
PART IV

COMMUNITY GPI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

*Survey Development Phase Final Report
Kings County Nova Scotia*

August 2000

COMMUNITY GPI DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Survey Development Phase Final Report Kings County Nova Scotia

August 2000

This project was undertaken to assist the community of Kings County to design and prepare to administer a comprehensive survey questionnaire. The survey is intended to help the community identify what is important and to set benchmarks against which the community can measure genuine progress in its efforts for community and individual betterment. This phase of the project also included a preliminary survey and data collection for Agriculture and Land Use in the County

Prepared For Participating Partners

HRDC Kentville
Canadian Rural Partnership
Kings CED Agency

Prepared by

Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society
966 Prince Street (P.O.Box 181)
Truro NS, B2N SC1 (902) 897-1167

In Association with

GPI Atlantic
P.O. Box 489,
RR#1 Tantallon NS. B0J 3J0 (902) 823-1944

And

Citizens of Kings County

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Atlantic Region Office of HRDC, together with the Atlantic Office of the Canada Rural Secretariat provided the funds for Phase 1 of this project. This phase successfully identified Kings County as the test pilot community and brought Kings County volunteers together to select the priority sectors, help prepare a work plan and organize the work groups to develop the questionnaire.

The Kentville regional office of HRDC and the Canada Rural Partnership provided the primary funding for the project as outlined in this report. The Canadian Rural Partnership is designed to support rural community development by adopting new approaches and practices to respond to rural development issues and concerns

Kings CED Agency provided its good offices to bring the community interests together and provided meeting space and the services of Andrea Caven to organize meetings, prepare minutes, develop and maintain mailing lists and perform other valuable administrative services to the project.

Central Kings Community Health Board provided a financial contribution to initiate the community information program.

The Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society and GPI Atlantic gratefully acknowledge this support.

The **Report** was prepared by Leonard Poetschke, Project Co-ordinator for NSCCDS

Preface

Economic Growth -- an inadequate measurement of well-being

Our growth rates make no distinction between economic activity that creates benefit and that which causes harm. More crime, more pollution, more accidents, more sickness, more natural disasters all make the economy grow, simply because more money is being spent. In fact, sickness is far better for the economy than health, because sick people cause more money to be spent on doctors, drugs and hospitals. The *Exxon Valdez* contributed far more to the U.S. GDP by spilling its oil than if it had delivered its oil safely to port. And the Littleton Colorado massacre fuelled the economy by forcing schools to invest heavily in video surveillance equipment and security guards.

While our economic growth measures count many harmful things as "progress," they completely ignore genuine contributions to well being, like voluntary work, simply because money is not exchanged. If we hire a stranger to look after our child, the economy grows. If we care for our own child, it has no value in our current measures of progress.

The economy can also grow even while inequality and poverty increase. It grows if we work longer hours: free time has no value in measures of progress based on the GDP. The economy even grows if we produce shoddy goods that have to be replaced more often; and it grows if we produce more waste. Scientists warn that the only biological organism that shares the economic dogma of limitless growth is the cancer cell.

Genuine Progress Index -- a people-centred measurement of well-being

Economic growth rates are an inadequate and misleading measure of well being and prosperity. Fortunately, there are better ways of measuring progress. The Genuine Progress Index (GPI) assesses the health of our natural resources and environmental quality; it assigns explicit value to *unpaid* as well as to paid work; and it counts sickness, crime, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions as costs not gains to the economy. Unlike the GDP, in which "more" is always "better," less crime and less pollution make the GPI go up. Greater equity and more free time make the GPI go up, as does greater livelihood security, better health, and improved educational opportunities.

The Genuine Progress Index can be a more accurate and comprehensive measure of progress than we currently have. It has the potential to change the policy agenda to reflect social, environmental, and long-term concerns.

At present we have no way of knowing whether we are really leaving the world a better place for our children or not, or of knowing whether we are better off now than we were 20 years ago. Certainly we have more "stuff," -- more cars, more home entertainment equipment, bigger houses. But if we are concerned about the natural world our children will inherit, about the strength of their communities, about their health and security, we need better measures of progress. The GPI is dedicated to that task.

GPI in Kings County

We currently gauge our well being and prosperity according to economic growth rates. The more we buy and sell, the more rapidly the economy will grow, and the "better off" we are assumed to be. The more fish we catch, the more fossil fuels we burn, the more rapidly we deplete our natural resources, the faster the economy will grow. The question is, are we as a society "better off" in the long run?

We need to step back and ask ourselves what our goals and aspirations are; what makes us happy; what makes our work meaningful and our farms viable; and what makes our communities healthy? It is good that Kings County has a strong economy, but it is also important to make sure that the economy is functioning in a way that allows citizens to realize their most important goals. Quality of life factors into the equation. We want employment, but also work satisfaction and reasonable income levels. When we know what things really improve our well being, we can use them as new indicators of progress.

Evaluating existing social, economic and environmental assets and transactions can help provide a sound information base to modify and broaden community development strategies. The process can assist a community to develop a set of annual benchmarks of progress – annual report cards that help the community build on, nurture and protect its greatest strengths, overcome apparent weaknesses, and revise development strategies where necessary to meet aspirations for greater, long-term well-being and sustainability.

The purpose is not only to develop a useful "product" for Kings County. The *process itself* should be an enjoyable and challenging educational tool – a way for the community to learn more about itself, to review the legacy it is leaving for its children, and to discuss the society it wants to create in the new millennium. It is an opportunity to share in developing the benchmarks and measures of progress toward the future the community genuinely wishes to inhabit.

