



Voluntary Sector Studies Network (Luther College, Regina)

Koffee Klatch flipchart notes from small groups - Dec 15, 2014

Meeting held at United Way Regina

On December 15, 2014, approximately 35 people met at United Way Regina for the first Koffee Klatch to discuss 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. Small groups participated in Kafé style conversations with a focus on the following three main questions:

- What do you need from VSSN and what would you use if VSSN provided it? (e.g., what course content areas, what delivery methods such as online, face-to-face, etc.)
- What learning opportunities (e.g., university and college courses, professional development courses through professional associations, etc.) are already available to those who work in the voluntary sector in Saskatchewan?
- 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?

The flipchart notes from the seven small groups have been organized into three main categories using these three questions. The final large group question, what could/should VSSN be, is also presented in this document. A summary document has been created and can be found on the VSSN website at Luther College.

Appendix A at the end of this document contains a list of participants. Appendix B contains their evaluation of the Koffee Klatch.

1. What do you need from VSSN and what would you use if VSSN provided it? (e.g., what course content areas, what delivery methods such as online, face-to-face, etc.)

a) Course content areas and competencies (not in any particular order):

- **Funding and financial management**
 - Ability to demonstrate impact to apply for funding
 - Who do we apply for funds to?
 - Fundraising
 - Grant Writing
- **Human Resources Management**
 - Staff and volunteers
 - What it means to volunteer and be engaged with real world applications (psychology and social work)

- Improved understanding of why people volunteer
- Volunteer training development
- Motivation – different way to volunteer
- Volunteer boards
 - need to educate on how to run a board
 - how you deliver it if they don't think they need it
 - support to help them run more efficiently and effectively
 - dealing with boards (human behaviour)
 - Board Governance
- **Organizational governance, leadership and liability**
 - Strategic planning including change management
 - Generational perspectives
 - Risk management
- **Capacity Building**
 - Issues of general numbers. How do we grow the numbers? How do we build capacity?
- **Managing Nonprofits**
 - How do we operate, how do we structure/build new organizations?
 - Partnership management
 - Time management
 - Best practices
 - How do you progress from purely volunteer to 'staffed' – sustainability
 - Running meetings, taking minutes, etc.
- **Technology**
 - Its impact on the sector
- **Communications**
 - Marketing
 - Social Media – challenge is that not everyone uses or is able to use it
 - Writing Media Releases
- **Cultural/Diversity Training**
 - Learning between aboriginal and non-aboriginal
 - Historical
 - Cultural safety
 - Newcomers
 - Cultural awareness transcends sectors
- **Evaluation**
 - Measurement of what we do:
 - Fear of performance measurement and evaluation (“Report Cards”)

- How do we show that we are making a difference? Results Based?
- **Project Management**
- **Advocacy**
- **Legal Aspects**
 - Contractual agreements, basic legal requirements
- **Power Structures/Systems**
 - For example, volunteers as leaders, not just doers
- **Sustainability**
- **Research methods**
 - Qualitative/quantitative
 - How does spiritual and technical connect/apply?

b) Important additional comments offered about content areas (not in any particular order):

- Inspire new ways of thinking, decision-making, addressing issues
- Opportunity for creating relationships, dispelling myths, misconceptions
- Need to help people access information
 - It's out there but not everyone knows how to access it
 - How to ask – I know I have a need, how do I define it? (in order to access info)
- Nonprofit organizations can help develop course curriculum, models, and case studies.
 - Many have tools to offer and many resources
 - We can be incubators for creative ideas
 - Non-profits can triangulate and move quickly; less restrictions than government so we can adapt and we are open to new ideas
- Alternative models for solving problems
 - Question of voluntary sector funding versus downloading of government responsibility book 'Paved with Good Intentions'
- Learning Pillar – involve experts both community and academic experts
- Opportunities to connect with universities, etc. need assistance regarding who to ask, where to go to get help including what developments to access, experiential learning opportunities.

c) Delivery Methods (not in any particular order):

- **Job Shadowing/Mentoring** – this was a much talked-about item!
 - Look for synergies with co-op sector (self-employed)
 - Community based placements, internships, practicums, co-ops
 - Internships (& equivalent) are most valuable learning opportunity

