including those with experience in community organizing and mobilization, HIV policies and issues facing the southern states, and monitoring and evaluation. Through this internal quality assurance process, the team identified several topics to be included in the survey: 1) respondents' past community organizing experiences; 2) the current state of community organizing in the Latino community around HIV/AIDS; 3) internal and external factors impacting Latino leadership in the respondents' communities; 4) current issues impacting the Latino communities; 5) current opportunities to impact these issues using community organizing approaches; and 6) respondent demographics. The survey was distributed via the online software, Survey Monkey, for collection of responses.

Due to restrictions in current capacity to select the sample in a more random manner, convenience sampling was used; therefore these findings are not generalizable. The Commission's Deep South Project staff tapped the project's networks in each of the seven southern states¹ where it focuses its efforts. The survey was then distributed using a snowball sampling technique. Links to the survey were originally distributed on January 14, 2011 to 1024 contacts in the Deep South Network. On January 25, 2011, a reminder email was sent to the network asking for additional responses and to disseminate the survey to other contacts in the South. Additionally, on January 20, 2011, the Commission became aware of a glitch in the online survey in which respondents were unable to answer several questions, including those around internal and external factors impacting leadership in the community. The survey was repaired on that date and respondents were then able to answer those questions until the survey was closed on February 16, 2011. A total of 81 people responded to the survey, with 65% (n=53) responding prior to the Commission repairing the glitch. Due to the small number of responses in these sections with the glitch, these data were not analyzed. Furthermore, due to the length of the survey, most respondents did not answer all the questions; the number of respondents for each question is indicated throughout the report below. Responses in Survey Monkey were exported to SPSS for analysis.

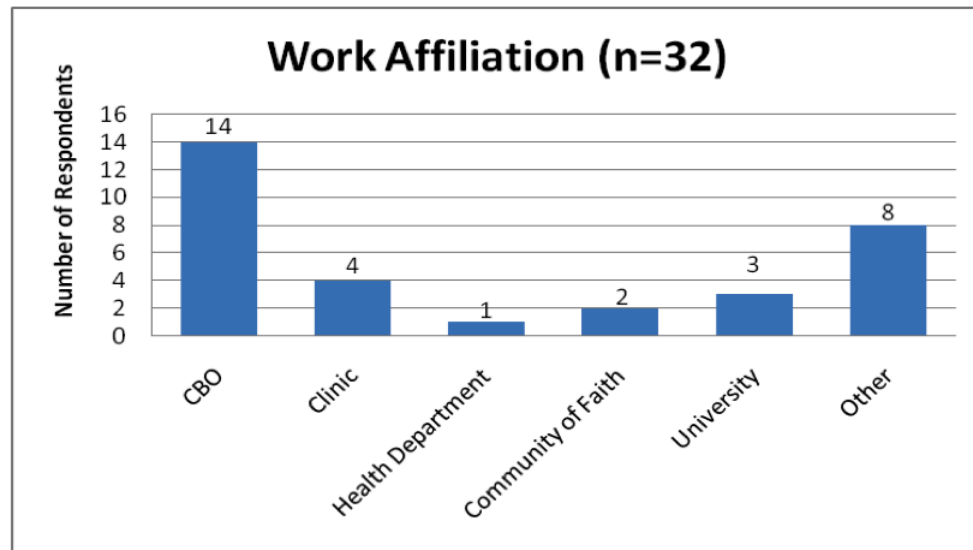
After completion of the survey, respondents were asked whether they would be interested in participating in a follow up interview. Of the 81 survey respondents, 16 individuals reported interest in participating and provided their contact information. All potential interviewees were initially contacted on July 17, 2011 to further assess interest and schedule the interview. Eleven interviews were scheduled between August 3 and August 19, 2011. Ten interviews were conducted in English and one in Spanish. Interviews lasted from 25 – 55 minutes and included a series of questions around: leadership characteristics, the spread of policy information within social networks, discussions around HIV and general policy concerns affecting the local Latino community.

Two Capacity Building Assistance (CBA) Specialists conducted all the interviews, except the interview in Spanish, which was conducted by graduate-level interns. The interviewing and note taking roles were alternated between the CBA Specialists to reduce bias. In addition to thorough notes, calls were recorded and referenced during analysis. After completion of the interviews, responses were aggregated and coded for themes by two coders. There was an 89% agreement between the coders across the interviews.

Respondents

Very few of the 81 respondents, between 20% and 25% depending on the question, completed the demographic section of the survey. Of those who responded, there was an almost equal representation of male and female, 13 and 12 respondents, respectively. The respondents' average age was 46.7 years, with a range of 24 to 65 years. The majority of respondents indicated their primary language was English (17 respondents) compared to Spanish (n=4), English & Spanish (n=3) and other (n=1). In terms of race and ethnicity, 8 respondents indicated they were Hispanic or Latino, 9 respondents indicated being White or Caucasian, 3 respondents indicated being African American or Black, and 4 respondents indicated being mixed. The majority of respondents identified as being heterosexual (n=15) compared to gay or homosexual (n=5) or other (n=1). As for work affiliation, respondents reported a variety of affiliations (Figure 1), including community-based organization (CBO), clinic, local health department, community of faith, university and other (such as funders, state government, non-profit, and board of directors).

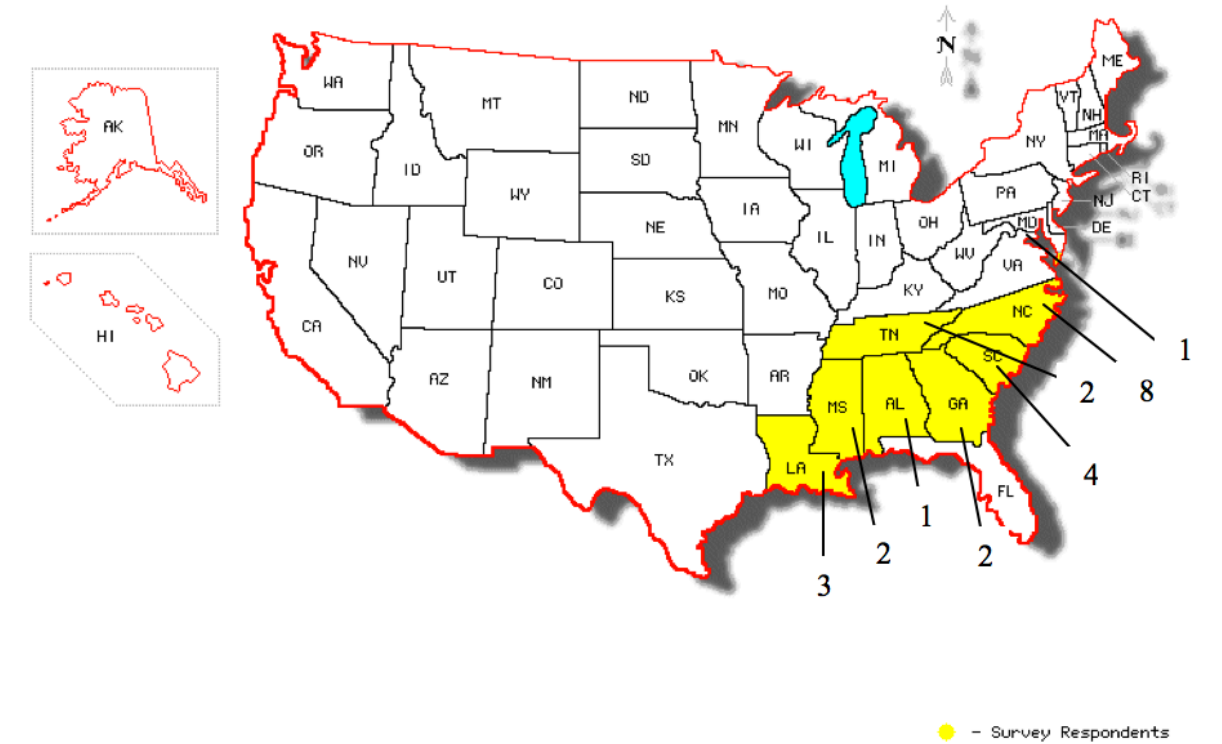
Figure 1.



Finally, respondents were asked to identify their zip code. Figure 2 provides a graphic for the location of respondents who indicated their zip code on the survey (n=23).

Figure 2.

Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents



In terms of the interviews, a subset of those who responded to the survey, we see a similar geographic distribution, with 1-3 interviewees in the following states: Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi and Washington DC. In order to protect confidentiality, and due to the small number of interviewees, further demographics will not be discussed.

ENGAGEMENT



Respondents reported having been involved in a variety of efforts such as health coalitions, political campaigns and professional unions.

