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CPRN is a national not-for-profit research institute whose mission is to create knowledge and lead public debate on social and economic issues important to the well-being of Canadians, in order to help build a more just, prosperous and caring society.

Canada's Cities: Laboratories for a New Federalism

Canadian governments must overcome constitutional hang-ups, political rivalries and outmoded fiscal arrangements to collaborate on a new urban agenda. If they don't, Canada will be left behind in a global economy that favours cities that deliver a high quality of life to their citizens.

That's the thrust of a new paper by Neil Bradford, CPRN Research Associate in Cities and Communities and Professor of Political Science at Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario. In **Place-based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada**, Bradford argues that the increasingly complex challenges that govern the quality of life in our cities cannot be solved by one or two players acting on their own. Instead, Canada's future competitiveness depends on its ability

to set aside traditional, segmented and aspatial approaches and develop a "place-based public policy" rooted in "collaborative, multilevel governance".



Photo: Designpics

In the new knowledge economy, distance to market may no longer be the important economic factor it once was, but location, paradoxically, is more important than ever. Location in the sense of "place quality", that is.

"Knowledge-based innovation is the critical ingredient for prosperity and well-being in the 21st century," says Bradford. "It

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thrives in places that value diversity, encourage the flow of new ideas, and include all residents in the economic, social and political life of the community.”

This represents a tremendous opportunity for Canada, a country where 80% of its citizens live in urban areas.

Bradford stresses, however, that there is nothing automatic about cities emerging as innovative, inclusive and sustainable places. What is required is a new urban policy framework that recognizes the complexity (or “wickedness”) of policy problems, that taps into *local knowledge and resources*, and is characterized by *horizontal collaboration* within cities and communities, and *vertical collaboration* across all levels of government.

Bradford’s model weaves together the goals of social equity and inclusion, economic success and political reform.

“So many of our major social challenges today are located and experienced in urban communities and addressing them

effectively is essential to economic competitiveness,” Bradford explains.

“Getting there involves reinvigorating the political process. It could turn our cities into laboratories for modern democracy.”

Despite the logic of collaborative approaches to urban policy, Bradford finds little progress towards this objective in Canada. He reviews recent developments in Europe and the United States, where the new collaborative urban paradigm has been applied and draws lessons of relevance to this country.

He suggests three key areas of reform that could provide a greater strategic focus for all three levels of government currently active in urban policy and governance:

- *New principles* of intergovernmental relations to include municipalities.
- *New processes* to bring an “urban spatial lens” to bear on economic, social and

environmental policies of governments.

- *New practices* for the delivery of tri-level programming tailored to the specific needs and assets of different cities and communities.

Bradford finds promising examples for future efforts in a number of current initiatives across Canada, like the Urban Development Agreements in Vancouver and Winnipeg, and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in Regina.

He concludes his paper with a discussion of the key factors that will help move the new urban agenda forward: leadership, social trust and democratic accountability.

“Time is of the essence,” says Bradford. “Other countries have already invested a great deal in new urban governance arrangements. We can learn from them, but we need to build our own body of experience – the intellectual, social and political capital that will deliver a high quality of life and economic success in our own cities.”



Social Architecture Research Results Made Accessible

CPRN’s *Social Architecture Papers* comprise eight research reports on different aspects of redesigning Canada’s social policy framework to respond to the new risks and social reality of the 21st century. A ninth and final report by Jane Jenson, the originator and director of the project, synthesizes the findings of the other papers and sketches out a blueprint for a new social architecture.

It is a critically important body of work that needs to reach the widest possible audience. But for many interested in the subject matter, the original reports represent an enormous amount of reading, for which they may not have the time.

To respond to their predicament, David Hay, Jane Jenson’s successor as Director of CPRN’s Family Network, has written a short accessible summary of the main research findings of the series.



A New Social Architecture for Canada’s 21st Century: Research Highlights provides a useful overview of the Social Architecture research and its conclusions, along with an annotated bibliography for those who want to delve deeper.