- Organizations get more back - great opportunities
 - Will need to have 2-way communications so that organizations are aware of the material covered on VSSN program etc. so they mesh
 - Students can provide new ideas, evaluation, etc.
 - Provides longer term opportunities and whole picture perspective
 - Need coordination to not overload organizations with placements
- **Professional Development Workshops** – this too was much talked-about!
 - On specific topics
 - One by one topic driven, accessible, low cost (e.g., Community Research Unit Toolkit Series)
 - Great for staff
- **Certificate Program**
 - Project based courses - e.g., research, evaluation, planning, project ideas, huge wealth of experience built upon it
 - Service Learning
 - Good for career
 - Good starting point
 - Tailored courses/classes
 - Opportunities that currently exist are often out of province, costly, not accessible.
 - We need more widespread access to research and training opportunities
 - Look at Carlton University for program/resources
 - Training practitioners – look at Humber and Georgian Brown Colleges
- **Weekend University**
- **Seminars** (2 hours or 1-2 days)
 - Useful for non-profit volunteers
- **Face-to-Face**
 - In person classes may encourage commitment to participate and complete the program
 - Get more out of class through interactions
- **Distance**
 - Online
 - Has high enrollment
- **Blended** – Face-to-face & online
 - Centre for Continuing Education also does a variation of 'Blended Residency' where they have online courses and meet 4 times through the semester on Saturdays.
- **Weeklong Intensive**

- Centre for Continuing Education offers intensive week long face-to-face courses which bring in many people from across the province. However, hotel costs are very high. If Luther could house these students for the week and use the cafeteria for food, this could potentially recruit many interested people.
- **Sharing Circles**
 - Facilitate opportunities for people/groups to come together to discuss/explore issues (informs learning and research too)
- **Consider less traditional ways of learning**
 - For example, sweats and round dances

d) Important additional comments offered regarding delivery methods (not in any particular order):

- Create an inviting, safe environment where all feel safe, welcome, valued
- Ensure community engagement is two-way, allows for real learning and sharing in a safe environment
- Consider alternative ways of learning and knowing
- Rebuild courses for public co-op and non-profit businesses
- Opportunities within the sector – flexible experiential learning opportunities
- Experience base – so someone can jump into the program depending upon prior learning recognition/experience
- Organizations need to recognize different behaviours, change management, be flexible but also offer flexibility in their work environment that can adapt specific to individuals and their lives
- How does spiritual and technical connect?

e) Demographics – specific groups of people were discussed (not in any particular order):

- **Aboriginal peoples**
- **Both Staff & Volunteers**
 - Would like to see that a certificate would be offered to people already volunteering or working in the Non-profit sector – many are looking for the opportunities because they are working in areas where skill set is required.
 - Still need same skill sets whether staffed or purely volunteer
 - 2 tiers – training staff and volunteers
 - Need to tailor to staff due to skill gaps and high skill-set required
 - Volunteers - how do we capture those missing from the sector? For example, the mechanic who volunteers. How do we engage the aboriginal community as volunteers?

- **Both Students & Staff**
 - Mutually beneficial opportunities for students and organizations
 - For students and those already working in the sector
- **Students**
 - Due to the aging population we want to get more youth engagement
 - Want to make this sector attractive to young people. We can do this by highlighting the experience that young people get from volunteering!
 - Having volunteer opportunities through school is essential for getting youth's feet wet. Once they volunteer a couple of times for school hours, they learn that they actually enjoy doing it!
- **Newcomers/Immigrants**
 - Newcomers, new Canadians, and opportunities. People who want to volunteer/work have to have skill sets and require training
 - Many immigrants turn to volunteering for experience, to connect with jobs, for interaction with others and networking, and to even get a visa. There is a huge market here and this helps integrate diversity into these organizations which many organizations are looking for.

2. What learning opportunities (e.g., university and college courses, professional development courses through professional associations, etc.) are already available to those who work in the voluntary sector in Saskatchewan? (Not in any particular order)

- **Accounting programs**
- **Professional Association Certificate Programs:**
 - Certified Fund Raising Executive
 - Canadian Gift Planning course
- **Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health (SEARCH)** – North Central bringing in professional development for students as volunteers (as a teaching clinic)
- **Arts Cares** – student placements (60-70 students) – 15 hours/student and 3 workshops
- **Webinars** – Food Secure Canada
- **Sport/culture/recreation** provide opportunities in rural districts
- **Toolkit Workshop series - Regina Public Interest Research Group, Community Research Unit, Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, University of Regina: Centre for Continuing Education.**
 - Low cost, subsidized PD (on College Ave, Campus) \$15 per ½ session – e.g., Fundraising, posters, social media, board governance, succession planning (co-management models), advocacy, financial, budgets, book

keeping, monitoring and evaluation (are we making an impact) changes in government regulations, research for advocacy, Social Return on Investment (SROI)

