



Voluntary Sector Studies Network

Luther College at the University of Regina

World Kafé Koffee Klatch Proceedings – Feb 27, 2015

Meeting held at First Nations University, Regina, SK

On February 27, 2015, approximately 25 people met at the First Nations University for a World Kafé style Koffee Klatch to discuss the VSSN. The main goals of the morning meeting were a) to create opportunities for connecting and conversations among students, voluntary sector practitioners and university faculty/staff; and b) to share ideas, critique a draft of VSSN and modify it based on participants' experiences and knowledge. Our World Kafé style Koffee Klatch was made up of 6 tables, each with a specific question. Participants were able to choose a new table to join every 20-25 minutes which was signalled by the sound of a bell. Each table included flipchart paper where we invited our participants to doodle, draw and write on.

The notes and flipchart doodles from the small groups have been organized into 5 main categories using each of the kafé tables. A summary document has been created and can be found on the VSSN website at Luther College (www.luthercollege.edu/vssn).

Appendix A contains a list of participant evaluations of the Koffee Klatch.

Kafé Table

1

What do you need from VSSN (e.g., what course content areas are you interested in) and what do you, your volunteers and staff, and/or your organization 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? (*This latter question was not answered.*)

- Intentional cohesion - making connections/networking
- VSSN as a central conduit for bridging and making connections
- Course content – connecting to business and government sectors
- Volunteer Saskatoon (June) – would be good for Regina
 - Hold workshops, discuss common problems
 - Specific to volunteer management (build a standard level)

Course content areas:

- Governance – values and ethics
- Board development – brining boards up to date
- HR management – performance appraisals for staff and volunteers
 - Discomfort doing this with volunteers
- Project Management – organize events. Crucial to sector.

- Connect with community organizations to get this experience
- Connecting to expertise is something the organizations need

Modes of Delivery:

- Online is crucial
- Job shadowing and mentorship – especially for new Canadians
- Seminars and workshops
- Weeklong courses
- 1-1½ day seminar/course might work (eg, board or director)
 - Short, intense, in person, own time/pace
 - Specific to the groups needs
- Less traditional ways of learning
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Kafé Table

2

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

Volunteer recruitment:

- Must engage the immigrant and First Nations populations (growing populations)
- Can use Open Door Society/Friendship Centres to teach ‘what is volunteering,’ and to build relationships and mentorships.
- HR management – talking to those people about ‘new types of volunteering emerging’
- How do we relate to youth? Why do youth act the way they do?
- Mentorships between recent immigrants and experienced volunteers
- Where do we find family volunteer opportunities (caregivers and children)
- Who will replace the retirees with volunteering?

How to engage High School Students:

- Those who don’t care or see value in volunteering
- We must encourage them to see the impact and find what speaks to them
- Must highlight all of the different 14 categories
- Could invite high schools to attend the university volunteer fairs
- High School competition of volunteering
 - Who raises the most money or volunteers the most hours

Rural communities:

- Limited resources and volunteers
- Technology could be used for this such as online training and webinars

Difficult to find recruitment for Boards/committees:

- There is a high commitment and the baby boomers do not seem to be interested.
- Organizations can get people to do small activities, however not 'policy development' for example because it is too much effort/time consuming.
- Could VSSN get students to sit on a board as part of a class project?
- Boards need term limits to reduce the same repetitive cycle.
 - This is a challenge because boards want to pick people themselves
 - How do we look for new people? It is almost like trying to fill 'bums in seats' however, we need people who are good at what they do

Funding challenges:

- Less funding, no sustainability
- Project based, pilot projects, term based
- This wastes so much time within organizations between writing up applications and evaluating programs.
- There is too much time between filling out an application and finding out if you get the money (this can take up to a year)
- There is an increase in the number of non-profit agencies which means there are far more agencies soliciting donor dollars and competing for funding
 - The current trend of crowd sourcing ... has this contributed to donor fatigue?

