



NVSSN

NONPROFIT & VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK
LUTHER COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

COMMUNITY
IMPACT REPORT
2023-24



LUTHER
COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA



COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Studies Network

PREPARED BY:
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March 2024

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List of Abbreviation

- BHER – Business and Higher Education Roundtable
- FGSR – Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
- SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

PREAMBLE

The Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Studies Network

The Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Studies Network (NVSSN) is a network of academics, nonprofit leaders, voluntary sector leaders, and university students. The mandate of the NVSSN is to support a thriving and sustainable nonprofit and voluntary sector in Saskatchewan.

The work of the NVSSN is guided by an Steering Committee composed in equal parts of Luther College faculty (three members), students (three members), and community leaders in the nonprofit sector (three members). The Dean of Luther College and the NVSSN Director are ex-officio members of the Committee.

The NVSSN strives to deliver its mandate of supporting the nonprofit and voluntary sector through the Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation Certificate Program (NSLI) and through community-engagement activities.

Community engagement activities include initiatives such as networking events, workshops, an annual conference, and community events that aim to connect students, academics, and nonprofit professionals. In addition, the NVSSN has demonstrated community

leadership on important social impact efforts, including the localization of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supporting local organizations that are working towards net-zero with climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Engaged learning serves as a foundation for all the NSLI courses and supports both the community-engaged components of the work of the NVSSN, in addition to student learning in the NSLI Certificate. Each course in the NSLI Certificate includes an engaged-learning component that allows students the opportunity to connect with local organizations and support the work of these organizations through the projects that are completed for academic credit.

Luther College is committed to service learning, which has been identified as an important part of Luther College's mission of preparing students to be compassionate, creative, and critical thinkers through academic excellence and a community of care that is rooted in our call to love and serve our neighbors. The NSLI courses enhance the College's profile with respect to service learning.

NVSSN Steering Committee Members:

Faculty:

Dr. Roger Petry
Scott J. Wilson
Dr. Vijaya Agasthian

Students:

Mindy Gregory
Brooke Willock
Caitlin Bronsinsky

Community Members:

Rhonda Rosenberg, Executive Director,
Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan
Jacqui Wesacase, Executive Director,
Rainbow Youth Centre
Karen Henders, Retired Nonprofit
Professional and Consultant

The NVSSN thanks the Steering Committee members for their invaluable guidance and contributions.

The NVSSN would also like to thank outgoing Steering Committee Members, the foundational pillars in the creation of the NVSSN, for their vision, compassion, commitment and determination:

Tracey Mann
Ingrid Cazakoff
Kerrie Strathie
Hannah Sackville
Rob Harrison

COMMUNITY VOICES

“The NVSSN has demonstrated the tangible impact that collaborations between universities and communities can have. Nonprofit organizations are often on the frontlines, grappling with real-world issues that communities face daily. Their intimate knowledge, coupled with the support and hub within the university realm along with the fresh perspectives of students, creates a powerful synergy. This collaborative approach becomes crucial in addressing complex societal problems through creative problem-solving amongst Saskatchewan nonprofit organizations.

The importance of having spaces where nonprofits can come together to share best practices and engage in meaningful dialogue with diverse groups of people cannot be overstated. These spaces become hubs for generating innovative solutions, fostering understanding, and sparking action on complex societal issues. Through the years I have greatly benefitted from attending many Koffee Klatches, workshops, and conferences put on through the NVSSN. This engagement facilitates interaction, dialogue, and collaborative problem-solving among the community and university. NVSSN provides a platform for Saskatchewan nonprofits to come together, share experiences, and collectively work towards addressing shared challenges. The merging of academic insights with practical, on-the ground experiences create a fertile ground for transformative change and progress.”

– Angela Tremka,
Community Engagement Manager,
Salthaven West Wildlife & Education Centre

“As an alumna of the NSLI certificate, I can confidently state that I gained significant advantage from participating in the program and from attending NVSSN events during and after graduation. Introduction to best practices, theories, and practical experience in strategic planning, program evaluation, and governance of organizations has been important context for my work and allowed me to confidently establish myself as a leader in multiple positions and organizations.

