



## Annual Report 2005

### Summary

2005 was an extremely productive year for GPI Atlantic. Two major projects on energy and the health impact of economic change were completed, and research on several of the remaining GPI core components, including education, agriculture, debt, and sustainable transportation, continued to progress. Two issues of Reality Check were released and GPI Atlantic continued to work with the Atkinson Charitable Foundation (ACF) and other partners on the development of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). GPI Atlantic also prepared two proposals for dissemination of its research – one to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and one to the Canadian Population Health Initiative. Both were successful. GPI Atlantic materials continue to be referenced regularly by the media, policy makers, and non-governmental organizations.

In addition to this research work, GPI Atlantic also organized and hosted a landmark international conference in June 2005, *Rethinking Development: Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing*. This conference was an enormous undertaking for GPI Atlantic and stretched our resources and capacity to the limit, but we can happily say that it was an unqualified success, attracting 450 delegates from 33 countries on six continents, including some of the world's leading practitioners of socially and environmentally responsible development. The conference received very widespread media coverage internationally, nationally, and regionally. The effects of the conference continue to be felt, as GPI Atlantic has also taken the lead on a number of follow-up activities.

There is growing interest in developing new indicators of wellbeing and sustainable development, both nationally and internationally, and our greatest challenge continues to be managing the increasing demand for our work. We continue to receive more requests than we have the capacity to respond to. This means that we have to make careful decisions in selecting projects and activities that contribute to our core goals. A board retreat held in December 2005 was extremely helpful in beginning a discussion about GPI Atlantic's long-term mission and goals, the organization of work, and addressing capacity issues.

In 2006, we look forward to returning to dedicated research in order to complete the remaining components of the Nova Scotia GPI. GPI Atlantic will also continue the process, begun at the board retreat, of developing a strategy that will shift our priorities somewhat from focusing almost entirely on research to a more active educational and communications role, in order to better disseminate our research results and message.

The coming year will also see us integrate the various components of the Nova Scotia GPI developed over the last decade into a coherent set of headline indicators and measures of progress, and we will play a lead role in the release of the first Canadian Index of Wellbeing results in the fall, hopefully bringing Roy Romanow to Halifax as part of that event. We are also working with one Nova Scotia government department on the possibility of bringing GPI

indicators into its core reporting infrastructure, and we will be working actively on two follow-up projects from last year's conference.

### **1. Research**

*The Energy Accounts for the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index* was released in October 2005. The report received good media coverage in daily newspapers and on television and radio. An overview of the media coverage is available on the GPI Atlantic website (<http://www.gpiatlantic.org/clippings.shtml#energy>). This report was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Using materials from this report, GPI Atlantic testified at the Nova Scotia Power rate increase hearings in November, 2005.

In addition to the Energy Report, the Health Impact of Economic Change project has been completed and the final report, *The Social Gradient in Health in Atlantic Canada: Evidence from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia 1985-2001*, is posted on the GPI Atlantic website. This project was funded by Health Canada and managed by Jacques Whitford. As well, the Community GPI projects in Kings County and Glace Bay continue to generate research and activity.

Work on the remaining core components of the GPI is ongoing. The following projects are all expected to be completed in 2006:

- Sustainable Transportation: Todd Litman, executive director of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, and one of North America's leading experts on sustainable transportation, has been engaged to assist in completion of this major 500-page report. GPI researcher Aviva Savelson is also working full time on this report.
- Education: A major 800-page literature review of education indicators by GPI researchers Karen Hayward and Linda Pannozzo was completed in 2005, and work on the actual indicators is now under way. The education report is being prepared for both the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and the Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index.
- Agriculture reports on social capital, livestock, and water quality: GPI researcher Jennifer Scott is working with Raymond Parker on these reports.
- Debt: GPI researcher Colin Dodds is completing this report.
- The Value of Free Time report being prepared for the CIW will address this area in the GPI as well.

After receiving funding from ACOA and the Canadian Foundation for Innovation in 2004, work is continuing on the development of a GPI Atlantic database. GPI Atlantic is working in cooperation with Statistics Canada and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing to develop a set of data that reflect our key indicators and most commonly used statistics. Having this data in a format that is easy to update and to access will be an extremely important contribution to GPI Atlantic's work. It will enable us to more easily complete replications of our work for other provinces and to update the results of our own work as new data become available. It will also facilitate the development of a regular report on the headline indicators for the Nova Scotia GPI (discussed below). Two GPI researchers are currently engaged in this task.

GPI Atlantic is also playing an active role in the development of the first components of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing – reviewing reports on Living Standards, Population Health, and Ecological Footprint – all slated for release later this year, and is working with the Joint

Research Council of the European Commission, OECD, New Zealand, Australia, and other countries in an effort to produce indicators that are internationally comparable.

