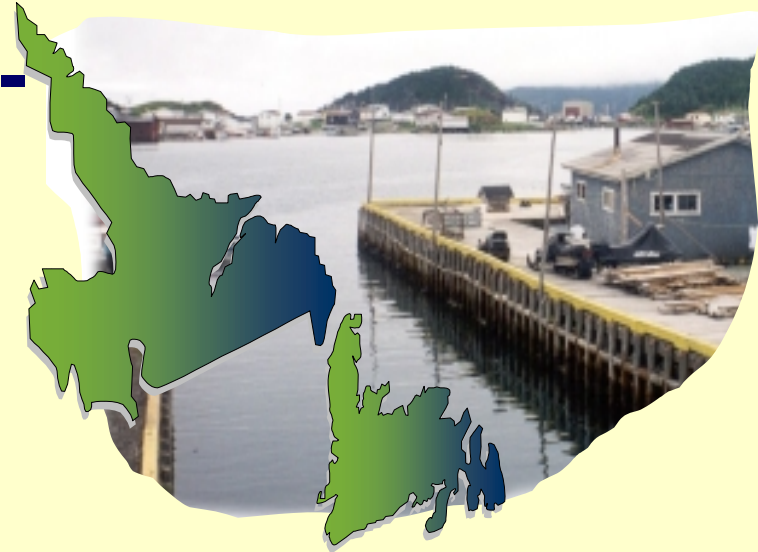


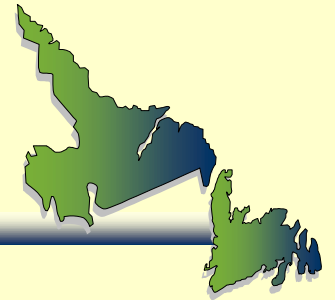
**EVIDENCE FOR
BETTER DECISION-
MAKING:
Perspectives of the
Strategic Social Plan**



**Dr. Doug May
Memorial University
Senior Advisor to SSP, NSA**

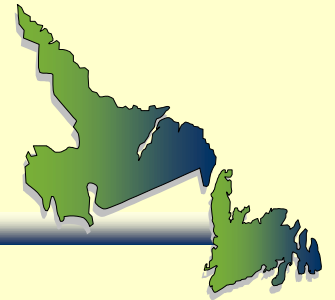
**CES Meeting
St. John's, January 2003**

Overview of Evidence-Based Policy Development



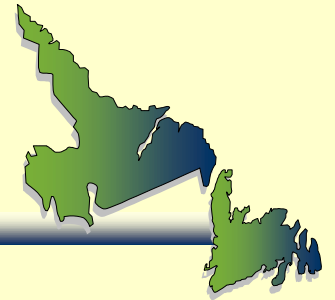
- Background to EBPD in the SSP
- Steps in EBPD
- The Role of the Social Audit
- Experiences and Challenges
- Next Steps
- Are the Costs worth the Benefits

Strategic Social Plan Goals



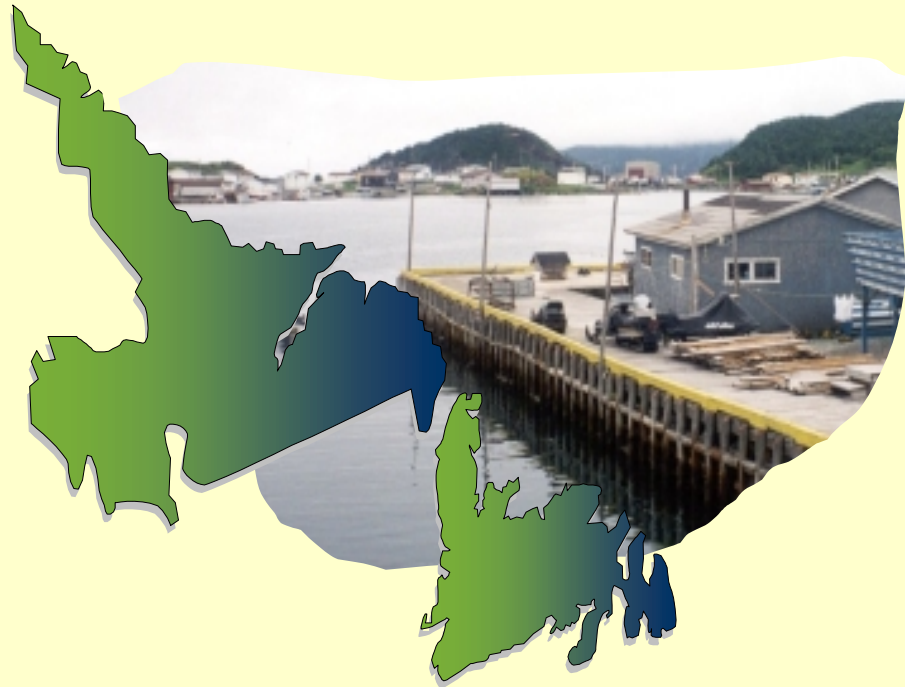
- **Regional and community development**
- **Integrated social and economic development**
- **Investing in people**
- **Evidence-based decision-making**

Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Strategies



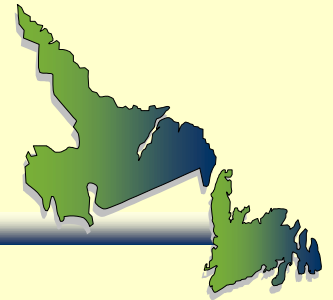
- Focus on outcomes
- Focus on people/target groups
- Understanding root causes
- An analytic approach to what works
- Program evaluation
- Social Audit Accountability: reporting back

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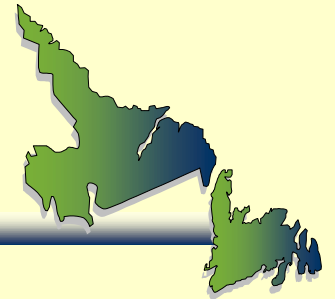
Steps to Evidence-based Policy Development Within the SSP

Step 1: Surveying Our Social Landscape



- **Community Accounts: Provides data on all aspects of the vision of the SSP**
(www.communityaccounts.ca)
 - **Supports the SSP's strategy of holistic approach to intervention**
- **“Where We Stand” and a longer version of the provincial landscape will provide a possible template and be a basis discussion at all levels**

Data Capacity



To understand Social and Economic Landscape

- **Sectors in the vision**

Health

Prosperity

Education

Distinctiveness

Self-reliance

- **Communities**

Vibrant

Supportive

- **Regions**

Sustainable

- **Population groups**

Women

Children

Youth

Seniors

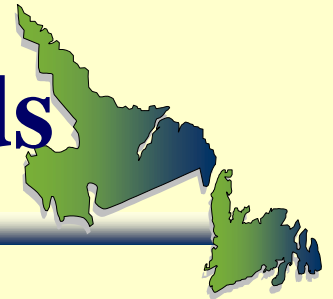
Persons with Disabilities

Families

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Step 2 Evidence of Social Needs

