

Reinvestment in the Community

30% back to the community

Over \$24,000 of the \$80,000 cost of the series was returned directly to county businesses and residents through space rental fees, food and beverage costs, outreach and event support stipends. This does not include caterers, materials and outside consultants that were not directly in the county.

Social Capital Landscape: Gaps

We found that members of the Live, Learn, Earn Initiative did not have or did not invite in many IPOC (Indigenous, People of Color) in their networks. This is the first time we have encountered that situation with a client. We feel that perhaps the race/class divide in the county plays a large part in that, since there really isn't a significant population of diverse professionals who live in the area. The lack of a higher education institution in the county may also play a role in that gap.

There is a lack of non-denominational large gathering spaces in greater Scott County that are accessible by transit and allow for outside caterers (both key to inclusive practices used in IZI). This is a barrier to holding larger community conversations in the greater county.

There is a lack of trust and collaboration amongst community serving institutions in the county. We encountered this often in our community outreach when we encountered employees blocking our outreach folks from sharing information with clients/members and also when we encountered challenges with conflicting events/meetings on IZI dates after they were chosen and advertised.



"I love having a voice within my community & I <3 hearing the many voices within my community"

- IZI attendee

Outreach

Blanca Martinez Gavina, assisted by Donte Curtis of Marnita's Table recruited and a team of local community connectors in a comprehensive community outreach strategy. Community outreach for Scott County was tailored to each community with culturally specific tools and strategies with a focus on the Latinx/Hispanic population. The cities composing the county each required unique outreach that focused on the communities' social capital. The following outreach mapping outlines the steps taken when conducting the community outreach and includes tools and lessons learned for future community engagement.

Phase 1: Detached Outreach

A physical and social capital mapping of Scott County was done by first focusing on detached outreach or an outreach model that targeted culturally specific spaces. The locations were often composed of religious entities, culturally specific businesses and other high traffic areas of interest.

Phase 2: Recruitment of Community Members

During the detached outreach, key members of the community were identified and recruited for further "voz a voz" outreach. The community members were chosen from either recommendations, location or connections in a focus area that included religious communities, youth, and community liaisons.

Lessons learned:

- Flyers are not very effective as a standalone outreach tool
- "Voz a voz" or voice to voice, as the main way that information is passed along in the Latinx/Hispanic community
- Culturally appropriate language is key to reaching and establishing trust with the Latinx/Hispanic community

Phase 3: Domiciliary Outreach

Through both the detached outreach and outreach community members input, specific domiciliary locations of high concentrations of Latinx/Hispanic were identified.

Lessons learned:

- Many Latinx/Hispanic community members work up to two jobs, therefore late evenings work best, usually after 6:30 p.m.
- Targeting areas of high concentration is the most efficient way to have higher contact results
- Some community members have had very bad experiences with ICE and other governmental agencies. It is of high importance to state your reason for being there when a person responds without opening the door
- Ensure that outreach people speak the language, are able to communicate properly and understand the dynamics of door knocking.
- Many community members will ask for support directly on their situation. Listen carefully and give community members the space and support to share. Ensure that they are connected with the necessary social services.
- In some Latin American countries, social service agencies engage in door-to-door outreach, this can be a very effective method to reach marginalized and underrepresented communities

Phase 4: Peripatetic Outreach

Peripatetic outreach, or outreach targeting organizations that serve specific populations, was done in Scott County's Latinx/Hispanic and Somali community within public institutions and non-profits.

Phase 4: Peripatetic Outreach (cont.)

Lessons learned:

- Some Scott County public schools were not very open or welcoming to the idea of partnership to reach IPOC communities. It is important to have connections and established relationships from the county prior to contact.
- Reaching high school students in cultural groups such as ALAS (Association of Latin American Students) in Shakopee is a great way to connect to their demographic. ALAS meets every Thursday at 3:00 p.m.
- High school students throughout the county were eager and excited to be included in the outreach. It could be impactful to also include them in the early stages of outreach planning.

