



Voluntary Sector Studies Network



World Café Meeting Proceedings

**Administrators of Volunteer Resources – SK, held June 1, 2015
at Comfort Suites Inn, Saskatoon, SK**

On June 1, 2015, 36 people met at the Comfort Suites in Saskatoon for a World Café styled gathering to discuss issues relevant to their organizations as well as the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN). The main goals of the day were a) to create opportunities for connecting and conversations among voluntary sector practitioners and b) to share ideas, critique a draft of VSSN and modify it based on participants' experiences and knowledge. The World Café was made up of 6 tables with 6 people per table and each table worked on a specific question. Participants were able to choose a new table to join every 25 minutes which was signalled by the sound of a bell. Each table was covered with flipchart paper where participants were invited to doodle, draw and write.

Energetic conversations ensued across tables about the challenges and opportunities facing the voluntary sector in the near future, core competencies that graduates should have as they enter careers in the voluntary sector, real-world research ideas for course-based assignments, innovations and wildly new ideas that should be incubated and given life in Saskatchewan, and much more! The space was lively as participants shared their ideas and passion for the voluntary sector, learned from one another, and had fun as they travelled from table to table!



The notes and flipchart doodles from the small groups have been organized into 5 main categories using each of the café tables. A PDF of this document can be found on the VSSN website (www.luthercollege.edu/vssn).



What do you/your staff and volunteers need from VSSN (e.g., what course content areas and delivery methods are you interested in) and what do you/your staff and volunteers have to offer VSSN? For example, do you have a special set of skills and knowledge that VSSN, and in turn the voluntary sector in Saskatchewan, can benefit from?

Preferred modes of course delivery:

Online	Cost-effective	Individual courses vs. entire certificate
Project-based	Practicums	Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition
Face-to-face	Webinars	Set time limits for classes
Own time/pace	Conferences	Several courses and electives
Video conferencing	Flexibility	Workshops/mini-sessions

Course content areas:

Risk Management	Standards processes	Volunteer history in Saskatchewan
Grant writing	Screening volunteers	Working alongside staff & volunteers
Trends & Statistics	Managing within unions	Volunteer recruitment & retention
Best practices	Governance models	Volunteer recognition

What does AVR-SK need from VSSN?

- Need to have “specialized” information for individuals to access.
- Remove word “volunteer” completely.
- Do not recreate the wheel. Instead, access what is already available nationally and internationally.
- Help form a professional association for nonprofit organization staff.
- For VSSN to provide education and support to volunteers and long-term employees:
 - provide practical & working knowledge;
 - access to credible information;
 - provide information relevant to those already in the field; and
 - raise the profile of volunteer managers.



What can AVR-SK offer VSSN?

- Great partnership opportunities.
- AVR-SK members are a huge asset of knowledge and experience and could provide access to knowledge that exists within the field of volunteer administration such as resources, trends, and best practices.
- AVR-SK could assist VSSN by connecting its members across the country through Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada.

Café Table 2/3

What do you believe are major challenges and opportunities facing the voluntary/nonprofit sector in Saskatchewan over the next 5-10 years?

Opportunities:

- Marketing and exposure of the voluntary sector's positive news stories.
- Technology:
 - social networking (Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn) and website;
 - using technology more efficiently (e.g., virtual volunteering);
 - using technology for training, references, exposure, and networking; and
 - to create awareness of the sector as well as the need and value of the sector.
- Donations to specific needs from individual donors through 3rd party advisors.
- Youth benefit the sector through their interest, impact, careers, and skills.
- The new generation will work for themselves, team up with small nonprofits, fund themselves, and stay away from top heavy bureaucratic volunteer opportunities.
- www.nextup.ca – supporting young leaders committed to social and environmental justice.
- Volume of opportunities including ongoing education, numerous topics of learning, and open workplaces.

Changing Demographics:

First Nations / Newcomers / Aging population /
Differing abilities / Large group of 30+ years of age

- Training programs for people over 30 years of age to re-enter the sector once they are ready to volunteer again.



Volunteer recruitment:

Challenges:

- Commitment level, frequency and availability.
 - Volunteer coordinators must set ground rules at the beginning through having volunteers make a commitment. Let them know ahead of time that they will not receive a reference if they do not follow through with their commitment.
- The skillset volunteers wish to share.

Opportunities:

- Can use volunteers specifically.
- Can build on a person's skillset and utilize their skills.
- Youth-entrepreneurs are becoming more prevalent.

The different reasons why people volunteer:

- Is it to challenge themselves and learn new things or is it to relax and do what they know for philanthropic purposes?
- Needs vs. interests: preferences matter!
- People volunteer for personal investment, to gain more experiences, because it is rewarding and because of their passion.
- Some volunteers want to fulfill their own needs instead of those of the nonprofit.
- Organizations must fit the volunteer to the role.
- Volunteers are skill driven and seek opportunities that meet their needs/skillset.



