

Genuine Progress Index – Atlantic

We currently measure our progress and gauge our wellbeing according to a narrow set of indicators: our economic growth rates. Yet vital social and environmental factors remain invisible in these measures.

Ronald Colman, Ph.D., Executive Director

The Organization

The Index

The Genuine Progress Index (GPI) is a new measure of sustainability, wellbeing and quality of life consisting of 22 social, economic and environmental components

- Non- profit organization founded in 1997
- A pioneer and leader in quality-of-life research
- Completed more than 50 reports to date

The Approach

- The GPI approach is an alternative to the practice of equating progress with

economic growth alone.

- *If critical social and ecological assets are not counted and valued in our measures of progress, they receive insufficient attention in the policy arena. By contrast, the GPI values the health and education of our population, the strength of our communities, our livelihood security, the quality of our environment, and the health of our natural resources.* Ronald Colman, Ph.D., Executive Director

The Mission

- GPI Atlantic's core mission is the development of a demonstration index consisting of 22 components and focusing on the province of Nova Scotia.
- The Genuine Progress Index recognizes that true long-term prosperity and wellbeing are ultimately dependent on the protection and strengthening of social and environmental assets. If these deteriorate, we are not living sustainably, and we leave a poorer world to our children.

Current Growth Rate Measure

- Our growth rates make no distinction between economic activity that creates benefit and that which causes harm. Since economic growth statistics simply measure how much we produce and spend, they fail to distinguish economic activities that

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contribute to wellbeing from those, like crime and pollution, that cause harm. They ignore the value of unpaid work like that of volunteers and care-givers, and they count the depletion of our natural resources as that were economic gain. In fact, the economy can grow even as inequality and poverty increase.

- The need for better measures of progress is universally acknowledged.

If we measure and count what really matters to Canadians, we'll value our social, economic and environmental assets properly, and they'll get the attention they deserve. Then we can act effectively to ensure that we leave a better Canada for our children.

Ronald Colman, Ph.D., Executive Director

GPI Measure

- The Genuine Progress Index links the economy with social and environmental variables to create a more comprehensive and accurate measurement tool.
- The GPI accounts for the value of human, social, and natural capital, in addition to standard measures of produced capital, and assigns value to assets like population health, educational attainment, community safety, voluntary work, and environmental quality.

Need

- The GPI reveals a mixed message that is quite different from our conventional economic growth based measures of progress. Canadians have more material goods; smoking rates are down; our drinking water is cleaner; and we are recycling more. But we are also twice as likely to be victims of crime as a generation ago; volunteer work is down 12% in the last decade; we are more stressed; obesity rates have doubled; we are losing many of our old forests; and greenhouse gas emissions are up 20% to twice the per capita rate of the British. We're also becoming a more unequal society – the poor got poorer in the last decade, and the gap between rich and poor grew sharply.

Learn More

- The Genuine Progress Index offers communities, governments, organizations, and businesses an opportunity to assess their progress more accurately and comprehensively. Please see www.gpiatlantic.org for more information or contact:

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Executive Director, GPI Atlantic
535 Indian Point Road
Glen Haven, NS B3Z 2T5 Canada
Phone: (902) 823-1944
Mobile: (902) 489-7007
colman@gpiatlantic.org
www.gpiatlantic.org

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