Boosting Essential Skills of Low-skilled Workers

Despite what we know about the importance of skills development to success in the knowledge economy, there are still few opportunities for low-skilled workers to improve their situation by enhancing their skills. Government training programs tend to target the unemployed, rather than the low skilled. Employers often prefer to spend their training dollars on workers who are already highly skilled.

A new report from CPRN examines some Canadian initiatives designed to promote skills upgrading for less-skilled workers to uncover the conditions that contribute to success in such endeavours. ***Skills Upgrading Initiatives in Canada: Regional Case Studies***, by Richard Brisbois, Researcher, and Ron Saunders, Director, of CPRN's Work Network, presents some innovative case studies from two Canadian jurisdictions – diamond mines in the Northwest Territories and oil sands and trucking companies in Alberta. Most of them involve special efforts to meet the needs of Aboriginal workers. Brisbois and Saunders find collaboration between governments, employers and educational institutions has been a major key to success. Other factors include; significant

private investment by the companies concerned; assessment tools and training customized to fit the needs of employers and the skill gaps of employees; a readiness by companies to provide paid time for training; appropriate, sensitive learning environments; learning materials directly related to employees' jobs; marketing of upgrading programs to both senior management and employees; community capacity building; appropriate regulation by governments, and; skilled adult educators.

While anecdotal evidence from the case studies points to improvements in employee skill levels, productivity and self-esteem, the authors advocate greater effort to track such initiatives across the country and measure outcomes. They also suggest that their case studies do not address the situation of small and medium-sized enterprises where the substantial costs of delivering training may pose an unaffordable challenge.

This is a preliminary report prepared for the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as part of the Study on Skills Upgrading for the Low-qualified, led by the LEED Directing Committee of the OECD. A revised version will appear in a forthcoming OECD publication, *Rising Expectations: New Perspectives for the Low-Skilled*, OECD, Paris, 2005.



Suncor Energy Inc. bitumen upgrading facility north of Fort McMurray, Alberta.



Extracting bitumen oil sand from the Athabasca Oil Sands in Alberta.



On the Road with the



From left to right: **Nancy Olewiler**, Director, Public Policy Program, Simon Fraser University, **Judith Maxwell**, President, CPRN, **Warren Gill**, Vice-President, University Relations, Simon Fraser University, and **Cynthia Williams**, Senior Research Fellow, CPRN.



David Choi, President and CEO, Royal Pacific Group and **Judith Maxwell**, President, CPRN.



From left to right: **Ian Peach**, Director, Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy (SIPP) and **Harold MacKay**, Chair, SIPP Board of Directors, honoured **Judith Maxwell**, President, CPRN with an Honorary Fellowship. Also part of the presentation was **Tom McIntosh**, Director, Health Network, CPRN and affiliated with SIPP.

Over the past few months, CPRN has been hosting receptions in Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver. In all three settings, CPRN was able to stimulate discussion about the primary concerns of the residents of these communities regarding the impact of policies on their regions.

In Regina and Vancouver, we celebrated our staffing partnerships with Universities. In Vancouver, Cynthia Williams became a CPRN Senior Research Fellow and is working in affiliation with Simon Fraser University. A great mix of over 50 people attended and contributed to the dialogue about sustainability. In Regina, Tom McIntosh has become CPRN's Health Network Director and works in conjunction with the University of Regina and the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy (SIPP). In Regina, participants included the Board and staff of SIPP, as well as an array of academics and government officials. Former Premier Roy Romanow took part, as well as, Pat Atkinson, Minister of the Public Service Commission and Eric Cline, Minister of Industry and Resources.

In Edmonton, Lou Hyndman, former Alberta Treasurer, emceed the event which brought out a cross section of people from the education, municipal government and business communities, as well as other interested individuals.

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CPRN Campaign...



From left to right: **Harold MacKay**, Chair, Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy (SIPP) Board of Directors, **Judith Maxwell**, President, CPRN and **Roy Romanow**, former Premier of Saskatchewan.



From left to right: **Bruce Bentley**, President and CEO, Maclab Enterprises, **Judith Maxwell**, President, CPRN and **Lou Hyndman**, Partner, Field Law, and host of the Edmonton reception.

