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## **BOOK REVIEW**

# **Terry Kading, editor, NO STRAIGHT LINES: Local Leadership and the Path from Government to Governance in Small Cities, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2018, p. 308**

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The book **NO STRAIGHT LINES: Local Leadership and the Path from Government to Governance in Small Cities** is a scientific reference in the field of quality of life in small towns. The work is dedicated „purpose of this collection is to expose how these leadership initiatives have and continue to fortify – often unknowingly – the equality of quality of life in one small city, Kamloops, British Columbia”. (p. 3)

The volume authors have extensive experience in quality of life studies at the local level.

The idea of leadership and learning is emphasized, according to which local initiatives need to be developed primarily by local actors who understand the context very well and can prioritize both the needs and the allocation of resources.

*The most visible forms of leadership are understood as being driven by the local “pro-growth coalition,” a combination of developers, property owners, professionals, tradespeople, and businesses acting in concert with the local government to ensure the continuous expansion of the city.* (p. 3)

*This collection expands on the concept of quality of life to encompass equality of quality of life, a new perspective comprised of less recognized but critical components that ensure the health and vitality of urban life – particularly in the small city, where the structures and capacities of local government are more circumscribed than in large urban centres* (p. 4)

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The structure of the paper is complex and its chapters describe and analyse both the theoretical and methodological elements (Møller & Huschka, 2009, Glatzer 2015, Tonon, 2015) as well as the practical and practical ones: Promoting –Community Leadership and Learning” on Social Challenges: Government of Canada Homelessness Initiatives and the Small City of Kamloops, British Columbia; –What a Difference a Shower Can Make”; No Straight Lines: Using Creativity as a Method to Fight Homelessness; The Kamloops Public Produce Project—A Story of Place, Partnerships, and Proximity in an Edible Garden Setting; The Kamloops Adult Learners Society: Leadership through Organic Partnerships and Knowledge Support in the Small City, The Tranquille Oral History Project: Reflections on a Community-Engaged Research Initiative in Kamloops, British Columbia, Leadership Initiatives and Community-Engaged Research: Explorations and Critical Insights on –Leadership and Learning” in the Small City of Kamloops.

Chapter 1 Promoting –Community Leadership and Learning” on Social Challenges: Government of Canada Homelessness Initiatives and the Small City of Kamloops, British Columbia”

Previous measures to reduce the number of homeless people have not yielded the expected results, and therefore a rethink of policies was needed to combine measures at the federal level with those at the local level.

*With an inadequate response from the provinces to this off-loading of responsibility in housing and social support, the Government of Canada returned with a new and revised funding model to address homelessness – a model that placed the onus on local communities to assume a leadership role in addressing an emerging homelessness crisis. (p. 35)*

A new implementation mechanism has been built up with very well-defined decision levels and action that has led to much better results in Kamloops, British Columbia.

In chapter 2 –What a Difference a Shower Can Make” s presented a project that has set up a special shower room for homeless people and how this facility has helped to improve the quality of life of these people. In a wider context homeless people went to the table in better and more confident conditions.

It is also noted that researchers support the strengthening of the relationship between learning and quality of life at the local level.

–are exploring the relationships between leadership, learning, and quality of life in small city settings *and* the value and contribution of our academic skill sets to this process” (p. 72-73)

The chapter 3 –focuses on the initial planning stages of a community-engaged theatre and research project involving NSL in collaboration with homeless and marginally housed individuals” (p. 99)

NSL is one of several initiatives on homelessness resulting from a partnership between the United Way, Thompson Rivers University (TRU), and the Kamloops Homelessness Action Plan (HAP).(p 101)

An interesting project evaluation is carried out which highlights the results of the collaboration between several partners and the benefits of the integrated approach.

In chapter 4 was described „grassroots-initiated urban agriculture project introduced in Kamloops, British Columbia, in 2011. As one of the first urban agriculture projects of its kind in Canada, the “Public Produce Project” interrupted the prescribed logic of a downtown urban space by creating an innovative response to issues of sustainability and food production at the local level. It was Kamloops’ first fully public garden project, and it transformed a derelict urban lot into a fertile garden oasis. (p. 145)

The defining element of this chapter is that the researcher was involved in all phases of project development and implementation: design, partnership creation, implementation and evaluation.

*In chapter 5, after situating the organization in the context of the third-age learning movement, examines the motivation for its creation, its leadership and structure, the motivation of its students, and the community partnerships – particularly the extensive but unofficial relationship with Thompson Rivers University – that KALS has established. (p. 175)*

The lessons learned from this initiative are: the elderly were involved in coordinating and running the project, the participants in the course were also trainers, the length of the relatively low courses and the synthetic modules, the provision of courses for small groups that increased the interactivity

Quality and *equality of quality of life* are widely accepted as being fostered by third-age learning (p. 189)

In chapter 6, *was reflected on the development of one public history initiative in Kamloops, British Columbia: the Tranquille Oral History Project (TOHP). Established for a two-year period beginning in June 2012, the TOHP involved representatives from private industry, the non-profit sector, and the university (p. 215)*

This paper is the result, on the one hand, of the contribution of some specialists with experience in the field and, on the other hand, of the systematic work done in the field of quality of life in Canada.

## References

- Møller, V., Huschka D. (2009) *Quality of Life and the Millennium Challenge*, Springer Science + Business Media B.V
- Tonon G. Editor (2015) *Qualitative Studies in Quality of Life. Methodology and Practice*, Springer
- Glatzer W., Editor (2015), *Global Handbook of Quality of Life. Exploration of Well-Being of Nations and Continents*, Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London