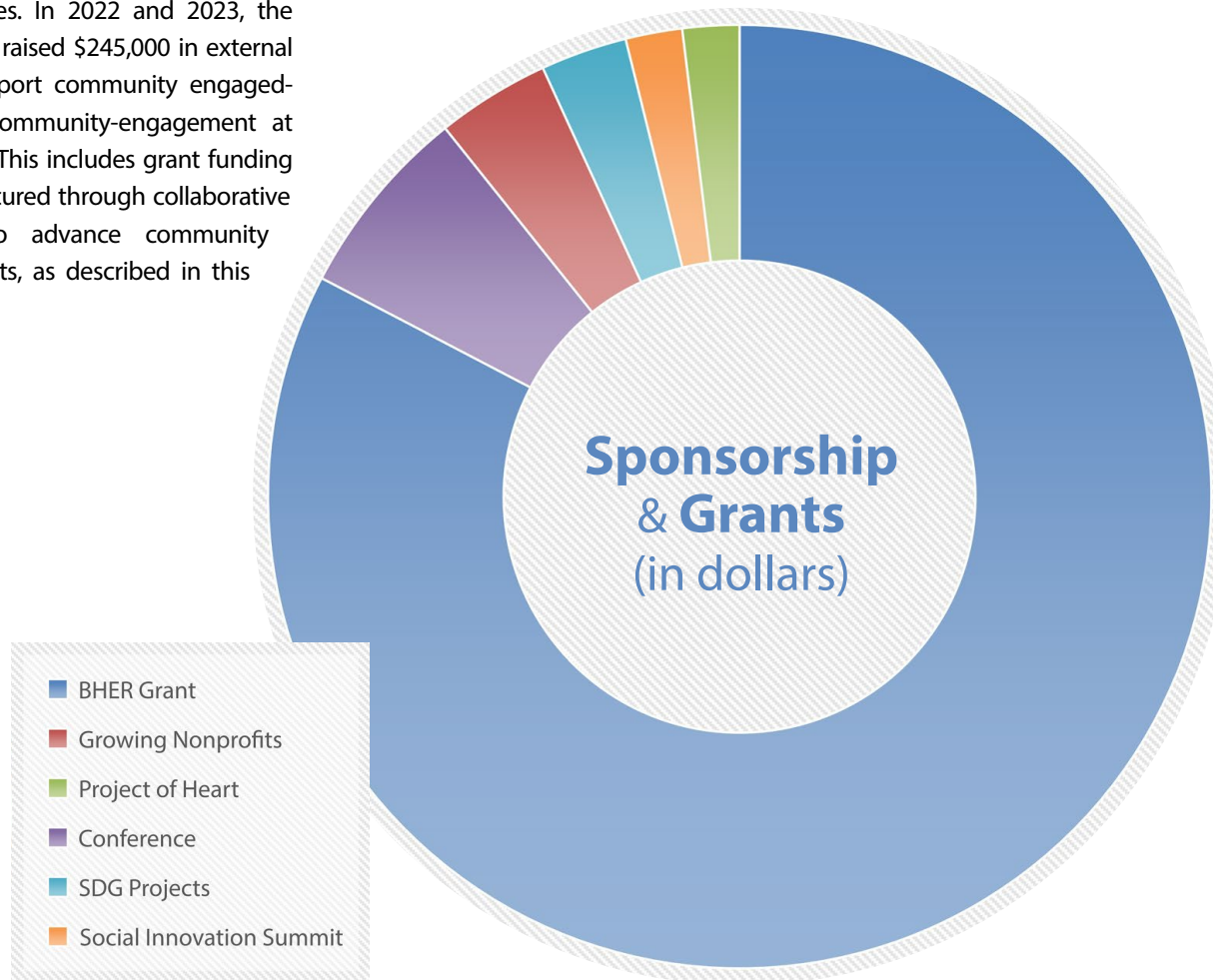
NVSSN events offer networking, knowledge-sharing, and partnership opportunities for participating organizations and individuals. Not only does the NSLI certificate provide vital, unique experiential learning opportunities, it also gives space to the knowledge of nonprofit practitioners and volunteers whose voices have not been honored properly in academia.

A program like NSLI helps to heal the divide between the nonprofit and academic sectors by producing students who understand the value of the nonprofit sector economically and in production of research, who prioritize community engagement, communication, and critical thinking, and who are better able to make use of their academic skillset in a working environment.”

