

# GPI News

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### Special Points of Interest

- GPI Atlantic has 5 current research projects in a variety of subject areas.
- GPI Atlantic continues to play a leading role in the development of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW).
- GPI Atlantic plans to develop headline indicators for Nova Scotia based on our past and current research.
- GPI Atlantic is a member of the newly formed Nova Scotia Education for Sustainable Development Working Group.

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## GPI News is back by popular demand!

GPI Atlantic is resuming publication of its quarterly newsletter, the GPI News.

Our last issue was published in January 2004. Since that time, we have been extremely busy on a number of exciting projects and initiatives, so there is lots to tell you about!

In 2005, the time and energy of GPI Atlantic's staff went mostly into the planning and follow up for the *ReThinking Development* Conference we hosted in Antigonish, NS in June 2005. This conference brought together over 450 delegates from 33 countries around the world to hear about some of the best models of socially, economically, and environmentally responsible development. For more conference details, see our website, at

[www.gpiatlantic.org/conference/index.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/conference/index.htm).

In November 2005, GPI Atlantic hosted a follow up workshop to the June conference. This workshop, called *Building Sustainable Development*, was focused on taking the inspiration of the *ReThinking Development* Conference and turning it into action here in Atlantic Canada.

Since last fall, we have been busy with projects stemming from the workshop. These include working with The Natural Step (see p. 2 for more) and the Ecological Footprint. These projects are a direct extension of our research work on the Genuine Progress Index, as they focus on the practical *application* of the values and ideas in the GPI.

In addition to all of these projects, our research work continues to be one of our core roles. In October 2005 we released the Energy Accounts for the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index. The Energy report, like all GPI Atlantic reports, can be downloaded free of charge from our website, at [www.gpiatlantic.org/research.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/research.htm).

Other research is currently underway on agriculture, debt and assets, education, sustainable transportation, economic security and more. We expect to release a number of reports in the next year.

There are lots of other new developments and current projects to tell you about . . . Read on for more information!

## The benefits of membership

GPI Atlantic has a new and improved membership policy and is looking for new members!

Now, for only \$10, you can become a life-time member of GPI Atlantic. As a member you will:

- receive the *GPI News*
- receive the publication *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing*
- receive advance an-

nouncements about events, report releases, and more!

- be able to participate in our activities by attending and voting at our Annual General Meeting (AGM), held every year.

Members and donors play a vital role in supporting GPI Atlantic, in particular in funding projects that would otherwise not have hap-

pened, and in contributing to our core operating costs.

We are committed to engaging and interacting with members and keeping them informed about our activities.

To become a member, please fill out our online form, [www.gpiatlantic.org/society/join.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/society/join.htm).

## The Natural Step for a Sustainable Atlantic Canada

In November 2005, GPI Atlantic hosted a workshop called *Building Sustainable Development*. This workshop was a follow-up to the *ReThinking Development* Conference hosted in June 2005, and was intended to develop some specific actions that Atlantic Canadians could take here in our own region to make us leaders in environmentally and socially responsible development.

At that workshop, The Natural Step (TNS) emerged as a framework that would be very well suited for use in Atlantic Canada. Both the Town of Wolfville and the Halifax Regional Municipality are already



Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt,  
Founder of The Natural Step

using The Natural Step framework in different ways.

The TNS framework is a science and systems-based approach to organizational planning for sustainability. It provides a practical set of design criteria that can be used to direct social, environmental, and economic actions.

The Natural Step framework is now being used internationally by hundreds of organizations, including companies such as Ikea and Interface Inc., government departments, universities, municipalities, and small- and medium-sized businesses in their respective journeys to sustainability.

As a first step in this project, GPI Atlantic commissioned Dr. Peter Eaton and Dr. Janet Eaton to write a primer on The

Natural Step and its specific applicability to Atlantic Canada. This report is available from GPI Atlantic and will be posted online soon.