Other Outreach Tools

- Social media is effective when people in the community are doing the outreach. Facebook and WhatsApp are some of most widely used tools, according to community members
- Radio can be a great tool to diffuse information for an event. Radio Rey and La Raza both have coverage in most parts of the county but specifically Shakopee
- Calling and text campaigns are important to remind community members of the event
- Facebook RSVP is not a very good indication of actual numbers of people who will attend.



"Met new people and we had a fruitful conversation. It was a great learning experience."

- IZI attendee

Goal Assessment

Social capital is an *accrued resource* that is developed in a processual manner over time. Results will not be immediate; therefore, it is important to avoid undervaluing those who came into the room.

Look closely at all four goals achieved at once: cross-cultural competency developed; leadership development (both internally and externally); community engagement; and participatory action research.

Leadership Development

- Empowering local community outreach leaders who are more inspired to take leadership positions in the community
- 19 diverse people interested in learning more about joining the Housing Working Group
- 23 diverse people interested in learning more about joining the Workforce Development Working Group
- 5 diverse people interested in learning more about joining the Ed Prep Working Group



Community Engagement

- Shakopee is a diverse cultural epicenter in the county, and there will be better attendance when events are located there
- Strengthening relationships with local immigrant religious institutions as partners in reaching community and identifying events
- Using appropriate language for outreach materials. Internet translation tools can give archaic language, so we highly recommend working with a fluent speaker to ensure the language used is accessible to community members.

Cross-cultural Competency

- Workplace accommodation for religious observance spaces and flex days for other religious holidays since our calendar typically reflects Christian holidays
- Pathways for people who have formal training/education in their native countries and would like to have opportunities to transfer those certifications and find similar work here
- Understand individual vs. familismo cultures
- Create asset-based models in hiring practices that compensate, value and highlight the bilingual and bicultural capacity of the immigrant workforce
- Uncovering the barriers Muslim community members face in purchasing homes due to Koranic law prohibiting paying or receiving interest on loans
- Many immigrant and other families of color live in intergenerational households and need affordable housing stock that allows for adult cohabitation.

During the *Home! IZI*, a Latinx community member connected with necessary tools to begin the process of purchasing a home. She shared that it was the first time she felt she could really begin the process and felt supported in doing so.

Stories of Impact

Participatory Action Research

- Basic needs (belonging, shelter, living wage employment) need to be met before higher level conversations can be had
- Meeting the need for belonging through community and relationship building
- Youth and young adults in the county are hungry for local post-secondary and job opportunities
- Youth of color face significant challenges in accessing resources and job opportunities but have a deep desire to do so
- Affordable and appropriate housing in the county is a high priority for many of the low income and working-class members of the community. Community members expressed interest in the issue to community outreach liaisons as early as the outreach conducted for the Education Preparation IZI
- We had the highest attendance of any event we have hosted in the county. Furthermore, our outreach leads received a significant amount of feedback from the community during one-on-one community outreach which echoed similar themes as were found in the Mindstorm conversations.



"Those in attendance are passionate, concerned about children/education, and fun!"

- IZI attendee



	Ready, Set Learn!	Home!	Let's Work!	Aggregate
Total Participants	65	160	77	302
People of Color	33 (51%)	109 (68%)	42 (55%)	184 (62%)
Youth under 24	21 (32%)	55 (34%)	30 (39%)	106 (38%)
<i>Generational Breakdown</i>				
Human Survey Participants	60	132	65	319
Silent Generation	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.6%)
Baby Boomers	12 (20%)	33 (25%)	13 (20%)	58 (18%)
Generation X (“GenX”)	16 (27%)	62 (47%)	17 (26%)	95 (30%)
Millennials	11 (18%)	47 (36%)	18 (28%)	76 (24%)
Generation Z (“GenTech”)	21 (35%)	50 (38%)	17 (26%)	88 (27%)

Table 1: Human Survey



Observations & Findings

Logistics & Planning Process

Scheduling

Dates for the education preparedness event (“Ready, Set, Learn”) were changed twice, once after it was announced to the community, providing a heavy barrier for getting uptake. In over 900 IZIs serving over 43,000 people, we have never allowed any other client or partner to change or move a date. It breaks trust with hard-to-reach stakeholders.