Social capital:

- Volunteers do not get money, therefore it is not counted in society as financial capital
- Strategic way of using volunteers to sustain communities
 - How do we take care of people's essential needs?
 - Key connections with the government
- Mobilizing human resources versus finances – mobilizing people as human resources. It is easier to get people than it is to get money.

Kafé Table

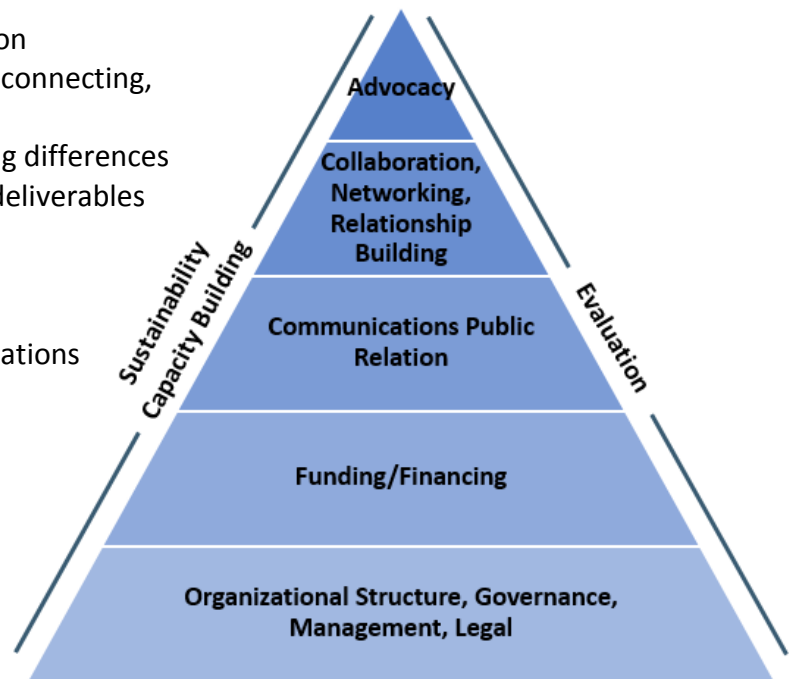
VSSN "learn" pillar - What core competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, etc.) do you think graduates should have as they leave university/college and enter careers in the voluntary/nonprofit sector?

- **Student perspective:** Governance; Legal/liability; Leadership; Managing; Funding

Year 1:

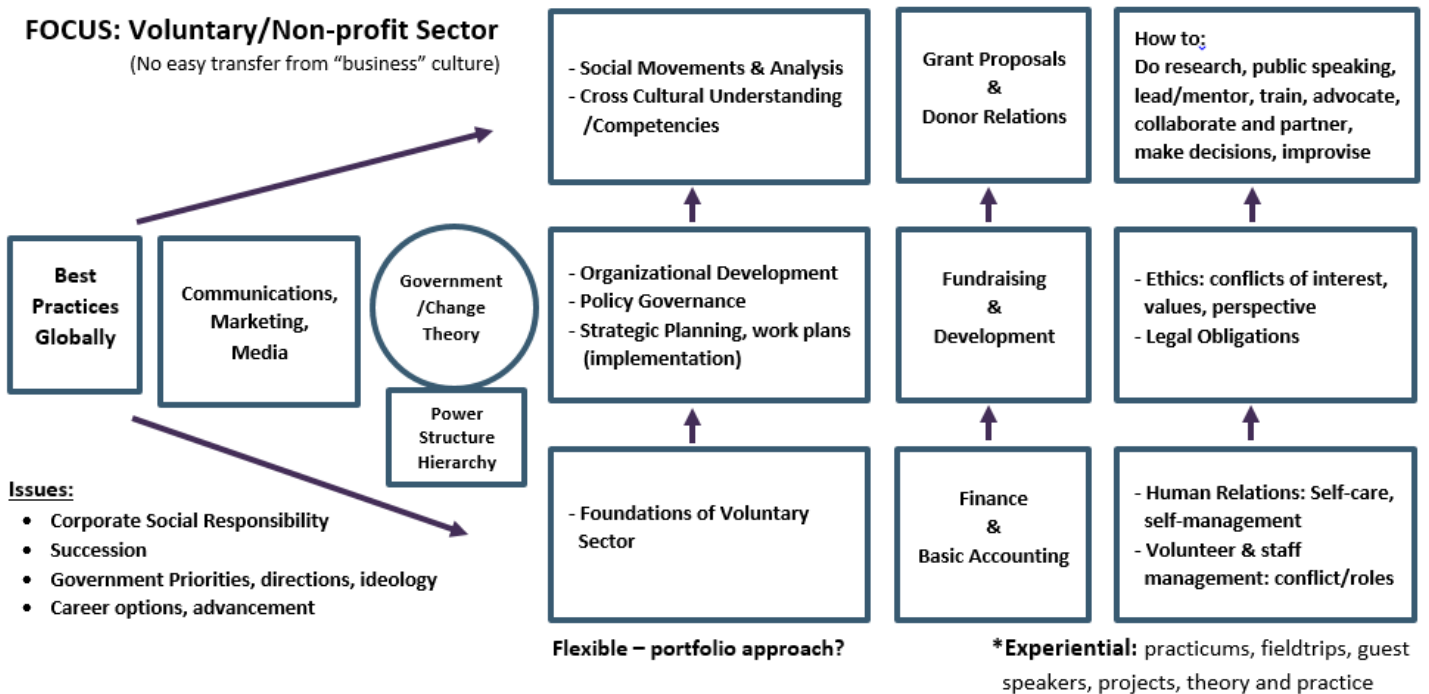
- **Funding & financial**
 - Funding models
 - "Making the case" – business planning and seeking alternative funding models.

