

Community - *driven*
Health Impact Assessment
~ CHIA ~

Vibrant Communities Symposium

Pre-symposium Workshop

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PATH Network

PATH

People Assessing

Their Health

Presentation outline

- Origins and evolution of People Assessing Their Health (PATH)
- What is unique about community-driven HIA?
- A quick look at the PATH process
- Community-driven HIA case study
- Questions and discussion

PATH – Where did it come from?

- Mid-1990s – restructuring of Nova Scotia health care system
- Decision-making being handed over from “regional” to district and local levels
- People in northeastern NS concerned about capacity-building at the local level:
 - Antigonish Women’s Resource Centre
 - Extension Department, StFX University
 - Public Health Services (Eastern Region)

PATH origins cont'd...

- **PATH Project I** (1995-96) — funded by Health Canada
 - 3 communities in northeastern NS
 - community development / health promotion / capacity-building
- **PATH Project II** (2000-2002) — funded by Health Canada
 - community health board (CHB) – Antigonish, NS
 - locate CHIA within an on-going organization
- **PATH Project III** (2008-2009) — with assistance from the National Coordinating Centre for Healthy Public Policy (NCCCHPP)
 - using CHIA to influence healthy public policy

PATH origins cont'd...

- **PATH Network** – a network of groups and individuals sharing ideas and resources to build healthy communities in northeastern Nova Scotia
- Through the **Coady International Institute**, St. Francis Xavier University, PATH has worked in:
 - India
 - Ghana
- 3-day training session for community development people in Saskatoon Health Region

What is unique about community-driven HIA?

- Community members develop their own unique health impact assessment tool (CHIAT)
- The assessment tool reflects the values and priorities of the community
- Use their assessment tool (CHIAT) to assess a project, program or policy

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)



PATH Process

- Facilitated group reflection with members of the community
- Uses the “story-dialogue method” (Labonte and Feather, 1996)
 - people reflect on their experience of “health” through a sharing of personal stories
 - collectively analyze one of the experiences

What

do you see happening
in this story?
(Description)



Now what

can we do about it?
(Action)

Why

do you think it happened?
(Explanation)



So what

does this tell us
about the factors that affect health?
(Synthesis)

PATH

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PATH Process

- Results in naming the determinants of health
- Create their “vision of a healthy community”
- Based on the vision, list all of the factors needed for the vision to be realized
- Organize the factors into a check-list
- **Voila! – A unique CHIAT is born!**

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Results in a
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PATH

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Use of PATH and CHIA

PATH Process:

- PATH I – 3 NS communities
- PATH II –Community Health Board
- 2 more NS communities
- Coady Institute training
- Health Canada staff training
- Saskatoon Health Region
- Community groups in India and Ghana
- **2011: 3-week certificate at Coady Institute, StFXU**

CHIA:

- Funding cuts to a women's centre and an adult literacy organization
- No-smoking by-law
- Sunday shopping issue
- Paid parking at a hospital
- Affordable housing project
- Recreational project (KBM)
- Tax increase in NS budget

Community HIA Case Study

- Keppoch-Beaver Mountain Project (KBMP)
- Four-season recreation project in rural northeastern Nova Scotia
 - Nordic and alpine skiing
 - hiking, nature walks, etc.
- \$27 million
 - “Summit Centre” at top of mountain
 - parking for 400
 - new roads, etc.

Case Study cont'd . . .

- KBM project sponsored by municipal government (Antigonish County)
- Significant citizen opposition due to cost, expropriation of land, disruption of rural life
- Significant citizen support due to health benefits, tourism, jobs, etc.

Case Study cont'd . . .

- Enter \Rightarrow community health impact assessment
- Proposed by both citizens and the District Health Authority
- Used CHIAT developed by the local Community Health Board in 2002
- Process overseen by Antigonish Regional Development Authority working with PATH Network

Case Study cont'd . . .

- 14 citizens (one from each of 10 electoral districts plus 4 to balance)
- Commitment to 6 hours over two nights
- Facilitated by PATH Network members
- Report prepared by PATH Network members

Case Study cont'd . . .

Results:

- High praise 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*
 - *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.*

PATH

People Assessing

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Case Study cont'd . . .

Results:

- Effect on municipal government:
 - Council received the report
 - 3 months later, announced there would be no expropriation of land
 - 8 months later, announced that project was being cancelled due to lack of community support and funding issues

Conclusion

- Community-driven HIA brings the voice of the community forward in decision-making – through the value lens and priorities of the community itself
- The PATH Process – with its focus on capacity-building and empowerment – is just as important as the subsequent use of the tool
- Community-driven HIA empowers those who participate in the assessment
- CHIA's influence on decision-makers is not yet clear

Conclusion

Health impact assessment may be highly technical and require sophisticated technology and expertise. But it can also be a simple, highly practical process, accessible to ordinary people, and one that helps a community come to grips with local circumstances that need changing for better health.

Maurice Mittelmark, 2001

Promoting social responsibility for health:

Health impact assessment and healthy public policy at the community level.

International Journal of Health Promotion, 16(3):269-274

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