



SENIOR BIENESTAR ENGAGEMENT: SNAP-SHOT OF MEXICAN AMERICAN PRIORITY CONCERNS

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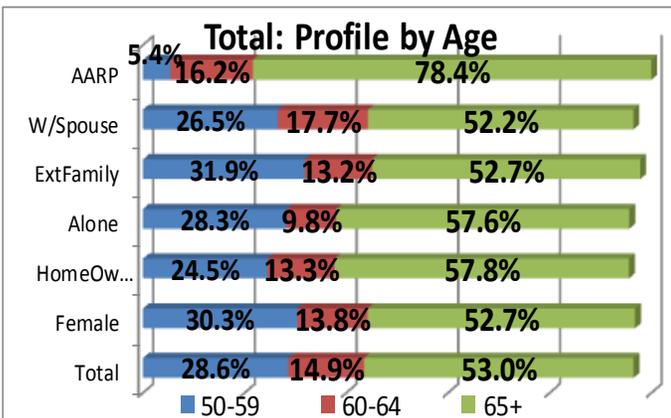
The **goal** of the **Senior Bienestar (Well-Being) Engagement (SBE)** project was to demonstrate how through grassroots capacity building at the local neighborhood/city level, leadership development, civic engagement and advocacy that policy change can be accomplished through the efforts of empowered and mobilized Mexican American (MA) older adults and seniors. The SBE was a successful 10 month community-driven initiative to demonstrate a senior-based *Animadora* (promoter and organizer) leadership model.

The SBE targeted 2 neighborhood areas of San Antonio's Westside (Westend and Edgewood). The SBE project focused on developing organized senior involvement with issue directed advocacy to improve the *bienestar* of low income Latino seniors age 50 plus; i.e., raise the level of civic involvement in order to improve their quality of life.

Neighborhoods	
Edgewood:	Westend:
East- Gen. McMullen	East- Colorado
South- Hwy 90	South- Martin
West- 36th St	West- 24th

The primary collaborative partners include La Fe Policy Research and Education Center (La Fe PREC), Neighborhoods First Alliance (NFA), Martinez Street Women's Center (MSWC), and AARP.

A first step in the SBE process was to train 5 older adults and seniors to conduct a qualitative survey in the targeted neighborhoods. The survey team interviewed 315 individuals age 50 plus to gather their perspectives and concerns regarding a) livable senior conditions, b) issue and priorities requiring change, c) information access models, and d) 'trust' perspectives on leaders and organizations. The bilingual survey tool was pilot tested with 12 seniors before implementation. The results were reported back to a group (85) of older adults and seniors from the targeted neighborhoods to prioritize the major issues, and incorporate into an organizing/advocacy strategy. Below is a sampling of some of the report back information.



Profile of survey respondents:

- ♦ Majority female (59.7%) which is also similar to the composition of the Westside.
- ♦ Most likely to own their own home (79%).
- ♦ Over half of respondents were over the age of 65.
- ♦ Most likely to live with a spouse than alone or with extended family.
- ♦ Overall, the experience of Westend & Edgewood residents is reflected on how they view their life in their neighborhood. The overwhelming positive view of the resident's life as described as "Good" is a testimony to the sense of community. Often "good" was expressed as very good, pretty good, they like their neighbors & neighborhood, enjoy it, or nice.
- ♦ Men surveyed more likely to think living in their neighborhood is "good" (57.6%).
- ♦ Women had a more negative view (7.7%) of what it's like living in their neighborhood than men (4.5%).
- ♦ The percentage of 'neutral' responses to neighborhood life was nearly a quarter which suggest at best that life could be better.
- ♦ Roots in the neighborhoods run deep. The deepest roots are by residents who lived in their neighborhood for 58, 62, 70,71 years. The willingness by residents to speak to the number of years they have lived in their home or in the neighborhood shows the pride they have in their community.

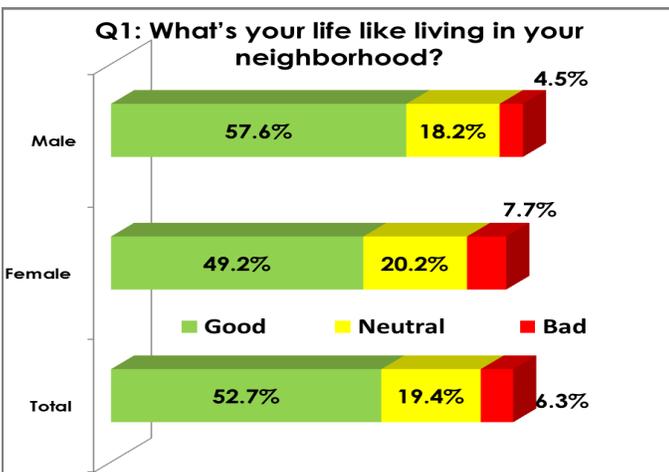


Figure 2

Note: Due to missed data in the 315 surveys completed, all numbers will not total 100% .