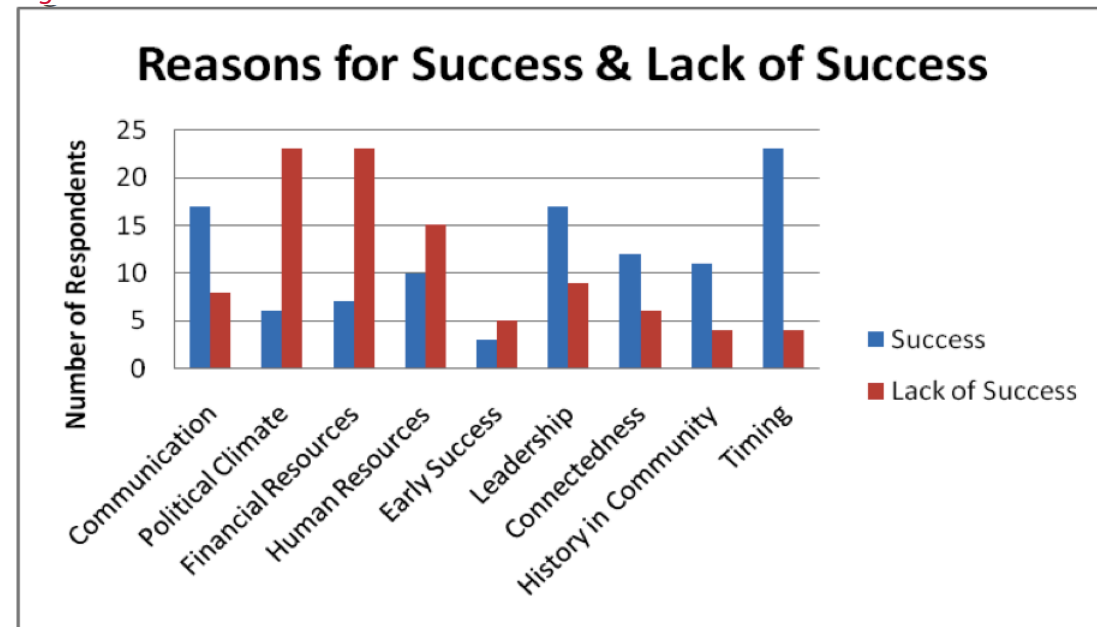
Perspectives on Success in Past Community Organizing

Respondents were asked to identify whether they had been involved in community organizing efforts. Of the 81 respondents, 68 reported having been involved in a variety of efforts for between 2 and 35 years. These types of efforts included health coalitions (n=25), political campaigns (n=8), professional unions (n=2), local groups of concerned citizens (n=12) and other efforts (n=13), such as the Catholic Church, AIDS taskforces, immigrant justice and human rights. Those who indicated not having been involved in community organizing (n=13) did not complete this section of the survey.

Respondents were then asked a series of questions designed to assess their perspectives of success and lack of success in their past organizing efforts. In order to ground respondents' answers into a particular experience, respondents were asked to identify a community organizing issue to keep in mind when answering the questions. Of those who completed this open-ended question (n=34), answers included issues such as improving services for HIV infected/affected Latinos and minorities; organizing service providers who serve Latinos and other minorities; working toward social justice and civil rights (particularly for farm workers); and promoting immigration reform, local community development, and general health issues.

Respondents were then asked to rate this effort's success on a 1-5 scale. Of those who responded (n=36), 90% indicated that the effort was "very successful" or "somewhat successful." In order to examine more deeply these organizing successes, respondents were also asked to select from a list the top three reasons for their success and the top three reasons for their lack of success in the past endeavors. Figure 3 (next page) presents these data and depicts several reasons for success (in blue), such as clear communication, strong leadership, and timing of the organizing. On the other hand, respondents attributed lack of success in their organizing efforts (showing in red) more often to an unsupportive political climate, a lack of financial resources and a lack of human resources.

Figure 3.



Interestingly, the reasons for lack of success can be described as mainly “external factors”, while those factors more highly endorsed in relation to success can be described as “internal factors.” Here, “external factors” are those situations, environments or people outside the coalition; in general, these factors are not in direct control of the coalition. “Internal factors” in this case would be those characteristics, relationships and reactions within the coalition and are more based on the choices and people within the coalition. In order to investigate how respondents grouped factors important for success or lack of success, a factor analysis was conducted to examine how respondents typically grouped their answers. The factor analysis examined if, for instance, respondents selected an “external factor,” such as political climate, how likely were they to select other “external factors,” such as financial resources? This statistic helps determine whether the respondents were, in fact, grouping their answers to fit in the categories of “internal” and “external.” Based on the factor analysis, we found that respondents did tend to group their answers, which fits the concept of “locus of control.” Locus of control describes the degree to which a person attributes the outcomes of a behavior to his or her own personal characteristics (an *internal locus of control*) or to some outside force, such as luck or a powerful political figure (an *external locus of control*).² It appears that respondents showed an internal locus of control when describing their successes and an external locus of control when describing the lack of success. This pattern, attributing success to personal (or community) traits, such as clear communication and strong leadership, and attributing lack of success to external forces, such as political climate and lack of funds, has been shown to be a factor associated with resilience³ and is a fairly typical in terms of maintaining self esteem and also for those stigmatized in society.⁴ It is also consistent with respondents’ overwhelmingly positive assessment of the success of their past efforts. The findings of this survey, therefore, suggest that the respondents may have characteristics and attitudes that set them up for long-term resilience in the face of challenges to their community organizing efforts.

Lessons Learned and Looking Toward the Future

Respondents were asked to summarize the lessons learned from their past organizing efforts in an open-ended question. Of the 68 respondents completing this survey section, 33 responded to the lessons learned question. Four themes emerged among the responses. Respondents recognized the need for long-term commitment and consistency as a key component of organizing work that is essential for sustainability; they wrote about the need for (and sometimes lack of) the right allies, or including effective voices even if those individuals are not in complete agreement with the organizers; on a related note, respondents emphasized the role of empowerment of the community, or giving prominence to community voices; and they also recognized that structural barriers such as lack of education often stand in the way of effective community organizing.

Several respondents have learned through their past organizing experiences that long-term service, commitment, consistency, and building trust in the community are essential to success:

- ◀ *“Members of coalitions need to share responsibility to prevent burnout and they need to feel they have something to contribute. Follow up with the community to see if effort was successful for them, what they would have changed about the process and what needs to happen next.”; and*
- ◀ *“Our seiprives⁵ were much needed and a better, more trusting relationship needs to be established.”*

Another lesson that emerged from the responses was the need for engaging the right allies in organizing efforts, that is, individuals who can contribute, are respected by the community, and who provide linkages to other sources of power:

- ◀ *“Need to involve leadership that is recognized and respected across several populations in the community, not just those involved in the organizing effort.”; and*
- ◀ *“Latino organizations don’t work together very well, specially if they are ran by someone who was educated or grew up in another country. This person doesn’t understand how things are done in the US”*

Together with a need for commitment to the community and for engaging allies from the community, respondents described their experiences with community empowerment:

- ◀ *“There is a real need for our movement to do an internal power analysis and bring an anti-racism/anti-oppression lens to our approaches to the work. Both at the state and national level, we have seen the dominance of professional, white, English-dominant Latinos (including myself) controlling access to resources and dictating the approaches to change. We need to have the challenging conversations that raise the question of how we, as a community, are replicating the same system of oppression we are struggling against.”; and*
- ◀ *“The community responded to call to action. Those who get more involved were women and the youth. The approach to both is not the same but can work together.”*

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT



Besides allies, empowerment, and community leadership, respondents recognized the need of commitment as a key factor in developing a better future for the community.

And, when engaging in organizing efforts respondents often came upon structural barriers that stood in the way:

- ◀ *"The structural conflict that people live in—the challenges of poverty, drug addiction, conflicts w/ neighbors, and on top of all that repression from police, landlords, etc.—makes organizing very difficult"*
- ◀ *"The Hispanic community is extremely diverse in medical/health myths, lack of basic health education due to socio-economic status and geographic home base, discussions of personal sexual practices are challenging for both men and women, women are not comfortable in discussing domestic violence or infidelity, internalized fear/stress and discrimination/stigma generated from ignorance of clergy/citizens."*

Following reflection about past community organizing efforts, respondents were asked to think about the shape of future organizing efforts. In particular, they were asked to consider the ideal structure of an organizing group or coalition, and to name issues that would be central to their future advocacy efforts. Of the 68 respondents completing this section of the survey, 28 offered responses to this question. Responses about structure and central issues were coded separately. Several respondents only mentioned organizing structure, and did not touch upon issues.

Two themes emerged among responses regarding the structure of groups that respondents envisioned for future organizing efforts: coalitions of organizations and coalitions of people, or individuals. Those who wrote about coalitions of organizations were largely concerned with group by-laws, membership, staffing, emerging leaders, and communication patterns. They saw the value of having key organizational representation in coalitions. They indicated that a strong organizational and procedural backbone will be essential to sustain momentum and build a solid organizing structure. Respondents who would like to see a coalition of organizations made statements such as:

- ◀ *"Members organizations contribute funds to the coalition, executive committee is formed including treasurer/secretary/facilitator positions that rotate annually. Coalition maintains a website about their work."*
- ◀ *"a board of directors and membership with reps from all around the state", and*
- ◀ *"To be effective, the coalition must consist of the key decision makers of any organizations that are part of the coalition..."*

Others emphasized the need for coalitions, or collaborations, of specific people, being concerned with building individuals' capacity for leadership, and ensuring statewide diversity and representation. Respondents who suggested a structure that emphasizes coalitions of people wanted to ensure that key leaders were promoted and given power at the table:

- ◀ *"*Work together as team members, and go from there.. to see where everyone of your co-workers and volunteers can participated. *Work from the bottom up with everyone not against them. *Set a time table and work together so the issues can be accomplish.", and*
- ◀ *"It would be great to see regional/local representation sitting at a coalition table with a demonstrated and active commitment to bring those folks most impacted into the dialogue. This would require real justice efforts in our meetings, popular education efforts, and some type of decision-making structure that is transparent and more inclusive."*

Four themes emerged in the comments about issues that respondents envisioned targeting through future organizing efforts: access, voice, economics, and HIV. Several respondents mentioned multiple types of issues in their answers. Responses having to do with access touched on a broad variety of areas, including language access, immigrant rights, access to education, and access to healthcare:

- ◀ *"I would continue to work on the broad issue of equitable access to quality health care services for Latinos/Hispanics, particularly immigrants.", and*
- ◀ *"Ultimately, it comes down to real equity in the areas of health, education, workplace, etc."*

Respondents concerned with voice reflected on the need to encourage advocacy, particularly around issues of immigration reform and policy more broadly. They saw the importance of potential future organizing efforts in increasing the Latino community's voice both in local and regional spheres:

- ◀ *"The issues that we would tackle would be for equal rights for Latinos in the South", and*
- ◀ *"...issues central to advocacy efforts: empowerment, particularly individuals feeling empowered that they have a voice..."*

