

Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone

# Impact Report 2015-16



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*August 2016*



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## Summary

This report has been prepared for the Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone (VISIZ) to summarize the key outcomes and impacts of the McConnell Foundation RECODE project between 2015-2016. The Vancouver Island Social Innovation Zone is a unique collaboration between higher education institutions, government and community organizations in the Vancouver Island region. This evaluation is intended to measure the value of the process and the impact of the activities on the participating institutions/ organizations, students and the broader community. The impact evaluation framework is guided by the overarching strategic goals of VISIZ:

1. To Generate, Incubate, Accelerate and Scale Social Innovation, Social Enterprise & Social Finance;
2. To be a leader in community engaged educational experiences on social innovation, social enterprise and social finance;
3. To strengthen and support Vancouver-Island research that connects students and researchers to communities; and
4. Build a strong eco-system for impact business and social enterprise on Vancouver Island

A survey was administered between May-July 2016 to the VISIZ list serve (286 people), composed of a mixture of participants who attended various events (*see outputs*), and members of VISIZ Steering Committee and Working Groups. Follow-up interviews were conducted with some members of the VISIZ Steering Committee for additional feedback. The responses reveal 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, however documenting real system change is limited at this early stage of the program. A number of recommendations for advancing the Social Innovation sector on Vancouver Island are outlined.

## I. Introduction

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.

This report summarizes the outputs of VISIZ over the last year and draws on a survey and in-depth interviews administered between May-June 2016 to further elaborate on outcomes and impact.

## II. Evaluation Framework

The conceptual framework used in this evaluation is informed by a logic chain model, mapping the input of resources through to the outputs and the broader outcomes. This is also called Theory of Change, a methodology used in program evaluation that explains the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative (*i.e., its shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes*). Rather than establishing indicators, common in this type of evaluation, we rely on survey participants to identify any changes at varying scales including *Individual, Community, and System Change* as a result of their engagement with VISIZ. In addition to the more qualitative anecdotes presented in the following section, below are some quantitative indicators of impact, including number of events, persons attended, and outputs including research publications, reports and spin-off projects and funding.

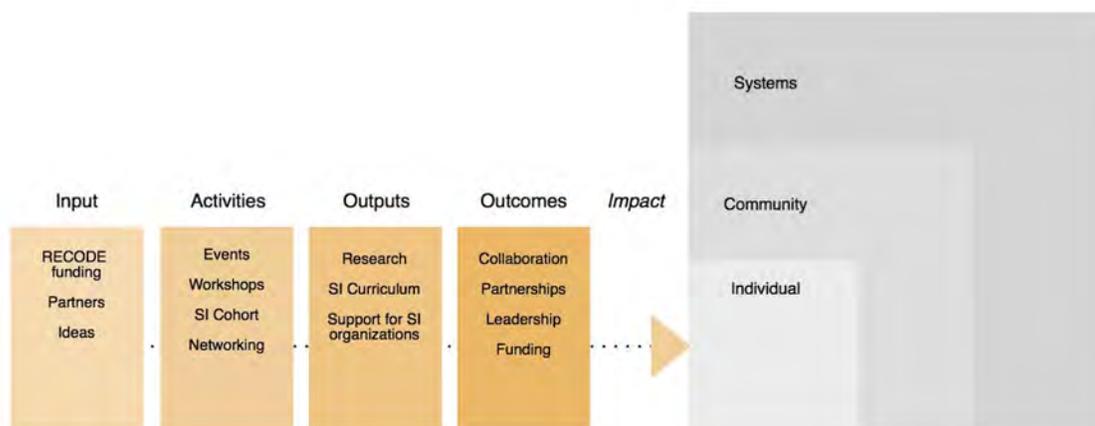


Figure 1. Logic chain model for VISIZ.