- Understanding challenges
- **Evaluation and planning**
 - Thinking strategically and having the ability to move organization forward and know how you are doing/monitoring achievement
- **Governance, leadership, boards**
 - Include values and ethics as a topic
 - Roles and responsibilities of a board
 - Constructive involvement
 - Conflict resolution/mediation
 - Teamwork, common goals, connecting,
 - Relationship building
 - Cultural/diversity/respecting differences
 - Accountability, outcomes, deliverables
- **Human Resources**
 - Paid and unpaid
 - Performance appraisals
 - Job description, role expectations
 - Coaching
 - 2 way feedback
- **Project management**
 - Organizational skills
 - Needs assessment
 - Planning & Evaluation
- **Communications and marketing**
 - Especially in a digital age



- Like the idea of VSSN coordinating student placements/practical experiences as part of the program
 - E.g., VSSN to help place students on boards and committees
- Students are already learning: advocacy, research methods, technology, cultural diversity – do not need to duplicate
- Experiential aspect is very important
- Students who volunteer often get offered jobs in voluntary organizations
- Overall knowledge of/about the voluntary sector
- VSSN must be affordable to voluntary organization staff
- Management Skills
 - Funding proposals, fundraising, basic accounting
 - Human relations, managing volunteers
 - Ethics legalities of dealing with volunteers, public, vulnerable people
 - Organizational development
- How organizations work, policy and governance
 - Relationships within government legislation

- Advocacy
- Overall big societal picture, critical analysis, social movements
- Competencies depend on the size of the organization – e.g. small organizations of less than 6 people
- Change Theory
- Possible minor at U of R on “entrepreneurship” proposed by Business
- Innovation, start-ups
- Possible research project:
 - The difference in organization development, etc.
 - Private for profit
 - Volunteer not for profit



Kafé Table 5

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

Interdisciplinary research projects on living heritage:

- Contributions to the idea of living heritage. Heritage Sask: replacing the word ‘culture’ with ‘living heritage’ – the way we are raised shapes who we are.
- E.g., Living heritage can be a healthcare worker: researching traditional diets of the past and where our food comes from.

- Measuring the impact of ‘reminiscence’ on an aging population. Reduces isolation, depression, cognitive abilities, and keeps people socializing.
- Smaller rural communities need governance guidance – municipalities need help. Therefore, research can be done on that. Community is not just the core of people who do all the volunteering – it’s the whole. Get people to come together on finding out what the community needs and how they can do it.

