

Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone

UN Sustainable Development Goals

3. health & well-being

8. decent work & economic growth

9. Industry, innovation & infrastructure

11. Sustainable cities and communities

16. promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development,

UVic's International Plan Goals

**International Development, Health and Education
Science, Technology and Sustainability**



Collaborating to support social innovation, social enterprise and social finance on Vancouver Island

Faculty Leads: Leslie Brown & Crystal Tremblay, Institute for the Studies & Innovation in Community University Engagement.

Partners: Camosun College, University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, Community Social Planning Council, Vancity Credit Union, seCatalyst, Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, Victoria Native Friendship Centre

Project timeframe: 2014-2016

Funding: McConnell Foundation, Vancity Credit Union, Camosun College co-op, UVic SLIP grants, Centre for Sustainability and Social Innovation (UVic)

Website: <http://visocialinnovation.ca>

About

In 2014, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation launched RECODE, an initiative providing social innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities for College and University students across Canada to become drivers of social change. Their aim is to support the development of social innovation and entrepreneurship within and in proximity to colleges and universities, along with business, community and public sector partners. In response to this opportunity, the Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone (VISIZ) was founded in 2015 as a partnership between seven institutions and community organizations with the aim to advance social innovation and entrepreneurship on Vancouver Island. The founding partners include three post-secondary institutions Royal Roads University, Camosun College and the University of Victoria, financial cooperative Vancity, and community organizations Community Social Planning Council, Victoria Native Friendship Centre, and Social Enterprise Catalyst.



VISIZ has produced a number of outputs including a website, and participating members have hosted a number of events, initiatives and training opportunities for students, post-secondary institutions and community organizations focused on social innovation, social enterprise and social finance. VISIZ has produced a series of research publications and reports, an ambitious strategic four year plan, and a successful Social Innovation cohort pilot, pairing co-op students and providing financial support to local social enterprises.

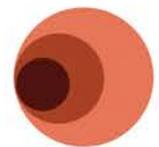
“ One thing that VISIZ has done very well, as a collaborative community initiative, is really broaden the reach of social enterprise/social innovation conversations in the region. More people are involved in these conversations/action now, and also more "pockets" of interest in SE/SI are working together.”

Level of Impact:

Individual

Community

Systems



Extent of community collaboration throughout the project cycle 100%

Impact Summary

An impact assessment of VISIZ was completed at the end of 2015 which documented a number of outcomes that are helping to strengthen the Social Innovation (SI), Social Enterprise (SE) and Social Finance (SF) sector on Vancouver Island, including greater understanding and knowledge of the sector and resources, cross-sector collaboration, and enhanced curriculum. Impact at the individual and organizational level was significant, and there has been some groundwork laid for eventual system level impact.

Description of research partnership

These partnerships were originally established through a community initiative called seCatalyst. From there, a select number of partners came together to develop the proposal for VISIZ. The Steering Committee was guided by an MOU and decision making process. The funds were administered by UVic.

Motivation for starting the project

The motivation for starting the project was a timely Request for Proposals that built upon recent community work around social enterprise and social innovation eco-system development for Vancouver Island. The first steps were to gather the partners into a steering group, write the proposal and then, once awarded, bring that group back together to act as the formal steering group for the initiative. Camosun College and UVic initiated the project

Student role & Impact

Students were involved in a number of ways: 1) research student from UVic did the mapping, 2) research student from Royal Roads conducted literature review and scans, 3) student from Camosun College was hired to manage events and communications, 4) student showcase demonstrated 10 student social venture initiatives, 5) students from each post-secondary sat on the Steering Committee, 6) 4 co-op students were hired as part of the Social Innovation Cohort pilot

Students in the showcase received funds to support the development of their ideas. The majority of students (3 out of 4) in the social innovation cohort became employed by their community organizations

"The Cohort pilot advanced Social Innovation in the region by aligning what already exists within Post Secondary Institutions (PSI), providing an immersive experience for students and delivering financial, tech assistance and capacity value to advance Social Innovation"

Project successes & challenges

The VISIZ initiative met all of our deliverables-- research, mapping, events and student involvement. It also provided opportunities for key partners in the region to collaborate and build relationships. Each partner is advancing social innovation both collaboratively and within own organizations. More resources will assist in continuing to grow the initiative.

The challenges are maintaining momentum, moving from planning to doing, gaining adequate resources to make an impact, getting buy-in from key organizational and system decision makers, and administering funds in a timely basis.



Outputs

Book chapter	1
Non- refereed publications	6+
Multimedia products	website & social media
Students employed	10+
Invited Presentations	several
Consulting with government & non government bodies	multiple
Jointly prepared funding proposals/new projects	3
Conferences	6
Community events	9

Outcomes

Student skills, knowledge, attributes towards capacity building
Development of new courses/programs/curriculum
Development of new and improved theory
Increased inter-university linkages
Increased interdisciplinary linkages
Industry connections and spinoffs
New innovations including social or technological
Partnerships secured through MoUs
Student awards and honours
Building community sector organization capacities
Strengthened community-university networks

Key factors for a successful CER project

Transparent, collaborative communication and decision-making processes insured all partners visions and interests were valued.

"Once VISIZ gets the ball rolling on the strategic plan outcomes, there will be no doubt a great change-making happening on the Island. Through collaboration with partners and the various cities, VISIZ can create an island-wide impact that ties together a network of communities for increased exposure"

Key References

Tremblay, C. & Bagelman, C. (forthcoming). Where pedagogy and social innovation meet: assessing the impact of experiential education in the third sector. In: Osman & Hornsby "Transforming Higher Education: Towards a Socially Just Pedagogy". Palgrave Macmillan.

Non-refereed publications

Social finance report: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/resources-2/reports-publications/>

Social Innovation cohort impact report: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-cohort-impact-report/>

Community Engagement report: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/community-engagement-report/>

Vancouver Island SI Assets and Gaps: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-assets-gaps-report/>

VISIZ Strategic plan: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/strategic-plan/>

SI Working definitions: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/working-definitions/>