On September 22, GPI Atlantic and partners hosted a lunch and lecture with the founder of The Natural Step, Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt. Details of Dr. Robèrt's presentation are posted on our website, at [www.gpiatlantic.org/robert.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/robert.htm)

We are planning to build on the visit from this inspiring speaker by launching an early adopters network in Atlantic Canada. This will encourage the implementation of sustainable practices in the region, and will create local success stories that other communities and organizations can build on. For more information, please contact us.

## GPI Atlantic becomes member of the Nova Scotia Education for Sustainable Development Working Group

In early 2006 GPI Atlantic was one of the lead organizations on a proposal to form a Nova Scotia Education for Sustainable Development Working Group (NSESDWG). Our involvement fits with our mandate of promoting education that will help Nova Scotians better understand the relationships between the environmental, social and economic aspects of life. GPI Atlantic is now an active member of the Working Group.

The Nova Scotia Education for Sustainable Development Working Group will support systemic change within the formal, non-formal and informal education systems by working with representatives from government, NGOs, all areas of education, youth, industry, and academia.

The Working Group initiative is linked with the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

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For more information, please contact the Working Group Coordinator, Andrea Flowers, at [esd\\_novascotia@magma.ca](mailto:esd_novascotia@magma.ca).

The next NSESDWG meeting is set for Nov. 21.

## Recent GPI Atlantic events

Below is a list of some of the events that GPI Atlantic has organized or participated in over the past few months. For details, see our website, [www.gpiatlantic.org/events.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/events.htm)

In the last month GPI Atlantic has presented "**The Cost of Tobacco in Nova Scotia: An Update**" at the Nova Scotia Tobacco Control Summit; "**Measuring Genuine**

**Progress**", as part of Acadia University's School of Business 2006 Distinguished Business Speaker series; "**New Directions for Health Policy in Nova Scotia: The GENUINE Progress Index**", as part of Dalhousie University's Health Law and Policy Seminar Series; and a presentation was also made to government officials in **Newfoundland and Labrador** to assist them in the

development of their new Sustainable Development Act.

In addition, in September, GPI Atlantic also co-organized "**Sustainability: The Leadership Challenge**", a lunch and lecture by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, and "**Child Honoring: The Compassion Revolution**", a presentation and lecture by Raffi Cavoukian

## Canadian Index of Wellbeing releases first research reports

On November 8, at a working conference in Toronto, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) will release its first research reports. The CIW seeks to provide Canadians with a clear, valid, and regular accounting of the things that matter to them and the genuine progress of Canada. GPI Atlantic is playing a lead role in the development of the CIW.

The CIW is organized into 7 domains:

Time Use, Living Standards, Healthy Populations, Ecosystem Health, Education, Community Vitality, and Governance. The first two reports to be released will be on the Living Standards and

*The first CIW research reports on Living Standards and Healthy Populations will be release in Toronto on November 8 & 9.*

Healthy Populations domain.

These reports will provide a broad overview of how we are doing at the national and provincial levels in these two areas. For each domain, 10 headline indicators are selected, but within each report a wide range of data and issues are examined.

In addition to the two domain reports on health and living standards, other

research will also be presented. This includes a Fact Sheet on the Ecological Footprint (part of the Ecosystem Health domain), an analysis of the

Ecological Footprint by income (linking the Ecosystem Health and Living Standards domains), and two papers on the development of a composite index.

A composite index means that all of the CIW results are rolled up into one single number (like the Consumer Price Index for example). The development of composite index is a complex challenge, and the question of whether or not to do so is still open. The research papers presented at the Working Conference will suggest two possible methods for developing this composite.

For more information, see [www.atkinsonfoundation.ca/ciw](http://www.atkinsonfoundation.ca/ciw).

## GPI Atlantic in the news

GPI Atlantic has been in the news a number of times in recent months. In some cases, this is a result of a press release we have put out, but in most cases, the articles reflect journalists' knowledge and use of our past work.