– Hannah Sackville,
NSLI Certificate Program Graduate,
and Member of the NVSSN Advisory Committee

SPONSORSHIP & GRANTS

The NVSSN has been highly ambitious and successful in securing funding for its various initiatives. In 2022 and 2023, the NVSSN Director raised \$245,000 in external funding to support community engaged-learning and community-engagement at Luther College. This includes grant funding and funding secured through collaborative partnerships to advance community centered projects, as described in this report.





CERTIFICATE

in Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation

The Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation (NSLI) Certificate is a comprehensive program designed to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to excel in the dynamic and influential nonprofit and voluntary sector. It offers a specialized curriculum that focuses on key competencies crucial for effective leadership and innovation in the nonprofit sector. Any undergraduate student at the University of Regina can enroll in NSLI courses and the certificate program, which can be taken concurrently with a degree program, or as a stand-alone certificate through the Centre for Continuing Education.

Enrollment in NSLI courses has increased consistently over the years. Since fall 2018, 705 students have successfully completed NSLI courses. From 2021 to Fall 2023 Luther College offered 16 NSLI courses and 299 students successfully completed them. In the winter 2024 term, there are 80 students enrolled in 3 courses, not including the internship.



NSLI Program Review

In 2022 the NVSSN Director completed a review of the NSLI Certificate. This involved community consultation through focus groups, key informant interviews, and counsel from the steering committee. In addition, the NVSSN Director, with support from writing across the disciplines coordinator Scott Wilson and the University of Regina's Centre for Teaching and Learning, developed a comprehensive set of program learning outcomes with course learning outcomes. The course learning outcomes were then mapped to program learning outcomes, a process known as curriculum mapping, to determine how effectively the courses were supporting the desired outcomes of the program.

This process helped to articulate clear program goals that were co-developed with the community. In addition, the curriculum mapping identified opportunities for improvement to the certificate, which were implemented with support and advice from nonprofit professionals. These changes are outlined in more detail in the following section.

Changes to NSLI Courses

Two new courses were introduced to the program. The Community Based Research course, which recognizes community members as an essential part of the research process, will provide students with real-world non-profit sector experiences, and equip them with an understanding of community engagement theories and practices. This course will be the only undergraduate community-based research course offered at the University of Regina.

The second course that has been added is the Leadership and Strategy course, which is a updated version of NSLI 300 (Organizational Management). This course is an introduction to the leadership competencies needed for nonprofit organization management. This includes the fundamentals of strategic planning, leadership styles, team building, leveraging volunteer support, and strategies for sustainability and growth.

As a result of the review, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) components have been added to a number of elective courses. An understanding of EDI was identified by nonprofit professionals

as an essential skill for work as a nonprofit professional and volunteer. The nonprofit sector plays a significant role in advocacy and community development. The enhanced EDI components allow the students to develop an understanding of the justice and equity issues that are affecting community members.

Finally, it is important to note that developing practical work experience for the NSLI students was recognized through focus group research as an area of utmost importance. The NVSSN Director has worked extensively and successfully to build relationships with community-based non-profit organizations (see section on Community Engagement). This important community engagement work will continue, ensuring the program remains up-to-date with sector trends and issues, and providing students with exceptional work experiences.

The program review has laid a solid foundation in building community relationships. The rigorous review of the courses, the learning outcomes, and the community-engaged components of the certificate have ensured that the certificate is preparing students for work in the sector.

STUDENT VOICES

"The NSLI Certificate Program has been a game-changer, shaping my perspective in the non-profit sector and equipping me with essential skill sets for my career. The program's comprehensive curriculum and guidance from professional instructors deepened my understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within and beyond the non-profit sector.

The program's emphasis on leadership and innovation has provided me with valuable tools to continue to grow my community projects. The knowledge and skills acquired have supported me in building a non-profit organization with consistent growth in governance, volunteers & fund development, and community engagement."



– Ziyang Zeo Li, NSLI Graduate (2022),
and Recipient of the Multicultural Youth Leadership Award
from the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (2023)



"As an alum of the Nonprofit Sector Leadership Innovation & Leadership program, I've been able to take what I've learned and put it towards my community-focused work. My prior experience in the nonprofit sector was complemented very well with the education I received in the program, and getting to learn from accomplished nonprofit leaders and alongside fellow aspiring changemakers was an amazing opportunity. I received in-depth training in nonprofit essentials such as community-centred communications, strategic relationship building, fund development through fundraising and grant writing, and more. As a dedicated advocate and community worker, the knowledge I gained and connections I made through the program have been priceless.