Photos, right: Edmonton reception and bottom: Regina reception.



Elsewhere, CPRN has received support from the Roasters Foundation and the William and Nancy Turner Foundation, both of which are located in Montreal. These two foundations are contributing to the Work Network's *Access and Excellence in Canadian Universities* project.

For more information about the Campaign, please contact Margaret Miedema, Fundraising Coordinator at (613) 567-7500 ext. 2030 or mmiedema@cprn.org



Health Care Accountability: The Role of Performance Measurement

The demand for greater accountability in the health care system has focused new attention on measuring its performance and making the results public.

Public Reporting of Performance Measures in Health Care, by Kathleen Morris and Jennifer Zelmer, of the Canadian Institute for Health Information, is the fourth in CPRN's *Health Care Accountability Papers* series. It explores examples of public reporting in Canada and abroad. The authors review the objectives underlying performance reporting and what we know and don't know about its effectiveness. They go on to earmark lessons of relevance to future reporting initiatives.

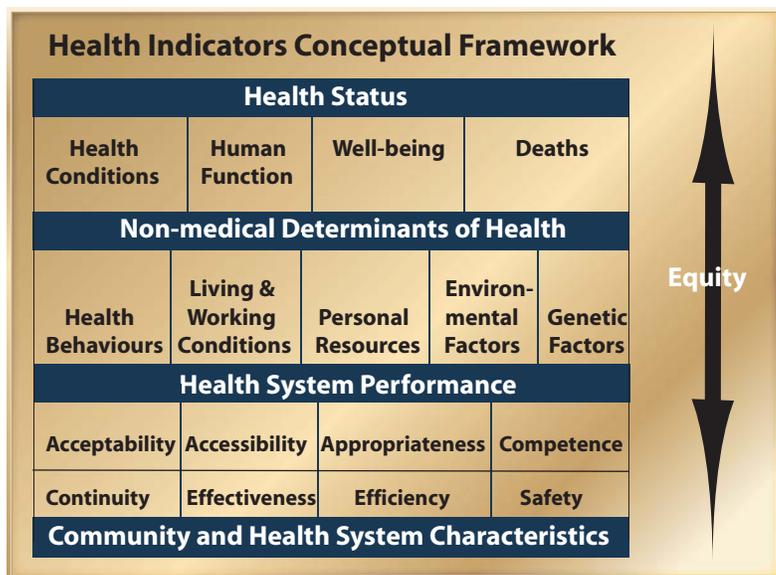
Their paper considers reports that target the public directly, as well as reports aimed at administrators, clinicians, policy makers and others that are also made public. It focuses on reporting of standardized performance indicators – “a performance indicator is a single summary measure, most often expressed in quantitative terms, that represents a key dimension of health status, the health care system, or related factors.”

More specifically, the authors find:

- Public reporting is increasingly common in Canada and abroad. The audiences for these reports, the incentives that motivate them, and their ability to respond to performance information vary greatly.
- Outside the U.S., reporting efforts focus mainly on accountability to citizens and motivating improvement in the quality and efficiency of health care delivery, rather than informing consumers' choices.
- While studies show that the public is increasingly aware of at least some reporting efforts and is making more use of on-line reports, there is limited evidence on how this information influences an individual's selection of a clinician, health care facility, or health insurance plan.
- Research has shown that health care organizations respond to publicly released data and take specific actions to improve the quality of care.

Morris and Zelmer also identify key lessons that developers of future performance reporting initiatives might consider:

- Clear objectives aid design, implementation and evaluation.
- Identifying the target audience for the report will determine the type of data required for the decisions they are expected to make.
- Communication of the results will need to be tailored to the intended audiences. Public and provider audiences may have different needs, while both will require guidance on how the information should be interpreted and used.
- Performance indicators can't capture all aspects of health care. Report developers might consider how public reporting fits with other accountability and quality improvement tools.
- The value of public reporting must be weighed in the context of alternative uses for the resources employed. Does the value of the data collected justify the cost?
- Participation in reporting initiatives can be mandatory or voluntary. There is something to be said for both.