The project is designated as a pilot for rural communities. The GPI is still in its development stage at the provincial level, designated as a pilot project for the country by Statistics Canada, and scheduled for completion by the end of 2000. But the keenest interest has actually been expressed at the community level. Kings County volunteered itself as a "guinea pig" in experimenting with this community-level application. One major objective of this project is, therefore, to learn from mistakes so that other communities can build on the Kings County experience. Training community development workers from other parts of Nova Scotia and the region in the new measurement tools can itself provide an economic development opportunity for Kings County.

Executive Summary

Objectives

The Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society, in partnership with GPI Atlantic, has set out to develop and test a prototype ***Community Genuine Progress Index*** and to organize its use as a powerful tool for communities striving to gain greater control over their own destiny. This part of the project was to design, test and organize application of a comprehensive survey to enable communities to gain knowledge about their values and aspirations and to establish benchmarks against which to measure progress. Also as part of this phase, an extensive and separate questionnaire on land use and agriculture was developed and tested with 8 selected farms participating.

Survey Development

Strong volunteer interest and response among citizens in Kings County Nova Scotia led to its selection as the test community. Volunteers from some 40 local organizations participated in selecting the economic, environmental and social components to be included and formed the work groups that, with the professional support of GPI Atlantic, developed the core elements of the questionnaire. Professionals in the fields of justice, health, education and statistics consider the questionnaire unique in the information it will generate and in providing the opportunity for tracing critical interrelationships among these components of life in the community.

The general survey questionnaire seeks information on seven elements of community life considered to be of priority concern by the Kings County plenary group:

• Well Being	• Peace and Personal Security
• Health	• Land Use and Agriculture
• Volunteer Activity	• Ecological Footprint
• Employment/Underemployment	•

General questions relating to agriculture in the community are included in the section on Employment/Underemployment

Both the general and the agriculture surveys were subjected to intensive validation review with Statistics Canada, Agriculture Canada and Nova Scotia Agriculture. Also, under the guidance of Statistics Canada, the questionnaires were field-tested and, with the assistance of HRDC and Statistics Canada, valid sample size and random sample selection of respondents will assure the integrity of the results.

Land Use and Agriculture

Agriculture is a key industry in Kings County and, with the support of the Canadian Rural Partnership, county citizens decided to design and test a questionnaire for this sector in addition to the agriculture questions incorporated in the general questionnaire. A pilot test was carried out to determine what genuine progress in agriculture would look like.

A summary of the indicators and values is presented in the report. The main components are: 1) Work and Employment Capacity; 2) Return on Investment; 3) Resource Base Capacity and Environmental Quality; and 4) Organizational Capacity and Community Infrastructure.

Fundamentally, the agriculture report is about the viability of farming in Kings County. Genuine progress is equated with increased viability. If farming is to be truly viable, it must be sustainable in the long run, based on much more than gross farm receipts. The survey reveals a (non-representative) consensus of viability based on experience and knowledge, fair prices for farm products, understanding relationships with neighbours and consumers, work satisfaction, a vibrant local economy, soil quality, and ecological balance.- the components which make up the key indicators discussed in the report.

The GPI soils and agriculture survey has developed a number of suggested new indicators that can help the farmers of Kings County assess if genuine progress is being made in their sector. Using this information as a base, the next step, scheduled to start in the fall after harvest, will be to facilitate extensive discussions among farmers and farm organizations intended: to review the results, highlight key issues and draw consumers and others into discussion; amend the questionnaire and extend the survey; and set in place a continuing process of measuring genuine progress.

Community Involvement

Apart from the extended participation of volunteers in the preparation of the survey instrument, a number of volunteers were given training in the concepts of the GPI, its application to community decision making and the objectives and procedures of the project. These people were available as speakers to community organizations and citizen groups to explain the program and to solicit financial and volunteer support for the survey portion of the project. Financial participation of the East and Central Kings Community Health Boards and the Kentville Rotary Club resulted from this activity before it was discontinued pending decisions on future funding and re-organization of survey procedures.

As part of this initiative, a local society has now been formed and is organizing to take charge of the survey itself and to begin building the citizen base to carry the future responsibility to:

- Conduct the survey
- Organize for continuing analysis of results
- Sustain the development and expansion of the community GPI in Kings County
- Organize for future measures of progress in the county;

- Develop the links throughout the community to make findings available to agencies, organizations, governments and business whose decisions and actions impact on life in the county.

For the future, as part of the overall project, the Nova Scotia Society, with the continued participation of GPI Atlantic, will be documenting the experience, providing a manual for community participation and supporting initiatives in other communities to launch their own community GPI. Initial survey work was started in Kings county and the full survey is under way in the Glace Bay area, primarily under the sponsorship of the Crime Prevention Division of Justice Canada, using the questionnaire developed in Kings. It is hoped that the survey results from the next phase of the Kings County project will be analysed in conjunction with the Glace Bay results to allow comparisons between the two communities. The information and comparisons should provide guides for action by both communities.

Summary of Findings

General Survey

While subject to amendment from experience in application, the general survey as presented, is a valid instrument for use by any community concerned about the sectors included. With intensive volunteer community effort, the survey can be modified, adapted or expanded to serve specific priorities for other communities.

For valid, useable results, however, competent professional advice and assistance is critical to help frame the questions and structure the questionnaire: a) to be valid statistically; b) to be readily understandable to respondents; and c) to be able to develop the interrelationships among the economic, social and environmental components of individual, family and community life – the essence of the GPI.

Land Use and Agriculture Survey

The tested questionnaire and the unique data analysis led by the findings have demonstrated a powerful tool for local development planning by the agricultural community in Kings County and related interests. Its value lies in its potential use by the agriculture community in local planning and in developing common action and policy positions to advance genuine progress.