There will always be a demand for dedicated nonprofit staff; in these trying times, it's folks working with nonprofits and registered charities that do the most meaningful and impactful work in our communities. Whether people are just starting their nonprofit career, are well-established in the sector, or are just considering getting involved with a local community organization, the Nonprofit Sector Leadership & Innovation program is a fantastic opportunity to learn invaluable information, make meaningful connections, and gain skills that are transferable in countless fields. The program has been a huge boost for my career and I strongly recommend it for any and all students looking to make a difference."

– Amid Said, NSLI Graduate (2022)
Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation's
2023 Global Citizen Award

CERTIFICATE

in Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation

NSLI Course Delivery

With the advancement in technology, NSLI course delivery options have expanded. This includes remote-synchronous course delivery along with newly developed online courses. Four of the NSLI courses have received DDL grant funding to develop innovative online learning experiences for students.

Internship

As part of the commitment to engaged-learning, students enrolled in the NSLI certificate are encouraged to take the NSLI internship as part of their course work. This provides students with an opportunity to work on case studies, campaigns, or projects, providing them with tangible employment skills.

As part of the internship, the NVSSN Director matches students with a nonprofit organization that best meets their passions and career goals. Students work approximately 8 hours per week for 13 weeks and receive 3-credit hours towards their certificate/degree. There is no cost for community partners to participate.

The NVSSN is working on strategies to ladder learning opportunities from smaller experiential learning projects in the classes to longer internships in the following semester. This would allow students more sustained learning opportunities that provide greater value to the organization they are matched with. Students can start work on a project with a nonprofit community partner in the first semester.

The next internship is slated to run in Winter, 2024. NSLI students will be interning with Habitat for Humanity, where they will be mentored in event planning by business professional and the host of Access Communication's weekly show "Talk of the Town", Lisa Peters. Together they will plan, host, and evaluate a fundraising event during their internships.

Business and Higher Education Roundtable Grant

In June 2023, Luther College was awarded a \$214,000 grant from the Business + Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) in partnership with the Government of Canada. This grant allows

the NVSSN to provide students in participating courses with hands-on experience by working with community-based non-profit organizations focused on sustainability initiatives. Through this partnership, each NSLI course will have a community partner for which students will complete academic assignments to support community-based organizations. This grant is unique as it provides funding to community-based organizations to partner with Luther College on the development of service-learning. The theme of the grant is net-zero, and the goal is to empower students to succeed in green careers that will have a positive impact on the community and society. The NVSSN considers this to be a huge step in our continuous efforts to build capacity in the community and create meaningful opportunities for students to apply theory to practice in their learning.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement is a core pillar of the NVSSN. This engagement supports the NSLI Certificate and is also a way for Luther College to provide a service to the nonprofit community. This section provides an overview of the community engagement activities that the NVSSN has lead over the past two years.

Koffee Klatches

Koffee Klatches are informal social gatherings for coffee and conversations. These community events are designed to provide networking opportunities, and facilitate the sharing of ideas, with a view to fostering innovation, learning and support among those learning and working within the non-profit world.

The NVSSN has organized three Koffee Klatches since 2021. The first focused on addressing the challenges, vulnerabilities and opportunities created by the pandemic. The second, "Rethinking Volunteerism", addressed changes in the ways people volunteer, what organizations can do to address these changes when recruiting and working with volunteers, and how to adapt to these changes in engaging volunteers. The third, "Citizenship and Civic Engagement for a New Age" focused on socially responsible community engagement for nonprofits.

The event was a discussion on engagement related to volunteerism, which many nonprofit organizations have identified as a crisis. In this post-pandemic and economically challenging time, it has become increasingly difficult for nonprofits to recruit and engage volunteers to work within their organizations. Facilitated by Josh Fullan with Maximum City, this event was a platform for conversation and sharing of ideas around citizenship and civic engagement.

Non-Profit Career Fairs and Panel Discussions


In partnership with the Regina Public Library, the NVSSN organized a career fair in March 2023. The fair was designed to provide information about career and volunteer opportunities available in the non-profit sector, and how to prepare for those opportunities. A panel discussion of experts was followed by a full career fair, with representatives from several non-profit organizations. This event included panelists from the South Sask Independent Living Corporation, St. John Ambulance, Ranch Ehrlo, and CityKidz Regina.