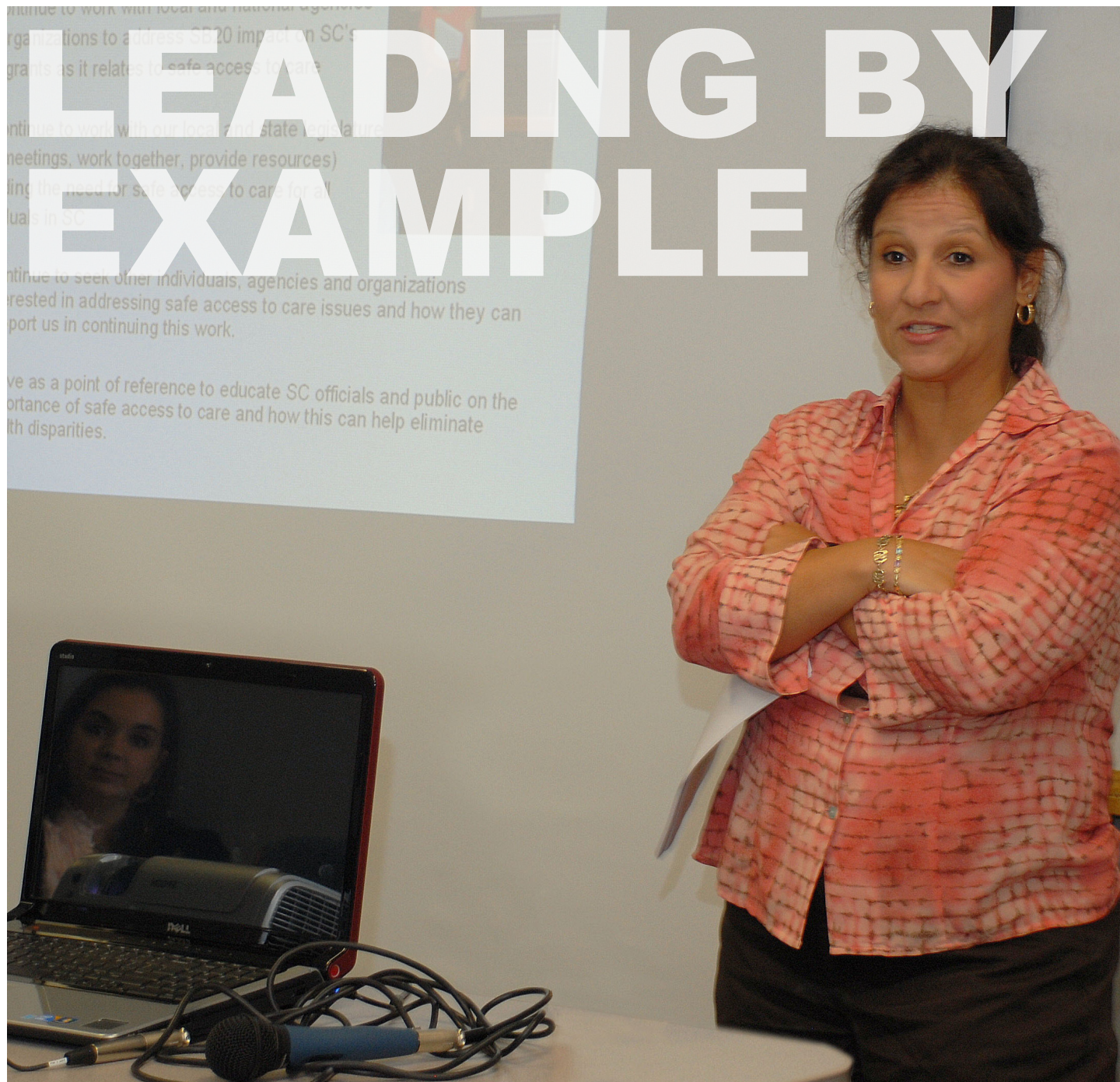
In addition, some respondents were concerned with organizing on issues particular to HIV, including HIV prevention, treatment, HIV-related stigma, and disease integration:

- ◀ *"Our Community need to learn more about how can to eradicate the HIV stigma and change the mind of the Hispanic about sexual education...", and*
- ◀ *"expansion of hiv services, such as dental, long-term rental assistance, emphasis on mental health and chronic disease management"*

Less frequently, respondents wrote about specific economic issues. These included the need for resources both on an organizational and on a personal level, such as wage increases. For example:

- ◀ *"Farmworkers: Child Labor, Wage increases, enforcement of existing laws ... corporate responsibility campaigns"*

In summary, many of the respondents who had previously been involved in organizing efforts had specific ideas both about the structure of organizing and the issues on which organizing should focus in the future. While some proposed structures that are grounded in by-laws and procedures to help organizations coalesce and sustain their joint efforts, others focused more on ensuring representation of individuals who can each bring commitment and grassroots experience to the work. Respondents brought up a range of issues for organizing efforts. Unsurprisingly, they mentioned many of the realities currently affecting Latino communities in the South, and contributing to barriers to organizing around HIV/AIDS.



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Characteristics of a Leader

To follow up on the respondents' discussions of previous community organizing experiences, the interviews further explored characterizations of particularly effective and particularly poor leadership. When asked to describe a particularly good leader, interviewees chose individuals who work in community-based organizations and in faith-based settings. Most interviewees had personal and/or professional relationships with the leaders they spoke about; that is, they had leaders in mind who are part of their communities and whom they know at least to some extent. And, they spoke about specific instances when they had been able to reach out to these leaders to contribute to their own efforts in the community, and how they would be able to do so again in the future. Importantly, many interviewees mentioned that they could count on the leaders to connect them to others in the community; the leaders were viewed as the appropriate people to forge linkages and mobilize community members.

In discussing the characteristics that make these individuals true leaders, they again focused on the **connections and relationships** that they have in the community, as well as on their **personal characteristics**. Less often, interviewees mentioned the track record of **outcomes** that the leaders helped bring about for their communities, such as raising funds, providing direct assistance to community members, and achieving desired changes.

In terms of the **connections** in the community, several interviewees brought up their chosen leaders' abilities to reach, motivate and engage community members, and their long-term involvement in the community:

- ◀ *"He is very involved within the community. He does a lot of things with the youth... A lot of people respect him. He has opened the doors for us in some avenues where we wouldn't have been previously been able to do programming in, because of his connections within the community... What makes him a leader is the fact that that he's involved, that he pushes for certain things within the community, because of his reputation a lot of people rally for the same causes that he does, he has really good relationships within different organizations and different groups within [this county]. So, the fact that he can bring people together for a cause makes him a good leader."*

Participants also spoke about personal characteristics of good leaders. Several said that these aspects are somehow "natural", or part of the personality structure of a good leader. They brought up commitment and caring for the mission, "a special ability to identify the strengths within the group", dedication, perseverance, intelligence, humility, extroversion, advocacy skills, and personal strength to be out as an LGBT member of the Latino community in the South. These comments echoed survey respondents' lessons learned about the need for commitment, dedication, and the right allies to succeed in organizing work.

Fittingly to the discussion of character traits, when asked whether these exemplary leaders could continue their leadership in a different context than that in which they typically



“Participating in The Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership Institute has had a profound impact in our understanding of policies impacting HIV care for Latinos at the local, regional, and national level.”

**Cindy Wilks-Vásquez,
ArteSanar, Executive Director/Founder**

lead (e.g., a community-based organization) all interviewees agreed that they would. They mentioned three key qualities that would ensure these individuals’ enduring leadership in a variety of contexts: **experience**, **strength**, and **passion**. For example:

- ◀ *“He has not forgotten where he came from, and he knows offhand the obstacles that our community faces on a daily basis.”*

Next, the interviewees were asked to think of a particularly poor leader and reflect on the qualities of this person. While some interviewees hesitated with this task, all but one were eventually able to think of a poor leader in their communities. Interviewees described poor leaders in terms of **poor management skills**, both as managing one’s time and as a lack of ability to work effectively with others, and in terms of being too **self-focused** and concerned with image and gaining positions of power.

- ◀ *“And so, you know, it’s not your appearance and all of that that really determines whether you’re a leader or not, or even your education, or your own achievements. I think that leadership has to do with a concept that you’re there to serve, that the goal is to serve the community, the goal is to improve the conditions of the community, the goal is not to make yourself be important.”*
- ◀ *“Some of those things are: not really there for things that would be beneficial for that person to be in, so in terms of the absence – they are absent. They have the title of a leader, but when it comes to being present or doing things, they’re not there.”*

Opinions were mixed on whether a poor leader can be changed. Some interviewees expressed hope in that a leader could potentially change and improve, while others contended that that is not the case. In some cases, this doubt came from interviewees’ beliefs that the innate qualities of a leader cannot be taught, that leadership comes from the heart. In other cases, the doubt was based on the length of time that the poor leader had been in the same position of power, and his/her intransigence and reluctance to change.

LEADERSHIP TODAY



Respondents described the current state of leadership in the HIV field in their region -identifying both the goods and the bads.

Analysis of Leadership in the Latino Communities in the Deep South

In the second survey section, which was accessible to everyone (n=81), not just those who indicated having previously been involved in community organizing work, respondents considered the current state of leadership in their Latino communities, and how to support and strengthen that leadership.

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

First, respondents were asked to describe how community organizing in the Latino community around HIV/AIDS prevention currently looks in their states, focusing on strengths and weaknesses; 27 respondents answered this question. Responses about strengths and weaknesses were coded separately. Seven respondents named strengths but no weaknesses; 5 respondents named weaknesses but no strengths. Importantly 6 of the responses could not be coded because the respondents stated being unaware of the current state of organizing in their communities, or because they said it was “non-existent.” This in itself is a telling finding about the extent to which organizing efforts are communicated across groups, as well as about the need for more and broader statewide organizing initiatives impacting Latinos in the South.