There is no one set way to define impact in the context of Social Innovation. Like the terms “community” and “engagement”, the term impact carries many meanings. Impact can be described as the effect of a project at a higher or broader level, in the longer term, after a range of outcomes has been achieved. This may include changed thinking (*i.e. meaning, values and interpretations*) or behaviour. Usually there is no one-to-one relationship between cause-and-effect links, but reflected in a variety of connections involving influence, contributions, and benefits – new policies deemed relevant, economic performance, competitiveness, public service effectiveness, new products and services, employment, enhanced learning skills, quality of life, community cohesion and social inclusion. Ultimately defining impact in this context is about making a difference and identifying

what changes have resulted from new partnerships and collaborations with the intent to make an impact.

Being aware that impact is often measured over a long-term period (e.g. ideally 8 or more years), the findings from this evaluation point to some substantial outcomes and illustrates how this innovative collaboration can lead to greater impact for advancing social innovation/enterprise/finance on Vancouver Island.

## **(i) Data Collection**

Data was collected in a survey format using a Fluidsurvey platform, intended to capture both quantitative and narrative data on impact from participating students, institutions and community originations. The survey was administered between May-June 2016 through the VISIZ list serve (286 people) and those that signed up at events; such as the pitch-it event, or the Social Innovation symposium at Royal Roads University. Follow-up interviews were conducted with some members of the Steering Committee, and all members of the cohort pilot (students, community partners, co-op coordinators).

### **Survey**

- A total of 22 surveys were completed from individuals in universities/college (5), community organizations (4), private industry (3), government (1) and the VISIZ steering committee members (9).

### **In-depth interviews**

- In-depth interviews with some members of the VISIZ steering committee were conducted between May - August 2016 to determine how the process did or did not: build relationships between supportive actors, build greater understanding of social innovation amongst PSI and community assets, which assets were useful in supporting Social Innovation and the challenges/successes in identifying and mobilizing those assets
- In-depth interviews conducted with community Social Innovation organizations participating in the cohort pilot to evaluate the extent the pilot model supported their social innovation or social enterprise, what worked, what didn't work, and how to improve the model?
- Mid-term and exit interviews conducted with the student cohort (4) to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot model – did the students grow their understanding, knowledge and applied skills in social innovation, what are the learning competencies specific to SI?

### III. Key outputs

#### (i) VISIZ hosted the following events:

Event	Number of people attended
seCatalyst Day of Learning Nanaimo (May 2015)	550+ to both gala and day of learning
Social Innovation Snapshot Nanaimo (September 2015)	20+
Social Innovation Snapshot Victoria (September 2015)	46
Social Innovation Mentor Training (November 2015)	8
SI Symposium Royal Roads University (January 2016)	70+ registered, 55 attended
Pitch It Student showcase Victoria (March 2016)	10 student showcases and 40+ attendees
Social Finance Forum (April 2016)	55
seCatalyst Day of Learning Nanaimo (May 2016)	110 (sold out)
Steering Committee (monthly)	13

#### (ii) Website, Reports, Publications

Name of Resource	URL or Source
VISIZ Website	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca">http://visocialinnovation.ca</a>
VISIZ Strategic plan	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/strategic-plan/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/strategic-plan/</a>
Social Innovation Bibliography:	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/social-innovation-bibliography/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/social-innovation-bibliography/</a>
Vancouver Island SI Assets and Gaps	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-assets-gaps-report/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-assets-gaps-report/</a>
SI Working definitions:	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/working-definitions/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/working-definitions/</a>
Community Engagement report:	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/community-engagement-report/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/community-engagement-report/</a>
SI Cohort impact report	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-cohort-impact-report/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-cohort-impact-report/</a>
SI Frameworks:	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/literature-review-social-innovation-frameworks/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/literature-review-social-innovation-frameworks/</a>
Social Finance report	<a href="http://visocialinnovation.ca/resources-2/reports-publications/">http://visocialinnovation.ca/resources-2/reports-publications/</a>

Name of Resource	URL or Source
Book Chapter	Tremblay, C. & Bagelman, C. (forthcoming). <i>Where pedagogy and social innovation meet: assessing the impact of experiential education in the third sector</i> . In: Osman & Hornsby "Transforming Higher Education: Towards a Socially Just Pedagogy". Palgrave Macmillan.

