

Theme B – Friday PM

Community Engagement and Social Action

Notes taken by Tom Berkhout

Stephen Shepherd (Opening remarks)

- A couple of themes of the sessions will be:
 - How do we move our thinking and others into the future?
 - Thinking about different scenarios of the future.
- Key questions:
 - How to convey future consequences and choices?
 - How should we use stories in making science and scenarios meaningful?
 - How do we scale up from individual to collective transition?

Arnim Wiek

Effective Stakeholder Engagement in Transformational Sustainability Efforts

Three key objectives:

- Talk ABOUT recent decision-making projects
- Illustrate challenges of stakeholder engagement
- Try to get a sense for what can be a research or activity agenda for CIRS

Recent example:

- UBC-CALP – in-vivo stakeholder engagement study
 - Simple but compelling idea – take global climate scenarios and downscaling to local level and then ask what would they do in terms of adaptation and mitigation measures
 - Different researchers were in a room facilitating different discussions. Focus was on places participants were familiar with.
 - There is a strong idea that such engagements are beneficial e.g., sharing info, enhancing understanding,
 - But there are also often under considered costs associated with stakeholder engagement e.g., additional time& money, additional expertise, shift of control over process and results
 - How do we maximize benefits & minimize costs of stakeholder engagement processes?

Illustrating Challenges:

- On the service the planning process looks straightforward: plan it, do it, implement it
- But behind simple activities there are a variety of activities operating at different levels. There are many choices behind all of these activities.

City of Phoenix Planning Project:

- Prior to work undertaken by ASU in 2010, the last stakeholder engagement in city planning was 1978
- Challenges in Phoenix:
 - Is it all just about scenarios in the future
 - Foresight is relatively well developed and can build all kinds of stakeholder engagement into this
 - But Phoenix only wanted to do scenario development
 - WE told them that they had to go beyond scenarios and ask things like how to get there, what is desirable etc.
 - Important to think about normative perspective – backcasting done with foresight work – what are critical transition steps that we need to take
 - Major challenge with City of Phoenix to consider backcasting element as well
 - Tried to do in a way that would be accessible
 - Worked through steps of getting to desirable state
 - Getting beyond the ‘usual suspects’ of stakeholders involved
 - Intention to get new ideas and insights
 - People put in the focus of stakeholder work by asking: What do people do with water in Phoenix?
 - When designing stakeholder engagement ensuring stakeholders from each of the activities included
 - Training and Coaching Facilitators
 - Researchers may not be best because they are not necessarily facilitators and it also limits the other roles that they might play in the process
 - Other common method used is to bring in professional facilitators – problem is cost and disengaged from details of topic at hand
 - ASU took the path of training students and staff to facilitate. Training done by professional facilitator
 - From Extraction to Negotiation
 - Around each discussion table effort to get mix of stakeholders in order to get mix of opinions and perspectives. This arrangement was an excellent starting point for very immediate and productive negotiations about this issue.
 - Working also with more visual tools e.g., maps
- Other practices being used:
 - Embracing community diversity
 - Translators brought in
 - Alliances with less represented groups as way to try to get others involved

- Creating unusual alliances
 - In a stakeholder engagement project that was looking at super fund group beyond the clean up, brought in students from high school as more typical stakeholders. Students represented future voice and changed dynamic of normal discussions.
- Decision Theatre – brought to places where people are working rather than having them come to ASU.
- Outlook for CIRS and stakeholder engagement research community
 - Need to document better
 - Need to coordinator research agenda
 - How do we incorporate really strong education opportunities with stakeholder engagements?
 - We should be sharing learning between different centres around the world.

Michael Flaxman

Climate Change Adaptation in Southern Florida's Everglades Landscape: A Spatial Resilience Planning Approach

Florida Case Study

- Goals – simulate alternative futures in which climate change acts jointly with other drivers in influencing human behaviour. Tried to make it not just another climate change scenario project.
- Stakeholder-Based Process
 - Participants identified using snowballing technique – eventually getting about 200 people involved over a couple of years
 - Involved professional groups responsible for managing conservation in the area
 - Study area almost the entire south half of the southern Florida Peninsula: 9.2 million acres, 23 national refuges and over 16 million people
 - Why stakeholder process? – Surprisingly very little coordination between conservation staff at mid and on the ground levels. Some coordination between senior management only. Federal strategy was not integrated with the state; Prior methods did not engage – very soloed approaches
- Drivers of change
 - Rapid population growth (doubling in population over next 30 years)
 - Planning assumptions and regulations could have enormous impact (land use planning, water resources); land reserves originally set up for `plumbing` not conservation so shifting of objectives was taking place.
 - Climate change
- Modelling Process
 - If can't simulate what can be in the future, not allowed to be in alternative future.