Is public reporting effective?

“Apart from its informational/educational role,” says co-author Jennifer Zelmer, “public reporting is effective if it causes someone to act – or to consider acting – to improve quality or performance.”

“Public reporting of performance data is likely to be an enduring feature of Canada's health system,” says Zelmer. “Our challenge is to learn from Canadian experiences and that of other jurisdictions in order to get the most from such reporting in the future.”



Health Care Accountability: What the Legislation Says

All recent major federal and provincial health care reform inquiries have found that Canadians rank greater accountability high among their priorities.

Accountability means answering questions like; Who is responsible to whom for what? How can we tell whether they have fulfilled that responsibility? and, What is the consequence for not fulfilling it?

A fifth addition to CPRN's Health Care Accountability Papers explores Canadian health-related legislation with these questions in mind.

Mapping Legislative Accountabilities by Susan V. Zimmerman, provides what she calls, "a useful outline of the landscape, identifying where accountability is concentrated, what types of accountability are most prevalent, and where there are weak spots or gaps."

The key responsible players in health care are: *Governments; Government agencies and commissions; Regional health authorities (RHAs); Professional colleges*, the regulatory bodies for each health profession; *Health facilities*, from hospitals to long-term care centres, and; *Individual health care providers*.

Key areas of accountability explored in the paper are: *Standards* (systemic, institutional, clinical and professional); *Resources* (financial, human); *Public engagement and responsiveness* (citizen representation in decision-making, public participation, transparency, complaint and appeal mechanisms, public education and information), and; *Quality and evaluation*.

Zimmerman reviews more than one hundred statutes to compare federal/provincial/territorial practice with regard to each of these areas of accountability.

"While a review of statutory provisions without reference to their accompanying regulations provides an incomplete picture of legislative accountability," she says, "it does provide a rough measure of where the accountability focus lies and a good indication of the locus of responsibility."

Zimmerman also warns that the fact that powers are legislated tells us nothing about the effectiveness of those powers in practice. That depends on the human and financial resources

devoted to implementation, and enforcement of the sanctions for non-compliance. Political will is also an essential ingredient in the effectiveness of accountability measures.



Photo: Designpics

Among her main conclusions:

- 1) Responsibility for establishing **standards** in the health care system lies primarily with provincial ministers, departments of health and specialized government agencies, with the support of RHAs. Professional colleges have a significant role in setting standards of practice and ethical conduct for providers in regulated professions. Operators of health care facilities also play a role in establishing and upholding organizational and professional standards in their institutions.
- 2) Only health ministers and regional health authorities have significant authority over **financial resources**. There is little in the way of legislative accountability assigned to any of the main actors for **human resources**. This may reflect a lack of strategic planning regarding health human resources.

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Housing: Social Policy's Lost Opportunity

Today, to our shame, 100,000 Canadians have no homes at all, while another 1.7 million (almost 16% of the population) are in core housing need – unable to afford shelter that meets accepted adequacy, suitability and affordability norms. Core housing need is highest among lone parents, Aboriginal peoples, seniors and recent immigrants.

In addition to the human suffering that lies behind these statistics, they represent a failure to see housing as a key social policy tool.

David Hay, Director of CPRN's Family Network, underlines housing's social policy role in *Housing, Horizontality and Social Policy*, a paper prepared for an Expert Roundtable in Vancouver in January, part of a country-wide consultation process led by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) in collaboration with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Hay reiterates a fundamental argument of recent research by CPRN and others, that adequate, affordable housing is essential to the success of many other social and economic policies. He reviews the impact of housing on health, on the integration of immigrants, on seniors, on Aboriginal peoples, on crime prevention and income security.

Housing's many dimensions (physical, spatial, financial, psychological and social) and its intersection with so many areas of economic and social policy, make it a "horizontal policy issue", one that crosses established departmental lines and jurisdictions. Tackling core housing need in Canada requires collaboration across governments, between governments, and between public, private and community sectors.