In March 2023, the NVSSN partnered with University of Regina Career Education to hold two career-related virtual events. The

first was a panel discussion highlighting career opportunities in the non-profit sector.

The panelists at this event were: Victoria Flores, Manager of Communications for Regina Open Door Society; Ijeoma Nwamuo, Executive Director of International Women of Saskatoon; Victor Roman, Manager of Community Impact, South Saskatchewan Community Foundation; Rhonda Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Multicultural Association of Saskatchewan; and Tayef Ahmed, Executive Director of the Regina Public Interest Research Group.

The panelists shared what motivated them to work in the non-profit voluntary sector and spoke about the most rewarding and challenging aspects of their careers. They also provided helpful ideas on how students could connect with nonprofit agencies.



The NVSSN in conjunction with the NSLI certificate program served as vital to my academic experience.

– Chiara Marcella Wolfe,
2020 NSLI graduate

COMMUNITY VOICES

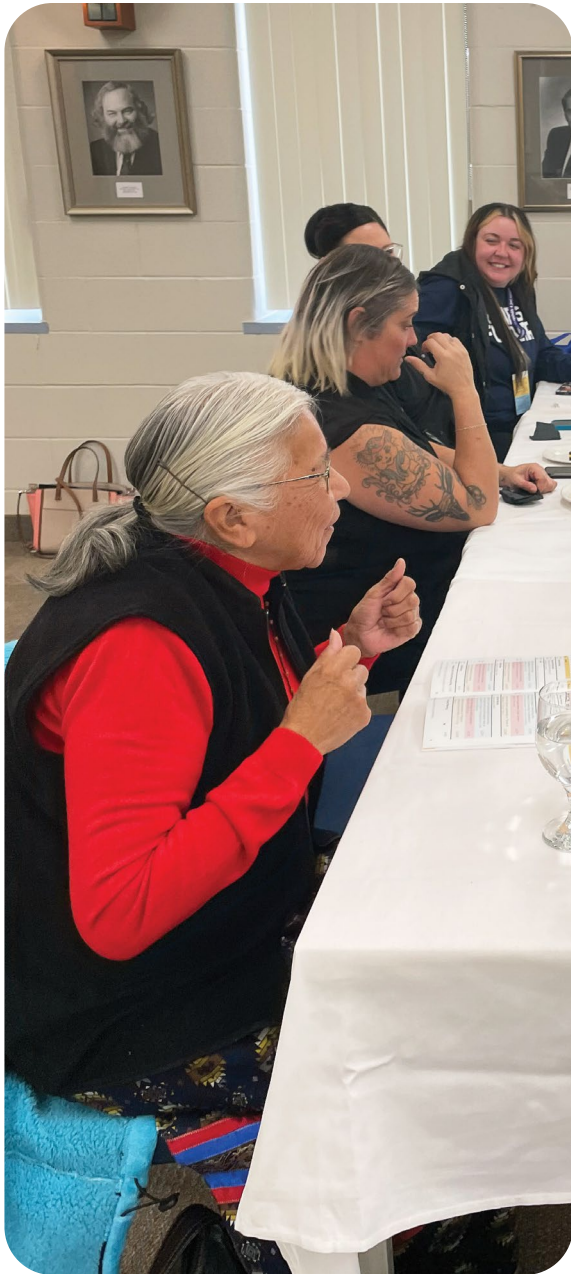
"I have been extremely impressed by the connections the NVSSN is making and maintaining among a variety of community organizations... In my work as a parish pastor, (the NVSSN) has facilitated connections between our food pantry ministry and other related organizations, and our pantry coordinator learned a great deal by attending the NVSSN capacity building program. The NVSSN embodies the mission, vision, and values of Luther College. It is an endeavor to provide education and connection for the good of the whole world, in pursuit of grace, justice, and joy."

– Rev. Dr. Sarah Dymund, Interim Chaplain,
Luther College at the University of Regina and Pastor,
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Regina

"Being a non-profit, we know the tremendous value that is added when students are able to volunteer and gain knowledge of the resources available in their city. In the long term... the NVSSN is helping build a better future and more caring members of the community. CityKidz Regina has utilized many of the resources that (the NVSSN) has developed, particularly non-profit workshops and forums. Without... these events, we would be scrambling to find these connections; taking time away from other important duties within the organization. Non-profits have limited manpower and the work (the NVSSN) does gives us the ability to do even more with our own organization."