### (iii) Conferences/Networking

Conference Name and location	Details
Indigenous Innovation Summit, Winnipeg, 2015	Steering committee member Bruce Parisian (VNFC) presented
CUVIC Conference, Victoria 2016	Cohort organization Social planning Council and cohort student presented a teaching circle
Ashoka Changemakers Conference, New Orleans 2015	Steering Committee members Rob Middleton and Zoe MacLeod presented on collaboration in Social Innovation, VISIZ was an example
Employment and Social Development Canada, Ottawa February 2016	Project Director Kristi Fairholm Mader consulted with Employment and Social Development Canada on social enterprise research
McConnell National Working Group on Evaluation	Crystal Tremblay participated on calls every 2-3 months
Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, March 2016	Project Director Kristi Fairholm Mader met with Minister Stilwell to discuss support for the sector BC wide

### (iv) New projects/funding

Name of project	Amount \$	Description
Indigenous Sustainability and Community Innovation: sites of social innovation on Vancouver Island	\$90,000 from the UVic CCBE Grant	A CBR project with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, T'Sou-ke Nation and researchers at UVic (August 2016-7)
Centre for Innovation (formally ICE)	N/A	Research project on mapping mentor pools on Vancouver Island, identifying key competencies required to support social innovation and social enterprise, capacity building, gaps and development of appropriate tools to upskill mentors

Name of project	Amount \$	Description
CityStudio Victoria	N/A	Connected to VISIZ but led by the City of Victoria, CityStudio Victoria is adapting a successful applied innovation lab model from Vancouver. Students have the opportunity to work on real world issues within community as part of their curriculum. CityStudio Victoria is in pilot phase.

### (v) SI Cohort Pilot

As part of VISIZ vision, the Cohort pilot advances 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. The SI-cohort paired co-op students from the University of Victoria and Camosun College with placements in 4 social enterprises or innovation projects, providing \$10,000 funding for the social enterprise/innovation alongside other post-secondary supports, including student salaries. The cohort pilot ran from January -April 2016. An impact report specific to the cohort pilot can be found on the VISIZ website: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/visiz-cohort-impact-report>.

To view the completed case studies from the cohort please visit: <http://visocialinnovation.ca/social-innovation-cohort/>.

## IV. Innovation Outcomes

The following criteria were rated as an outcome of participants engagement with VISIZ. The most significant outcome based on the number of *strongly agree* and *agree* responses are 1) Enhanced knowledge and understanding of SI/SF/SE (90%), 2) Enhanced support for social enterprise and social entrepreneurs (82%), 3) Enhanced networking and collaboration between post-secondary institutions, community, industry and government (77%), 4) Enhanced collaboration within institutions/organization (74%). The outcome that scored the lowest is 5) Enhanced curriculum development and teaching on SI/SF/SE (39%). Following are some anecdotal examples provided in each category.