Two types of **strengths** emerged among the responses. In some cases, respondents identified strengths in terms of specific efforts, services, persons, or assets that are present in their communities, often by name. Others focused on the strength of **unity**, with emphasis on community members coming together with the common interest of developing the community in some way.

Some respondents writing about **specific** strengths named certain organizations, while others alluded to persons, initiatives, or services. Echoing those who stated that they are unaware of current organizing strengths and weaknesses, some respondents indicated their incomplete knowledge of the situation when discussing specific strengths.

- ◀ *“MIRA – Mississippi Immigrantes Rights Alliance”,*
- ◀ *“we have the Louisiana Latino Health Coalition that has been in existence since 1990 working on behalf of Latinos with HIV/AIDS and promoting awareness of issues affecting Latinos with HIV”, and*
- ◀ *“A Reproductive Justice Coalition exists, but not sure what they do, haven’t interacted much. Every summer, we use popular theater to educate farmworkers about HIV/STI’s. There are promotoras in the community, but don’t know who and how many.”*

When discussing **unity** as a strength, some respondents emphasized the trust and sense of community among Latinos in their respective communities:

- ◀ *“The Latino community is a very young community which is open for prevention, education and outreach. Its also ready to do more as long that there is someone/group or organization that is leading the way. It’s also a community that is not going any where”,*

- ◀ *“An increasing interest among an important sector of the Latino community, to participate in facilitating community development.”, and*
- ◀ *“those who are aware of us and our presence are open and curious and trusting of our services and confidentiality”*

Four themes emerged among responses dealing with **weaknesses** in current community organizing. Respondents identified as weaknesses the lack of resources, including funding, education, and training. They connected the lack of resources with a lack of sustainability of organizing efforts. Another type of weakness identified was the lack of collaboration among organizers, which was connected to the lack of a unified mission and to working in isolated silos. An inhospitable political climate was put forward as another weakness, which some identified as a barrier to HIV organizing, in part because it creates issues of trust. Finally, respondents pointed to stigma standing in the way of organizing efforts.

In addition to a concern with sustainability, respondents often mentioned the lack of resources for outreach, particularly in rural areas:

- ◀ *“Local and regional coalitions are functioning and reaching the Hispanic population, but rural, outlying communities are not being served due to lack of bodies and financial resources.”, and*
- ◀ *“Lack of funding for the community to be reach, lack of education and resoures...that often times other communities take for granted.”*

When describing the lack of collaboration, respondents related the lack of structured connections among isolated efforts as a factor impeding sustainability:

- ◀ *“Seem to be projects led on a sporadic basis by individuals and agencies. No connectivity across cities or the state in prevention efforts.”, and*
- ◀ *“Prevention efforts are ongoing and reaching stated goals established by individual organizations, but communications are fractionated. There is no overall infrastructure or unified goals, objectives or mission.”*

Among external weaknesses, respondents mentioned the inhospitable political climate that is prevalent across the South, which, in their view, is a barrier to effective education and organizing around HIV along with other issues impacting Latinos:

- ◀ *“Fear of immigration, safe communities and 287g that many counties, towns and states have consider (such as Arizona) and or are taking iffect or under consideration.”,*
- ◀ *“It’s all about TRUST and awareness right now.”, and*
- ◀ *“Health Depts. do what they can and most of our schools are unable to distribute much due to state mandates.”*

Another barrier arising from the community is the prevalence of sexuality- and HIV-related stigma:

- ◀ *“very little honest conversations about issues of sex and sexuality in the larger community.”, and*
- ◀ *“Many people of the Hispanic Community think is no suitable to put on posters about HIV/ STD in their busines or restaurants.”*

The following question prompted respondents to consider opportunities that currently exist to strengthen the organizing efforts. To help focus the responses, the emergence of new and important leadership and the existence of strong coalitions were presented in the prompt as examples of opportunities. Twenty-three respondents answered this question; 4 responses were not coded because they did not mention opportunities for organizing efforts.

Three main themes emerged among the opportunities identified by respondents: the existing and expanding mobilization of organizations and coalitions, especially across issues; specific positions of leadership; and the existence of services that benefit the community.

Responses discussing existing and expanding mobilization efforts as an opportunity included:

- ◀ *“Importance of making this issue not just a Latino issue, but piggy backing on the work of the African American communities. The coalitions that emerge are also linked to LGBT issues and there have been several wins for LGBT recently, therefore, it is important to capitalize on those wins.”, and*
- ◀ *“The coalition achieved non-profit status 2 years ago; new leadership has emerged; membership has been slowly increasing to be more representative of other parts of the state”*

Respondents also found that specific positions of leadership present opportunities for organizing. Several named existing roles, while others saw an opportunity of engaging more leaders:

- ◀ *“We now have a new field coordinator for the migrant camp programs through a grant from a neighboring county leading the state in migrant workers health.”*
- ◀ *“Targeting the Community and Religious Leaders. Educating the younger generation of Hispanics/Latinos to serve as future leaders/mentors.”*

Others brought up culturally competent services as opportunities for the region:

- ◀ *“once again providing HIV testing. No blood or needles, a mouth swab. Communicating in the spanish language.”*
- ◀ *“The creation of new programs around the state that outreach to Latinos.”*

The last question in this series asked respondents to consider threats to community organizing efforts in their communities. To help focus the responses, recent enactment of damaging legislation and the election of an official who is not sympathetic to the needs of Latinos were presented as examples of threats. Twenty-eight respondents offered their thoughts on this question.

The responses included four types of threats. Respondents wrote about anti-immigrant legislation as an outcome of a conservative political environment that, in turn, begets fear among the Latino population. On the community level, respondents identified generalized

WEAKNESSES



Divisions within the Latino communities were described as one of the reasons of lack of effective leadership.

hostility against immigrants and Latinos that, along with stigma, is a threat to their work. Others brought up the threat of intra-community divisions within Latino communities, along with a lack of effective leadership. And respondents identified economic barriers to healthcare, and the overall economic situation as another threat.

Anti-immigrant legislation and its deleterious effects on trust in the community featured in a majority of the responses:

- ◀ *"247g, driving checkpoints directed at Latino communities, raids/deportations. People are afraid to attend community events."*
- ◀ *"Current threats would have to deal with immigration laws. Lack of support by politicians when it comes to the Latino Population," and*
- ◀ *"A threat is the current rise on conservative groups who are very anti LGBT creating a climate of fear and power within the establishment. Tea Party candidates have been winning, and they have a conservative and anti-gay approach. The enemy is the other."*

Community-level hostility against immigrants, Latinos and other marginalized and stigmatized groups was often mentioned together with anti-immigrant legislation as a threat to effective HIV organizing:

- ◀ *"Fear, not only of dealing with a scary disease, but of going out in public and of speaking up when there is such a climate of hostility toward immigrants."*
- ◀ *"Stigma in the Deep South, which is traditionally very "white" and "black" – now the Latino community in some ways represents a "third" population, in other ways are seen as "whites" but often judged to be sub-whites"; and*
- ◀ *"There is also a very vocal anti-immigrant population in our region, always willing to quash any progressive efforts, regarding available services to our Latino populations."*

Threats to organizing were also seen to emanate from within Latino communities, arising from a lack of effective leadership and intra-community divisions:

- ◀ *"Power and territorial struggles between churches for parishioners, finances and souls. Myths and misinformation being created by opposing community leaders or individuals within the Hispanic community," and*
- ◀ *"discrimination within the Latino community is also important to consider."*

Respondents also wrote about economic barriers, resulting from the current economic climate:

- ◀ *"Budget cuts affecting key coalition member organization's work"; and*
- ◀ *"lack of access to affordable care for undocumented immigrants"*

Following the thoughts about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to community organizing, respondents were asked to rate the overall Latino leadership in their communities. Respondents (n=31) rated the effectiveness of Latino leadership in their communities a little below average on a 1-7 scale (M=3.68, SD=1.54). Similarly respondents thought that the level of sharing of leadership was a little below average (M=3.47, SD=1.50). See Table 1 below for frequencies of these responses.

Table 1.

Leadership is not effective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Leadership is effective
←	3.2%	25.8%	19.4%	19.4%	19.4%	9.7%	3.2%	⇒

Leadership is not shared at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Leadership is shared when appropriate
←	3.3%	30.0%	26.7%	6.7%	26.7%	3.3%	3.3%	⇒

Next, respondents were asked how Latino leadership can be developed in their respective communities, with the option to choose multiple answers from the four presented. Approximately equal numbers selected the top three choices: 29 respondents chose “Enhance support for emerging leaders by giving them a voice in local organizations or coalitions”; 27 chose “Promote leadership *qualities*, such as orientation toward participatory decision making, conflict management, and articulation of vision”; and 25 chose “Build leaders’ *skills* for community organizing, such as creating media relationships, conducting advocacy campaigns”. Only 1 respondent selected “I do not believe that leadership can be developed”. That is, supporting local leadership by providing opportunities for emerging leaders to have a voice, promoting leadership qualities, and building leadership skills were all deemed important facets of local leadership development.

Respondents were then given an opportunity to further expand on their ideas about other ways in which Latino leadership can be developed in their communities. Twenty-one respondents answered this open-ended prompt.

Four themes emerged from the responses provided. Many respondents saw a need for training and further education (both formal and informal), as a way to build leadership; echoing the lessons learned from organizing efforts, respondents mentioned commitment, collaboration, and consistency as a key ingredient in building leadership; again echoing the lessons learned, respondents wrote about the access to resources needed to carry out organizing work, including financial resources as well as power and representation of a variety of stakeholders; finally, respondents pointed to the recruitment of emerging leaders, particularly young leaders, who must be engaged if the organizing work is to be sustainable in the long term.