Continued...MA Snap-shot of Priority Concerns

Figure 3

For surveyed Seniors, **infrastructure (INF)** like sidewalks, street lights, speed bumps and street issues were of the greatest concern. (see figure3) The second most identified concern was their **neighborhood environment (NE)** and surroundings where issues like graffiti, fast cars and parked cars, and vacant lots and deteriorating houses worry them. **Safety** issues in their neighborhood worry Seniors as well, especially the drugs/drug users, loose dogs, prostitution, and lack of police patrol. Lastly, as residents have experienced an increase in robberies, **Crime** and no police protection was of major concern. Females have similar overall concerns except they were more likely to raise health , safety and crime concerns. When Seniors were asked what they needed that was not available, many identified the lack of infrastructure in their neighborhood (see figure 4) .

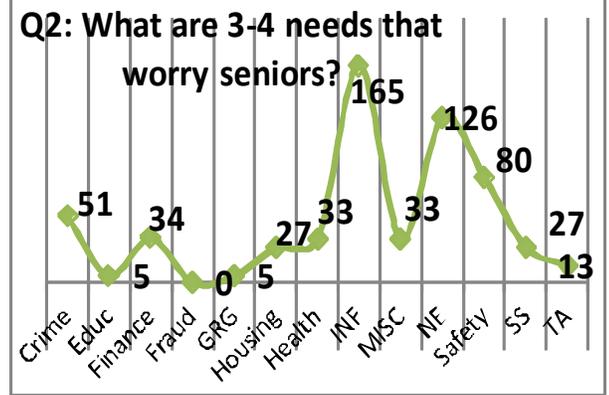


Figure 4

But Seniors were clear that they also want more social service (SS) help for their neighborhood such as: senior centers and more places for seniors to connect , be active and talk to people; more support, benefits, programs, service providers, financial assistance to make ends meet and health/medical care; better health care facilities, food program, disability friendly infrastructure; and senior assistance, housekeeping, or maintenance. Improving their neighborhood environment for Seniors includes closer grocery stores and pharmacies especially Westend, who wants a Wal-mart.

Senior also told us:

- ◆ The most Trusted Organizations and Agencies were Social Security & Medicare (as opposed to local)
- ◆ Who they turned to when they needed help were their Children, Family, Spouse, Hospital/ Clinic, or Private Doctor
- ◆ Where they get their information were TV (264x), Radio (37x), Newspaper (60x), or Internet (16x)

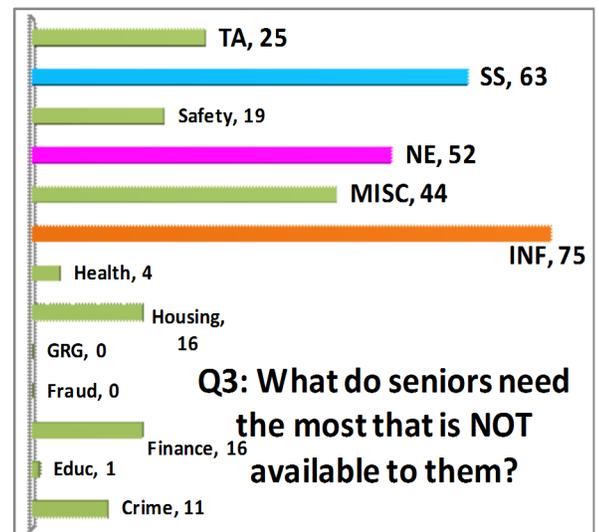


Figure 5

Profile of AARP Members

- ◆ Female (57%), homeowner (83%), 65+ yrs (78%)
- ◆ Your neighborhood life: Good (62%); Okay (16%); Bad (5%)
- ◆ The need that worry AARP members include: Infrastructure, Neighborhood Environment and Safety
- ◆ Trusted Organizations/agencies: Social Security & Medicare
- ◆ Who do Seniors turn to when they need help? Children, Family, Spouse, Hospital/ Clinic, or Private Doctor.
- ◆ Where do Seniors get their information: TV (62x),Radio (11x), Newspaper (20x) or Internet (3x)

