Balsz Community Scan

Findings from Scan User Questionnaire

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Introduction

The Partnership for Community Development (PCD) sent out a short online questionnaire to stakeholders from the Balsz Promise Neighborhood steering group\(^1\) to better understand how the Scan is being used in the Balsz community. Between May 8 and June 3, 2013, thirteen BPN members submitted their answers anonymously (out of sixty-three addressees, this was a 20.6% response rate).

We would like to thank all respondents for their time and help in answering of our questions and to Valley of the Sun United Way in helping us send out the questionnaire.

Balsz Scan User Questionnaire Questions

The questionnaire was comprised of eight questions - a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. They are reproduced in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
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| 1. Have you ever read the Balsz Community Scan? If you read any excerpts from any of the 5 sections of the Scan, please select 'Yes' | Yes
|                                                                          | No                                                                            |
| 2. Where did you first hear about the Scan?                              | At a Balsz Promise Neighborhood meeting
|                                                                          | In an email from Valley of the Sun United Way
|                                                                          | From a colleague at work
|                                                                          | Other (please describe)                                                      |
| 3. How much did you read in each of the 5 parts of the Scan? Please check one box for EACH part: Prologue: Executive Summary | I did not read it
| Part A: The Story of Our Community                                      | I read some of it
| Part B: Scan Methods, Findings, and Resources Toolbox                    | I read all of it                                                             |
| Part C: Community Vital Signs and Asset Inventory                        |                                                                                |
| Epilogue: Bridging Two Planning Approaches                                |                                                                                |

\(^1\) In order to provide unbiased information to Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW), representatives of both VSUW and the PCD were not among the recipients of the questionnaire.
Findings from the Scan User Questionnaire

Scan Awareness and Accessibility

Among those who completed the questionnaire, nine had read at least some pieces of the Balsz Community Scan (69% of respondents). All nine first heard about the Scan at a BPN meeting. Of those nine, two did not read the prologue, two read some of the prologue, and five had read the prologue in its entirety. Three persons had read some of Part A, and six persons had read Part A in its entirety. Two persons did not read Part B, four persons had read some of it, and three persons had read its entirety. Six persons had read some of Part C, and three persons had read its entirety. Finally, two persons did not read the epilogue, two persons had read some of it, and five persons read its entirety.

Only six out of the thirteen respondents noted that something interfered with their reading of the Scan documents. Two persons did not know of the Scan before answering our questionnaire. Another person noted that they did not have the time to
read the Scan. Another relied on others to read the Scan and brief them. No one indicated that they could not access the Scan or that they did not find it useful. Finally, one respondent requested for a synopsis or visual representation of the Scan to view.

**Uses and Usefulness of the Scan**

Respondents to our questionnaire reported different ways that they were using the Scan documents. Two found the Scan as useful in planning and providing programs for persons in the neighborhood. Three persons used the Scan to develop a personal awareness of the neighborhood’s issues. Two found it useful in financial planning (i.e. budgeting and fundraising). Three found it useful when working with others for finding solutions to neighborhood issues (i.e. brainstorming, networking, and referencing). Finally, one respondent had not used the Scan document even though they had read a portion of it.

Among the nine persons who read the Scan, seven found it useful for their community building efforts. Specifically, they used some of the questions posed in the Scan when they were guiding discussions, when they conversed with community members, when they were designing programs for teens, and when they were deciding on what services and resources are needed for the community. In the words of one respondent:

“Since I am constantly engaged with some part of the community on a daily basis the questions [posed in the Scan] have helped guide me in my communications with them. I am working on conversations with diverse groups of refugees in the area and the questions have helped me shape these conversations.”

This particular insight reveals how the Scan can be used to include diverse groups from the Balsz community to take part in the conversation.

In response to the question, “From what you have seen, how are people in the Balsz Elementary School District using the Scan,” diverse opinions were offered. Five out of the eleven respondents to this question were unsure on how the Scan was being used; six were sure the Scan was being used. One of these noted that the Scan was being used to reach out to young people by providing a framework on how to create activities that target their demographic. A second noted that the school district was using it to reach out to parents. A third commented that it was being used in planning meetings. A
fourth commented that “They (Balsz Elementary School District) broke it down and begun forming sub-committees to address the needs.” A fifth noted that persons at the school district were, “...trying hard to meet needs, but budget constraints seem to cause them to make less useful decisions.” And, the sixth respondent noted that more people need to read the Scan to know “what is going on,” so they could use the Scan.

Eleven respondents provided suggestions for future uses of the Scan. Two suggested focusing on a limited set of issues outlined in the Scan rather than tackling all the issues identified in the Scan. Indeed, one of those two individuals noted that the information seemed overwhelming. Two individuals suggested that the Scan could be used to write future grant proposals. Another wanted to explore further the resources from the professional and scientific literatures referenced in the Scan. Another wanted to use the Scan to support economic development initiatives in the neighborhood. Another noted it could be a resource for planning and evaluating new programs. And finally, another noted the Scan should be used as a reference in the future. Throughout all responses, a core theme emerged: Respondents seemed to indicate that the Scan would be useful for prioritizing community goals and planning efforts in the Balsz community.

**Concluding Remarks**

The results of the stakeholder questionnaire give insights into the usefulness of the Scan for accomplishing the goals of the Balsz Promise Neighborhood steering group. It appears that the Scan has been particularly useful in community building, visioning, organizing, and planning. The Spanish rendition of Part A of the Scan (made available after the questionnaire was distributed) will further facilitate the engagement of a broad array of community members toward building a collective vision. The Scan documents, available fully at [http://scrd.asu.edu/pcd/reports](http://scrd.asu.edu/pcd/reports), offer the tools for doing so.