Respondents who wrote about training and education mentioned very specific skill sets that leaders can gain from further learning:

- ◀ *“I think that by providing workshops people can learn and expand their leadership qualities. Teaching people how to conduct surveys so they can learn what are the issue. Learning how to build coalitions and use what is available to them.”; and*
- ◀ *“Training directly to visit legislators, at the local level and/or at the state level. Leaders have to actually see themselves as policy players to be more engaged as policy players. The training*

has to be experiential, has to have a accomplishment at the end of the day. Training in the abstract does not give the sense of being valuable when ‘Rome is burning.’”

Those who suggested the need for commitment to the community and to collaborations among agencies emphasized the long-term nature of this work:

- ◀ *“*Time, patients, and desire on wanting to work with the community... Not just start something and forget about it. Because, just starting and forgetting about it.. is something that the community has expirience one to many times... and its something that needs to change.”; and*
- ◀ *“Keep trying / STRIVING and NEVER give up!! Were getting there, slowly but surely”*

Along with commitment, respondents saw access to resources, both in terms of material resources and access to power and representation:

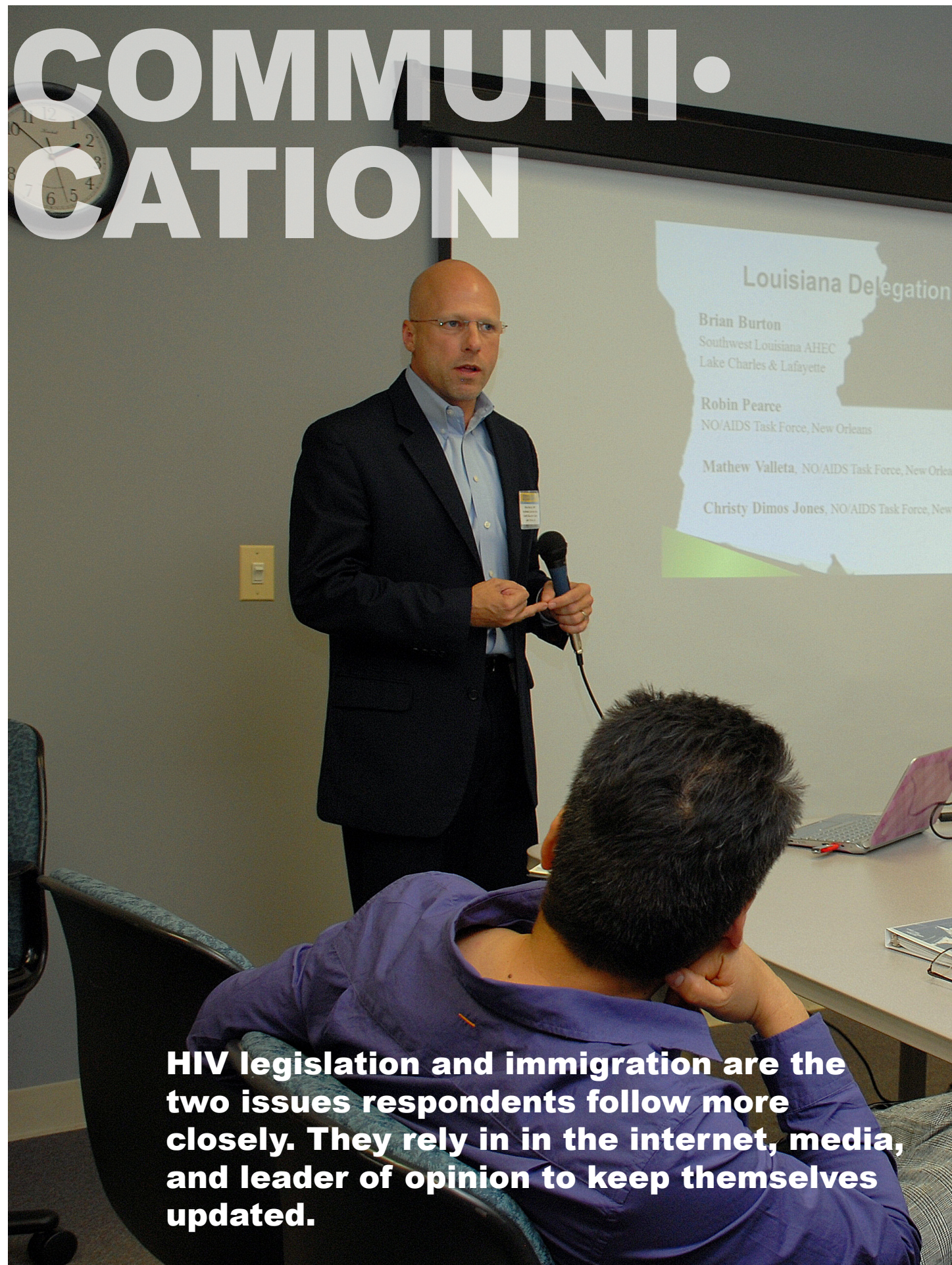
- ◀ *“Increase the visibility of Hispanic advocates, leaders and supporters to the media and non Hispanic communities.”*
- ◀ *“need resources so it is not all volunteers with no time to devote to expanding the coalition”*

Respondents also pointed out the need for recruitment of new leaders, particularly young leaders. They connected recruitment with training these new leaders:

- ◀ *“Tools such as fotonovellas, peer education models and workshops for new leaders.”;*
- ◀ *“There are natural leaders already present who only lack specific knowledge about issues, and opportunities to develop their skills through organizing efforts.”; and*
- ◀ *“Providing oportunities for youmg leaders to plug in get involved and develop their strengths.”*

Overall, respondents were able to identify in concrete terms the tools, resources, and commitment necessary to continue to build Latino leadership in their communities. This information will be useful to inform not only the DdLSLI, but other training and capacity building initiatives in the region.

COMMUNICATION



HIV legislation and immigration are the two issues respondents follow more closely. They rely in in the internet, media, and leader of opinion to keep themselves updated.

Diffusion of Information and Calls to Action

Recognizing the centrality of accurate information to collaboration and community organizing, the interviews also explored the ways in which policy developments are communicated through networks and organizations in the South. Interviewees responded to questions about policy and legislation in general, such as budgets on the city or state level, and policies concerning HIV and immigration in particular.

First, interviewees considered which policy issues they follow most closely. As expected, HIV/AIDS and health policies figured prominently in these responses because the sample consisted mainly of providers and researchers in those fields. In addition, interviewees pay attention to policy developments in immigration, the economy, and education:

- ◀ *"First and foremost, immigration for the Hispanic population, probably followed by educational policy, and that's for the whole entire community. We live in a state where education unfortunately just does not seem to be a priority. And also I would say the other priority – along with immigration – would civil rights and just basic human rights."*

Most interviewees' motivation for paying close attention to these issues is a mixture of personal and professional reasons. Others also spoke about concern for the state of the community as a primary motivator for following policy developments.

- ◀ *"I'm coming from background of HIV and understanding from my own personal friends and my own family, who have lived and died with HIV, and how they're oftentimes stripped of their personal human dignity and they just all of a sudden have this one label and it's 'HIV' and no one seems to be able to look through that. Also in being a gay man, and looking at my own community, and how HIV has impacted my community over the years. Now that I see that we're living in a world of AIDS apathy and AIDS fatigue, looking at how all of this is impacting the Hispanic community and new arrivals coming into this country... I didn't want to see this population become a victim to HIV when they simply do not need to be."*

To keep informed, each interviewee relies upon several information sources in the areas of immigration, HIV, and other, more general policies. These information sources included the internet (email, websites, listserv announcements through organizations), television and radio, local and national newspapers, contact with organizations at different levels (local, state, national), as well as meetings and reports. In many cases, interviewees cited a different set of information sources depending on the policy realm, indicating that they spend a fair amount of time to ensure that they learn about policies from appropriate and relevant sources. According to one interviewee, if a respected leader disseminates information, *"I would be more likely to glance over that and read it."* All interviewees agreed that due to ongoing legislation changes in many Southern states, immigration is very often discussed, both through mass media and through agency networks.

Interviewees believe that their colleagues and organizing partners learn about policies in similar ways as they do; however, several expressed concern that myths

and misinformation are a problem in the community, particularly around the topics of immigration and HIV. In this, they echoed survey respondents' identification of misinformation as a threat to community organizing in that it engenders disunity. When interviewees want to pass along information about immigration or HIV to their networks, they most often start by sending emails both informally and to established groups or coalitions. Others engage in community outreach or bring up issues at coalition meetings.

- ◀ *“Yo considero que mi vocación es comunicar, me gusta hacerlo, y en los dos campos en que me muevo, en los dos mundos en que me muevo tengo condiciones de hacerlo. Uno es que soy un pastor, estoy frente una congregación, quizás, en el contexto donde yo estoy se ve raro en el contexto pastoral que yo tengo disculpa de hablar del VIH, que yo tengo que hablar de violencia doméstica, pero sí lo hago. Lo hago porque debemos hacerlo. Yo creo que tengo un espacio abierto buenísimo, y lo hago. Para mí es mucho más fácil que para otra gente, probablemente, porque yo estoy cada semana reunido con mi gente, cada semana tengo un grupo de personas. Por un lado de este plano. Ahora, en el plano de mi trabajo regular... Creo muy firmemente en usar los espacios que existen. Por ejemplo, si hay un campo de fútbol, yo trato de ir al campo de fútbol... y trato de hablar. Si voy a la flea market con mi esposa, por ejemplo, tenemos una flea market aquí cerca. Rentamos una mesa, a veces, para tener información y para hablar con la gente.”*

[I consider that my vocation is to communicate, and I like doing it, and in the two worlds in which I operate I have the conditions to do so. One is that I am a pastor, I'm in front of a congregation. And maybe in this pastoral context it's unusual for me to have the excuse to talk about HIV and domestic violence, but I do it. I do it because we should do it. I think that I have a great and open space, and I do it. For me it's much easier than for other people, probably, because I meet every week with my people, every week I have a group of people. So, on the one hand, in this context. Now, in terms of my regular work... I firmly believe in using the spaces that exist. For example, if there's a soccer field, I try to go to the soccer field... and I try to talk [to the players]. If I go to a flea market with my wife, for example, we have a flea market here close by. We rent a table, sometimes, to have information [to share] and to speak with the people.]