Key Remedy: *involve community stakeholders in date identification processes.*

- Be aware that in most populous areas there is no such thing as a “perfect date” (i.e. when no other events are planned). Scott County is just big enough that there is much going on all the time and just small enough that SCALE doesn’t want to counter program to it. Scott County would benefit from having a regional calendar in multiple languages.
- We uncovered and built new relationships that will help avoid key audiences being pulled to other events in the future.
- Greatest barrier identified was not having ongoing relationships with the largest faith institutions most trusted by the hardest-to-reach stakeholders. We collectively have now established those relationships. We will NEVER set another date in Scott County without ensuring that these trusted institutions are able to support and push out the message to their hardest-to-reach stakeholders.



Strategic Site/Location Selection

We chose to hold the final workforce development IZI (“Let’s Work”) outside of Shakopee (at the request of the LLE as a whole) but we believe we lost a significant amount of people who were interested in the issue by doing so.

- The greater county does not have many other spaces that were large enough to hold a large intergenerational community engagement event that allows for outside food vendors (to meet the needs of a diverse group of people), is accessible by transit and has ample parking.
- Several different community members who engage in cultural outreach warned us about holding anything outside of Shakopee and how that would impact attendance of our key stakeholders. While we still had a great attendance at this event, we think we would have drawn even more participants if the event was held in the center of diversity in the county.

Event Size

IZIs of under 100 participants provide **unique opportunities** that are important to be aware of and utilize effectively:

- Intimate, deeper discussions leading to richer research and learning.
- Relationship-building opportunities, essential for building trust, buy-in, inclusion and sense of belonging for community members.
- Leadership development outcomes (follow up on IPOC leadership candidates for open boards and advisory roles identified during engagement event).



"Learned how I can support my kids, my community."

- IZI attendee

Intersections Across Conversations

Across events, a major theme emerging from conversations and outreach findings is the interrelatedness of issues around education, workforce development and essential needs like housing, food security, transportation, resources for English Language Learners, and childcare for working parents. These issues were broadly described and understood as closely linked, with an emphasis on the barriers represented by unmet basic needs:

Basic Needs

- **Transportation, affordable housing and food security** identified as essential for supporting families in preparing their young children for educational success.
- Need for **better-paying jobs** for some respondents to meet their families' needs around childcare and housing.

Belonging and authentic welcome

- **Relationship-building** to create better engagement and support for parents and families who are currently unable to fully access existing resources, and for parents (and children) who identify a sense of belonging and welcome as central to holistic child development and community strength.
- Unfriendly or unwelcoming neighbors, **less segregation between communities** of affinity desired
- Sense of community support and welcome, positive attitudes and good communication practices important in the workplace

Cultural Awareness and Inclusivity

Education readiness and early childhood development is intimately connected with integration into the community more broadly, especially for immigrants and multilingual families – many of whom shared that they do not have the information they need (in a language they speak) to understand, navigate and access school- and community-based resources and systems (including educator expectations and system processes).

Cultural Awareness and Inclusivity (cont.)

Cultural awareness and sensitivity and inclusive working environments for parents, immigrants, those with medical health concerns, members of different religious traditions (Muslim, Jewish, Christian, etc.). Respondents expressed concerns about:

- Lack of awareness of cultural difference, especially around religious practices and holidays makes workplaces unwelcoming and difficult for some
- Language learning resources necessary for workers who are also English language learners (non-native speakers)
- Stigma about age affects hiring, especially for younger and older workers, makes it difficult to get work
- Male-dominated fields unwelcoming to women, gender-based discrimination an obstacle

Religious difference, discrimination and other challenges (such as Muslim Somalis' inability to pay or receive interest due to religious moral obligations) were brought up in regards to housing access

- Resources (including online and self-teaching support) for non-English speakers and English language learners, especially for those who are working and unable to access traditional classes due to time, financial capacity, and transportation issues
- Lack of cultural and religious literacy (especially around Muslim holidays, shared spaces for multi-faith practice) in the workplace is a barrier

Communication

Knowledge gap identified regarding existing resources for supporting education readiness, requires **more accessible community calendar(s)** and communications strategies: using social media, libraries, schools, cafes and community locations to distribute information about events, services and resources in multiple languages.