Hay calls for "place-based policy approaches" that emphasize the integration of local knowledge, local participation and local capacity-building to replace the old one-size-fits-all approach. He goes on to suggest ways to strengthen the role of housing in social policy that take advantage of the contribution and savings affordable, decent housing can produce.

(Continued from page 7)

- 3) Few legislative provisions address **public engagement and responsiveness**. Professional colleges lead the way in terms of providing for public representation in decision-making, transparency and complaint mechanisms, along with RHAs. Governments and government agencies do not fare so well.
- 4) Governments take the lead regarding **quality and evaluation**, monitoring quality, providing information and sponsoring research. Government agencies and professional colleges also perform a monitoring function, while RHAs are a significant source of public information.

Zimmerman concludes that the goals of public engagement and responsiveness are best served when the actor involved has a clear sense of its direct responsibility to answer to the public.

"The contrast between professional colleges and governments and government agencies in this regard is striking," she says. "The former have a clear mandate to set and uphold professional

standards and respond to public complaints of misconduct. On the other hand, fewer than half the provinces and territories have provisions of any kind relating to public engagement and responsiveness."

Zimmerman finds that the current system of accountability offers few avenues (with the notable exception of Quebec) for members of the public to express, individually or collectively, their dissatisfaction with *access to or quality of services* provided by the health care system.

"Current lines of accountability run primarily between government and service provider or facility operator," she says. "Legislating more direct avenues for accountability to the public would send a strong message that the government understands to whom it is answerable."

CPRN hopes to publish a matrix developed by Zimmerman that allows comparison of legislated accountabilities in the provinces, territories and the federal government at a later date.

Since writing this paper, Susan V. Zimmerman has joined the Health Law Group at Borden Ladner Gervais in Toronto.



On the Net and In the Media – March 2005

As of the end of March 2005, the number of discrete visitors to www.cprn.org is up more than 20% over last year to 620,000 a year. Downloads of CPRN publications are at an all-time high, topping 1,000,000 for the first time, up 88% over a year ago. Visits to our Web site on workplace indicators, www.jobquality.ca, are also on the rise hitting 123,000 for the past 12 months, up 25% over the year before.

We now have 94 publications registering 5,000 downloads or more, and 43 over 10,000! Recent “best-sellers”, include Julie Ann McMullin and Martin Cooke (Work Network), *Labour Force Ageing and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario*; Ron Saunders (Work Network),

Passion and Commitment Under Stress: Human Resource Issues in Canada’s Non-profit Sector – A Synthesis Report; Cathy Fooks and Lisa Maslove (Health Network), *Rhetoric, Fallacy or Dream? Examining the Accountability of Canadian Health Care to Citizens*; Julia Abelson and François-Pierre Gauvin (Health Network), *Engaging Citizens: One Route to Health Care Accountability*; Frances Abele (Family Network), *Urgent Need, Serious Opportunity: Towards a New Social Model for Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples*; Jane Jenson (Family Network), *Canada’s New Social Risks: Directions for a New Social Architecture*; Mary Pat MacKinnon (Public Involvement Network), *Public Dialogue and Other Tools for Citizen Engagement*; and ;Judy

Watling (Public Involvement Network), *Citizen Engagement for Sustainable Public Policy*.

Media interest in a number of recent CPRN studies has been strong. In particular, the Work Network’s research on vulnerable workers, access to post-secondary education, ageing and skills shortages, innovation in the non-profit sector and skills upgrading got attention, as did the Family Network’s research on housing and cities and communities. CPRN people were also in demand to discuss federal and provincial budget priorities and recent initiatives in child care and parental leave. The number of listserves that forward our releases to their members continues to grow, helping us reach an ever-increasing number of Canadians who might benefit from our work.

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Awards

CPRN's President, Judith Maxwell, received two honours when she visited the city of Regina in February.

Saskatchewan's Premier, Lorne Calvert, and the province's Lieutenant-Governor, Lynda Haverstock, awarded Judith the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award at Government House in the capital. The award is given to "non-residents of the province who have made outstanding contributions to Saskatchewan and the development of the provincial economy and society."

The citation accompanying the award says that Judith "has broadened Canada's and Saskatchewan's perspectives on how social and economic policy interact."