Specifically, interviewees reported that they engage in discussions on immigration legislation with a variety of members of their social networks. Some tend to hold these conversations with friends or family, while others reach out to colleagues, coalition members, community members, and elected officials. These discussions take different forms depending on the level of knowledge of the respective interlocutors. Because of the immediacy of the issue, they spoke about how often they share information about immigration policy.

- ◀ *“To start with, with the community that is going to be affected, in this case our community – the Latino community. Next, with those who are in favor of some type of immigration policy, and thirdly, with the ones who may be against it.”*
- ◀ *“We talk about it with my family, and also with friends that work on immigration issues. I used to work there, so I have a lot of friends that still work in issues around immigration. So, sometimes I go to them to kinda get a little bit more deep understanding of it, cause a lot of times, the newspapers they have so much space that they only mention certain things, so that helps.”*

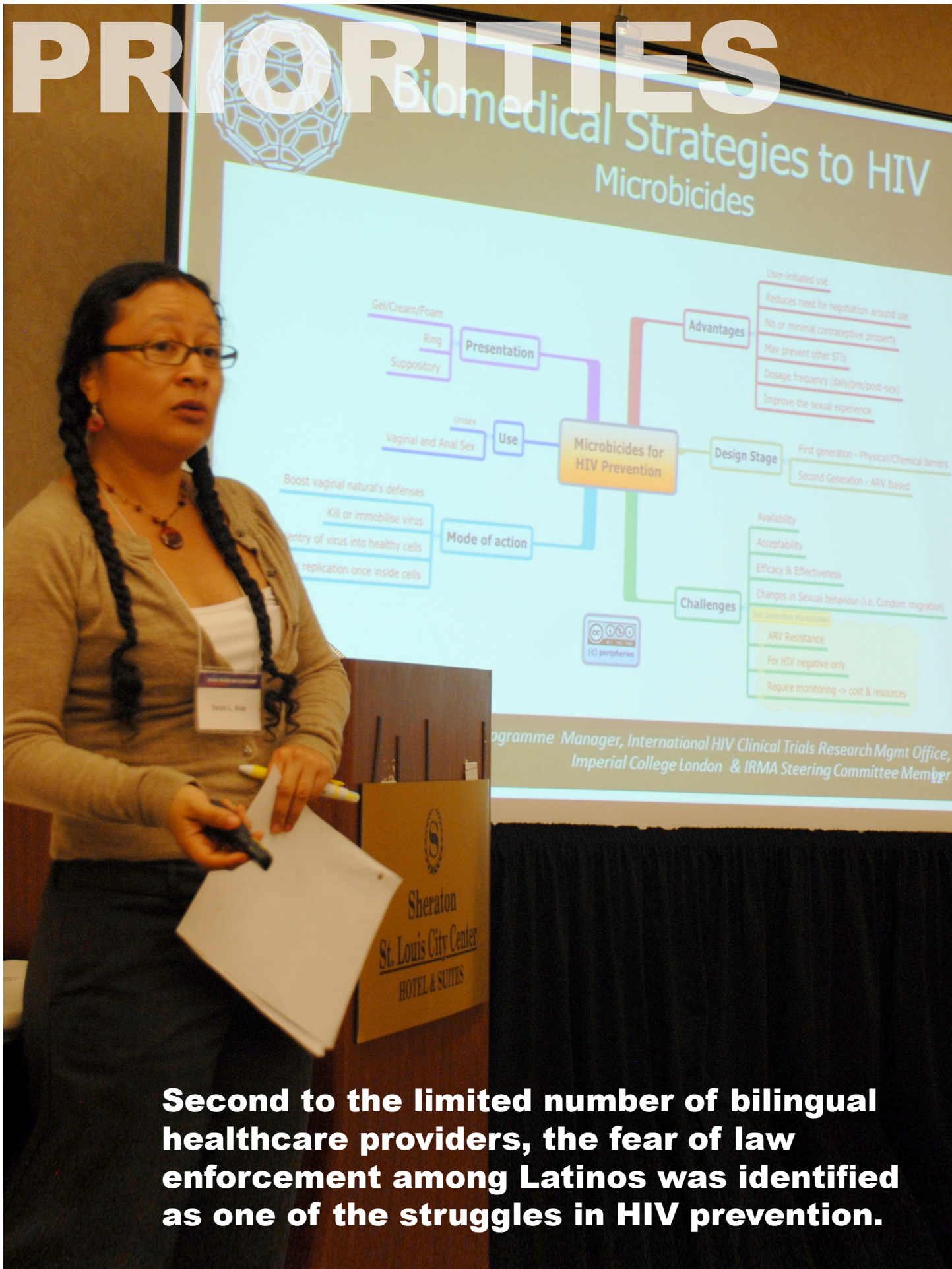
Unsurprisingly, interviewees reported that these discussions are often heated and controversial, with parties taking different sides of the issue, and trying to persuade in addition to disseminating new information about immigration.

All interviewees reported having previously taken some form of action on an issue; most of these actions have been regarding HIV policies, and some on immigration policies. They were asked about their next steps when deciding to take action on a policy. Most mentioned that they first make an effort to **bring people together** to collaborate on the action, and part of that effort is **disseminating information** to the potential advocates to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Some interviewees went on to talk about their efforts in **persuading legislators** around an emerging issue:

- ◀ *“I'm from the old school, and that basically means you just gotta get out there and whether it's picket signs, or you know, just going to the state capital and voicing your concerns. I've done that before with some of our HIV patients, I took them to the state capital to lobby for more money, to lobby for better healthcare. And that would probably be my next step, cause politicians can't make a move without support of the community. And they have to understand that folks are coming to the capital to state their points and make their demands... Utilizing the Latino church: giving them information, and having those religious leaders be aware of what's going on regarding these policies, convey that message to the congregation. And, you know, even again, just a group of churches getting their buses together, and going to the state capital and making their point.”*

Others tended to concentrate on **persuading individuals**, or public opinion:

- ◀ *“That would be an email alert also. [probe] Firstly, the people who are living with HIV around the state of Mississippi, across the whole state, and also the providers of services.”*



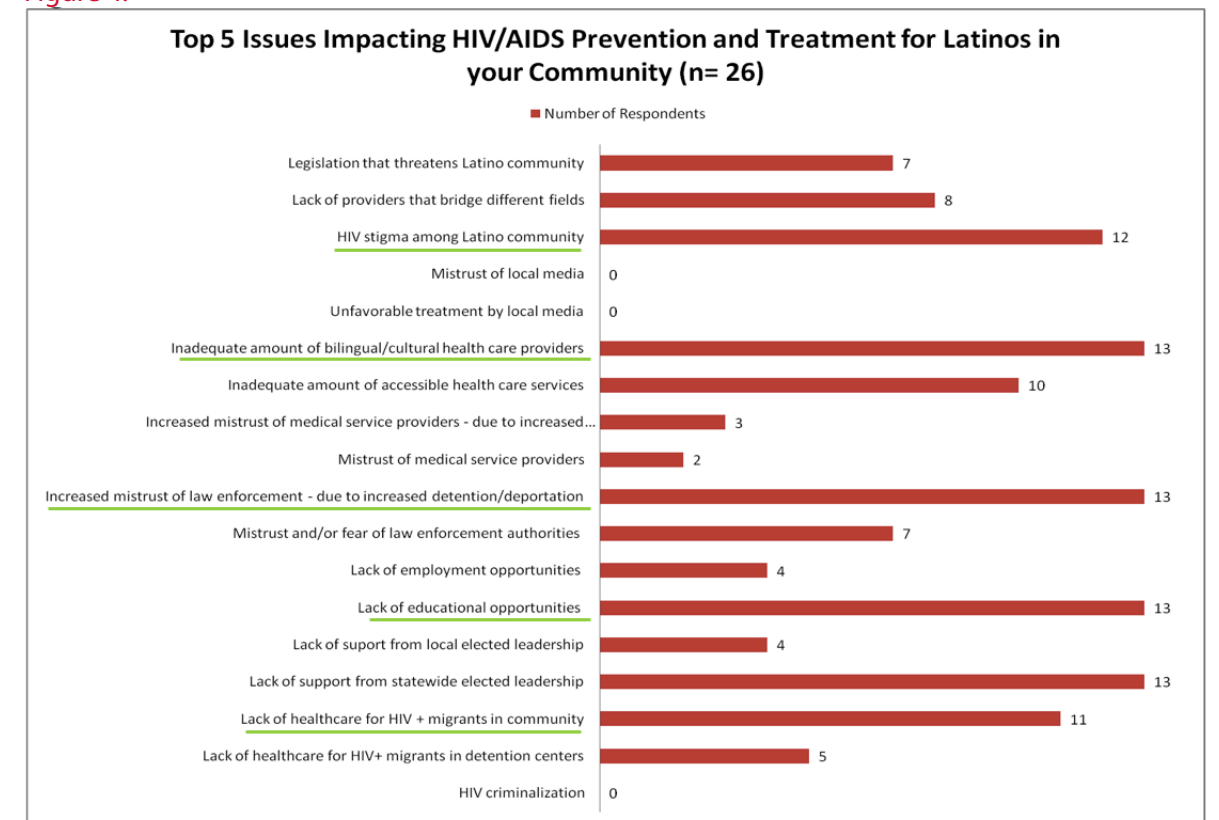
Issues Impacting HIV Prevention and Treatment for Latinos

The last section of the survey explored the respondents' ideas about priority issues that affect HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for Latinos in the Deep South. First, respondents were asked to select the top five issues impacting HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for Latinos in their community from a list of 18 options. The five issues most frequently selected by respondents were:

- Inadequate amount of bilingual/bicultural healthcare providers serving the Latino community
- Increased mistrust and/or fear of law enforcement authorities among the Latino community due to recent increase in detention/deportations of undocumented migrants
- Lack of educational opportunities for Latinos
- Lack of support for Latino community from statewide elected leadership, e.g., U.S. Congresspersons, Governor
- Pervasive stigma surrounding HIV among the Latino community

These issues echoed the issues and barriers that respondents brought up in the open-ended responses discussed above. Figure 4 below summarizes the responses to this question. The most common issues are underlined in green.