To sustain this value over time, however, will require determined organization within the farm community to: adjust and apply the questionnaire to a representative sample of farms; set the benchmarks; organize continuing measurement and analysis; and ensure emerging findings are made widely available within the community and to those whose actions and policies impinge upon the community.

The usefulness of this work to other communities, at this stage, is entirely dependent upon the energy, commitment and initiative of the local agriculture sector to adapt this prototype tool to their own circumstances and to search for commonalities in the results.

Community Ownership

The volunteer energy generated to develop the questionnaire and begin the process of wide community understanding and participation is eloquent testimony to the resonance of the GPI concept as a new and powerful tool in support of community betterment.

Much of this energy, however, was dissipated by the long delay in committed funding and by shifts in direction from lessons learned. While there would be no project without the continued commitment of a few people, the community information program was virtually wasted effort and volunteers to participate in the survey itself disappeared. Any community concerned to pursue this opportunity would be well advised to carefully plan and have committed the resources to carry through at least to the information compilation phase of the initiative.

Problems notwithstanding, there is a core of dedicated citizens organizing to pick up the responsibility to carry the project forward. If they are successful and receive timely support, the efforts to date to build the questionnaire will be well rewarded. The final report on the full development project will provide a comprehensive guide to assist other communities to build and sustain this critical volunteer effort.

Community GPI Development Project Final Report – Survey Development Phase

1. Background

Development of this community survey for Kings County is part of a three-phase project for research and development of a prototype community Genuine Progress Index (GPI). Initiated by the Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society in association with GPI Atlantic, the project has two primary objectives. The first is to develop, test and present a model for other communities to use in preparing their own GPI. The second is to help the community of Kings county, through the prototype use of this tool, to gather the information needed to build a consensus on what is important to the community and to define benchmarks that can be used in the future to track progress in achieving individual and community betterment.

Phase I of the project, financed by HRDC Halifax and the Canadian Rural Secretariat, was completed in June 1999¹ This work identified Kings as the test community. With the participation of local volunteers, priority indicators were chosen for development and a work plan and project proposal to undertake this work were prepared.

The results of this work and the project proposal were presented to representatives of 11 Federal and Provincial department in July 1999. While the project was endorsed and supported by all present, only HRDC was able to commit funds and the Rural Secretariat undertook to seek funding support. The funds subsequently provided through the Canadian Rural Partnership enabled the survey preparation phase to proceed along with the preliminary survey in the agriculture sector.

Funds from HRDC, (Kentville region), were applied to support the work groups to develop the questionnaire and begin organizing to conduct the survey. While considerable work was done in the fall, the balance of the funds required was not available until March 2000, resulting in delay and loss of volunteer energy. Much of this lost time and energy has now been made up and this report reflects the extensive work that has been done to prepare the launch of the community questionnaire to some 2500 of the approximately 60,000 county residents.

¹ The Phase I report presents the organization and participation and the reports of the work groups. The Appendices include: Details of Data Needs and Sources for Agriculture; Working paper on the Application of the GPI in Kings County; and Project Plan for Phase 2. These papers are available from the Society for \$12.00 each or \$30.00 for the set.

2. General Survey Questionnaire

Preparing the Questionnaire

The primary product of this current phase of the project is a completed, validated, tested and formatted survey questionnaire and selection of a representative sample of the population.

With the support of GPI Atlantic, volunteers in work groups for each sector spent, literally, hundreds of hours developing a consensus on values to be tested, indicators to be developed and survey questions that would provide the needed information. The product of this work was a set of draft questions in the following sectors of community interest:

- Well Being
- Volunteer Activity
- Employment/Underemployment
- Peace and Personal Security
- Health
- Soils and Agriculture
- Ecological Footprint

The resulting sections were then consolidated to provide an integrated questionnaire. This draft underwent an intensive and extended interactive review with Jane Mulvihill, Senior Methodologist, Social Surveys Methods Division, Statistics Canada for validation, testing, formatting and sample selection. The final questionnaire has now been printed and, with the assistance of officers from Halifax and Kentville HRDC, the sample has been selected and distribution of the questionnaire begun.

Validating the Questionnaire

Since this is a pilot project developing instruments that can be replicated by other communities, GPI Atlantic has made every effort to ensure that the survey design phase was fully and properly completed, with expert validation at every stage. This work has generated a first-rate data collection tool that will yield results never before available at the community level in Canada. The following tasks were all successfully accomplished to bring this prototype for a community Genuine Progress Index survey to completion.

- 1) Expert review of draft questionnaire by Senior Methodologist, Jane Mulvihill, Social Survey Methods Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa. Ms Mulvihill spent many days reviewing the questionnaire in great detail, line by line and word by word, and provided outstanding feedback. There were at least six very lengthy telephone conversations with Ms Mulvilhill, spread over 10 days to review fine points of phrasing and meaning, and to re-word questions for greater clarity.
- 2) Two weeks were then spent incorporating all the Statistics Canada feedback, re-writing many questions, changing the organization of sections, revising virtually all the instructions, and completely redoing the food consumption section and time use survey.