Opportunity of VSSN Certificate Program:

- Larger pool of educated potential employees for the voluntary sector.
- Will help increase the awareness of the sector (opportunities).
- Education will give credibility to the sector.
- More cooperation and coordination is going to increase the productivity and profitability of organizations.
- The certificate program will help with growth of the community and increase teamwork.
- People want formal and informal education opportunities!

Challenges:

- Economic downturn/upturn creates imbalance in time and resources.
- Lack of cooperation and coordination in the sector.
- Changing funding structures and budget challenges.
- Cannot afford advertising which can lead to lack of awareness.
- Lack of space.
- Corporate sponsorship.
- Changing volunteer trends through turnover and lack of retention.
- Salaries do not always match skillset.
- Nonprofits are nomadic and require individuals who have a broad knowledge base:
 - Recruitment, retention, funding, grant writing, resource development, and human resources.
- The demise of Volunteer Saskatoon was a hit to our sector.
 - Need volunteer listing database and calendar.

Life over 65 years old and volunteering:

Numerous skills

Appreciates time

Life transitions

Loss of/sick spouse

Difficult to recruit

Loss of identity

Transition programs

May not have licence

Disability/abilities/mobility

Mentor in workforce

Seniors connecting with youth

Offers opportunities

Worry/concern of loss of skills



Cultural diversity & challenges for newcomers:

- High volume of newcomers
- Finding childcare can be difficult
- Different experiences
- Cultural bridging can be difficult
- Language differences (e.g., how to change an app to Arabic).
- Insurance - volunteers can sue company/organization & clients can sue volunteers.
- Understanding culture:
 - First Nations
 - English as a Second Language
 - Youth and culture
 - Seniors and cultural diversity
- Orientation/training
- Immigrant volunteer connections
- Driving training is not free from SGI

Criminal Record Check Challenges for newcomers:

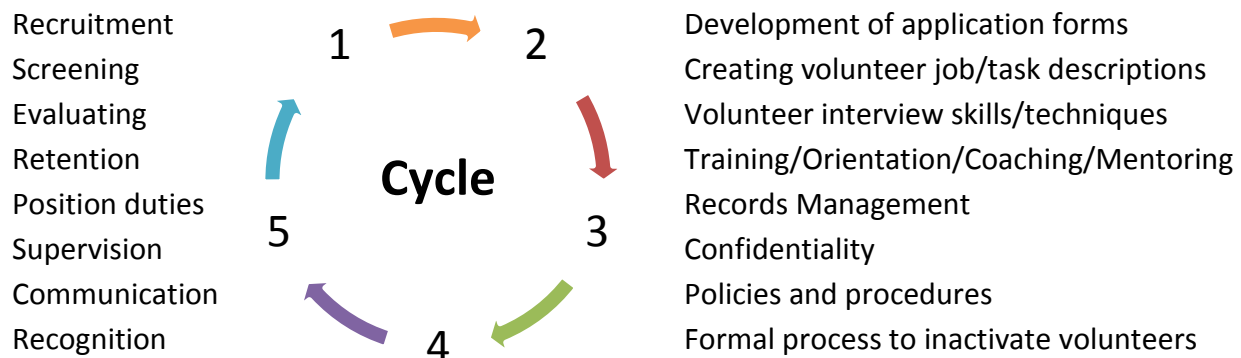
References	English as a Second Language
Requiring I.D.	Immigration documents
Interviews	Immigrant – can get references
Policy Standards	Refugees – cannot get references

Café Table

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VSSN “learn” pillar – What core competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, etc.) do you think graduates should have as they leave university/college and enter careers in the voluntary/nonprofit sector?

Human Resource Management (*specific to volunteer management*):



Ethical Principles:

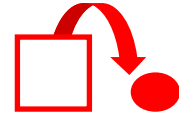
Respect	Trustworthiness	Citizenship & philanthropy
Neutral	Justice & fairness	Defining an ethical situation
Impartial	Caring	Openness & honesty

References:

- The Canadian code of volunteer involvement and Canadian standards of practice for Volunteer Management;
- The Council for Certified Volunteer Administrators; and
- The National Occupational Standards.