## **2. Rethinking Development Conference and Follow-up Activities**

### *2a) Rethinking Development*

In June 2005, GPI Atlantic hosted, along with several partner organizations, the *Rethinking Development: Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing* conference in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The conference brought together 450 delegates from 33 countries on six continents, including some of the world's leading practitioners of socially and environmentally responsible development. Delegates represented governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, academia, and youth. More than one-third of the delegates (about 180 participants) were from the four Atlantic Provinces, with the remaining 270 delegates divided roughly equally between the rest of Canada and foreign countries. A high-level delegation of 20 from Bhutan attended and participated, with support from the United Nations Development Program. Delegates included the country's Home Minister and former Prime Minister, the Vice-Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan, and the Director of the Centre for Bhutan Studies.

Particularly significant was the attendance and active participation of about 80 youth (aged 25 and under), who not only participated actively in all conference sessions, but also had dedicated meetings and question and answer sessions with key speakers, and demonstrated natural building techniques throughout the conference. The Bhutanese delegates were so inspired by the youth participation that they now plan a national youth congress on Gross National Happiness to be held in Bhutan in the summer of 2006.

Keynote addresses were given by His Excellency John Ralston Saul; Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley (Home Minister and former Prime Minister of Bhutan); and Ray Anderson (Founder and Chairman of Interface Inc – ranked as one of the top three companies in the world for commitment to sustainability). Other notable presenters included Sanjit Bunker Roy (founder of the Barefoot College in India), Dr. Marilyn Waring (well-known New Zealand feminist economist); Krishna Kumar (Director of Kerala's Total Literacy program); Fr. Francisco Van derHoff (Founder of Fair Trade); Ela Bhatt (Founder and General Secretary of the Self-Employed Women's Association in India); Farouk Jiwa (Founder of Honey Care Africa and recipient of the Equator Prize for sustainable development); Mathis Wackernagel (co-developer of the Ecological Footprint); and famed troubadour Raffi Cavoukian.

There was extensive media coverage of the conference on national radio, television, and newspapers, in the provincial and regional press, and internationally, with extensive reports of the conference in Brazil, the USA, Bhutan and other countries, including a major article in The New York Times that spawned many other media reports. Please see the conference website, at <http://www.gpiatlantic.org/conference/media01.htm> for a sample of media coverage.

Perhaps most significantly, the conference spawned a wide range of new and productive initiatives both in Atlantic Canada and abroad. Partnerships among delegates were formed with a resolve to move forward in new ways. Correspondence since the conference indicates that the

gathering continues to reverberate in many parts of the world and to generate new initiatives as a result of the inspiration experienced at the gathering.

## *2b) Follow-up Activities*

The Antigonish conference was never intended to be just a one-time, feel-good event. The point of inviting 450 delegates from 33 countries and six continents here for that conference, including some of the world's most brilliant practitioners of socially and environmentally responsible development, was always to turn our inspiration into action here in Atlantic Canada.

In order to build on the partnerships and initiatives developed at the conference, GPI Atlantic hosted a very successful workshop, titled *Building Sustainable Development*, on November 18 and 19, 2005. The goal of this workshop was to begin to develop concrete and meaningful actions that will make genuinely sustainable development practices the norm rather than the exception in this region, and ultimately in the world.

The workshop drew 84 participants from all four Atlantic provinces. Participants were fairly evenly divided between government officials from federal, provincial, and municipal levels, representatives from a variety of non-governmental organizations, business people, academics, community leaders, and a strong contingent of young people. The participants also represented many different sectors and areas of expertise, such as health, waste management, environment, education, politics, economic development, rural development, agriculture, energy, international development, and many others.

As a result of the actions that participants developed at the workshop, GPI Atlantic is now pursuing two initiatives in cooperation with other partners. The first is a report on The Natural Step framework. This report is being prepared by Peter and Janet Eaton. Once it is complete it will be used to explore potential further funding opportunities for introducing The Natural Step framework to businesses, communities and governments in Atlantic Canada.

The second project is to bring the Ecological Footprint concept to schools in Nova Scotia. GPI Atlantic is working with the Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Canada Chapter, to develop a work plan and funding proposals for this project.

In addition to follow-up happening here in Atlantic Canada, many initiatives are also occurring on the international scene. Following a report on the *Rethinking Development* conference to the Bhutanese National Assembly by the delegation from Bhutan, the National Assembly mandated the development of new indicators and measures of progress for that country – to be fully institutionalized by the end of 2007. GPI Atlantic is working actively with the Bhutanese government in this endeavour.

Other follow-up activities from the conference include a meeting scheduled for June 5 and 6 in Melbourne, Australia, initiated by Prof. Michael Salvaris, University of Victoria, hosted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and attended by representatives from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Sweden. The aim of this meeting is to improve international cooperation and to work together to develop measures of progress that are internationally comparable. As well, the

delegates from Thailand and Laos who attended our conference are planning their own follow-up regional conference for the Mekong Delta countries for August of 2006.