- 3) The revised questionnaire was then field-tested. Four informal tests produced further revisions, and 24 formal tests were then conducted under actual field conditions by a team of interviewers. Length of survey, question ambiguities, respondent reactions, and usability of results were all carefully tested by a staff of four.
- 4) Two full days were then spent reviewing the test results with the staff testers/interviewers. The feedback was all incorporated into another review and iteration of the questionnaire with Statistics Canada aimed at clarifying and simplifying questions, refining the instructions further, changing the order of several questions, and so on.
- 5) At the same time, the questionnaire was reviewed by Dr. Andrew Harvey, Director of Time Use Research, Department of Economics, St. Mary's University, and president of the International Association of Time Use Research; and by Chris Jackson, in the Chief Statistician's Office, Ottawa. Both gentlemen gave detailed advice and feedback on re-formatting the time use survey and re-writing the instructions. Their feedback was incorporated into a newly designed and formatted time use survey, with an entirely new 5-page section demonstrating to respondents in sample form how the time use diary is completed.
- 6) The newly revised questionnaire was then reviewed for a second time by Jane Mulvihill, Senior Methodologist, Statistics Canada; and her detailed feedback was again incorporated into a newly revised questionnaire.
- 7) That fourth revision was then reviewed by Paul Kelly, Questionnaire Design Resource Centre, Social Survey Methods Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, for advice on formatting. Mr Kelly spent three full days reviewing every detail in the questionnaire, and sent several pages of detailed advice, on the basis of which the questionnaire was again revised line by line, with particular attention to question formatting, simplifying and clarifying instructions, and eliminating further ambiguities of phrasing.
- 8) At the same time, the food consumption section of the questionnaire was dropped and replaced, on Statistics Canada advice by a food consumption diary, which was newly designed, formatted, reviewed and revised by Jeff Wilson, of the GPI Atlantic staff.
- 9) The entire questionnaire was then re-formatted by a professional typist/graphic designer, Carol Johnstone of Windword Graphics, who also did the final layout in of the time use survey, and prepared the questionnaire in camera-ready form for the printer. Ms Johnstone also entered a number next to each check box in the entire questionnaire, so that each answer has a code-able number, to allow compatibility with data input coding procedures.
- 10) The questionnaire then went through three separate professional editing/proof-reading iterations by Dr. Irene Nowaczek, a professional editor, Anne Monette (of GPI Atlantic staff), and Ken Macdonald (GPI Atlantic). Their observations of remaining typographical errors, misplaced numbers, slight formatting improvements, punctuation improvements, and other details were incorporated by Ms. Johnstone into the final version.

- 11) During this process, the random sample for Kings County was selected, through co-operation with the Electoral Commission and HRDC, and arranged alphabetically for individuals (rather than households as originally obtained) both by name and by street address. As a result of Statistics Canada feedback, the original sample size of 1,500 was increased to 2,000 in order to allow two full cross-tabulations of data with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5%. An additional 1,500 names were obtained as back up in case of non-response, and also because of the necessity of eliciting additional respondents in the 15-18 year old age bracket.

- 12) As a final stage, Hugh Gough, senior methodologist in Statistics Canada's Social Survey Methods Division in Ottawa, assisted in the writing and design of a confidentiality and consent agreement with respondents. This document was also reviewed by Mike Pennock, Research Director, Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University, where the data will be stored on a secure computer facility.

IN SUM, all stages in the survey design phase have now been successfully completed, including expert review and validation of the data collection tool by senior Statistics Canada staff, proper field-testing of the questionnaire, extensive revisions, re-formatting and professional design of the entire questionnaire, complete redesign of the food consumption diary and time use survey sections, entry of data input code numbers, and proper and secure randomization of respondent sample.

The questionnaire is complete and ready to go into the field. Successful response will provide Kings county with the best and most complete information about itself of any community in Canada and provide the base to measure genuine progress in community betterment over the coming years.

Observations On the Survey Instrument

The questionnaire, as presented, is a tool that can be used as is in almost any community. Such use, however, without intensive community involvement, turns its purpose from a powerful tool for community self-betterment to an instrument serving particular interests.

The unique strength of the questionnaire is the development of information on the ***interrelationships of economic, social and environmental elements of community life*** – interrelationships that reflect how people and communities function rather than the separated interests of government departments, businesses and other interests impacting on the community from outside. Accordingly, building community capacity to take ownership of community GPI is critical to its success.

Also critical is community understanding that while priorities and information requirements must be set by the community, competent professional advice and assistance is needed to help frame the questions and structure the questionnaire. Such assistance is mandatory to ensure that the questionnaire is:

- Statistically valid and therefore useful and defensible;
- Readily understandable to respondents, thereby providing relevant results; and
- Able to establish the interrelationships among the economic, social and environmental elements of individual, family and community life – the unique and fundamental feature of Community GPI.

While not critical, there are strong advantages to communities to ensure some basic commonality and comparability of survey questions with other communities. Where results point to action that would benefit many communities, common results will strengthen the hand where policies and behaviour need to be challenged. In addition, as the process evolves, communities can learn from each other's successes and mistakes. To "go it alone" would be seriously limiting and inordinately expensive.

Finally, communities should be aware that administering a survey of this size and comprehensiveness, has been proven possible and do-able, even with volunteers *but only with intensive training, development of professional attitudes and informed and dedicated management.*

3. Land Use and Agriculture

Agriculture and agricultural land use is a critical element of the economy and community life in Kings County. Accordingly as part of this phase of the project, it was agreed that, for this sector, the questionnaire developed would be focussed on agriculture and tested with a small group of farmers before being expanded at a later date to include a valid representative sample.

In the event, a mix of 8 different farms businesses was selected based on product mix, size, organic and inorganic. Intensive interviews of four to four and one half-hours were conducted.

Development of the Questionnaire

A committee of farmers and agriculture-related volunteers in Kings County developed the questionnaire using the list of indicators developed for the provincial agriculture Genuine Progress Index. The purpose of the questions was to get information on important indicators not available from other sources, and to find out from interviewed farmers what indicators of progress were most important to them. The questionnaire was tested and modified further with the help of Barb McLaughlin, Agricultural Statistician, Statistics Canada, Agriculture Division. When the questionnaire was ready, a sample of twelve farmers on eight farms was interviewed to get an idea of priorities and trends.