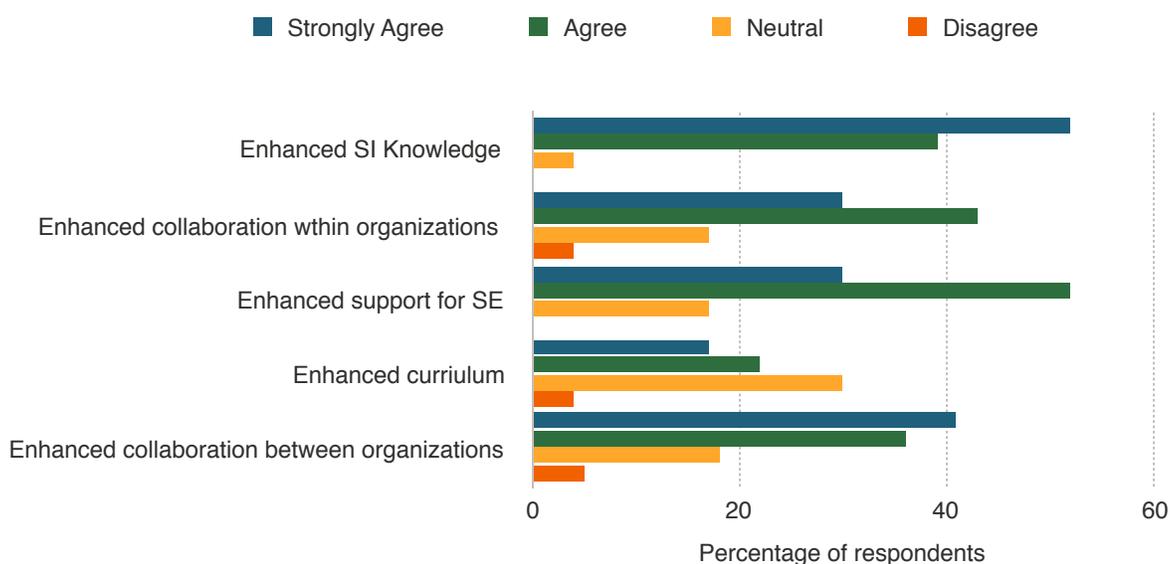


Figure 2. Outcomes chart.

### (i) Enhanced Knowledge and understanding of SI/SF/SE

*Strongly agree (52%); agree (39%); Neutral (4%) of survey responses*

Over 90% of the respondents *strongly agree or agree* that VISIZ activities have led to enhanced knowledge and understanding of social innovation, social finance and social enterprise.

*“Networking with other SI’s from other institutions has broadened perspectives and knowledge. It is very encouraging that the movement is expanding.”*

*“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."*

### **(ii) Enhanced collaboration within institutions/organization**

*Strongly agree (30%); agree (44%); Neutral (17%); Disagree (4%) of survey responses*

Enhancing collaboration within institutions and organizations is a fundamental pathway for innovation. This would include greater cross-disciplinary research activities within post-secondaries, and enhancing strategies and mechanisms for cross-collaboration in community and government departments. A total of 74% respondents *strongly agree and agree* on this criteria as an outcome of their engagement.

*"I found the Symposium at Royal Roads University especially enlightening. It was something never done before on the island. I was pleased that it went so well."*

### **(iii) Enhanced support for social enterprise and social entrepreneurs**

*Strongly agree (30%); agree (52%); Neutral (17%); of survey responses*

Providing financial and research support to social enterprises/innovations is a strategic goal of VISIZ. A total of 82% of respondents felt this was a significant outcome. One of the main functions of the SI cohort pilot was to provide financial (\$10,000) and student salary support to four local SI initiatives. *"The cohorts funded through the McConnell grant and supplemented through coop, were a terrific addition to the supports available to social enterprise. It would be great if this could be expanded."*

Other indirect supports that have resulted from VISIZ include the development of a incubator pilot as one respondent explains: *"Rather than running a one time small workshop on Business Model Canvas for 2-3 organizations we are now collaborating with multiple partners including VISIZ to develop and deliver a pilot of a social enterprise incubator for up to 6 organizations. This will include long term feasibility for continuing to make this resource available Island wide in the future."*

### **(iv) Enhanced networking and collaboration between post-secondary institutions, community, industry and government**

*Strongly agree (41%); agree (36%); Neutral (18%); Disagree (5%) of survey responses*

Enhancing opportunities for greater collaboration between post-secondary institutions, community organizations, industry and government is central to VISIZ mission. The creation of the Steering Committee, a partnership between seven founding partners, can be seen as an innovation in itself, with a serious dedication ushered to relationship building, democratic governance, and the development of strategy and function of committees and

events. One respondent writes: *“The relationships with steering committee members, and knowing that we're all in agreement on what the priorities are for fostering and accelerating SE/SI in the region, is a very meaningful story to tell when advocating for SE/SI support, initiatives, or ideas within my organization. It is valuable to be able to say that everyone involved in VISIZ is behind a certain ideal/concept/program.”*