Our website ([www.gpiatlantic.org/media.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/media.htm)) contains links to all of the media coverage that mentions GPI Atlantic. New articles are posted as they are published. If you see an

article that mentions GPI Atlantic, please send it to our attention!

Here is a sampling of recent articles:

- October 15, 2006, [The day we start eating planet Earth](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- October 12, 2006, [Hiking hills, and making public policy](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- October 2, 2006, [Clearly, we could be recycling more](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- September 9, 2006, [Stora Enso debacle: a failure of forest policy?](#), The Chronicle-Herald
- July 2006, [Measuring Genuine Progress](#), Impact Magazine, New Zealand

## Current GPI Atlantic research projects

GPI Atlantic currently has 5 major research projects in the works, and we are also working on the development of a new GPI Atlantic database.

Todd Litman and Aviva Savelson are working on the Sustainable Transportation report, expected to be released in November. Aviva is also working on the GPI Atlantic headline indicators project, and the new GPI Atlantic database.

Jennifer Scott is working on the completion of the Agriculture Accounts, including reports on Water Quality and Capacity, Social Capital, Livestock Productivity, Land Capacity and Input Use Efficiency.

Andrew Sharpe, Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, is pre-

paring a report on Economic Security. Kimberley Tran, economist at APEC, is working on the Debt and Assets report.

Karen Hayward and Linda Panno are working on the Education report, which will also be for the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

The Agriculture, Education, and Debt and Assets reports will be released in the spring of 2007.



## GPIATLANTIC'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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GPI Atlantic, in partnership with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, also produces a colour tabloid magazine called *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing*. If you become a member of GPI Atlantic, you will receive a free hard copy of Reality Check.

This magazine is also accessible online, at [www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck/index.htm](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck/index.htm)

GPI Atlantic's **vision** is that decisions made by governments, businesses and other organizations in Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world, are based on criteria that properly value social, economic and environmental assets.

GPI Atlantic's **mission** is to conduct research on the Genuine Progress Index, which measures environmental, economic and social progress and wealth, and to assist leaders in business, government and communities in using the GPI perspective in their decision-making.

For more information about GPI Atlantic, please contact:  
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**Take a look at our new  
and improved website!**

**[www.gpiatlantic.org](http://www.gpiatlantic.org)**

## GPI Atlantic to develop headline indicators for Nova Scotia

From its inception ten years ago, GPI Atlantic has been dedicated to producing detailed research of the highest quality on each of the components and indicators included in the Genuine Progress Index (GPI).

This focus on research has resulted in GPI Atlantic's reputation for excellent work, which is reflected in the organization's lead role in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and in the number of requests we receive to participate in a variety of different projects, to replicate our work for other jurisdictions, and to advise and consult on indicator development in many contexts both nationally and internationally.

Work is now complete on 15 of the 20 components that make up the GPI. The remaining five components, education, debt and wealth, economic security, time use, and sustainable

transportation, are expected to be completed in the next year.

We have now begun to think about the next phase in the development of the Genuine Progress Index.

In February 2006, GPI Atlantic researchers, past and present, met to begin the process of developing our own headline indicators that will be easy for GPI Atlantic to update and for the public to access. These headline indicators will summarize and integrate key results from all of the components of the Genuine Progress Index.

Once the headline indicators are developed, GPI Atlantic can release regular

updates as new data become available, provide regular GPI-type commentaries on headline issues, and give a new emphasis to effective communications that can be an instrument of real - and positive - change to improve the wellbeing of Nova Scotians and to make this province a model of sustainability and responsible practices.

Regularly updated headline indicators will really help GPI Atlantic to bring the GPI into regular public discourse, and onto the policy agenda.

Look for the headline indicators report in 2007.



GPI Atlantic current and former researchers.  
Left to Right :Anne Monette, Ron Colman, Aviva Savelson, Kyla Milne, Linda Pannozzo, Colin Dodds, Jennifer Scott, Sally Walker, Karen Hayward, Raymond Parker