Figure 4.

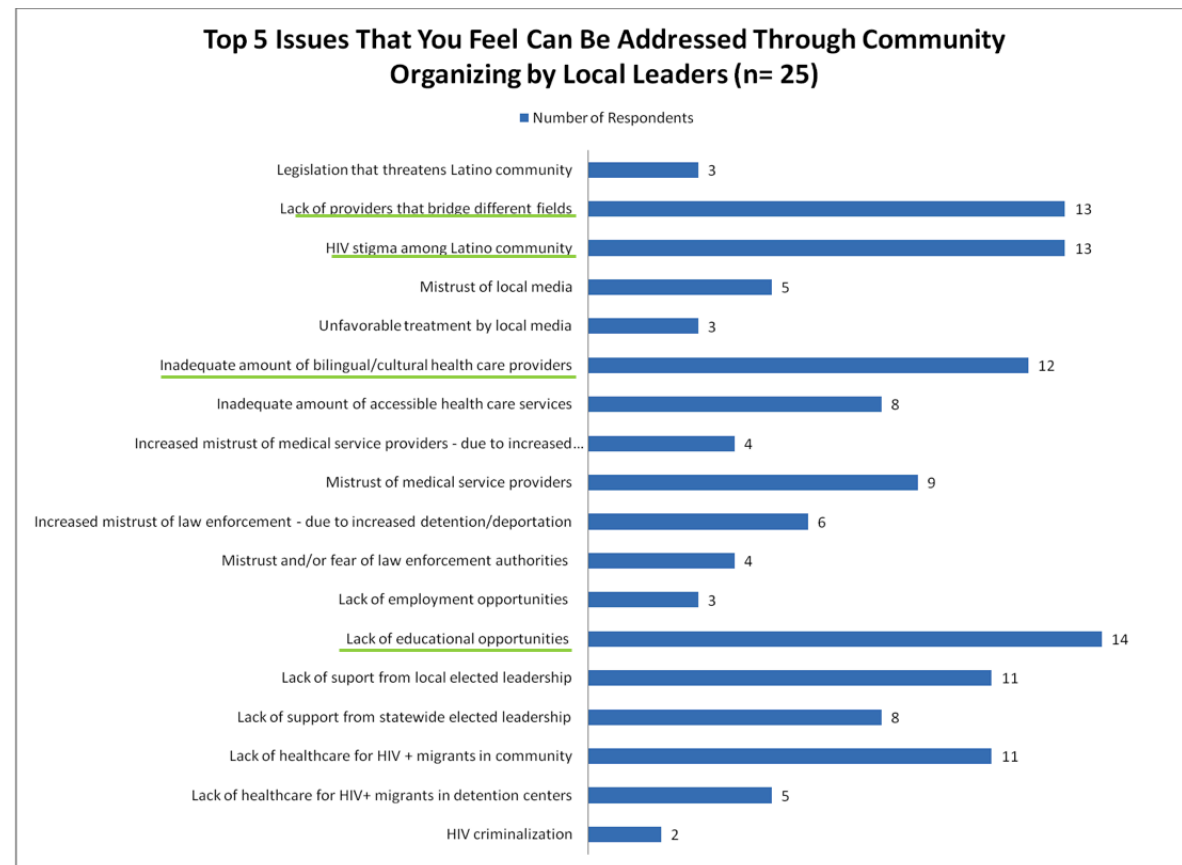


In addition to assessing the most important issues impacting HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment for Latinos in the community, respondents were asked to identify the top five of these same 18 issues they felt could be addressed through a community organizing approach by local leaders. The four issues most frequently selected by respondents were:⁶

- Lack of educational opportunities for Latinos
- Lack of provider networks whose work bridges different fields pertinent to health disparities for Latinos in HIV/AIDS, e.g., healthcare, human rights, media, education
- Pervasive stigma surrounding HIV among the Latino community
- Inadequate amount of bilingual/bicultural healthcare providers serving the Latino community

Figure 5 presents this information, with the most frequently selected choices underlined in green.

Figure 5.



Following this set, respondents were asked to what extent these issues can be impacted through community organizing efforts in their communities. Respondents tended to view the potential for organizing efforts to impact these issues positively, with the mean at 5.56 (SD=1.23) on a 1-7 scale ranging from “not at all” to “definitely” (n=25). Table 2 below offers a visual representation of these responses.

Table 2.

To what extent do you think these issues can be impacted through community organizing efforts in your community?

Not at all ←	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Definitely →
	0%	0%	4%	16%	32%	16%	32%	

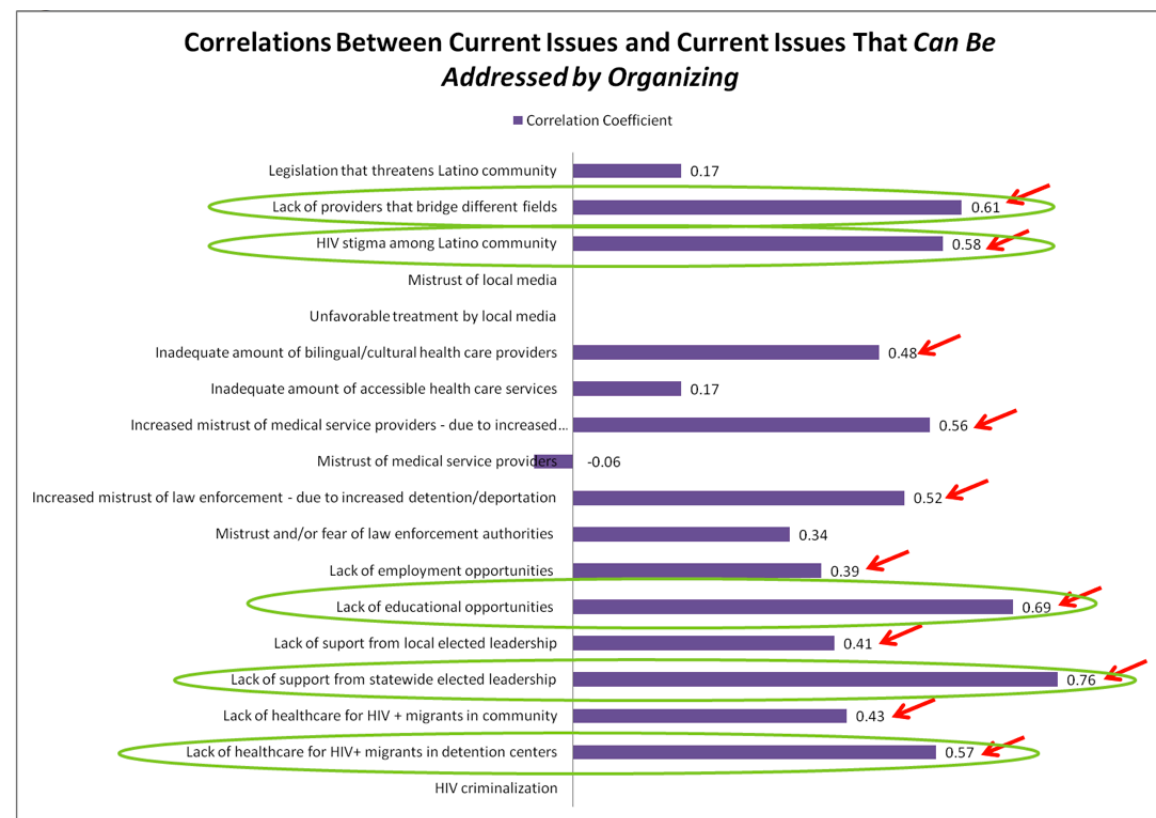
When asked what could strengthen these organizing efforts, respondents offered ideas such as education on the issues, community assessment, coalition building within the Latino communities and across different communities, and support of emerging Latino leaders.

An important question that arises from this information is: which issues are of high priority and can be addressed through community organizing? In order to address this question, correlation analyses were conducted between the top issues and the top issues that can be addressed through organizing. Figure 6 presents the findings of these analyses. Correlations coefficients, presented in Figure 6, range from -1 to 1. A number that is positive means that respondents who chose the issue also tended to choose that issue when thinking about what can be addressed through community organizing. If it is negative, it means that respondents who chose that issue tended *not* to choose it when considering what can be addressed through community organizing. Correlation coefficients closer to -1 or 1 (the extremes) indicate stronger associations between issues and issues that can be addressed through organizing. The red arrows in the figure point out significant correlations, meaning that those correlations most likely did not occur by chance.

The issues circled in green (Figure 6) represent highest correlations; they are issues that respondents felt are of high priority and can be addressed through community organizing efforts:

- Lack of support for Latino community from statewide elected leadership, e.g., U.S. Congresspersons, Governor, $r(81) = .76, p < .001$
- Lack of educational opportunities for Latinos, $r(81) = .69, p < .001$
- Lack of provider networks whose work bridges different fields pertinent to health disparities for Latinos in HIV/AIDS, e.g., healthcare, human rights, media, education, $r(81) = .61, p < .001$
- o Pervasive stigma surrounding HIV among the Latino community, $r(81) = .58, p < .001$
- o Lack of access to adequate healthcare for migrants living with HIV in detention centers, $r(81) = .57, p < .001$

Figure 6.