*“The networking opportunities provided by VISIZ have broadened our network, which has a positive impact on our ability to do our work. Also, exposure to more examples of work being done on the island helps us to explain and promote social innovation across the province.”*

*“As former communications coordinator, working with VISIZ has given me an enriched outlook on the meaning of SE, SI and SF. Working with VISIZ and connecting to community partners was an experience that grew my knowledge and perception of Vancouver Island's potential and the sustainable development that organizations like VISIZ are carrying out.”*

*“Collaboration - indeed, the institutions that are involved are collaborating, there is evidence of this in the meetings and progression of the agenda. It feels like there is good energy and collaborative spirit around the table.”*

#### **(v) Enhanced curriculum development and teaching on SI/SF/SE**

*Strongly agree (17%); agree (22%); Neutral (30%); Disagree (4%) of survey responses*

A faculty respondent from Uvic found that there has been *“greater focus on social innovation/enterprise in our entrepreneurship program. A new course being developed with silse content, and greater sense of commonality of purpose between departments at UVic.”*

For another respondent, curriculum enhancement has been slow to develop as an outcome, and points to the ‘cohort’ model as having more impact. *“Enhanced curriculum - this is a bit hearsay for me, but I think it's positive that students have been engaged in the conversation and execution of SI. Personally, I delivered guest lectures on SI at Vancouver Island University, so I suppose that is also a part of seeing it in curriculum change. I think more broadly it's good to see 'cohorts' of students going through this rather than be limited to privileges/efforts of individuals such as myself. This is what gives it 'movement' potential, especially starting with students.”*

## V. Impact: Key findings

The key findings of this evaluation are summarized by reference to each of the key impact areas, **individual, community and systems**. Survey respondents were asked to identify any outcomes and provide an illustrative example, provided below.

### Individual: changed thinking or ways of doing?

#### 1. A broadened understanding of the social innovation sector

*“Absolutely. My history is one with the social service non-profit sector and so the enterprise side of social innovation was new territory. My thinking is much more rounded now as social enterprise, social finance is integrated into it.”*

*“Students expressed a deeper understanding of social innovation and social enterprise after connecting their learning from their SI orientation (day of learning) to their daily tasks. The immersive experience is what allowed them to make sense of these concepts. There was a heightened ability for students to engage in systems thinking” (*

*“Definitely - as a former member of the Social Innovation Zone's Project Management support team, being in the deep end of SE/SI has had an impact on my process as an entrepreneur and with engagement strategies. Connecting with people and businesses can now focus on the social side as well as focal points surrounding triple bottom line.”*

#### 2. Networking and cross sector collaboration

*“In current and future ventures (as a serial entrepreneur) I try to add in an element of social innovation. Whether it be finding elements of giving back, or tailoring a process to be sustainable or locally developed, the people and connections that I've made through VISIZ are invaluable for potential opportunities.”*

*“Personally, my connection to VISIZ has created and strengthened a great network of folks from around the community who I may not have had the opportunity to connect with otherwise (or at least not in such an engaged way).”*

*“Greater awareness of the social innovation "sector" on Vancouver Island - who's involved and what's happening - and of the potential of the Island as a hub of innovation in BC, partly due to the relative size (geography and numbers) of the community here.”*

*“I've thought more about the potential of cross-sector collaboration, that there really are 'people' within institutions that are change makers, and can potentially change the course of institutions. I used to think of institutions as more inert, or unchanging or able to participate in these collaborative processes.”*

### **3. Validates the significance of the sector**

*“This is affirmative work that supports and challenges what we are currently doing (and have been doing for several years now) at RRU in many departments and in many programs and in the local community.”*

