



Continuity of Local Reporting: Lessons from Canada

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The Influence of Information/Indicators

- Change decision making
- Change individual behaviour
- Individual or organizational learning
- Citizen empowerment
- Increase legitimacy of information provider

Reporting Formats



- Environmental Reporting
 - State of the Environment Reports
 - municipalities, watersheds
- Community Reporting
 - Quality of Life Reports
 - Sustainability Reports
 - State of the City Reports
 - Healthy Community Reports
 - Others

Methodology



- Reports collected 1998-2001
- 26 State of the Environment Reports
- 16 Community Reports
- Personal interviews with report authors
- Participant observation

Reporting Organizations

- Local government department(s) (SOER, CR)
- Social planning councils (CR)
- Community-based group(s) (SOER, CR)

How Used? Impacts?

- Source of information
- Prioritize local government resources/agency funding
- Setting the agenda/lobbying
- Modify existing programs
- Introduce new programs
- Inform policy documents
- Identify data gaps
- Introduce new organizational structures
- Corporate learning

Continuity of Indicator Reporting

Institutionalize indicators

- Linked to update of official plan, strategic plan
- Follow-up with action
 - New funding priorities
 - New programs/policies
- OTHERS?

Action



- “The fact that you are measuring something, even if it is very important, doesn’t mean that anyone will care about it. And even if your indicator can make people care about what you are measuring, it is a big step getting from concern to action. You need to get the right people to care and then need somehow to compel them to act.”
- Dean Kubani, Santa Monica Sustainable City Program Coordinator

Action?

- “People thought that all we had to do was just identify the indicators and publish them and that somehow everything else would just happen by itself, but of course nothing has happened.”
 - Community report coordinator, June 14, 2000

Barriers to Continuity

- Report served its purpose
 - Legitimacy for organization
- Organizational change
- Personnel change
- Money
- Competing reports
- Lack of ownership – by community, government

Barriers to Continuity

- Disappointing results
 - Nothing 'exciting'
 - Internal politics
 - Lack of data, poor indicators
 - Poor media coverage
 - Initial objectives not achieved
- OTHERS?