- **Saskatchewan Abilities Council** - have people certified to do Social Return on Investment training
 - Transforming “charities” to “justice”, rights-based organizations
 - Draw on indigenous knowledge
- **National builders volunteer/org management, software management**
 - "Upstream" from Saskatoon uses this
- **Luther College** Eco Museum course, philosophy and other ethics/values based courses, etc.
- **Justice Studies Department at UofR** – JS 380 “advocacy”
- **Kinesiology at UofR** – sport and recreation courses
- **Sustainable development**, sustainability courses (eg Phil 282)
- **Social work** on community economic development
- **Recognition programs** – Community Research Unit Community partners
 - Saskatchewan Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development recognition
- **Museum Association – certificate program**
 - PD and training (certificate program → on how museums operate)
 - Online and face to face; 1 day workshops
 - Organizational management
 - Future: governance including roles and responsibilities of a board
- **SaskCulture**
 - Diversity training (long term)
 - Training new immigrants how to become board members
 - Communication workshops
 - Aboriginal awareness sessions
 - Government training
 - These are not continuous. It depends on the needs expressed.
 - They bring knowledgeable people in to do these PD opportunities.
- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** - Depending on how many and what type of Professional Development workshops and seminars you’ve completed, you can potentially apply for PLAR.
- **Centre for Continuing Education** also does customized training on site for organizations.
- **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Need a picture of activities and gaps and overlaps - worried about there being a gap in programming or programming possibly overlapping because organizations do not know what is currently being done.
- How to engage non-traditional areas (humanities as participants)
 - Interdisciplinary teams
- Need to think about succession planning for religious/faith organizations

3. 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 in Saskatchewan, can benefit from? (Not in any particular order)

- Provide people who have firsthand knowledge (e.g., CEO's & experts) for courses
- Nonprofit organizations can help develop course curriculum, models, and case studies.
 - Many have tools to offer and many resources
 - We can be incubators for creative ideas
 - Non-profits can triangulate and move quickly; less restrictions than government so we can adapt and we are open to new ideas
- Fundraising seminars – fundamentals of fundraising and gift planning – in 1 day
- Can provide resources for the resource 'bank'
- Volunteer management professional development workshop
- Canada Helps has voluntary organizations list/database
- Involved in public engagement and global citizenship
 - Globalhive.ca = e.g., youth engagement
 - Elementary and secondary school education – global awareness/citizenship
 - Participatory action research e.g., heritage resources, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge
 - Personal stories
 - Anti-oppression training; diversity and inclusion, conflict resolution skills
 - Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation – can offer best practice in public engagement in global awareness citizenship - members who do global justice work, needs assessment of members, youth engagement through the creative arts
 - Royal Saskatchewan Museum (RSM) – Aboriginal internship program
 - Ethnobotany, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge
- Having First Nations University and U of R come over and use the Royal Saskatchewan Museum collections – art, archeology, history, biology, etc.

- Finding people to teach professional development courses at a beginning level (workshops) to allow laddering and at affordable rates (e.g., Toolkit Workshops - Centre for Continuing Education)

4. What can VSSN become? (Not in any particular order)

- Database/resource bank to lists volunteers and Professional Development resources
 - Must be accurate and up to date information (Volunteer Canada)
- Language – voluntary missing mark
 - Voluntary – concern that people perceive it to be solely volunteer even through the sector employs many people
- Vision for VSSN – a place for nurturing, caring, empowerment and relationship building
- Connector, clearing-house of information
- Have to have an ‘un-silo’ approach – need cross sectoral and look at commonalities
- Recognize that there are needs on both sides and welcome opportunities to become informed on research, knowledge out there and at the university so we can connect with one another and move forward
- Create a session (maybe called a Koffee Klatch) with different topics (for example volunteer management) where people from nonprofits come together and share their experiences and what works in their workplace. This gives people the opportunity to connect and network with others and learn about what is working in other organizations. This gives those who have been stuck in their ways for many years, which may not be working so great anymore, a chance to learn about what other organizations are doing.
- Compile inventory of skill sets
 - Faculty, community, professional
- VSSN to be using meeting spaces of organization members
- Distributional lists of organizations for research and opportunities

a) As VSSN moves forward, it should be aware of the challenges the sector faces:

- Recruitment of staff and volunteers is a challenge.
- Note high staff turnover.
- Retirement – there haven’t been opportunities regarding knowledge transfer
 - How do we facilitate this knowledge transfer
- People volunteering differently now than the baby boomers did
- Problems with categorization and labels

- Need studies that demonstrate how we work together and stop slotting us into different groups
- Need to make the voluntary sector more visible
 - E.g., international development, Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, local/global
 - Root cause of poverty, environmental, degradation, aboriginal peoples (breaking down the local/global binary)
 - Coordination between different voluntary sector organizations
 - Community asset mapping
 - Sharing/polling resources
 - Inventory of organizations
- Corporatization of voluntary sector – corporate boards destroy nonprofit organizations, need research on this
- Competition for resources when we should work together

b) Positives of the Sector:

- Lots of opportunities
- Lives will be touched or benefit from voluntary sector
- Leaders and followers – “ogimaw”
- Community - not just based on geography, “sense of place”
 - Learning from successes within communities
- Volunteers want to make a difference
- Contribution to common good, social services, quality of life, & well-being
- Living heritage – who we are
- Understanding who the people are and the choices they make
- Community togetherness; capturing what makes the community
- Volunteer sector – large in scope, variety of roles

Appendix A – List of organizations that participated in the Koffee Klatch on Dec. 15, 2014

Campion College Engaged Learning Program

Community Initiatives Fund

Four Directions Community Health Centre - RQHR

Heritage Saskatchewan

Indian Head Theatre & Community Arts Centre

Knox-Metropolitan United Church

Luther College, Academic Office, StudentsFirst Program, VSSN steering group
volunteers, VSSN staff, 3 faculty

Museum Association of Saskatchewan

RCMP Heritage Centre

Regina Education and Action on Child Hunger (REACH)

Regina Multi-Faith Forum

Regina Work Preparation Centre

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina

Royal Saskatchewan Museum

Saskatchewan Arts Alliance

Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

SaskCulture Inc.

Street Culture Kidz Project

Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health (SEARCH)

Students – 3 attended

University of Regina, Centre for Continuing Education

Appendix B - Participant Evaluation of Koffee Klatch held Dec. 15, 2014 at United Way Regina

1. What did you like about the Koffee Klatch?

- Directed discussion (facilitated)
- Nice to meet people and discuss ideas
- Great participation, organizations all worthwhile, well organized.
- Opportunity to meet people from non-profits
- New ideas, networking, support group for volunteer coordination
- The wide range of people and organizations
- Exchange of ideas and information
- Great brainstorming time, great discussion, great connections and networking
- The conversation around the table
- Diverse representation/accessible length, opportunity to contribute to conversation, group wisdom/innovation/collaboration
- Chance to meet like-minded people with experiences and resources

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

- Would like to have a focused discussion on a topic or two – known ahead so pre-thinking can be done
- Advance notice of discussion points if there is to be small group discussion. Could potentially group similar sectors/areas of focus to collaborate on specific needs and detail. But cross-area is also great to find common connections
- More individuals from each organization to cover all aspects from that place and to cover the entire scope
- Longer summary of previous work
- Switching between tables part way through to mix up the groups
- At this stage I like the eclectic nature

3. How appropriate were the facilities?

- Fine/good/excellent/great/very/perfect/no complaints
- Wonderful, comfortable, welcoming, functional
- No need to provide refreshments (costs \$)
- Parking is good

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

- I need to think about the idea of the voluntary sector as the dominant form of production
- Yes, contributions from around the table were interesting perspectives
- About work of other organizations, which is critical for avoiding duplication and connecting, building capacity and synergies. Learned about Aboriginal connection at Royal SK Museum, citizenship/holistic focus of Luther. Both relevant to our work.
- Not really - but did have things confirmed regarding needs and opportunities
- Some of the resources available
- I did learn a lot in a short time. I admittedly know very little about VSSN and the prospective initiatives
- Yes, about organizations that exist and how they currently function
- Yes, commonality of problems and solutions

- Learning about other areas of the sector
- More about some organizations that I do not generally work with
- Clarity around the definition of voluntary
- About the many excellent organizations in Regina and about the diversity of interests. I learned new ideas about membership organizations and places to intersect with/like-minded people and organizations.
- Importance of the non-profit/voluntary sector in Saskatchewan and Canada

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

- U of R proper – External Relations, Office of Research Services?
- Sports organization reps (have lots of volunteers)
- City of Regina
- Community associations and other non-profits/charities
- More non-dominant identities
- More students
 - I think that might speak to the need to really ensure program will meet the students' needs to be relevant to them.
 - Students beyond Luther
 - Students looking to take the course
- CRU equivalent at the U of S. I think it's called community-university institute for social research (CUISR)
- First Nations University of Canada
- Government (provincial & municipal especially)
- More faculty beyond Luther
- Need list of organizations involved
- Need for diverse cultures represented in the room

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

- Think about an advocacy arm, don't just become a website
- Strategic mapping and connecting to ensure people aren't left out, but more importantly, to not duplicate work. I see lots of potential duplication between SNNO and VSSN, so think very carefully about if there is a need for both, or if merges would be appropriate. Focus on research capabilities supplying the non-profit sector - something unique to offer.
- Clarification regarding the name and purpose - Primarily for those who will be paid staff or for volunteers
- A huge task ahead of you but you are going in the right direction
- Reach students
- Set up a data base
- Widen the scope of organizations
- Increased access/awareness, cost effective programming/training
- Keep it organized, learn and respond to what you discover
- Ensure more voices are heard/needs assessment of sector
- Asset mapping of community organizations and resources and skills
- Be clear in the objective of the organization. Look at the 'what is in it for me' point of view