Other core competencies:

Problem Solving	Management skills	Practicum/hands on experience
Leadership	Event planning	Keeping people engaged
People skills	Administrative Skills	Conflict resolution
Multitasking	Receptive to change	Think outside of the box
Passion	Engagement	Advocate for profession
Collaboration	Research skills	Governance
Prioritizing	Government/historical	Political science
Motivating	Adaptive skills	Time management
Risk assessment	Needs assessment	Organizational management

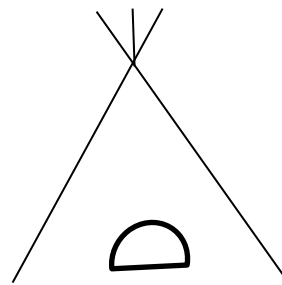


Communication:

- Written
- Public speaking
- Presentations
- Social media
- Facilitation

Cultural Sensitivity:

- Awareness
- Diversity
- First Nations
- Newcomers



Financial knowledge & accountability:

- Budgets
- Accounting
- Grants
- Fundraising

Diversity of volunteers:

- Staff
- Liaisons
- Managers

Technical skills:

- Computers
- Databases
- Social Media

Understanding Boards of Directors

- Governance or operational
- Liability – legal requirements

Unionized vs non-unionized and how this impacts volunteers



VSSN “research” pillar – What research ideas do you have that would make excellent real-world, course-based assignments for students?

- How many seniors are computer literate? What does that look like and can we use that?
- Current and local research regarding the nonprofit sector for Saskatchewan (what’s currently available is very old or from the United States) as well as research on resources available on the sector in Canada and around the world.
- Culture shifts in work/home balance.
- What are untapped resources? How do we access them?
- How can we best utilize skills with the risk-management process?
- How to do big picture visioning within nonprofits when dealing with everyday stuff?
- How do we work with current staff in the field to help develop a successful change transition to the younger generation?
- What are the benefits to having volunteers in long-term care facilities?
- Competing with other organizations and charities – how can we be successful?
- How is the focus changing in regards to healthcare?
- How do we stop working in silos?
- How do we create a maintained database to share/integrate resources and tools between organizations (e.g., funding opportunities or links from various websites)?
- How do we deal with the generation gap with using social media? What are the risks of using social media?

Universities:

- Is there an untapped market of volunteers in universities?
- Raise the credibility of the sector.
- Can we make volunteering a mandatory part of the curriculum?
- To see research of benefits of university students being engaged in voluntary roles.
- Coordinated approach sharing success stories.



Researching trends:

- How was the voluntary sector in the past vs. what does it look like now?
- What does the future look like for the voluntary sector?
- How should we (as staff and volunteers) prepare for change?

Research around volunteering:

- How can we change the perception of volunteering?
- What attracts people to volunteering? Why?
- How do we create new recruitment techniques?
- How can we determine who is the most suitable for a position?
- How can we make it easier to retain volunteers?
- What is okay for volunteers to engage in?
- How are volunteers changing (demographics)?
- Can screening be done in a less onerous way?
- How are volunteers perceived when engaged?
- How do we get more seniors to volunteer from private care homes?
- Mandatory volunteering for a course. How do we turn short-term engagement into long-term engagement?
- Research on what volunteers want/are looking for.
- What happens when your “pool” of people diminishes?
 - How do we attract younger generations to volunteer?
- In communities, what can we do to get communities to create the buy-in to improve volunteer engagement? What are other successful communities doing?
- Find information on companies that will provide a one day volunteer experience for their staff.
- Research around volunteer liability and risk management.
- Flow and balance in how much is asked for different volunteer positions.



VSSN “innovate” pillar - What voluntary/nonprofit sector innovations or wildly new ideas do you think should be incubated and given life in your community and/or in Saskatchewan more broadly? Might VSSN be able to help?

- How do rural students fulfill certificate or course requirements? Must have opportunities for rural communities.
- Implement provincial standards for Saskatchewan:
 - Utilize current resources that exist (National Standards for Volunteer Administration/ Volunteer Canada).
 - Standardize best practices in volunteer screening and recruitment.
- Partnerships with other provincial organizations to share resources:
 - Collaborate with institutions on how to serve students with worthwhile courses.
 - Could there be a provincial linking process for networking, questions, and problem solving?
- Could AVR-SK submit ideas for research to VSSN?
 - Poll AVR-SK members and ask about specific needs/interests.
- Research/interpretation on guidelines (i.e. code of conduct, criminal record checks).
- Recognition/commitment by employers who want staff with skills/knowledge that the certificate provides.
- Organizations could send in “project” ideas to give students for practicums (e.g., databases, displays, brochures).
 - 10 hour volunteer courses vs full time practicum.
- Royal Bank/Credit Union/TD – volunteer hours → grants back. How to set this up?
- Double-edge sword of flow of university students for short but intensive experiences:
 - need better community opportunities to absorb the energy;
 - nonprofit organizations need to set more rules for community service learning experiences; and
 - students should be doing more than just “filling hours” – responsibility should not just be on host agency, but on college as well.
- VSSN should manage provincial work/learning projects to funnel in committed students.