– Donna West, Executive Director,
CityKidz Regina and Rebecca Probe,
Fund Coordinator, CityKidz Regina





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Connections Event

During one of the coldest days in December 2022, close to a hundred people from the community, faculty and students from the University of Regina gathered at Wesley United Church for Community Connections, an informal networking opportunity. The NVSSN looks for every opportunity it can to not only build relationships with people working in the nonprofit sector, but also to profile academic partners who can also provide support to the community. Along with the NVSSN and Luther College, campus academic partners from the University of Regina included the Centre for Experiential and Service Learning, the Community Engagement and Research Centre, the Research Office and La Cité.

The Community Connections event was designed to showcase ways for the community to connect with the university. They worked together on these brief “elevator pitches” to showcase ways these partnerships support the community through research, education training, volunteerism, learning projects, internships, and other activities.

Fund Development Workshop

This event was held in partnership with DCG Philanthropic Services, a firm that specializes in fund development strategies. This workshop focused on fundraising for non-profits. Presentation topics included funding sources, the core elements of fund development, and engaging and supporting volunteers in fundraising efforts. Using the workshop materials, participants were able to create their own individualized action plans.

Reimagining Nonprofits Conference

In October 2023, the NVSSN, together with Ivy and Dean Consulting and the Saskatchewan Nonprofit Partnership, hosted the inaugural Reimagining Non-Profits Conference at Luther College. This two-day capacity building event brought together 120 non-profit professionals, volunteers, and students from across Saskatchewan for collaborative training and networking opportunities.

The conference offered training sessions on topics such as governance, recruitment and retention,

collaborative leadership, and fund development, all with a view to encouraging growth, change, innovation, and new perspectives within the non-profit sector.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Growing Nonprofits Series

In fall 2023, the NVSSN embarked on a new partnership with the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation to enhance the professional development opportunities for both students and nonprofit professionals. Through this partnership, the Growing Nonprofits Series, guest speakers from a variety of non-profit

organizations will offer professional development opportunities for nonprofit professionals and NSLI students. NSLI course lectures with guest speakers will be open to both students and people from the community. Topics will include advocacy storytelling, social enterprise, coalition building, evaluating community impact, and influencing policymakers.

This new partnership is an exciting step towards the NVSSN's goal of being recognized as a centre of

excellence for nonprofit sector training, ongoing professional development, community-service learning, and community-driven research. The South Saskatchewan Community Foundation is the perfect partner for this program given their efforts to bring the nonprofit sector in Regina and southern Saskatchewan together through its Vital Signs Community Network.



University of Regina Campus Partnerships

Over the past two years, the NVSSN fostered academic-community relationships with several campus partners. Primary among these are the Faculties of Graduate Studies & Research, Engineering & Applied Science, the Community Engagement and Research Centre, the Centre for Experiential Learning, and the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. The highlights and outcomes of these partnerships are outlined below.

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and Community Engagement & Research Centre: Social Innovation Summit

In the Winter 2023 term, the NVSSN, in partnership with the Community Engagement & Research Centre and the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research, held the Social Innovation Summit, a new initiative aimed at bringing graduate students and community organizations together. The collaboration made it possible for graduate students from the University of Regina to apply their research to solve community issues. Student participants came from the Faculty of Arts, Media, Art & Performance, Nursing, Education, and Kinesiology and Health Studies.

The diverse community partner organizations included those that look after marginalized sectors, those that celebrate arts and culture, and those endeavoring to improve the local economy through tourism.

The Summit was held to provide the students a forum to showcase their intended graduate research areas to community organizations which might benefit from this research, with the intent of partnering the students with a community organization. It matched graduate students with community partners to help them refine their thesis or dissertation research questions and exposed them to applied research opportunities.

Successful academic-community partnerships allow for students to learn how their research can

benefit the community-based organization, and through the organization, the community. By working collaboratively, this type of community engagement can help guide and direct research, while at the same time research can be applied to address real-world issues.

A panel of community-based judges awarded three of the presenting students with research grants, while each of the students received funding to further their research.