- Do urban growth modeling
- `joint modeling` - back and forth over two years with stakeholders
- Scenarios
 - Showed large differentiation in conservation areas out to 2060
 - One regional simulation done and then scaled down to a few sub regions to get better sense of what scenarios look like on the ground
- Management consequences
 - Spatial information can inform some of the development decision and if the regional scale scenario model is built with enough resolution it can be used at multiple scales
 - Spatial context matter when making decisions – For example, in the keys, climate change literally swamps all other issues when you look out to 2060 because of flooding over much of the existing land mass.
 - Overlay mapping done to see impact on key species in different scenarios
 - Raises the question of what are you managing for into the future e.g., conservation issues today e.g., “Crocodile Lake” may not exist in future. Need to think about what future conditions are like and what conservation issues are under those conditions.
 - When you bring people who know the place itself and the different species, they can make some sensible early decisions. Not knowing exact climate change but knowing direction is not negotiable at this point. Knowing sea level rise is happening allows for some intelligent planning to start today.
- Improved generalizable conservation strategies (get ahead of problem with no regrets conservation):
 - Acquire current most valuable areas as for conservation
 - Identify and acquire future suitable habitat - Identify strategic conservation locations and identify actions to start to include these in protected lands sooner than later
 - Connect sites
- NEXT STEPS
 - More stakeholders needed to get to the ground than this initial process
 - Looking at three specific conservation issues in more depth
 - Methods to be used: visualization coupled with stakeholder workshops & surveys
 - Move to interactive web

Jennifer Penney

Engaging local governments in climate change adaptation: Bridging to the Future

- Adaptation to climate change is focused on the future
- With few exceptions, not much positive imaging/visioning of a sustainable future in this work

Two ways to combine adaptation and sustainability

- Best of adaptation integrates with effort to increase overall sustainability e.g., greenspacing – by doing so reduce heat, reduce storm water runoff etc. and make it a better place to live.
- but need not only to make adaptation sustainable, but to ingenerate adaptation into sustainability work e.g., rising cost of fuel and effects on poor (e.g., energy poverty)
 - sustainability needs to consider longevity of projects as well as more immediate sustainability benefits

Why engage with Local Governments?

- responsible for critical infrastructure

What motivates local adaptation?

- major extreme weather events e.g., flooding in Toronto in 2005, BC coast 2007, hurricanes in Halifax 2003, heat waves Toronto 2005
 - events are being connected more and more to climate change in media
- slower moving events such as climate-related threats e.g., permafrost melting and pine beetle

These motivations need to be combined with:

- leadership
- advocacy and capacity development needed as well

Who has worked to engage LGs in adaptation?

- NGOs
- Staff from environment Canada and NRCan
- Professional organizations e.g., insurance, engineering, planner
- Academics

What's happening as a result?:

- many local governments are ramping up protective activities
- some incorporating climate vulnerabilities into sectorial projects and planning
- modest number engaged in comprehensive adaptation planning
- a few are integrating adaptation and sustainability planning

Some NGO Approaches to Engaging LGs approaches

- community capacity building
- community engagement processes
- municipal planning – milestones approach

Clean Air Partnership's Capacity Development Work

- Began in 2005 with federal funding. Reputation of working with LGs helped to get funding.