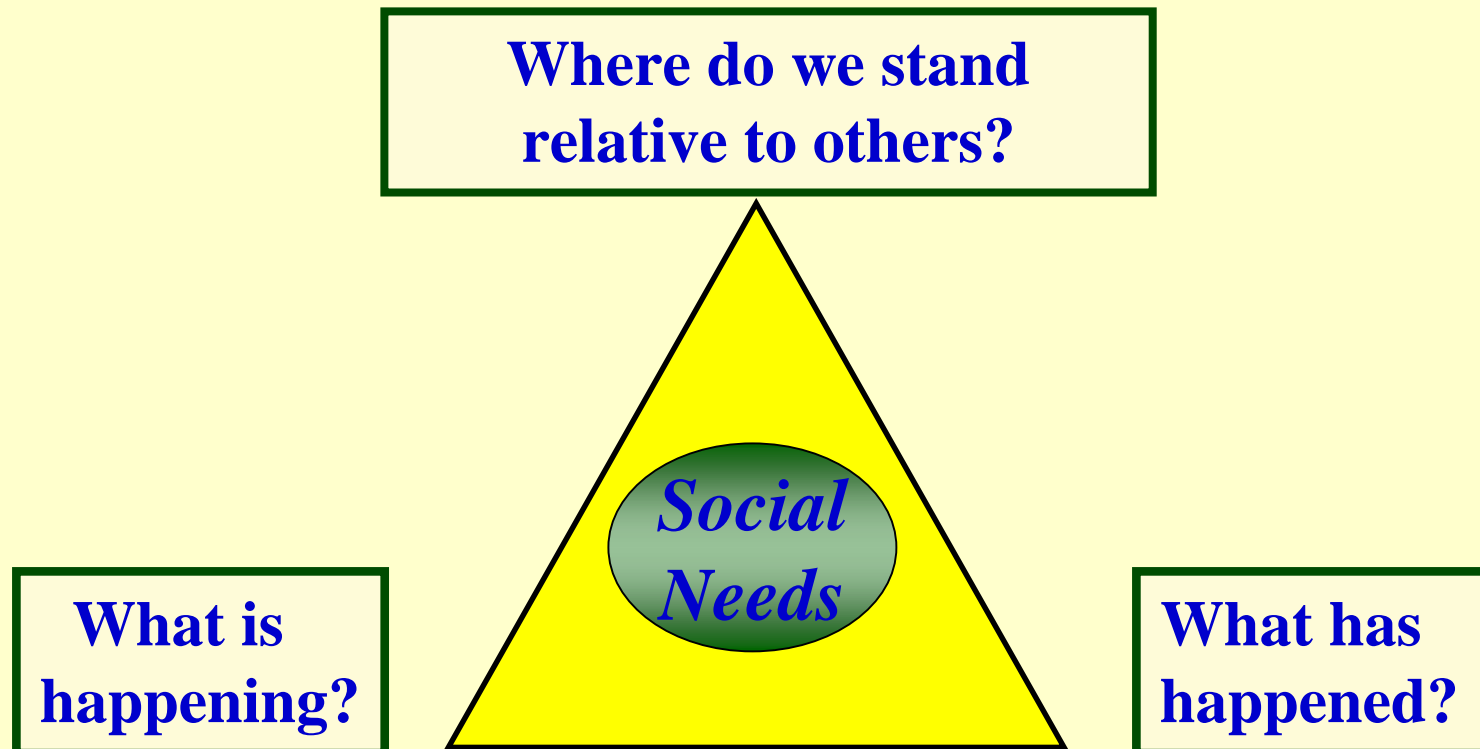
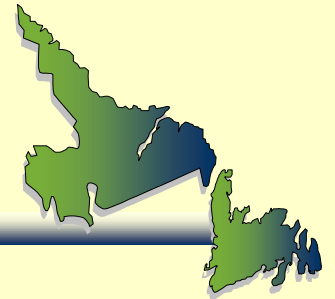


- **Determining Existence of Need / Groups at Risk :**
 - **Benchmarks and comparisons with past**
 - **Comparison with others: National/international standards**
- **Determining Dimensions of Need e.g. pervasiveness and depth of poverty**
- **Obtaining data to support “identified” social concerns especially at local level..**
 - **Adult literacy**
 - **Children and youth**
 - **Social capital and community capacity**

Possible Participants:

- **SSP Partners (Provincial government departments, boards and agencies)**
- **SSP regional steering committees**
- **Premier’s Advisory Council on Social Development**
- **Citizen and Community Groups**
- **Third Sector NGO’s**
- **Federal government partners**

Identifying Social Needs



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Step 3

Setting What We Want to Achieve

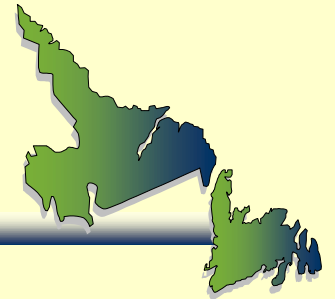


Social Development

- Goals
- Objectives
- SMART Targets and Outcome Indicators

Step 4a

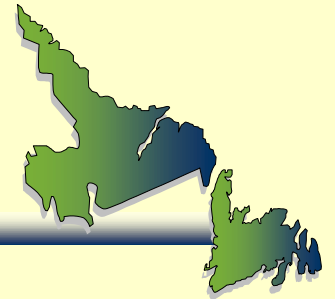
Evidence on Root Causes



- Necessary understanding before any intervention
- Often plausible “opinions” as to cause but no sound quantitative evidence
- Understanding root causes may require identifying and quantifying complex inter-relationships (e.g. www.communityaccounts.ca > documents > Working Papers > The Determinants of Health)

Step 4b

Evidence About Interventions' Potential Effectiveness



- At program level
 - Measuring effectiveness for clients
- In combination with other programs
- Given the presence of other social and economic factors
- In making Social Progress

