MEI Outcomes

- When previous participants have been surveyed, the greatest number of the anonymous responses said their project created and/or strengthened relationships beyond their church, making an impact in the local community and giving them a new sense of possibility for what their church can do in the world.

- Seventy-nine percent of the survey respondents said that their team had a challenging and motivating purpose with a measurable goal and experienced growth as a team.

- Projects typically have taken congregational leaders to places that they don’t usually go, seeing things they have not seen before, while offering a broader vision of God’s mission and the Church’s potential.

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Previous MEI Projects

The Church of the Nativity, Huntsville, Alabama: Organized parishioners and community members to engage with the Huntsville Inner City Learning Center’s programs: after-school tutoring; serving meals; sponsoring field trips; assisting with fundraising; supporting English as a second language and adult GED courses; and cultivating sustainable gardening practices that foster healthy eating practices.

St. John’s, Decatur, Alabama: Partnered with a local community college that has a grant to conduct English as a second language program to provide opportunities to develop relationships with the people served that will lead to more projects and deeper connections with the people in their neighborhood.

Missional Engagement Initiative

Effectively increasing parishes’ capacity for transformational lay leadership and mission development

The Missional Engagement Initiative (MEI) is a collaborative partnership between the School of Theology contextual education program, clergy, lay leaders, and their communities to develop spiritual leaders for God’s dream of a just and reconciled creation. MEI strives to enable us all to live more fully into our baptismal covenant.

Together, we are building bridges between the seminary and the world in which we serve in order to better facilitate the empowerment of parishes and their communities.

The program has been described as “exceeding expectations,” “providing us with tools that we will continue to need in the future,” and “just fantastic stuff!”

—2015 Mission Enterprise Zone Participants
“Almost every group had an innovation and some outcome that they didn’t expect and that was just right!”

—2015 Mission Enterprise Zone Participant

Calendar of Events

June 18, 2016—“Taste & See: Discerning a Collective Call to Faith and Action.” Teams begin to discern the urgent needs in their community and where they feel called to act.

Sept. 10, 2016—“Foundations of Shared Leadership Training.” Teams attend a one-day boot camp training that covers all the missional leadership practices and launch their missional campaigns.

Pentecost 2016 and Epiphany 2017—Teams meet locally for two mid-year gatherings to give and receive support for their work.

Sept. 2016 through April 2017—One-on-one coaching with team coordinators bi-weekly along with six online coaching clinics.

April 22, 2017—Program conclusion and celebration. Teams celebrate and reflect on the year.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a fee?
Because this is part of the ongoing contextual education program of the seminary and has generous support from the Roanridge Trust, there are no fees.

Who can apply?
All teams committed to working at the intersection of inner and outer transformation from parishes, schools, and nonprofits.

What constitutes a team?
Four or more people.

What makes for a strong applicant?
We are looking for teams that:
• Lead with others, not alone;
• Seek transformation and learning;
• Model flexibility and commitment.

Leadership Practices

1. **Shared Story**—telling our stories in ways that motivate others to join.

2. **Relational Commitment**—building relationships with others enabling purpose, meaning, and outcomes.

3. **Strong Team Structure**—developing stable, bounded teams that achieve results and build others’ leadership.

4. **Creative Strategy**—setting goals, inviting others to participate, and achieving those goals.

5. **Measurable Outcomes**—measuring, evaluating, and learning from successes and failures of our shared action.

6. **Guidance & Awakened Hearts**—mutual support for living the baptismal covenant together at the intersection of urgent community need.

theology.sewanee.edu/seminary/academics/contextual-education/missional-engagement-initiative