### *3. Other activities*

#### *3a) Canadian Index of Wellbeing*

The release of the first reports from the Canadian Index of Wellbeing is planned for fall 2006. The reports expected to be released are on living standards, population health, ecological footprint, and time use. It is expected that Roy Romanow will be coming to Halifax for the official release. GPI Atlantic continues to direct the research for the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, working in close collaboration with leading indicator practitioners from across the country.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing will be prominently represented at an important 20-person policy meeting this month – on March 21-23 – in Bellagio Italy, to be attended by the United Nations Chief Statistician, the World Bank Chief Economist, and the OECD Secretary-General and Chief Statistician. The CIW will also be represented at a June 19-21 meeting in Milan of key OECD and European wellbeing indicator experts. As well, consultations on wellbeing indicator development will be held with the New Zealand Ministry of Social Development and other agencies in May this year, and with the Australian Bureau of Statistics on June 5-6.

#### *3b) Reality Check*

Two issues of *Reality Check: The Canadian Review of Wellbeing* were released in 2005. The tenth issues, released in May, introduced the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and the eleventh issue, released in December, focussed on the results of the recently-released GPI Energy report. Laura Landon continues to do an outstanding job as Managing Editor and lead researcher and writer of the publication.

#### *3c) Presentations and outreach*

Executive Director Ron Colman has continued to present the GPI work to government officials, NGOs, universities, health care providers, and others, both regionally and in central Canada. As well, GPI Atlantic applied for and received a \$50,000 dissemination grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council that will allow us to focus on a number of major outreach projects in 2006.

#### *4. Staff and Finances*

##### *4a) Finances*

GPI Atlantic revenues and expenses in 2005 were significantly higher than in the past due to the *Rethinking Development* conference, which generated over \$500,000 in revenues and expenses. Total GPI Atlantic revenues in 2005 were \$1,087,553.01 and expenses were \$1,018,993.62, resulting in a positive balance of \$68,559.39 for the year. However, a significant portion of this “surplus” is actually “deferred revenues,” meaning that money has been received from projects that are still under way and not yet completed (notably the major Education component of the CIW and the GPI, and the development of the GPI database). Please see the financial statements for more detail.

Finding a stable source of funding that will support our core costs remains a priority. In 2006, staff will explore the potential for grants from foundations to support operating costs, and increased financial support from donations. Because of the absence of core funding to date, GPI Atlantic has not yet been able to secure its own office space, which makes regular face to face communications among GPI researchers and staff too episodic.

##### *4b) Staff*

A significant number of staff were hired on shorter-term contracts during the June 2005 conference in order to coordinate and implement the event. Conference organizer Janet Rhymes did an outstanding job of pulling the event together; Gwen Colman directed the highly successful youth program that was a highlight of the conference; Lyse LaVictoire from Quebec did a first rate job as project manager; David Mann performed miracles as transportation coordinator; and Norris Eddy cooked superb meals for 450 people – to mention only a few of the wonderful staff who were integral to the success of this event.

Clare Levin was hired in September 2005 to work on coordinating the assembly of the GPI Atlantic database. She is also working in a general organizational and managerial capacity to assist with the organizational development of GPI Atlantic.

GPI Atlantic researchers continue to be a mix of salaried and contract employees, depending on the scope of projects and the time-commitment required.

## *5. Future Directions*

The remaining components of the GPI for Nova Scotia are expected to be completed in 2006. The past nine years have been spent in the trenches, with an almost single-minded focus on producing detailed research of the highest quality on each of the components and indicators included in the GPI. This focus on research has resulted in GPI Atlantic's reputation for excellent work, which is reflected in our lead role in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, 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. As the bulk of this core GPI research work is expected to be completed in the next year, it is time to consider a shift in GPI's priorities and focus.

Of course, a dedication to research excellence, participation in new research projects that fit our mandate, and the maintenance and updating of our current research will remain high priorities. To give just one example, we have been asked by the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection to prepare a new, revised, and updated Cost of Tobacco report (our original one was prepared in 1999), and we have now contracted Dr. Mark Raymond of the St. Mary's University Economics Department to do this work for us. However, in addition to research, we must also consider our broader role in communicating our research results and message to decision-makers at all levels and to the general public.

GPI Atlantic is beginning to take steps towards this goal of improved communications. In consultation with key GPI Atlantic researchers, we are beginning the process of developing our own headline indicators and putting them into a format that is accessible and easy to update. We launched this new project at a splendid five-hour meeting in Halifax last month with twelve GPI Atlantic researchers who have prepared many of our core reports over the last nine years. At that meeting, we identified a framework of seven key areas and about 20 headline indicators that may constitute our core Genuine Progress Index measures of progress. We have also engaged a researcher specifically for the purpose of updating those headline indicators and we have had discussions with our database designer to use these headline indicators as the basis for our GPI Atlantic database. Work on this project will be high-priority and will continue through 2006.

Aside from the completion of remaining research, the development of headline indicators, and continued direction of research for the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, other priorities for 2006 include the creation of an overall communications strategy for GPI Atlantic, recruitment of new members and improved communications with our membership, development of the GPI Atlantic database, re-design of the GPI Atlantic website to make it more attractive and user-friendly, and continuing to build organizational infrastructure such as a records and information management system.