- First initiative involved collaborative research and workshops with City of Toronto
 - Scan of impacts of climate change on Toronto
 - Six cities study – what worked well and what didn't
 - Working groups (& reports) on heat and urban forest adaptation
 - Workshops with city staff
 - First workshop little idea about adaptation
 - In between workshops people learned more and by second workshop considerable increase in knowledge
- Initial work followed by advocacy to include adaptation in City's climate change and clean air planning – just old fashion advocacy – but got results and adaptation was put on the agenda
- Led to: adaptation framework for City of Toronto to be developed which was passed unanimously by Council
- Eventually got some funding and adaptation risk work picked up by a staff champion with City of Toronto

Other Projects

- Alliance for Resilient Cities – ended up being not terribly effective as national effort
 - Initially 50 communities signed up – 8 webinars a year for three years on climate change
 - Became clear that webinar not conducive to engagement if relationships did not already exist
 - Minority of presenters able to speak effectively to municipal staff using webinar format
 - Difficult medium to present to because you don't get feedback
- Training programs
 - Done in four regions of Ontario with local governments
 - Carried out wall exercise to identify current municipal activities
 - With bridge to the future need to start in the present. What are you already doing, may not call adaptation but you may be doing
 - Helped to motivate staff to see what is already being done and also what other communities are doing because multiple communities present – peer-to-peer learning was very valuable
 - LCLIPs exercise – analyzing community vulnerability from analysis of news stories of weather events
 - Started with trying to assess impacts of weather events over past decade – could not be done from internal records
 - Did media scan over past decade to see what happened, where, why, how many people effected etc... to estimate climate vulnerability places.

Discussion

Panel response to presentations:

- Arnim
 - All three presentations have such a good foundation. As a broader community, we have a lot of experience in engaging stakeholder in future orienting thinking around sustainability. **But we need to go beyond anecdotal evidence to bring it together and make it accessible to a wider community would be a really important step.**
 - How do we do this?
 - One way might be a traditional database in which we standardize our experiences. Can make interesting with web based tools etc...
- Alex
 - Existing effort to do database for conservation planning as a way to share experiences and help to answer questions about approach to take.
 - Arnim is right to highlight that there is commonalities which can be standardized.
 - Getting to point of comparative work is important. First because the cost of participant engagement is more than meeting where you talk *at* people. Need to be more empirical about results or else won't get resource to do this work. Also may miss something else that someone else has already done.
- Jennifer
 - Agree that there is not an accessible dataset for this type of work. Some in academic journals but not read by municipal staff.
 - Needs to be more written about processes and about what worked and what didn't.
 - Particularly when working through process for first time and working out kinks
 - For example, need to talk about webinars for example and what works and what does not work
- Stephen Shepherd
 - Follows up on what Katy said this morning and making documents accessible to practitioners and crossing disciplines
- Cara Pike
 - Gap between cutting edge approaches and practice where people will do it again and again and again.
 - Going beyond stories of what worked to what worked in overall process.
 - Sometimes about subtle things, your impact is not always obvious. Just because it didn't change policy, doesn't mean it didn't change perspectives and maybe will lead to future wins and policy changes.
- Olaf (re: longitudinal assessment of Kimberley case)
 - Very tricky with research findings being limited often to a year. In literature planning implementation can take up to ten years. So hard to bring together.

One project had funding for three years so had opportunity to go back to communities. Ask key stakeholders, policy makers and city staff what came out of this process and for indication of capacity building. Asked things like: Is material still used? What parts? What numbers? What visuals? What text? And, what were the outcomes?

- Kimberly project showed to be quite successful on a number of areas in terms of policies made and acquisitions (e.g., extra fire truck purchased based on forest fire data).
- Challenge is to link any specific outcome to visualization or even the process as there are so many variables that inform decisions. Hard to distinguish separate factors.
- Arnim
 - Similar project with three Canadian studies that we looked at.
 - What we encountered is with projects that are complete. How difficult it is to find participants, get them to participate again etc...
 - Tracking is difficult. At the same time, now a days, the type of capacity you can build in a two hour process – it is not very rich. Something can be done, though, about critically reflecting on what is reasonable with our input and what comes from that even if we can't provide strong empirical evidence.
- Jennifer
 - Advantage of NGO is we can do this kind of sustained work. Had a number of projects that built off of each other. Sometimes things would die down for a bit but then we could go back to past participants and see if they're interested in participating in new initiatives. Build those relationships over time and over multiple projects.
 - It does take a long time. And you may not be able to build much capacity in a two hour work shop but with City of Toronto one staff member tweaked interest in two hour workshop and had to wait for another project before she could act but she did.
 - Some things we can point to our influence quite directly and other times not. It is difficult but doesn't mean it shouldn't be done.
- Audience 1
 - Real stakeholders in sustainability are all people.
 - Data is important but often incomprehensible the way it is presented by professionals. Need to build a unified platform around sustainability to give credit to an action being good or not. E.g., CIRS most people don't understand its real value.
- Arnim
 - Agree with principle of making it as accessible as possible but doesn't have to be unifying. Need to communicate specifically to different groups. Need to create common ground but must be flexible to communicate to different communities.