*“My belief that Social Enterprise is the way of the future has been strengthened with the knowledge that so much work has already been done on Vancouver Island. Happy to connect with people with similar views to me.”*

*“continued collaboration is key to the work and finding ways to work together across campuses and with community is essential. The VISIZ has created a way to start... ”*

# Community: new ideas or initiatives generated?

## 1. Stronger connections between organizations and campus

*“For Vancity, one of the strongest mechanisms will likely be the social finance strategy and its delivery once we're at that stage.”*

*“Catalyst Conversations held at UVic last June where the post-secs invited 80 elected city officials from the region for 23 open space conversations. One of the tangible results from that is City Studio - a city of Victoria initiative where post-secs taking learning to the streets and where in terms of RRU, our revised graduate certificate in sustainable community development will work on socially relevant, real projects with city leaders to create positive change through learning. In this way "assets" becomes a verb!”*

*“Not necessarily new ideas, but definitely new connections coming from that awareness of what's happening, which strengthens our ability to connect people to each other (as a way to support their activities).”*

## 2. Support for Social Enterprise and Innovation

*“Significant improvement and change to several projects as a result of information, partnerships, and relationships. This has included securing new financial resources to support SE work. Also active development of new collaboration, and ideas.*

*“Yes. We have increased involvement in community ventures focused at SI/SE”*

*“the social innovation co-op cohort providing engaged students and \$ to innovative community organizations.”*

*“I completed a ‘Roundtable’ discussion at Camosun, which brought in 22 participants. I reached many people with a pitch for a Provincial Daycare Tax Credit and I was awarded a \$250 grant for my efforts.”*

## 3. New ideas generated

*“This involvement was very useful for planting seeds for new ideas for my community organization.”*

*“Smaller initiatives are taking place and VISIZ is taking action on a series of changemaking events and plans to stimulate a better share economy.”*

*“VISIZ is itself a new social initiative. I have seen a number of student social innovation/enterprise concepts generated”*

*“I've learned a lot about social finance and that's a great thing because I was pretty well versed to start with. It's been great to see fresh perspectives.”*

## System-change: new systems change?

Real systems change takes time and is often difficult to measure. The theory of change evaluation, as briefly mentioned in the conceptual framework (e.g. outcomes pathway), explains the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative. The success of this model lies in its ability to demonstrate progress on the achievement of outcomes. It is quite challenging to measure a one-one cause- affect relationship of one's involvement in VISIZ and large-scale change at the systems-level (e.g. policy, programs). It is simply too soon to tell and there are varying responses as to if and how much systems have indeed changed since the creation of VISIZ.

It is evident, however, that a lot of groundwork has been done and some foundation has been laid for eventual system change supporting this sector. *"We're at a good place - a launching pad for action."* One respondent provides an example in the area of social procurement with *"interest and momentum that has in part been driven by VISIZ in this region. It is also important to note the involvement of Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation on the VISIZ steering committee, as I think that shows that the Province is interested in the work and collaborating for impact."* Another respondent shares a similar view in that *"greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing is happening, as well as a trend toward social purchasing that will put more money into the social enterprise sector, and I think in general there will be more and more money available to support social impact business. I think work needs to be done to prepare the sector for that, in terms of financial literacy, awareness of where the sources of funding are, etc."*

Some see VISIZ as playing a strong backbone role for system-level change. *"It seems that VISIZ in itself is the system that is keeping things together. It is the common thread or point of reference. I see value in continuing to nurture it as a backbone unto itself, seeing where the ideas show up and where members mutually agree to co-create and create systems."* And *"Once VISIZ gets the ball rolling on the strategic plan outcomes, there will be no doubt a great changemaking will happen on the Island. Through collaboration with partners such as theDock, seCatalyst and the various cities, VISIZ can create an island-wide impact that ties together a network of communities for increased exposure."*