Step 5

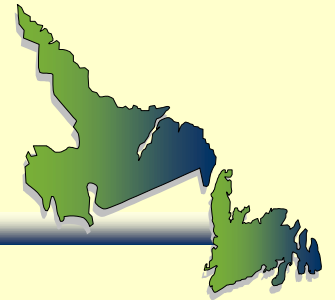
Program/policy Designs & Alterations



- **Program and Service Delivery Issues**
 - **Delivery Agencies**
 - **Extent of programs and services**
 - **Type of programs and services**
 - **Offices and institutions**

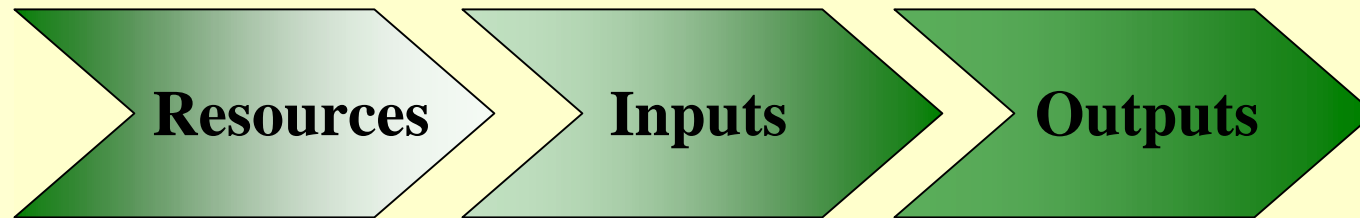
Step 6

Evidence on Our Activities



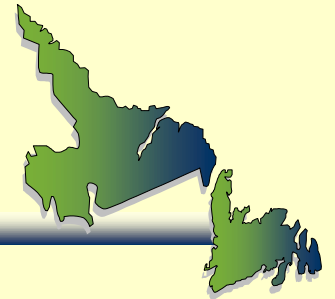
- “Internal” Accounting
 - Quantities of inputs/resources used and their related costs.
 - Activities undertaken
 - Goods and service outputs produced

The Production Process



Step 7

Evidence About Outcomes

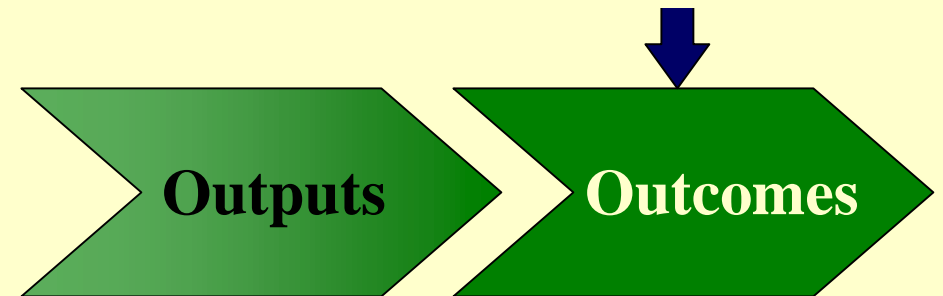


- “External” Accounts
- Identifying Consumers/Non-Consumers
 - Consumer characteristics
- Measuring changes in outcome indicators
- Establishing qualitative/quantitative outcomes through surveys/administrative records/statistical testing
- **Outcomes**
 - **Beneficiaries/target groups & equity**
 - **Final outcomes**
 - **1st and 2nd level intermediate outcomes**
 - **Intended and unintended**
 - **Positive and negative.**