Measure social intrinsic benefits of volunteers:

- Volunteering = 2 way street.
- Value of narrative/sharing stories
- Imagine a course on what makes volunteering successful versus repetitive approaches
- What does volunteering do? E.g., Increases social capital and places to work
- Impact of high-school volunteer programs on sector/students/high school curriculum

Look at case studies of what makes some organizations successful and others not:

- Case studies from the voluntary sector helps improve undergraduate’s research skills

Researching the needs associated with small rural communities:

- Need help with governance
- Expertise, find solutions, elevate stress
- Fundraising/volunteering
- Work with municipality
- How do they find out what the community needs, supports, etc.?
- Contribute to building sense of community
- How organizations run in small rural communities

Global aspect of how non-profits work in other places e.g., Sweden.

- What replaces volunteering if it is not labelled “volunteering”
- Benefits of volunteering and sharing. Research that in itself builds social capital. Look at other societies who do not know the concept of volunteering in the sense that North America does.
- Research – best practices

Cross cultural research projects:

- Confront who you are before looking at others (know thyself)
- Need to understand others living heritage before you can help. There are more newcomers in Saskatchewan now, how do we work with them.
- There is more variation within a population than there is between populations
- VSSN to identify the traditional knowledge of keepers of all parts of our society – different ethnic backgrounds. Bring in people with those skills.
- Research on racism in Saskatchewan – awareness needs to be raised to make what was reality more real

Research at Indian Head Theatre:

- Signatures on wall going back to 1904
- Oldest continuously ran theatre in Canada
- Registered non-profit now
- Turning centre into an Arts centre. Movie-house and arts.
- No community buy-in for the theatre – everything goes to sports – need for more balance.
- Goes back to municipalities – inclusive
- Economic value of your organization and how it fits in non-profit sector to show your value.
- Better influence on the quality of life argument that government touts. Economics are never a good enough argument. More comprehensive.

Can VSSN provide provincial data - Studies and research data at more local levels

- Research on hours and wages in the voluntary sector compared between provinces.
- Longitudinal studies – E.g., Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) – social research in quality of life in Saskatoon – 10 years now.
- Doing research for versus about the voluntary sector
- Designing assignment for the classes taken – learn in the area you (student) are actually interested in having theory married to practice. More rural life experiences. E.g., like nurses programs practicums. Cooperatives programs. Self-care courses, allow students to improvise or learn to improvise on the fly. Real world.
- Example – ethnomusicologist – the string connection project at the Heritage Forum. Showed that self-care helps people deal.
- In Saskatchewan we do not value music programs – develop research on this!
- Blanket exercise
- Research in Heritage sector on why municipalities/rural municipalities don't know and don't buy into their Property Act for example.
- Holding tank of ideas – VSSN could be a facilitator.
- Central collaboration agency for access to data consortium idea VSSN does it through research project.

Kafé Table

6

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

The teaching environment:

- Tie theory into practice for students via university courses since there is currently a gap between university education and actual work in the field
- Community Service Learning, fieldtrips, assignments, practicums, options for applied research (classes choose topics)
- Every class in the certificate program needs applied assignments customized to students individual needs
- Pair students with organizations to accomplish needed tasks
- Bring people from the voluntary organizations into the classes
- Mechanisms to collaborate with people in the sector and around the world
- The certificate program should innovate as teaching models, courses organizations
 - E.g., development portfolios, actual work = course components and projects that would benefit the organizations
 - Holistic, managing conflict, how teams work, seen in summer, intrinsic courses for professors
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in certificate program
- Need to run some of these courses in the summer when some organizations are most active
- Balance between volunteer work by students vs. exploitation via unpaid internships
- Research and applications of what other universities are doing
- Courses that provide insight into how their education can be actually applied and used

Courses – courses need applied assignments

- Bring people into classes
- Valuable for organizations and students – individual designed

Course topics:

- Self-care – learning how to debrief
- Understanding power and change theory
 - How to manage your way through those structures
- Government bureaucracy
- Social media - most agencies struggle with this
 - E.g., website design and management, how to get the word out
 - Communications and Public Relations and marketing
- Boards – how do we get students involved
 - Learning eg. Board buddies
 - VSSN courses could provide some background information
 - Need to be in the Fall semester
 - By-laws; Governance; Board liability; Confidentiality; Etiquette of a Board; Managing a Board; Board transitions
 - Builds community capacity as students come out as ‘ready-made’ board members
 - Community Associations, Arts agency, church councils

- Boards really looking for young members to give perspectives and get involved

Inventories – database of innovations in the sector globally

- No need to ‘reinvent the wheel’
- Global innovations – best practices
- Global collaboration possibilities
- Innovation – what does that look like
- New ways of seeing and doing course
- Description
- Analysis of effectiveness
- Students can research ideas (e.g., on mentorship)

Workshops and discussion/talking circles – for people in the field already

- Grant proposal workshops
- How Government works
- Mental health
- Variety of services already provided
- PLAR Development

Showing students that the voluntary sector is a good career option:

- Forum with young people under 40 who have become leaders in these organizations
- Courses team-taught by practitioners
- Incorporate into classes
- Have leaders of non-profits actually teaching classes (versus profs who have spent their whole life in academia)
 - Would relieve some of the “CSL” load on organizations

Interdisciplinary courses on practicalities:

- Navigating the healthcare system
- Theory of holistic approaches to care/interaction
- How teams work
- Bring together faculties such as education, social work, kinesiology, psychology
- Managing and getting beyond conflicts

Participant Evaluation of Koffee Klatch held Feb. 27, 2015 at First Nations University

1. What did you like about the Koffee Klatch?

- Beautiful setting
- The changing of facilitators at tables (preferred to rather than have only one facilitator)
- How people could stumble upon the event
- Good group sizes
- Really good set up today
- Community (various agencies, etc.) coming together to share ideas, brainstorm, and collaborate
- Great ideas shared by participants and facilitators
- Opportunity to network; share ideas
- Ideas sparking other ideas
- Moving from topic table to another
- The opportunity to hear what the other groups were saying; I had some notes when I arrived but thought of other suggestions as I listened to my cohorts

2. What suggestions do you have for us to make the next Koffee Klatch better?

- None that come to mind
- Trying to increase the number of students to get their perspectives/needs
- When I read the notes from December, I was worried that the process may be ethereal or bogged down in minutia. I was pleasantly surprised when it was practical. Other agencies may not be participants as they don't perceive value in this.

3. How appropriate were the facilities?

- Noisy at times
- Good setting
- Really good - a little bit loud with tour going on
- Keep doing what you're doing – strides are being made. Maybe summarize each Koffee Klatch
- Great
- Very nice bright and open
- Worked well overall
- Appropriate

4. Did you learn anything new today? If so, can you tell us about your learning?

- About some of the projects going on around the province
- What students are learning in school and what people seemed to all struggle with in the non-profit sector (ie Board recruitment and management)
- Many great ideas

- Great idea to get students on board as a way to develop understanding and get new ideas
- Hmm... I guess I learned about VSSN
- You didn't ask this but I am very glad that you are doing this. I'd much rather do this home-grown program than some online program from Ontario.

5. Who was missing from the Koffee Klatch that you think we really need to connect with (e.g., a person, an organization, etc.)?

- University professors (faculty representation)
- Just more non-profits --> maybe Transition House, Isabel Johnson shelter
- Regina Open Door Society and multi-cultural groups, friendship centre
- % of students was lower than expected

6. What else should we be doing to design the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) to meet the needs of the sector in Saskatchewan?

- Create a database for students to access
- So far so good -- looking forward to the forum on Tues evening
- Research what others are doing Nationally and Globally
- Training for those in sector
- Research – sustainability of jobs “living wage”, how to get support
- I think it came out in the final summary from Group 3 but I feel strongly that whatever models are adopted be very practical! Practical and affordable or none of us working in non-profits will be interested/able to access them.