*"Outside of the academy, the Social Finance forum brought to light several areas of systems change that would enhance the use of financial strategies to support social change. The idea of a social REIT for example is intriguing and such ideas need a mechanism for follow up/through."*

While others have been less enthusiastic about the level of institutional change to date: *"I have seen less systems change that I would have liked over the time of VISIZ. The signing of the agreement between the 5 PSIs was promising but I'm disappointed that the Presidents have not acted on its opportunity. PSIs have given a nod to enhancing community engagement, but tangible systems change that would actually facilitate it hasn't happened."*

## VI. How can VISIZ have greater impact in advancing social innovation on Vancouver Island?

The following recommendations/suggestions are in no particular order of relevance or weight.

### 1. Involve more people

- *“It will have to follow the energy of the group, and hopefully the 'group' will continue to grow. VISIZ is not a 'project', rather its a movement. We envision Vancouver Island as a place where SI/SE/SF flourishes. The **more people/organizations** we can include in the "we" in that sentence, the better. As "we" will make this the place to be.”*
- Ensure a **presence in smaller and more remote communities**, *“this is important to live up to the island wide name but also because of the innovation that occurs.”*
- **More resource sharing/collaboration** within and across institutions and organizations. More opportunities for intra-Cohort networking/brainstorming/communicating.
- **Host regular small-group discussions on the topic** - perhaps in the style of World Cafes. *“Offer something that connects solo social entrepreneurs together as most of the current work appears to be focused on larger institutions. Small business is the growth engine of our economy. I think a large number of people are being left out of the discussion.”*
- **More involvement of the entrepreneurial community.** *“As we look at 'enterprising' and 'revenue diversification' possibilities that show up in SI and SE, it seems to me they would be an invaluable source of input, thinking differently from how the key institutions think (emphasizing 'differently' not 'better'). Yet I empathize that they are not paid to be there and it takes them out of their regular business activities and becomes a 'volunteer' commitment of their expertise. I recommend some sort of financial or social capital exchange that would invite their participation in the process and recognize the value they potentially bring.”*

## 2. Moving beyond the campus walls

- ***Finding ways to increase SI knowledge, support and practices in the community organizations.*** “Having all those classes for students is great - LOVE City Studio approach - BUT if students land in an NGO where staff do not have the skills to work with complex adaptive systems - well - you need to pay attention to strengthening those muscles among all the partners not just the students.”
- ***Expanding the partnerships further beyond post-secondary institutions.*** My understanding is that the PSI focus was due to the original grant. However, now that that funding is over, maybe we can re-jig the steering committee so that it is more representative of the whole sector, and the active partners on the Island?
- ***Focus on the post-secondary institutions and their ability/willingness to collaborate "outwards".*** “The first couple of years of VISIZ have started this journey, but there is still a long way to go - a lot of this reality is due to the way things happen in PSIs and the longer timeframes that it takes for change to occur. The potential role that VISIZ can play in creating an enabling social finance environment (both on the demand and supply side) is also an exciting area for great impact.”

## 3. More commitment from local governments

- ***More buy-in from local and regional governments.*** “More support from the provincial government would make a significant difference to SE's future. Think Scotland!”
- ***Greater understanding of the need for further educational opportunities,*** strengthening relevance in curriculum, and connection to community.

## 4. More relevance to local communities

- ***“Try to involve more people from outside of CRD and City of Nanaimo. Think up-island and smaller rural communities. Also involve more First Nations representatives.”***
- ***“More connection to some of the social issues that are happening in communities.”***

## 5. Indigenous Innovation

- *“One of the biggest impacts the zone could have on the island is to **deepen the understanding of indigenous innovation** and bring that knowledge and those experiences into the bigger conversation. Ultimately, I just don't think the zone can achieve its potential without the participation of both the indigenous and non-indigenous communities.”*