The sample was carefully chosen to include a number of different farm types that exist within the county (Table 1). The last census in 1996 indicates that there are 707 farms in Kings County. The sample is not nor was it intended to be representative as it includes just over 1% of County farms. It was also important to include small and large farms; diversified and speciality farms; conventional and organic farms; and to speak with both men and women.

The interview process required a serious commitment on the part of the interviewers and the farmers being interviewed. Each interview took from two to four hours of focused attention. Half of the farmers approached to do the interview refused because of time constraints and a reluctance to share personal information publicly. Contacting farmers, explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and the concept of Genuine Progress also took more time than anticipated.

Table 1. Profile of Interviewed Farmers

Farm	Years of experience	Size of farm (acres)	Items sold from farm	Farm category	% of farms in County with similar category (1996)
A	47	400	hay, apples, some pulp wood (presently stopped farming)	fruit	20
B	28	28	garlic (organic)	vegetable	9
C	42	800	carrots, onions, peas, chicken and turkey broilers, grain	poultry	11
D	30	40	apples	fruit	20
E	6	50	breeding stock: sheep, cattle, pigs, and chickens (partly organic)	misc. speciality	14
F	38	309	milk, beef, grain	dairy	8
G	30	250	grain, pork, beef	hog	7
H	12	175	beef, vegetables, berries, grain & hay (certified organic)	beef	18

It was critical to start with a small sample in order to have the in-depth conversations needed to embark on this work properly. Farmers we spoke with have a better understanding of GPI and a stake in its development. Feedback from farmers who were interviewed was positive.

After the preliminary results were compiled, two of the most active committee members (both farmers) reviewed the results and contributed feedback. They suggested we present the final report results at a meeting July 18. Everyone who contributed to the entire project cycle and other interested farmers was invited to this meeting.

In addition to the results from interviews, a review of county agriculture statistics and studies was used to analyze trends and evaluate indicators of progress.

Primary Results of the Survey

The GPI land use and agriculture survey was carried out to determine what genuine progress in agriculture would look like and the work has resulted in a number of suggested new indicators that can help the farmers of Kings County assess if genuine progress is being made in their sector. These indicators were evaluated based on interview results, as well as county and provincial statistics to determine trends. Uncounted values associated with farming activities were also highlighted. The primary components are:

1. Work and Employment Capacity;
2. Return on Investment;
3. Resource Base Capacity and Environmental Quality; and
4. Organizational Capacity and Community Infrastructure.

Fundamentally, this report is about the viability of farming in Kings County. Genuine progress is equated with increased viability. If farming is to be truly viable, it must be sustainable in the long run. Viability is often equated with gross farm receipts, but we know it is based on much more. For example, viability is based on experience and knowledge, fair prices for farm products, understanding relationships with neighbours and consumers, work satisfaction, a vibrant local economy, soil quality, and ecological balances.

Indicator: *Experience and Knowledge*

Participating farmers had an average of 29 years of farming experience, with a total of 233 years to draw on. This knowledge base is a valuable asset to agriculture in Kings County. However, the average farmer is getting older and there are fewer and fewer younger farmers who are willing to farm.

Indicator: *Fair Prices for Farm Products*

Farmers undervalue their labour. On the farms that were able to estimate it, the value of unpaid labour is significant, with an average of \$57,800 per farm. Also, most of the participating farmers indicated that the level of income they are getting is not enough for the work and investment they are putting in. Farmers appear to operate on narrow margins and even if their gross income has increased over time, relative expense levels are higher, which leads to a net decrease in income.

According to County statistics, return on investment is very low or zero on many farms. Those farmers who feel they *are* getting an adequate return on investment are getting an adequate price for the food they sell. These are broken down into two categories: (1) supply managed sectors such as dairy and poultry, and (2) organic growers who market directly to the customer.

Indicator: *Understanding Relationships with Neighbours and Consumers*

The farmers interviewed do not think they are respected by the rest of society. Some growers have worked to develop good relationships with consumers and increase understanding of farming.

Indicator: *Work Satisfaction*

While most of the participating farmers do not think they get a fair price for the products, or a fair return on their investment, or are well-respected by the rest of society, most of those interviewed are still quite satisfied with their work. They appear to have chosen farming as a vocation, not just a job. Some find the challenge exciting, or their connection with animals a

motivating factor. The other factors that appear to be related to farmers' satisfaction with their work are their active involvement in soil improvement and a direct connection with consumers.

Indicator: *A Vibrant Local Economy*

Everyone interviewed was very conscious of the importance of supporting the local economy by buying farm supplies and machinery within the county. Farms and farm-based industries employ a significant amount of people. This activity supports a vibrant local economy.

Indicator: *Soil Quality*

Some positive trends (among interviewed farmers) with regard to soil quality include: 1) increased awareness of the importance of soil quality; 2) increased action to maintain soil organic matter; 3) increased use of composted manure as a soil amendment; and 4) slight increases in soil-building rotations.

Some other trends are: 1) increased intensiveness of cultivated crops; and 2) high risk of soil erosion in some areas.

Indicator: *Resilience*

The ability to recover from stresses such as pest attacks, drought, or plummeting commodity prices is a measure of resilience. For example, the fact that IPM was developed and applied in Kings County is a positive trend. A study by Robinson (1999) indicates that Kings County agriculture is perhaps more resilient than other agricultural counties is also a measure of success.