- Audience 2
 - Idea of translation and speaking appropriate language. E.g., water treatment plant sign in front of CIRS which says this is recyclable water please don't eat food in this area. What kind of message does that send other than raise questions about recycled water?

- Audience 3
 - **Linking research and politics – by bringing new information and research to the table either by making it more participatory or visualizations, is all of this information leading to better decisions being made?**

- Arnim
 - I thought about starting my presentation with the National Climate Initiative in U.S. which is all about creating the right knowledge. The thinking is that if we have the right knowledge, we'll make the right decisions. This is delusional. Decisions aren't better because information is better but it is better because engagement is better and creates deeper understanding and to think differently about certain issues. In a lot of cases uncertainty is extremely high so type of information created can be only one component.

- Alex
 - Agree with Arnim. Waterfall model of waiting for science to come up with the right information is wrong headed. I spend time doing processes with people not because it's easier because I do think better decisions can be made.
 - Struggle is dealing with climate change at local scale, not necessarily at global scale.
 - Maps are one of two boundary object between experts and the general public. May see different thing but there is purposeful communication devices. Important to create these and test these. There are, however, a limited number of devices we can use as communication bridges.

- Jennifer
 - Just because information doesn't lead to right decisions doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. Need to keep putting out good information. It may not change Rob Ford's view but it may grab the woman in the transportation department and she has an opportunity to work it into a risk assessment. And then she goes to her Director and says we need to take it into account. And he goes to Environment Committee etc... - goes up, down and across and occasionally may even get to politicians' attention. Can't be naïve and think that there will be a straight-line effect.

- Audience 4

- **The pathways to the future all emphasize a need for stakeholder engagement but about issues with acute conflicts, where may not be able to always get stakeholders you need to participate?**
- Arnim
 - Worked on nuclear waste disposal in Switzerland. If we can't get all parties at same table, maybe we can get them involved in what is a fair engagement process. Used neutral position as university to at least have a discussion with all stakeholders about what a fair engagement process would look like.
- Alex
 - Pleasantly surprised with people's willingness to get involved. My feeling is that flame throwers comes to public meetings but not public engagement process over many months. Some self-selection over who will and who will not participate.
 - Some very prickly situation that you can nevertheless do some good work with a fair process that stakeholders agree on.
- Audience 5
 - **Working off the boundary object idea and policy influence - I would suggest that the other boundary object is dollar signs. Benefit of a better visual sense of risk is you have constructed a more robust business case. That's the language that resonates with policy makers.**
- Audience 6
 - **I heard David Suzuki talk where he said the future doesn't exist only the present. How does future modeling be linked with action on the ground now? What are we doing today to change the future? One example may be transition towns?**
- Jennifer
 - About ten years ago a number of Ontario municipalities did visioning exercises. Some interesting ones but some repetition. Not sure what's been done with that. How, though, can that vision be sustained
- Arnim
 - Good point. Useful exercise but still a lot of flaws in those exercises. Most visioning exercises are a list of items that is not inspiring. Making an actual picture of the future, combing visual with narrative so you actually get inspired. It is not jut a laundry list.
 - Transition Town concept is spurred by vision and then working through what it will take to transition to this vision.
 - Big part of what we do when engaging with communities is to say that you have a role in this as well and ask what their contribution is to make the vision happen.
- Stephen

- Current research at UBC is to try to work out how to bring in different stakeholders from different walks of life.
- Greenest City Project speaker
 - Looking at different mediums for communicating to different communities
five channels – Facebook discussion, metro quest, participatory workshops, mobile media, table top games re: principles of sustainability, old medium e.g., poetry theatre, art