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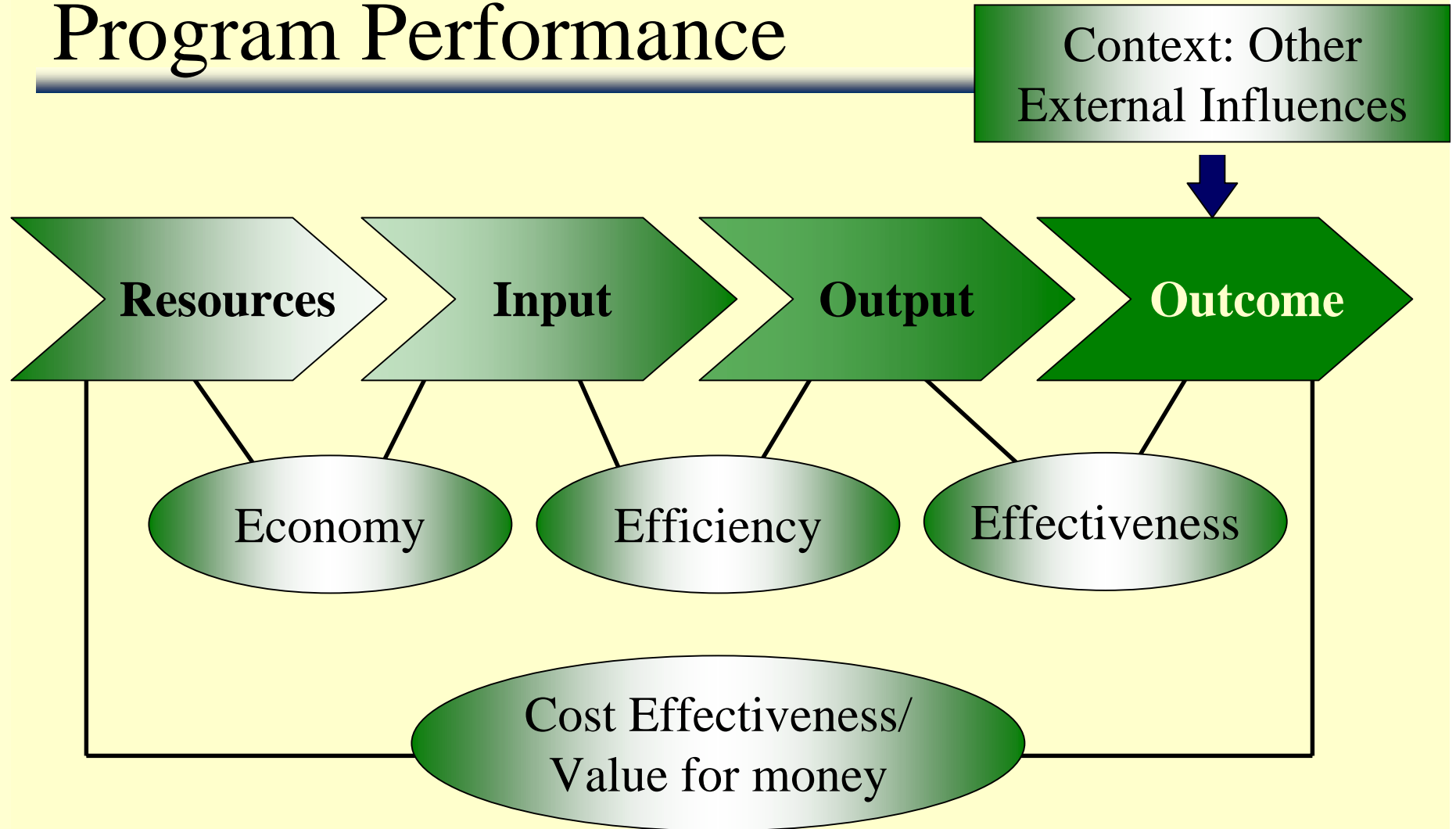
Consumption Process