Lessons Learned

It was extremely important to be able to take 3-5 hours for each farm interview in order to gain in-depth understanding between farmers and interviewers. It was also critical that the interviewers were knowledgeable and trusted by the farmers.

It was also important to highlight innovations and positive trends rather than focus heavily on negative trends and examples of ecological deterioration. In many cases ecological and social deterioration are associated with the low price of food.

Where Next for the Agriculture Community

In summary, the GPI soils and agriculture survey has developed a number of suggested new indicators that could help the farmers of Kings County assess if genuine progress is being made in their sector. Further discussions with farmers and farm organizations are critical to developing and using these indicators that better reflect the values of farmers in Kings County.

Information in this report can be selected, organized and used by farmers and farm organizations to draw consumers into a discussion about the public benefits of farming and the importance of getting a fair price for food.

Since this was a preliminary survey of a small number of farms, it is important to get a much larger group involved in the process of learning about and implementing measures to ensure genuine progress. Action should be pursued on several fronts, including:

- Conducting the larger survey;
- Off-season discussion groups;
- Media releases;
- Permanent ‘GPI-watch’ committees within farming organizations (including youth groups and community-based alliances); and
- Community-based asset mapping with a focus on rural areas.

Using this information as a base, the next step, scheduled to start in the fall after harvest, will be to facilitate extensive discussions among farmers and farm organizations to serve four objectives:

1. To review the results in detail and highlight key issues that can draw consumers, government and other organizations into a discussion about the public benefits of farming, supportive policies and the importance of fair prices for food.
2. To develop a broader consensus on indicators and measures of progress that best reflect the values of farmers in Kings County.
3. To revise the questionnaire and organize its application to a representative sample of some 80 farms in the county.
4. To agree on the vehicle and strategy to continue and enlarge this process of progress evaluation.

4. Communications and Public Participation

Activities

From the beginning it has been a central priority of this project to involve the community in all aspects of the work, leading to full take-over of the long-term activity by the community. The community GPI is being developed by, not for, the community. Through the good offices of Kings CED Agency, invitations to participate went out to many individuals, groups and organizations. Over 60 people attended at least one of the three plenary sessions and, of these, over 40 participated in at least one of the 3 to 5 meetings held by each work group. The response, energy and interest were outstanding and bode well.

Subsequently, volunteers were solicited to make public presentations to community organizations, congregations and interest groups throughout the County. These volunteers were given training in the concepts of the GPI, its application to community decision making and the objectives and procedures of the project.

The intent was to broaden community understanding of the community GPI and its potential for the community and to solicit involvement and participation. This work identified volunteer participants and resulted in important financial contributions to the next phase of the project by the East Kings and Central Kings Community Health Boards and by the Kentville Rotary Club.

A pamphlet was prepared for general distribution and the local community cable TV ran a half hour interview with Dr. Ronald Coleman on the GPI and the Kings Community GPI project. There was growing interest on the part of the local media and the coverage was being expanded as the project moved toward the survey phase.

Unfortunately the delays in funding, the immense unanticipated and highly fruitful work undertaken to validate, test and format the questionnaire and the general delays in launching the survey all contributed to a fall off in volunteer energy. In consequence, efforts to organize volunteer participation to launch the survey in the summer were largely unsuccessful.

Problems notwithstanding, there is a large number of people in the county who demonstrated a commitment to action in support of this venture. There is little doubt that that creation of credible conditions for successful action will bring these people back and introduce many more into the initiative. Those participating included:

PARTICIPANTS – KINGS COMMUNITY GPI PROJECT

Abbey, Gale	Kings CED agency	Mary DeRoche	Coastal Communities Net
Baird, Lois	Greenwd Family Res CNN	McMullen, Glenn	HRDC
Banks, Thomas.	West Kings Com CED	Meldrum, Ted	Kings Co Parks & Rec.
Bearden, Jack	Dept Ed & Culture	Metcalfe, Jerry	Kings CED
Cann, Chris		Misner, Belinda	Harbourville Restortn Soc.
Cann, Roger	E Kings Com Health Brd	Morgan, Fredr'k	Acadia ACSBE
Caven, Andrea	Kings CED agency	Mosher, Jennifer	TRCH & Rec Kings CED
Cere, Gary	C. Kings Com Health Brd	Pelham, Suzanne	CAPRE
Crawford, Donna	Horticulture NS	Pleasant, Jerry	Acadia CSBE& CEI
Currie, Harry			
Davies, Beverly	Dept Ed & Culture	Redden, Sherry	Career Resource Centre
Davies, Sid	C Kings Com Health Brd	Richards, Darrell	Chair Kings CED Tech
DesRoches, Mary	Coast&Rural Com Net	Ross, David	KCCEE
Eaton, Janet	Netfor Creative Change	Salsman, Betty	Family/Commity Serv. Co.
Ells, Glen	Farmer	Scott, Jennifer	GPI Researcher
Enman, Jennie	HRDC	Slawnwhite, Gary	Valley Regional Hospital
Gould, Richard	Public Health Services	Simpson, Elizabeth	Chryslis House
Griffiths, John	Wood Lot Owners, Kings	Smith, Gary	New Minas RCMP
Hawbolt, Steve	CARP	Smylie, Sandra	ACSBE, CED Facilitator
Hebert, Pearl	CEI/ACSBE/KCCE	Spicer, George	Tourism Committee CED
		Strong, Cindy	Kingston/Greenwood CHB
Hennigar, Richard	Suprima Farms Limited	Swetnam, Bill	Kings CED Ariculture Com
Hirtle, Donnie		Tatlock, Roger	The Flower Cart
Ilsley, Earle	Access NS	Trinacity, Michael	Sport & Rec Commision
Ilsley, Preston	West Com Health Brd	Thomas, Valerie	V.R. Hospital
		Thompson, Bob	Parole Services
Johnson, Michael		Tugwell, Maurice	Acadia U. Dept Econ
Legge, Jerry	S21 Scientific Tech. Inc.	VanOstrand, Neil	Organic Farmer
MacDonald, Holly	CEI	Bent, Erica	Insect and Pest Monitoring
		Walker, Janice	Horton Band
MacDonald M.	Kings CED agency	White, Jenny	Hall's Harbour CDA
MacKinnon, A.J.	Kings CED agency	Young, Denise	Valley Waste Res Mngmnt
Madeira-Voss, I.	Dept Ed & Culture	Zaichkowski, Terry	New Minas Youth Centre
Marshall, Robin	Kings CED agency		

