

VITAL CONVERSATIONS



NOVEMBER 2017

The South Saskatchewan Community Foundation (SSCF) believes in building our future as a community through dialogue and the power of philanthropy. We focus on and explore initiatives that address issues of community significance consistent with our mission, vision, and values — which are aligned with community priorities and the priorities of our donors.

What makes us unique is that we hold and invest the funds that we receive from donors allowing for grants to be made not just once, but year after year. This service creates a sustainable charitable fund to help make our community stronger, more vital and a more fair place to live, work, and play. We listen to the needs of the community and work with generous donors to respond to those needs.

With the guidance of the local *Vital Signs* Community Advisory Council, we produced our 2016 *Vital Signs*[®] report focusing on an overarching theme of 'Belonging' with three sub-themes: Pursuing Reconciliation, Welcoming Newcomers, and Building Economic Inclusion. As part of the national Community Foundations of Canada *Vital Signs*[®] week in October 2017, we launched the first of a series of 'Vital Conversations' focused on the topic of Pursuing Reconciliation.

Each Vital Conversation will invite community insight and explore a theme area in greater depth. The input will provide important context for publication of a SSCF *Vital Signs*[®] Report in 2018.

The South Saskatchewan Community Foundation is a proud member of Community Foundations of Canada, our national membership organization that includes a network of over 191 community foundations across Canada. *Vital Signs*[®] is a national program led by community foundations and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and supports action towards improving our quality of life.



REGINA AND AREA'S
VitalSigns

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*Qualitative data from the community forums was collected through notetakers and flipcharts.
This data has been organized by question and consolidated into common themes that stood out in each discussion.*

VITAL CONVERSATIONS



PURSuing RECONCILIATION: A COMMUNITY FORUM

On October 4, 2017, the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation (SSCF) conducted a Vital Conversation on "Pursuing Reconciliation." The objective of the event was to educate on reconciliation, to engage participants in an opportunity to share knowledge and stories about the importance of pursuing reconciliation, as well as to obtain qualitative input for the 2018 Vital Signs® Report. Further, the event was aligned with Reconciliation Regina to build off and support current momentum generated by this group.

In order to meet the above objectives, Praxis Consulting contributed their services by facilitating a community forum. The forum consisted of three stations located throughout the Regina Public Library Central Branch. Each station was facilitated by one Praxis facilitator, as well as one Indigenous guest facilitator. The three discussion topics were as follows:



Facilitated Conversation 1: **Envisioning Successful Reconciliation**

Picture yourself sitting around a campfire 20 years from now. You are explaining to your children that things have changed when it comes to reconciliation.

Take a moment to reflect on the story you hope to be telling. What is the new Canada? What is different than today?



Facilitated Conversation 2: **Building a Strategy**

Imagine that you are tasked with building the strategy to achieve reconciliation. What systems, processes, relationships, etc. will you need to improve or build to be successful? Who will you engage/involve?

How will we know we have made progress? What can we measure to answer this question?



Facilitated Conversation 3: **A Strengths-Based Approach**

Our communities have many strengths. It is important that we nurture and grow those things we are doing well while simultaneously working on our challenges. In your opinion, what are the building blocks of reconciliation that we already have in place?

What can we do to ensure these stay strong?



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ENVISIONING SUCCESSFUL RECONCILIATION



Picture yourself sitting around a campfire 20 years from now. You are explaining to your children that things have changed when it comes to reconciliation.

Take a moment to reflect on the story you hope to be telling. What is the new Canada? What is different than today?

There is an interdependent society where all contribute to the overall fabric of Saskatchewan life

Participants feel that it is imperative that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples come together. They note that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples need to feel more comfortable around each other, which could reduce the presence of racism and stereotypical views in our community. There is an opportunity to learn from one another and reduce the ignorance that exists today.

Physical space exists to learn and celebrate Indigenous cultures

Participants are hopeful that in 20 years there is physical space in Regina for people to learn and celebrate Indigenous cultures. They envision a truly welcoming and accessible gathering spot where people can share their stories.

“I want my children and grandchildren to bring home friends who don’t look like them.”