Context: Other
External Influences



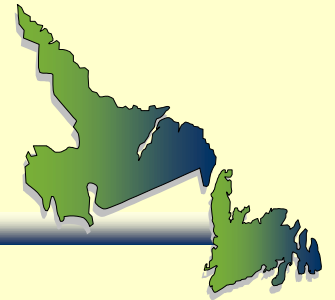
Step 8

Program Performance

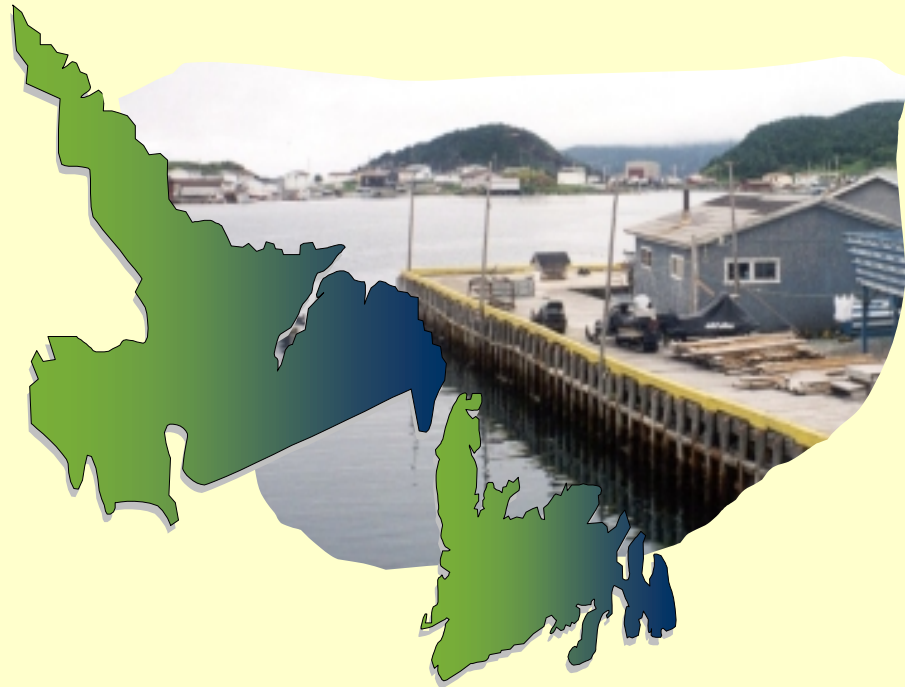


Step 9

Evidence About Altering The Social Landscape

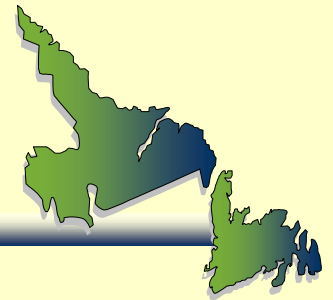


- Linkage between program effectiveness and more aggregate social change.
- Ability/synergy of groups of programs (or policies) coming together to produce change.
- Explaining the role of other influences in bringing about change.



The Social Audit

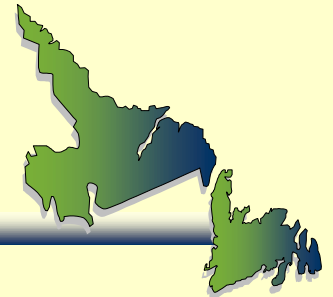
A Social Audit Is!



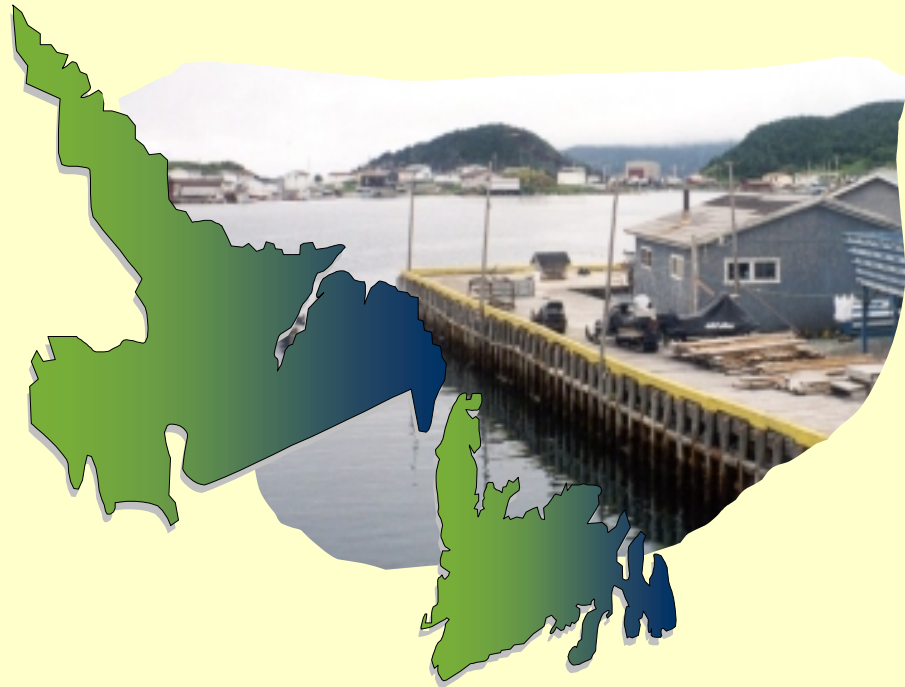
A **published and independent**

- **review** of the social and economic well-being of people living in communities and specific “at-risk” client groups.
- **listing** of social needs identified, objectives and targets set, and policy actions taken.
- **report and verification** of partnership driven **outcomes** of policies and programs.
- **report** on program effectiveness and service delivery.
- **report** on how we do business by implementing the strategies of the SSP (especially EBDM!).