WORK GROUPS – KINGS COMMUNITY GPI PROJECT -

Management Group

Hennigar, Richard	Suprema Farms Limited
Madeira-Voss, I	Dept Ed & Culture
McMullen, Glenn	HRDC
Not Named	Peace and Security
Prozinski, Piotr	Com College (COGS)
Tugwell, Maurice	Acadia U. Dept Econ
Colman, Ron	Resource
Poetschke, Len	Resource

Well Being and Volunteer Sector

Chris Cann	
DesRoches, Mary	Coast&Rural Com Net
Hennigar, Richard	Suprema Farms Limited
MacDonald, Holly	CEI
Meldrum, Ted	Kings Co Parks & Rec
Misner, Belinda	Harbourville Restor Soc.
Salsman, Betty	Family/community Serv
Tatlock, Roger	The Flower Cart
Thomas, Valerie	V.R. Hospital
Zaichkowski, Terry	New Minas Youth Centre

Employment

McMullen, Glenn	HRDC
Crawford, Donna	Horticulture NS
Enman, Jenny	HRDC
Hebert, Pearl	CEI/ACSBE/KCCEE
Pelham, Susan	CARPE
Pleasant, Jerry	Acadia CSBE& CEI
Redden, Sherry	Career Resource Centre

Education and Health Advisory Group

Madeira-Voss, I	Dept Ed Culture
Hennigar Richard	Suprema Farms Ltd
Gould, Richard	Public Health Services
Davies, Beverly	Dept Ed & Culture
Eaton, Janet	Net for Creative Change
Smylie, Sandra	ACSBE, CED, Facilitator
Illsley, Earle	Access NS
Bearden, Jack	Dept Ed & Culture

Peace and Personal Security

Ross, David	KCCEE
Legge, Jerry	S21 Scientific Tech. Inc.
Simpson, Elizbth	Chryslis House
Smith, Gary	New Minas RCMP
Walker, Janice	Horton Band

Soils and Agriculture

Prozinski, Piatra	ComCollege (COGS)
Swetnam, Bill	Kings CED Ariculture Com
Vent, Erica	Insect and Pest Monitoring
Hennigar, Richard	Suprema Farms Limited
VanOstrand, Neil	Organic Farmer
Morgan, Fredr'k	Acadia ACSBE
Hawbolt, Steve	CARP
Ells, Glen	Farmer
Scott, Jennifer	GPI Researcher

Lessons Learned on Participation

In building community participation and willingness to take over the project during this phase of the work, three critical elements have emerged which must be addressed. As commented below, these include:

- Issues of citizen structure for responsible decision making and action;
- Need for understanding and professional competence; and
- Need for continuity in action.

Having been learned the hard way in this pilot project, the lessons are presented to guide both the next stages of the work in Kings County and for other communities interested in developing their own community GPI.

Citizens Structure

Considerable attention must be paid to organizing the citizen structure that will take over and assume responsibility to develop and sustain the community GPI. For example, it is clear that the valuable information from the agriculture pilot survey will be unlikely to have much impact without an organization to take on the functions recommended in the Agriculture section of this report.

While Kings CED Agency took the initiative to interest and bring together the individuals and groups, the structure of plenary and work groups was entirely informal. This left the only entities legally accountable and responsible for expenditures of contributed funds to be the Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society and GPI Atlantic. On occasion, precipitate action was needed to protect the integrity of these funds, leaving the volunteer structure with a limited range of discretion in decision making.

Part of the difficulty in developing the structure lies in the all-encompassing breadth of the GPI itself. There is no organization in the county that has a mandate to intervene in the interactive social, economic and environmental aspects of life in the community, or to generate a GPI audit on the outcomes of action of the myriad of community, business and government agencies that contribute to life in the community. For this reason, neither Kings CED nor other community organizations or agencies considered that they could step forward to assume responsibility.

At the same time, there was resistance to the offer of the Society to help the community set up its own chapter and use the legal base of the provincial group to launch and manage a locally controlled community GPI initiative. The Society has incorporated into its constitution the ability to help set up and serve local chapters to develop and control their own community GPI and action has been taken in Kings, albeit with some reluctance, to use this service.

Professional Competence

While the core of GPI can only be of value if it is citizen driven in defining priorities, developing questions and deciding on and carrying out action in response to results, the preparation, administering and analysis of GPI questionnaires demands input from a high level of professional competence. The very essence of the GPI is the interrelationships of the social, economic and environmental elements of community life. Without this integration, there is no GPI, only a separate series of problems and opportunities that currently form the substance of political and bureaucratic definitions of problems and program solutions. The surveys can be built, administered and results identified and presented by volunteers, but unless done to professional standards, will carry little weight in the negotiations for genuine community development.

