



Tables at the World Dave were covered with brown paper and participants used colourful markers to jot down their ideas.

Discovering three things at the Vital Signs World Café

The Selkirk & District Community Foundation, along with hundreds of community members, have been checking the pulse of our communities for about a year now, and on June 5 we gathered again for a World Café.

The pulse checking is all part of the work that goes into the Foundation's Vital Signs 2.0 report, which will be released this fall. The World Café held at Memorial Hall was much like previous community consultations held to collect data for the report – energetic and insightful.

But this time, the Foundation was looking for three things we all can do to make a difference.

“We’ve been at this a while now, and every time we meet with community members, I’m blown away,” says Foundation Chair and Vital Signs Co-Chair David Thorne.

“We’ve compiled a lot of data in the last year and last night was a bit of sharing some of that data, getting more insight from our community stakeholders and putting the finishing touches on this report that really, we’ve all been living and breathing since last year. It’s been educational, emotional and energizing all at once. I’m proud of everyone who participated and I can’t wait to share the report with everyone.”

The World Café format is intentionally open and inviting and operates under the theory that the conversations people have in these comfortable settings are extremely powerful and lead to great things being accomplished.

In the Vital Signs team pursuit of three things we can do, the approximately 75 participants were broken down into smaller groups to discuss one of the reports 10 sectors, which are:

- Indigenous Community
- Health and Wellness
- Youth Engagement and Education
- Housing and Shelter
- Food Security and Access
- Environment
- Transit and Active Transportation
- Recreation Culture and Heritage
- Safety and Security
- Income and Work

“The World Cafe was amazing. The level of engagement was over the top and people had a hard task,” said Deborah Vitt, Foundation board member and Vital Signs team member.

“People were broken up into sectors, and to sit and read the draft report together, then come up with actionables, that’s hard.”

Facilitators from Probe Research and the Vital Signs team were at each table to help out, but, much like the town hall held last October, Vitt says those who came out were laser focused on the task at hand.

“They knew this wasn’t just coffee and chat time, they were there to engage in the really important work in our three communities going forward. They wanted to have their thoughts known, they wanted to communicate with one another, they wanted to collaborate. I heard the need for collaboration big time, at every table I was at.”

Vitt said there was plenty of talk about how we’re not in silos, and that one sector affects the other.

Diane Stolar, who attended as part of a contingent from the Selkirk Food Bank, agreed.

“I felt that all the group topics were intertwined meaning that you really couldn’t discuss one without the others coming into play,” Stolar said.

“You can’t achieve health and wellness without adequate food, housing or income...The evening was well organized and there was a lot of meaningful conversation. Some great ideas were brought up and I’m looking forward to the end results.”

Vitt was also impressed with who showed up, people representing all sectors, including a group of high school students, who she noted seemed happy to be there.

“They weren’t there under duress,” she laughed.

“They weren’t there as part of a final assignment for school. They wanted to be there because this is their community.”

The Vital Signs 2.0 report will be out in September.