



The **Building Communities of Hope team** is a multi-cultural group working among congregations of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference to assist in *undoing racism and advancing intercultural transformation.*

### For more information

If you have questions or would like to take the first steps toward improving your congregation's intercultural competency, contact the Building Communities of Hope team representative, **David Araujo**, at 574-293-8849 or [daraujo4@live.com](mailto:daraujo4@live.com).

Churches interested in getting connected with the Bienvenido Program can contact **Gilberto Perez Jr.** at 574-333-9522 or [bvdonetwork@gmail.com](mailto:bvdonetwork@gmail.com).



**Indiana-Michigan  
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**Indiana-Michigan  
Mennonite  
Conference**



**Building  
Communities  
of Hope**

## Helping your congregation build intercultural competency

What is intercultural competency?

*Intercultural competency is the ability to relate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures so as not to violate their values, norms, and expectations, and to accomplish common goals together.*

As a result of engaging with Communities of Hope facilitators, congregations will:

- Become more open to different cultural groups around them
- Develop intercultural competency, and welcome the richness of cultural differences
- Become Communities of Hope for immigrants in their communities
- Catch the vision for people of all nations to worship together as in Revelations 7:9-10

The work among congregations can be initiated through sermons, special events, mid-week studies, and weekend retreats.

## A model for building Communities of Hope through a common story:

- Construct a *current story* of your congregation by naming your congregation's identity, gifts, and calling within your local context.
- *Reflect* on your congregation's current story. Congregations are encouraged to take an intercultural inventory to see where you're at in terms of being intercultural competent (see [implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)). Another option is for your congregation to participate in anti-racism training through the Damascus Road Anti-Racism Analysis Training program (see [rootsofjusticetraining.org/workshops/damascusroad](http://rootsofjusticetraining.org/workshops/damascusroad)).
- Construct a *vision* for where your congregation wants to be in the future with regard to intercultural competency and/or undoing racism.
- Write a church *covenant* that details the steps your congregation will need to take in the next 2-3 years in order to make the vision set forth a reality. This covenant should include a process of accountability for reviewing progress.

## The Bienvenido Program – doing welcome work with immigrants

A second component of Building Communities of Hope is the Bienvenido Program, which is designed to help churches welcome and minister to immigrant groups. Communities of Hope facilitators will introduce the work of Bienvenido as part of the process of helping congregations welcome diverse people. This program is run by Bienvenido Community Solutions.

The Bienvenido curriculum is a mental health promotion program that assists immigrants with improving their mental health, quality of life, and increases their civic engagement with their local community.

### What are the goals of the program?

- Educate individuals about mental health and enhanced quality of life that increases the potential of hope for a better life in this country
- Create space for open discussion and peer support through a group format
- Encourage individuals to participate in community activities

### Where are Bienvenido groups held?

Community health centers, mental health centers, schools, churches, restaurants, parks, juvenile correctional facilities, literacy centers, and many other places.

### Who leads Bienvenido groups?

Mental health professionals, teachers, pastors, social workers, community health workers, community organizers, students, retired teachers, and many others.