Continuity of Action

Characteristic of all volunteer action is the common sense of the majority not to waste volunteer energy unless the project in which they are engaged is accomplishing visible results and that participant's sense that they are making a real contribution and having a real impact. The delays in funding, the non-accountable organization structure and unexpected level of professionalism required by community GPI all contributed to the loss of volunteer energy. For the future, each of these issues must be carefully addressed.

Observations

Despite the reluctance of some in Kings County, there is a strong rationale emerging to use the structure of the Provincial Society and local citizen chapters to initiate and sustain the local GPI.

- While each community differs in its priorities of interest, as the process builds in other communities, experience will be transferable, speeding up the process, reducing cost and rapidly expanding the base of tested community indicators.
- Common findings and concerns among communities can lead to a build up of strength for changes in practices and policies of external agencies that can result in community and individual betterment.
- Critical professional skills developed in one community can be identified and made available to others as required for starting action.
- While local funds can be tapped to support local GPI, a broader range of funding sources can be tapped by a larger organization dedicated to initiating and supporting local GPI action and consolidation and disseminating the lessons being learned as more and more communities participate.
- The Provincial Society and the proposed chapters are citizen based, not associations of organizations and are able to encompass the broad expanse of interest of the GPI. In consequence, in a role essentially as community auditor, they can provide assessments, information and suggestions to all organizations and agencies whose policies, programs and actions impact on community life.

5. Future Action

Citizen Management of the Program

Apart from the research in how to develop a community GPI, the fundamental objective of this project is to set in place a community structure that can:

- Analyze survey results and provide relevant information to agencies, community groups and all bodies involved in action for community betterment;
- Initiate development of further “benchmarks” in areas such as fisheries, forestry, education and other sectors of priority to County residents;
- Design and apply the most appropriate means to measure the success of the community over time in generating “Genuine Progress”.
- Conduct continuing analysis of the measurements of progress, providing the information to all who can use it to bring their own activities closer in line with real community values, aspirations and opportunities for betterment.

Exploration with possible groups to lead this citizen management activity led to the conclusion that no existing group in the county felt it had the mandate to reach across all sectors and interests that will be incorporated eventually into a GPI for the County. It was agreed by the Plenary Citizens Group to take advantage of the offer of the NS Citizens for Community Development Society to make available the legal structure of the Society to establish a local organization to take on this challenge.

Accordingly, the Society’s by-laws are being amended to allow the formation of community chapters which will develop and manage the community GPI. This structure will allow the society to support the transfer of the initiative to interested communities throughout the province.

In line with this decision, an interim Kings Board has been created pending a full organization and strategy development session in the fall. The officers are:

Gary Cere	Chair
Canon Syd Davies	Secretary
Richard Hennigar	Treasurer.

Those who participated in the development of the project, the work groups to develop the questionnaire, the volunteers who are participating in the survey and the community at large, are being encouraged to join and help shape the program and take over the challenge of long term direction.

Conducting the Survey

The new Kings Community Board engaged a project co-ordinator, a community liaison co-ordinator and seven field supervisors to begin the survey. Funds are still required but, to date, the project has received financial or in kind support from the following:

- GPI Atlantic providing technical support and making available some funds from a companion project provided and approved by the National Crime Prevention Centre (Business Action Program)
- Human Resources Development Canada – Kentville office
- Central Kings Community Health board
- Eastern Kings Community Health board
- Kentville Rotary Club
- Kings CED Agency (services)
- Nova Scotia community College – Kingstec Campus (office facilities and computer equipment)
- Population Health research Unit, Dept of Community Health and Epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University (Analysis)

With these funds and services in hand, the survey phase of the project began and efforts are being continued to raise the necessary funds to complete this phase and the analysis phase to follow. The Community Liaison Co-ordinator, together with board members are engaging and organizing training for volunteers to help conduct the survey, assist in the office and accompany survey staff as required for security. The procedure for the survey is as follows:

- The survey sample was divided up among the seven trained field staff;
- The staff hand delivered and mailed the information brochures in pace with the set-up of appointments.
- Volunteers who know respondents are being asked to phone and encourage participation.
- Phone calls by survey staff and volunteers are made to set appointments
- Surveys will be hand delivered with explanations and instructions.
- Follow-up calls made to answer questions, encourage participation and arrange for pick-up
- At pick-up, surveyors will ask respondents to check completeness before sealing completed questionnaire in the envelope and handing over.

The first survey went out on 27 July and it is intended that some 300 surveys will be completed by 31 August to capture summer patterns. An intensive campaign is to be mounted in the fall to secure a total of 2,000 completed questionnaires.

Public Information

Action is underway to obtain widespread coverage of the survey and its purposes. The local media are behind the project and will be presenting continuing news stories as the project

unfolds. In addition to the progress of the survey, weekly news stories will be developed from the results of the agriculture survey and it is intended to set up some public debates and discussions. Churches will be presenting information in their weekly church notices and clubs and organizations are being approached to circulate information to their members.

6. Summary Note

Despite the mistakes and unpredicted problems, as befits a major research and prototype development project, the Kings Community GPI, to this point, has been hugely successful. The final questionnaire, developed with extensive community participation and thanks to Statistics Canada and GPI Atlantic, is a highly professional document which closely reflects the community input and which will withstand challenges to its validity. It is regarded by professionals in the field as unique in its examination of many interrelated issues affecting crime, health, education, environment, income and employment and other factors and it will be generating valuable information not available from other published material.

Realizing this potential, however, will depend upon financing for continued professional and management support and re-vitalization of volunteer interest in Kings County through a much strengthened Kings Citizens for Community Development Society. The task is to create a county citizen based structure with a vision to build and sustain the indicators of genuine progress and to provide the audit results to organizations, government, business and the community at large to shape action for community and individual betterment.