

Community-driven HIA
and
the PATH Process

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Empowering People – Ensuring Health
Plenary Presentation

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PATH
People Assessing
Their Health

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**People Assessing
Their Health**

**A network of groups
and individuals
sharing ideas and
resources to build
healthy communities
in northeastern
Nova Scotia, Canada.**

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PATH Network

- **Universities, community groups, Public Health Services, interested individuals**
- **Based in eastern Canada (Nova Scotia)**
- **Work extends to other parts of Canada, India, Australia and beyond**

Community-driven HIA

- **Based on the belief that:**
 - **people at the community level know a lot about what makes and keeps their community healthy**
- **Lay knowledge / community expertise / civic intelligence, etc.**

Community-driven HIA:

- **A facilitated process:**
 - **Use story-telling and analysis to build on people's experiences**
 - **Name the broad determinants of health**
 - **Create a “Vision of a Healthy Community”**
 - **Create their own unique CHIAT (tool)**
 - **Use the CHIAT to do HIA from a community perspective**

PATH Process
of storytelling, visioning,
naming factors that
affect health

Use the tool to conduct
Community health
impact assessments



Results in a
Community health
impact assessment “tool”
(CHIAT)

Case Study:

Keppoch-Beaver Mountain (KBM) Project

- **Four season recreation project**
- **Alpine and Nordic skiing; hiking trails; interpretive centre; restaurant facilities; parking for 400 cars; etc.**
- **Projected cost: \$ 28.7 million (Cdn)**

Background

- **Rural northeast part of Nova Scotia**
- **Town of 5,000 surrounded by a rural area of 15,000 people**
- **Major employers:**
 - **St. Francis Xavier University**
 - **Regional Hospital**
- **Farming, fishing, forestry**

Context:

- **KBM Project proposed and promoted by local government (Antigonish County)**
- **Severely divided the community**
- **Proponents: economic development; increased physical activity**
- **Questioners: no expropriation of land; concerned about size/scale of the project; environmental impact**

Using CHIA with KBM

- **Local government invited us to use CHIA**
- **14 participants (one for each of 10 electoral districts plus 4 for balance)**
- **6 hour commitment (two 3-hour sessions)**
- **Used existing CHIAT from 2002**

Results

- **Report presented to local government including:**
 - **Discussion of potential positive and negative impacts**
 - **Recommendations**
- **Expropriation dropped**
- **Further decisions to be made**

Preliminary findings

- **Local government more aware of:**
 - the determinants of health
 - their role in developing healthy public policy
- **Concerned citizens felt heard**
- **CHIA participants more aware of the broad meaning of health and community well-being**

Preliminary findings

- **Positive evaluation from participants**
 - *I thought the process lead to calm, deliberate dialogue*
 - *The experience as a whole was very educational and informative. While doing the CHIA you gain a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. I found it to be a wonderfully enlightening experience and look forward to participating in another one.*
 - *I thought that people were respectful and that this was a learning process for everyone*

Preliminary findings

- *I have become a big fan of CHIAs. I've always tended to think along those lines regarding the impact of development on communities. To have a structured way to do these assessments means that the chances of overlooking some impacts, either positive or negative, are dramatically reduced.*
- *I thought that the CHIA process was wonderful. It was inclusive. Non-threatening. Everyone was given a chance to speak. I was totally impressed by the process.*

Conclusion

- The PATH Process and community-driven health impact assessment:
 - Empowers individuals and communities
 - Encourages respectful dialogue
 - Provides a way for community voice(s) to become part of decision-making

Thank You!

PATH

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