## 6. Support a range of leadership and trans-disciplinarily

- *“It's a trickling movement, it seems. It **relies heavily on key people** and their ability to infiltrate their organizations. For example, who will become the VIU champion? In order to attract these key people, we find out what makes it worthwhile for them, where they see value in integrating VISIZ initiatives. So I guess my overall answer is to stay the course and nurture the key people. Make it easy for them to participate and realize value in the opportunity.”*
- *“There is often productive idea sharing between university departments and partner organizations, but **the idea sharing between university departments is often limited**. I think this speaks to the competitive nature of academia and the limits that poses to this work”.*

## 7. Enhance SI curriculum and training

- ***Continue to push SI training through incubators, cohorts, etc.** “My bias tends to see this as an overlap with entrepreneurial training, perhaps as SI is so much about about being creative, sustainable, and re-mixing ideas to achieve what is possible.”*
- ***“Required education at all levels from elementary to post-secondary and in all business promotion bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce, business incubators etc, and management consulting firms.”***

## VII. Final Reflections

These final reflections were provided by some members of the Steering Committee. Some of the points are verbatim.

1. One of the key strengths and challenges of VISIZ has been its collaborative approach. There has been great power in the collaboration between PSIs, community organizations, government, etc. According to the VISIZ Chair, Leslie Brown, *“this approach is key in having the zone a success. A collaborative approach enabled us to take advantage of differing expertise, networks and resources; no one organization could ‘claim’ VISIZ yet all could claim it; it reflected how a zone (rather than another organization) would be sustained”*.
2. VISIZ facilitated cross sector learning and relationships. Having all three post secondary institutions involved was fairly unique, and was beneficial in nurturing relationships between institutions, providing a broader access to a variety of students, programs and expertise.
3. Some of the key challenges highlighted:
  - i. Governance: shared leadership and governance among organizations with differing capacities proved challenging. *“Network leadership is becoming more understood and I am interested in seeing Vancouver Island become a best practice leader, through the various collaborative initiatives going on, in this type of leadership” (Kristi Fairholm Mader)*
  - ii. It is always a challenge to resource movements that are not owned by one entity. *“Ownership has a different set of challenges in terms of collaboration, cohesion, involvement and contribution, plus the resources start going to support an organizational structure rather than support the work being done within the partners--- so I think some of the innovation of VISIZ was to try and understand and figure out this tension and balance.” (Kristi Fairholm Mader)*
  - iii. Accountability: it can be a challenge to get everyone to feel accountable, responsible and proactive;
  - iv. Accounting: one organization has to manage the funds. The University of Victoria took this role, however these complex financial systems were not conducive to nimble, collaborative sharing of funds;
  - v. Funding opportunities: as VISIZ is not a formal society/organization, but a network, there were occasions when one of the partners had to take a lead on

- funding applications and in so doing impacted their own organization's internal funding initiatives;
- vi. The role of backbone or project management is important and requires a full-time one or two staff. VISIZ had 2.5 days/week with student help. According to project director Kristi Fairholm Mader, *"this is enough time to project manage an initiative but not enough time to grow and resource a movement or build a sector."*
  - vii. The challenge and opportunity is figuring out the place where students, communities and PSI connect best. A good example of this was the social innovation cohort.
4. Success! Lots of people came to events and participated and showed their interest. *"We are hearing from ICE that social ventures and enterprises are the most common enterprises that are turning up--- so this work is important and relevant and practical to communities and students"* (Kristi Fairholm Mader)
  5. The strategic plan is in motion, a good sign that the research and consultation process was asking the right questions and the guidance of the Steering Committee identified the best actions. The challenge is to continue to move forward together and maintain the momentum.
  6. Relationships are stronger, people feel involved, and action is taking place!

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following in supporting this work: Chad Lubelsky, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, RECODE national evaluation Working Group, VISIZ Steering Committee and Working Groups, Norah McRae, Kristi Fairholm Mader, Leslie Brown, Faaris Kathrada and Sarah Rose McShane.

Thank you to all the respondents who took time to respond to the survey with such thoughtful reflections and suggestions.

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