The Social Audit Report

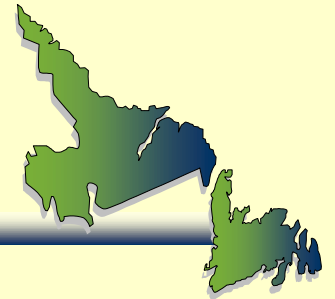


- Reports on the evidence gathered at each step of programs/policies developed and delivered by SSP stakeholder organizations.
- Phased approach to producing audit report :
 - Phase 1: Release of Community Accounts (Sept 2002)
 - Phase 2: Release of Landscape Documents (Feb 2003)
 - ? Phase 3: Report on social needs, activities and outputs (Steps 2-6) & on progress in implementing strategies of SSP (Evidence on evidence-based decision-making)
 - ? Phase 4: Report on outcomes, program performance and social progress (Steps 7-9)
- Few selected programs



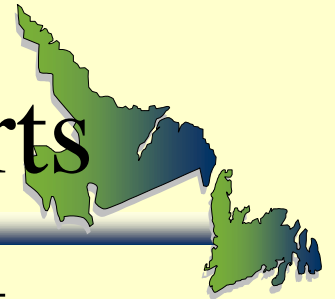
Experiences & Challenges (in facilitating EBPD and conducting a social audit)

Experiences



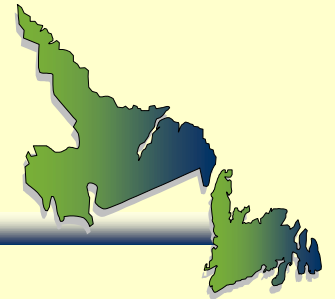
- Hard slog in collecting and assembling data
- Faith, vision and perseverance needed to move ahead
- Involved in cultural shift: anecdotal/qualitative to analytic/quantitative
- May lack foundation: data skills and information
- Facilitators/planners/managers may feel abandoned and overwhelmed
- Must build capacity
- Initial need for skills associated with data access & interpretation
- Positive reaction at local, national and political levels
- Creative dynamic of the team.

Our Capacity-Building Efforts



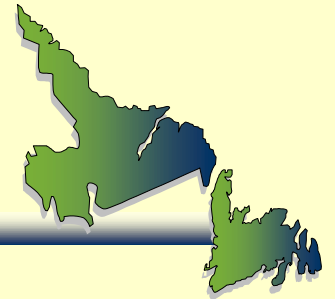
- Community Accounts and regular training sessions as well as on-line help.
- Assistance of NSA in developing data sets e.g. neighbourhood data (but a lot to be done: e.g. children & youth, social capital & community capacity)
- “landscapes” both long and short versions to help identify outcome indicators, data sources, data interpretation and cross-linkages.
- References to analytic studies using provincial data

Building Capacity cont'd



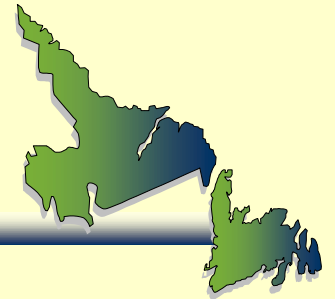
- Manual and Workbook on evidence-based social policy development being edited.
- Developing case studies (e.g. MU's MLC program presented at CES in Halifax)
- Collecting material on EBPD. (see Gillian Janes MBA paper in Documents section of Community Accounts.)
- “Portfolio” approach and use of regional/departmental “landscapes” to aid in preparing information for auditors.

Manual and Workbook



- **Assistance to complete program evaluation**
 - Within context of SSP
 - Within context of Social Audit
- **Text**
 - Describing concepts
 - Question and answer format
- **Workbook**
 - Worksheets completed based on specific program
 - Assist to complete program evaluation

Final Thoughts



- EBPD and social audit of SSP are “doable” as experience in UK and many other countries demonstrate.
- Solid, continuing and demonstrable commitment at highest levels required.
- Building capacity and changing culture take time. Must not rush skills development.
- Special effort needed on defining need, determining root causes in the provincial context, and providing evidence on successful interventions (Steps 2, 4a&b)
- Pioneering efforts of Department of Health are important as demonstration project in EBPD.