

Training course on:

Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Understanding Societal Change

May 11th - 15th 2009
Ottawa (Canada)

The Main Group Exercise

You have been appointed by the Prime Minister of Canada to be part of a group of experts charged with analysing whether Canada is making progress in one of three areas: Reducing Poverty; Protecting the Environment; or Increasing Knowledge and Learning.

The exercise is cumulative with the work of each day building on the next, incorporating subjects explored during the course. The exercise culminates in a final 10 minute presentation which should cover the following aspects:

1. Why is it important to measure progress in your area and how does progress in this area affect the progress of Canada as a whole? How does progress in your area fit into the bigger picture?

For example, a reduction in crime rates might lead people to feel safer and reduce the trauma of crime, which is important in itself. But it can also reduce the costs associated with crime (for example, reduced insurance premiums, reduced spending on prisons, increased investment and regeneration of an area and so on).

2. Which aspects (dimensions) of your area need to be considered in order to assess progress, and what are the best available indicators to measure progress in each dimension.

The three topics are broad and change or progress in each cannot be summarised easily in one number: there is no one indicator that measures *the environment* for example. To properly assess progress in each area we must consider a range of factors, identify which are key to progress and then select appropriate indicators for each.

3. Present your selected indicator(s) in a way which reports your findings in relation to tells the story of progress in your topic in a way that will resonate with a general audience.

There is no point in measuring the progress of an area if the information is ignored. You will be asked to present the indicators in a way that will capture the attention of both the general public and policy makers. They should leave the presentation remembering the facts you have presented.