Of note, one of the students from the Faculty of Media, Art and Performance presented research related to his PhD project, which was a theatrical production exploring issues of mental health, policing and racism. As a result of the connections that he gained through the social innovation

summit, he was able to successfully partner with the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, who funded his play. Later, following the connections made in the social innovation summit, this student was able to transition to employment in the nonprofit sector, in an arts-based organization in Regina.

*The Multicultural Council
was invited to be involved with the
Social Innovation Summit initiative in
the winter of 2023 to promote more
community-driven research by
Masters and PhD students.*

– Rhonda Rosenberg, Executive Director,
Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Faculty of Engineering & Applied Science: Website Design for the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation and for the Saskatchewan Career Development Association

Dr. Tim Maciag, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, Software Engineering, generously supports non-profit organizations that need technical support for their web-based projects. The NVSSN has facilitated two partnerships with Dr. Maciag to support two local nonprofit organizations. The first was a partnership between the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation to make the Vital Signs Report on the Foundation's website more interactive. The overall goal was to highlight the charities the Foundation works with and bring them to life, to engage and drive donor, community and government support for the charities.

The class successfully re-designed the website concept, and when the course ended, the Foundation hired one of the students to put the website into action and make it functional.

– Dr. Timothy Maciag

Localization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The NVSSN is a key player in leading community efforts to localize the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals framework to Regina by raising awareness of these goals among students and the community, and fostering work aimed at incorporating these goals at the local level for a more sustainable Regina.

During International Development Week, the NVSSN hosted two United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) events. The first was an SDG Expo designed to heighten awareness and understanding of the UN SDG framework among University of Regina students. The second was an

SDG Multiplier Training Workshop to train students and community leaders as facilitators, certified to educate others on the SDG goals and how to incorporate them into local initiatives. These events were recognized with an award from the Regional Centre of Expertise

on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE Saskatchewan).

In June 2023 the NVSSN organized and hosted the SDG Summit, Connecting the UN sustainable Development Framework to Community Action, which brought community leaders together to discuss ways to use the Sustainable Development Goals to coordinate efforts aimed at tackling social issues such as poverty and homelessness, climate change and the environment, and health and well-being. The Summit was designed to bring leaders together to discuss opportunities for collaboration and sharing of ideas, goals, strategies and initiatives. Ultimately, the summit was organized as a forum to share information, identify potential collaboration opportunities, and eliminate duplication of efforts.

The Summit supported relationship building and, in turn, ongoing community work to advance the SDGs. This includes the development of a community dashboard, a one-stop data repository for the collection, measurement, and sharing of local data mapped to the Sustainable Development Goals. This data can be shared and accessed by anyone and is particularly useful to organizations submitting grant applications related to the SDG indicators.

National Networking

The NVSSN is plugged into the most up-to-date best practices for community engagement, having recently joined Community Based Research Canada (CBR Canada) and Community Campus Engage Canada. Membership with these national networking organizations provides the NVSSN with opportunities to collaborate with other community-based professionals, have access to the most up-to-date trends within the industry, to promote the NVSSN nationally, and tap into funding opportunities.

CBR Canada is a membership-based organization which facilitates community-based research excellence addressing challenging societal problems. The NVSSN was a presenter at CBR Canada's C2U national conference held in Thunder Bay in June 2023. The presentation highlighted the Social Innovation Summit as a pilot project to facilitate community connection and co-design of graduate student theses and dissertations to support positive community change.

Community Campus Engage Canada strives to connect people, ideas, and resources to strengthen community-campus relationships.

COMMUNITY VOICES

"Luther College is one of the few places at the University of Regina that is doing partnership-building work and professional development for nonprofit professionals. As only one of many examples... (we) were pleased to provide funds from our SSHRC Partnership Grant to bring leaders in our community together to discuss ways to use UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for mobilizing community around wicked social problems like poverty and homelessness... This Summit provided opportunities for networking, learning, and strategizing. It created a shared foundation and understanding of the SDGs for leaders within the non-profit, private, and public sectors. This event was a perfect example of coalition building and community development... Groups are now working together instead of in isolation."

– Iryna Khovrenkov, PhD,
Associate Professor and Graduate Chair,
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of
Public Policy, University of Regina

"Thank you for organizing this event. Please keep doing what you're doing. The university needs to do more when it comes to community engagement. Getting so many like-minded people in the same room to talk about the SDG's – magic!"

– SDG Summit Participant



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