The public is aware and knowledgeable of Indigenous history

In 20 years, participants hope that all Regina citizens have an understanding of Indigenous history and an appreciation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. The prejudice that occurred is not only the history of Indigenous people, but rather the history of the province. Participants feel that all must learn from, and address, the tragic impact of residential schools.

“20 years from now I want our children to be shocked by our current situation.”

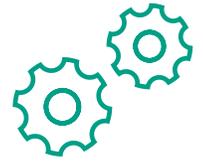
Regina is a leader in reconciliation

Participants want to be able to say proudly that our City is a leader in pursuing reconciliation. They hope to collaborate on efforts to make impactful change. They want to be able to say that Regina has made tremendous progress, and that other cities aspire to be where we are.

Appreciation to:

Regina Public Library for hosting this important Vital Conversation; Elder Norma-Jean Byrd for her participation and guidance throughout the process; Doug Cuthand for the keynote address; facilitators, note takers and organizers for the assistance and support.

BUILDING A STRATEGY



What systems, processes, relationships, etc., will you need to improve or build to be successful?



LEADERSHIP

While there are reconciliation initiatives happening in our community, it would be helpful to have a leader to serve as a “traffic coordinator.” There are many educational institutions, organizations and agencies that could fulfill this role.



RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CALLS TO ACTION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action have provided an excellent starting point for our community. Having said this, some initiatives require resources that are not necessarily accessible to all. There should be resources available, such as funding and physical space, to help people successfully support and implement TRC Calls to Action.



EARLY AGE EDUCATION

Indigenous culture and history needs to be a significant topic in school curriculums. We must invest in our youth and enable them to learn factual history. Parents also have an important role to play in discouraging racism in the home.



COLLABORATION

Regina has several parties who would be able to contribute substantial value to reconciliation. For this reason, we need to combine efforts and work together through meaningful partnerships. Reducing siloed efforts may lead to higher participation and engagement in our community.

Who will you engage/involve?

Everyone should be involved in reconciliation.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children and youth
- Those with decision-making powers
- Organizations
- Educational institutions
- Libraries
- Churches
- Elders
- Municipalities
- Police Services

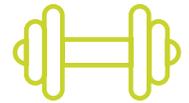
How will we know we have made progress?

What can we measure to answer this question?

- Increase in Indigenous graduation rates
- Increase in Indigenous representation among decision makers and business leaders
- Increase in people speaking Indigenous languages
- Decrease of children in the social services system, i.e., foster care
- Decrease in poverty rate
- Decrease in crime in our communities

“Relationships require understanding and respect. Education is key.”

A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH



In your opinion, what are the building blocks of reconciliation that we already have in place?

EVENTS AND PROGRAMS PUT ON BY VARIOUS AGENCIES

Many community organizations are highly engaged in reconciliation. This shows through the events taking place in our community. A few programs and events that have been recognized as particularly successful are:

- Orange Shirt Day
- Smudge walks
- Blanket exercises
- Treaty Four days
- Regina Public Library programs

These events have generated positive media attention, which has been helpful in building awareness.

EDUCATING YOUTH

Treaty history has been increasingly integrated into Regina school curriculums. With children receiving formal education on Indigenous and our shared Treaty history, there is an opportunity for them to become the teachers.

THE CITY OF REGINA'S RECONCILIATION AGENDA

The City of Regina has stated its commitment to reconciliation. As an important agenda item for them, the City and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner have facilitated the creation of Reconciliation Regina, a circle made up of numerous community champions, working together to provide collaboration, leadership and learning in our community's response to reconciliation and the TRC's Calls to Action. The group is made up of many community champions in Regina.



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INDIGENOUS LEADERS

There are many visible Indigenous leaders in our community. These individuals and organizations are positively impacting our community by sharing their success stories and bringing awareness to reconciliation initiatives.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

We have many educational institutions in our City that we are proud of. This includes, but is not limited to:

- First Nations University of Canada (FNU)
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology
- Gabriel Dumont Institute
- Mâmwâyâtîtan Centre

What can we do to ensure these stay strong?

1. Build partnerships
2. Maintain Indigenous leadership
3. Continue learning and creating opportunities for discussion
4. Share positive stories

"We need to focus on the positive and recognize that we can all empower each other."

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