▲ = $p < 0.001$ For issues without a correlation coefficient, there were no responses in either one or both of the questions.

Following up on the issues selected by survey participants, the interviewees were asked to name the top three conditions that, if changed, would increase the quality of life for Latinos in their areas. Almost all interviewees selected immigration policy in their list of three issues. To stress its importance, one interviewee said, “if I could put [immigration reform] three times, I would.” They also spoke about cultural competence as a broad issue encompassing stigma and language access that impacts Latino communities. As one interviewee put it, addressing immigration policy would affect not only the legal status of many in the community, but would also be reflected in issues of stigma and health:

- “One is legislation – in the most immediate future we need to get an injunction on this legislation that is making it very difficult for Latinos to feel safe in Alabama. So I think that it’s number one. In that sense, I’ll put immigration reform there as number one. Because until we address the issue of the illegal immigrants in this country, we’re going to continue to have this stereotype, at least in a state like Alabama, that everybody who look like a Latino must be illegal and therefore you are treated differently. ... I think [positive immigration reform] changes the perception of the entire community in how you react to people. The way we have it right now, with the stress and the oppression and all that, you know, it’s affecting their health, I mean with the allostatic load, more stress, more hypertension, more diabetes, and more reluctance to seek care for fear of deportation.”

In addition, interviewees mentioned the benefits that access to healthcare and education would have on the community, particularly education that would disseminate information about Latinos’ civil rights and opportunities for political participation. Finally, several interviewees spoke about economic issues such as employment itself, as well as providing driver’s licenses to impact Latinos’ access to a wider pool of jobs.

Interviewees were next asked to think about whether the top issue they selected can be addressed through community organizing. In considering this, the interviewees divided their responses along community lines: some spoke about **organizing the Latino community**, others focused their responses on the **mainstream community**, recognizing it as the source of power, and yet others considered the potential for organizing **both** communities.

One interviewee expressed confidence in the Latino community taking action on immigration policy:

- “very confident because the community is more than willing to step up and do what it takes or what is asked of them. And when I say what is asked of them, I am referring to do some type of calling, making phone calls, or if it is necessary to march in the street at either the local level or at the state level. Because we have done it before.”

Another explained the need to mobilize the mainstream community around immigration reform:

- “I am somewhat confident. Because it’s not the community organizing of the oppressed group, but it’s community organizing of the oppressors. And I’ll explain. I think we need more community organizing of the mainstream, American born population. Because a community that can’t vote, a community that is illegal... you can get organized all day, you don’t have a voice. So until we organize the mainstream to join forces with the oppressed, I’m not confident at all. I think doing community organizing just with the Latinos we’re missing the boat.”

Interviewees also discussed what factors would support the work of community organizing around these key issues, and what stands in the way. Most mentioned that the potential to connect people from different communities would help the organizing work a great deal, with some citing the **contact hypothesis** (or theory) by name⁷. That is, interviewees posited that increased contact and education among the mainstream society and Latinos (or HIV-positive Latinos in some responses), or “put[ting] a face on the issues” will lead to decreased discrimination and a willingness to organize together toward policy change. In terms of supportive factors, some interviewees also mentioned **experience** of existing organizations in doing this work. And some mentioned the motivation of **fear**, to “make sure we don’t go like Arizona or South Carolina as far as our immigration policy.”

And, when describing factors that stand in the way of community organizing, some interviewees focused on economic concerns, that is, having insufficient **resources** to do the work as well as the poor economic situation of the community as a whole. Echoing their view that increasing connections between communities will aid the work of organizing, interviewees spoke about discrimination, divisions, and a **lack of unity** as a barrier to effective organizing:

- ◀ *“Lack of education [probe] for the community at large. There’s a big lack of education, there’s a lot of xenophobia. I think those are the two main issues that are a barrier to being able to address the issues.”*

Interviewees were also asked to discuss the **degree of control** that the community feels over policies that affect them, which may impact community members’ empowerment in the community organizing process. Importantly, most interviewees did not feel that the community has a sense of control over policy developments, while some others said that the community feels some sense of control. In clarifying their responses, interviewees often differentiated the sense of control in different communities: the Latino community, the mainstream community, and the provider/academic community. Those who believe that the Latino community feels very little control, particularly in light of recent immigration policies that have pushed this community to the margins, also see the challenges in organizing Latinos in their area. Many also felt that communities were divided along immigration markers: documented vs. undocumented Latinos; mainstream, native-born non-Latinos vs. Latinos. These divisions reflect the apathy toward policy developments, particularly on immigration policy, that some saw among the more privileged groups (documented Latinos; mainstream, native-born non-Latinos).

- ◀ *“When it comes to the particular issues I was referring to, like the immigration issue, I feel that our community has little control just because a lot of people that can advocate for this particular group chooses not to. And it’s more the personal reasons, they’re like, well it doesn’t really affect me, I don’t have that problem, so I don’t think I need to get involved. Because they don’t see it as health disparity issue versus oh, well they came here illegally, so they deserve not getting services. You know, that’s their take on it. Where I see it as health disparity issue, it doesn’t matter if somebody’s a legal entrant or not legal entrant – they need to come and get tested for HIV because a lot of people have it, and they don’t know that they have it, they need to get treated, period.”*
- ◀ *“What I meant by community is probably a two-level thing. The community itself as far as the citizens that make up the community and then the community that would be, I would say, the other tier, the community of healthcare associates, advocates, social service advocates, more of the professional community that is trying to offer help. And also the community as it is, that exists, that is seeking help, or seeking assistance. [probe] Those citizens, and we’re talking specifically right now about our Hispanic community – the little bit of control that they might have felt was, I think, completely stripped from them when this immigration bill was signed into law here... [Service providers thought] how do we find some loopholes to regain the control that we had?”*

When asked whether the sense of control among the community has fluctuated over time, some interviewees again pointed to the recent changes in immigration policy as a main reason for the diminished feeling of control. Others pointed out that the sense of little control has remained relatively stable over time because of the lack of voting power among Latino communities, particularly in areas with large numbers of undocumented community members. Interviewees again referred to the divisions between communities due to immigration status, stigmatization of HIV, apathy among the more powerful communities, and discrimination in general. In sum, advocates face a number of obstacles in their efforts to organize the communities they serve, especially around such controversial issues as HIV and immigration.

Conclusions

There are a lot of great leaders in the South, and the seeds that they planted years back now have deep roots and connections that continue to develop and nourish the community. In conducting this assessment, it is clear that there is great passion, commitment and courage. One key factor influencing organizing in the South is unity, or bringing people together. Different contexts of unity, including within the Latino community, among communities, within coalitions and among individuals, were all described as being important for successful organizing. This includes strong and flexible leadership, commitment, connections in the Latino and mainstream communities, sharing information, sharing experiences, and resources. There was strong support in the assessment for the notion that the way forward is by increasing contact among communities and demonstrating the power of collaboration.

While we see unity as one of the factors central to community organizing success, we also heard it described as something that is needed to increase success in the future. We heard stories about anti-immigrant feelings and actions, stigma against immigrants and those living with HIV, hostility within the Latino community. Throughout the survey and interviews, the political climate emerged as a barrier to community organizing through encouraging these “anti-unity messages.”

Despite this tough political climate, we found evidence of strong leadership, excellent connections to the community and past successes in organizing for health and social justice. Leaders in the Deep South have set up successful information networks and make efforts to stay informed despite abundant myths and misinformation.

In terms of the future of the DdLSLI, several findings lend themselves particularly well to informing the Institute’s structure and content. In order to potentiate leadership in the South, the findings here suggest the DdLSLI continue its work to develop emerging leaders’ voices. This includes providing opportunities to network with other leaders in the South, including policy makers. Community organizing leaders need access and connections to: the community and policy makers. Types of activities that support this development can include introducing participants to other experts and allies in the field, bringing people together across states to share experiences and connections, and assisting with access to both the media and policy makers at various levels and sectors.

Additionally, the DdLSLI can continue to support developing the qualities of an effective leader. While some of the qualities that were discussed in the surveys and interviews were thought to be more inherent to the individual, several types of qualities are certainly available for development. This includes methods of participatory decision making, conflict management and articulation of a vision for the future.

Finally, skill development can be further supported by DdLSLI. Particular skills that could be addressed are working with the media, developing policy agendas, developing effective messaging for different audiences, and using social media for community organizing and advocacy.

INSPIRATION COMMITMENT LEADERSHIP



Survey respondents and interviewees themselves are doing great work, and speak from a wealth of experience. The task of the Dennis deLeon Sustainable Leadership institute is to first, listen carefully to what people have shared. There is a strong network of committed and passionate individuals that fuels the DdLSLI to provide customized, holistic and grassroots support to leadership development in the South.

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¹ Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

² Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs*, 80(1, Whole No. 699).

Rotter, J.B. (1990). Internal versus external locus of control: a case history of a variable. *American Psychologist*. 45(4), 489-493.

³ Baron, L., Eisman, H., Scuello, M., Veyzer, A. & Lieberman, M. (1996). Stress resilience, locus of control, and religion in children of Holocaust victims. *The Journal of Psychology*, 130(5), 513-525.

⁴ African Americans as a group tend to have this pattern, (Tashakkori, A. & Thompson, V. (1991). Race differences in self-perception and locus of control during adolescence and early adulthood: Methodological implications. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 117(2), 133-152.).

⁵ Please note: all comments quoted directly from survey respondents are reproduced exactly as written, including accidental misspellings, in order to consistently represent the comments in the respondents' own words.

⁶ Only four issues were highlighted here, because the two issues next on the list of most frequently selected received the same number of selections.

⁷ Allport, G. W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Whitley, B.E., & Kite, M.E. (2010). *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND POLICY ISSUES IN THE LATINO COMMUNITIES OF THE DEEP SOUTH



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