Materials, signage and communications from schools must be produced in multiple languages if parents and families are going to be able to support their children in being well prepared for early education and primary school.

Main Findings: Mindstorm

Based upon the participant submitted notes from Mindstorm discussions

Mindstorm: Ed Prep

Overall: Parents already do many of the things recommended by early childhood development researchers and practitioners to support learning, however barriers such as language and community integration challenges, lack of awareness of community and educational resources, stigmatization of immigrant parents and families, lack of experience with the U.S. education system, and difficulties meeting basic needs such as transportation for working parents limit the degree to which respondents are able to fully support their young children.

Mindstorm: Home!

- **Availability of affordable housing in Scott County** – especially for larger and/or multigenerational families (most respondents addressing housing size require 3-4 bedrooms for their families, several mentioned being unable to find affordable housing in Scott County at all)
- **Scott County considered livable and desirable** by many, including some who chose to live elsewhere due to budget constraints
- **Primary housing goals** for respondents included spacious options for larger families (3-4 bedrooms), affordable options (including trailer parks and updated apartments), and yards

Mindstorm: Let's Work!

Youth and young adults in the county are eager for local post-secondary education and job opportunities. Many of the young people of color that we spoke to faced significant challenges in accessing resources and job opportunities but have a deep desire to do so.

Financial management and career planning needs, beginning in high school (or earlier) and extending through early working life. Needs identified by respondents include:

- College readiness skills, how to transfer credits, apply for financial aid, information on career pathways and workforce development in schools, AVID
- Financial literacy and life skills: budgeting, taxes, building good credit
- Resources for would-be entrepreneurs and small-business builders
- More internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing opportunities (beyond just the healthcare field)

Transportation

- **Transportation assistance** (for school, after-school, community-enrichment), especially for young children (pre-k through early primary school years) and information about community-based resources for transportation
- Nine of 21 comments during the Workforce IZI identify transportation and childcare as primary barriers, particularly for working parents with long workdays or early/late hours who experience a gap between when daycare centers, schools and caretakers are available and when parents must be at work.

Transportation (cont.)

- During the *Home! IZI* Mindstorm, three comments shared that transportation plays a role in their current housing situation – one of which also cites proximity to work as a significant factor in negotiating personal housing decisions and outcomes.
- Four additional responses during the *Home! IZI* connect transportation needs to work, with respondents pointing to long commutes, lack of access to reliable public transportation, and challenges getting to work when one's car breaks down as significant barriers. One comment mentions that it is “difficult to go to school without a car,” while another highlights difficulties related to disability and physical inability to drive, reinforcing these themes.

"On a personal note, I had great interactions with mothers from four separate ethnic backgrounds (Turkish, Russian, Hispanic, Somali) at my table. I heard how different these women and mothers' experiences were related to language difficulties and helping their children's education. There was a lot of frustration from all that they are not able to help with homework or even clarify the language differences and sometimes feeling inadequate due to language difficulties. I left the IZI with so much respect for the challenges they face and have shared this with many friends and family similar to me that have not had these difficulties. This was a powerful impact that I have also shared with my colleagues at SmartLink and has helped create awareness for me of the importance of having multi language materials available that are easy to understand for various ethnic groups."

Stories of Impact

Move the Dial: Recommendations

- » Critical to integrate community members into the school system. Language is a major barrier, need educational information from schools and resource providers in multiple languages, available via multiple communications formats/platforms
- » Develop strategies for connecting resources and services to community members using a variety of platforms (online, in print, community outreach)
- » Deepen engagement and improve communication between schools, educators and parents; important to combat stigma around immigrant and New American families and to provide support for working parents
- » Core training on converting relationships into outcomes through emergent learning and participatory action research
- » Partner with school districts to create a culturally responsive, fun and fact-based “Practicum” so that parents feel as partners/eager participants instead of as though they are failing their children
- » Workforce participants recommended bussing or ride- and bike-sharing programs to address transportation needs

