



Voluntary Sector Studies Network (Luther College, Regina)

Koffee Klatch summary notes - Dec 15, 2014

Meeting held at United Way Regina

On December 15, 2014, 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 café style conversations with a focus on three main questions, which are presented below. The final large group question, what could/should VSSN be, is also presented in this summary.

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, etc.)

Course content areas:

Funding & financial management	Technology	Advocacy
Human resource management	Communications	Legal & liability aspects
Governance, leadership & liability	Cultural/diversity training	Power structures/systems
Capacity building	Evaluation	Sustainability
Managing nonprofits	Project management	Research methods

Modes of course delivery:

Job shadowing & mentorship	Seminars	Weeklong intensive courses
Professional development workshops	Face-to-face	Sharing circles
Certificate program	Distance & online	Less traditional ways of learning
Weekend university	Blended courses	

Specific groups of people were discussed:

Aboriginal Peoples

Staff, volunteers & students

- Would like to see a certificate offered to people already volunteering or working in the Non-profit sector because they want to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Still need same skill sets whether organization is staffed or purely volunteer.
- Mutually beneficial opportunities for students and organizations.

Youth - Due to the aging population and impending turnover of organization staff, we need to make this sector attractive to young people.

Newcomers/Immigrants

- Many immigrants turn to volunteering for the experience, to connect with jobs, for interaction with others and for networking. There is a vast market and this helps integrate diversity into nonprofit organizations.

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? These are some examples:

Professional Development:

Accounting Programs
 Certified Fund Raising Executives
 Canadian Association of Gift Planners
 Museum Association Certificate
 Sask Culture: Diversity training, communication workshops, Aboriginal awareness sessions, etc.

University of Regina Courses:

Kinesiology – Voluntary Sport & Rec. Studies courses
 Advocacy – Justice Studies 380
 Sustainability course – Philosophy 282
 Social work – community economic development
 Luther College – Eco-museum course, Voluntary organizations in Society course

- **Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health (SEARCH)** – North Central teaching clinic for students as volunteers
- **UofR Arts Cares** – student placements (60-70 students) – 15 hours/student and 3 workshops
- **Community Research Unit Toolkit Workshop Series at UofR:** Fundraising, social media, board governance, advocacy, financial, budgets, bookkeeping, monitoring and evaluation, etc.
- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Centre for Continuing Education, UofR** – Depending on how many and what type of workshops and seminars students have completed, they can potentially apply for PLAR.

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)

- We can provide people who have firsthand knowledge (e.g., CEO's & experts) to teach courses
- Nonprofit organizations can help develop course curriculum, models, and case studies.
 - Many have tools to offer and many resources for a resource 'bank'
 - 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
- Volunteer management professional development workshop
- Canada Helps has voluntary organizations list/database
- Involvement in public engagement and global citizenship
 - Elementary and secondary school education – global awareness/citizenship
 - Participatory action research e.g., heritage resources, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge
 - 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
 - Have students go to RSM to work with the collections (art, archeology, history, biology), ethnobotany, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, etc.

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

- Database/resource bank to list volunteers and professional development resources
 - Must be accurate and up to date information (e.g., Volunteer Canada)
- 'Voluntary' language – concern that people perceive the sector 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 sessions with different topics (e.g., volunteer management) where people from nonprofits can 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.
- Compile inventory of skill sets: faculty, community, professional
- VSSN to be using meeting spaces of organization members
- Strategic mapping and connecting to ensure people aren't left out, but more importantly, to not duplicate work
- Distributional lists of organizations for research and opportunities

List of organizations that participated:

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| • Champion College Engaged Learning Program | • Regina Multi-Faith Forum |
| • Community Initiatives Fund | • Regina Work Preparation Centre |
| • Four Directions Community Health Centre - RQHR | • Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina |
| • Heritage Saskatchewan | • Royal Saskatchewan Museum |
| • Indian Head Theatre & Community Arts Centre | • Saskatchewan Arts Alliance |
| • Knox-Metropolitan United Church | • Sask. Council for International Cooperation |
| • Luther College, Academic Office, StudentsFirst Program, VSSN steering group volunteers, VSSN staff, 3 faculty | • Sask. Parks and Recreation Association |
| • Museum Association of Saskatchewan | • SaskCulture Inc. |
| • RCMP Heritage Centre | • Street Culture Kidz Project |
| • Regina Education & Action on Child Hunger (REACH) | • Student Energy in Action for Regina Community Health (SEARCH) |
| | • Students – 3 attended |
| | • University of Regina, Centre for Continuing Education |