

Social Equity LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



JUNE 5 - 7, 2013 - NC STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

At-Risk Communities, including Immigrants

Carolina del Norte and the New South: Social work practice with new Latino immigrant communities

Thursday 2:15 pm; Panel 2

Arianna Taboada
Lisa de Saxe Zerden
Quentin Joshua Hinson

Abstract: Migrants represent 2.9% of the total world population, translating to 185-192 million people. One out of every ten of these migrants was born in Latin America and/or the Caribbean (World Bank, 2008). Millions of individuals migrate in search of better living conditions, requiring both global responses and local initiatives to meet their needs. With over 800,000 Latinos living in North Carolina (NC), this group accounts for approximately 8% of the state's population (2010 US Census). More than half of NC Latinos are foreign-born and many face issues related to immigration, acculturation, and often, discrimination. Local agencies and state institutions have turned to universities to better understand these rapid demographic shifts and develop a response that enhances social equity and integration for NC's newcomers. As a state university charged with seeking solutions to local issues, students and faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) School of Social Work are focused on meeting the needs of this burgeoning population through improved research, practice, and concrete policy recommendations. This presentation outlines the history of social workers engaging with immigrant communities, and argues that the social work profession brings strengths and unique skills to address NC's Latino immigrant population. Key social demographics of Latino populations, sociopolitical realities, as well as theoretical and methodological issues related to the complex needs of this diverse population group will be addressed. Two examples of Latino vulnerability in NC, HIV/AIDS and discriminatory local immigration enforcement practices, will be discussed to further highlight the unique strengths and challenges social workers and other professionals in North Carolina and the New South face when working to achieve social equity with and for Latino immigrants.