Judith was also named an Honorary Fellow of the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, "in recognition of exceptional service to Canada's policy community."

In accepting the awards, Judith spoke of the province's impact on the country. "I have always been impressed that Saskatchewan, despite its size and periods of economic hardship, gives so much quiet but effective leadership to the federation. That is why this award means so much. It comes from a province which has built and sustained a high quality, professional public service. It has also exported many of these public servants to other provinces and to Ottawa. (Let me say, they all needed this talent)."

Congratulations, Judith!

People

We are pleased to announce three new arrivals to CPRN's research team – Judi Varga-Toth, Assistant Director, Family Network, Renée Torgerson, Researcher, Health Network and Eva Lazar, Senior Researcher, Family Network.

Judi Varga-Toth, M.A., joined CPRN as the Assistant Director, Family Network, in February 2005. Previously, Judi was the National Programs Manager for Family Service Canada.

Judi has many years of experience managing projects related to family well-being in Canada as well as researching and writing in the area of children's issues. Her particular areas of interest and expertise include social capital and family well-being, social policy affecting the most vulnerable segments of the Canadian population, the impact of violence on children and the interface between families and municipalities.

Institut des hautes études européennes, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, France, focusing on the social, political and legal impacts of the European Union, and a B.A. in Political Studies from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

Renée Torgerson, Ph.D., is Researcher at the CPRN Health Network. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Saskatchewan. She is a former post-doctoral fellow at the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit at the University of Saskatchewan and, most recently, served as Health Human Resources Consultant to the Health Human Resources Planning Branch of Saskatchewan Health.

In March 2005, **Eva Lazar**, Ph.D., began a two-year interchange assignment from the Government of Canada as Senior

Researcher in the Family Network. Previously, Eva was a senior research officer for Social Development Canada.

Eva has significant academic, governmental, non-governmental and community experience researching, writing, teaching and managing projects in the area of social policy and human rights, both in Canada and internationally. Most recently, Eva has focused upon issues related to citizenship, governance and shifting caring regimes in the context of contemporary globalization.

Eva holds a Ph.D. in Political Studies from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, an M.A. from McGill University in Political Science, Montreal, Quebec, and a B.A. Honours in Political Science from Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. Eva was also a post-doctoral visiting fellow at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a



Judi holds an M.A. in European Studies from the

Sponsor's Corner



Scotiabank is one of North America's leading financial institutions and Canada's most international bank. Although their reach is global, their energies are focused on individual customers, employees, shareholders, and on building a strong community presence.

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Scotiabank is a proud member of the Imagine Campaign's Caring Companies.

Canadian Policy Research Networks is pleased that Scotiabank has generously supported CPRN through the President's Innovation Fund over the past few years. The President's Innovation Fund allows the President of CPRN to fund new ideas which have not yet received seed money.

People (Continued)

visiting scholar at the University of Witswatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. She has held lecturing positions at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and at Queen's University.



From left to right: Renée Torgerson, Judi Varga-Toth and Eva Lazar.

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Accountability: Finding the Right Balance

Accountability is the new imperative for corporate Canada. For governments, it is the foundation for re-establishing the trust and confidence of citizens.

The general principles are fairly simple. Accountability presumes that a) there is a relationship between those making decisions and those affected by them, and b) the decision-maker has a responsibility to make decisions, as well as c) the authority under law or generally accepted principles to do so.

Once these conditions are in place, there are consequences: the citizen or shareholder can require *answers*, including an accounting for *performance*, and, if performance does not meet the promised standard, *corrective actions* (or *sanctions*).

As trust and confidence in institutions have declined, assuring accountability has become a gigantic challenge. Legal and financial regimes have adopted extreme positions, forcing large institutions, whether public or private, to reconsider how they should conduct these accountability relationships.

The standard has become error-free decision-making. This has led to situations where it takes ten people to approve every transaction (no matter how small) and ten others to certify that they did the right thing. On big decisions it can involve many more.

Companies are spending millions on financial controls and certification systems and similar amounts on audit fees to meet U.S. Sarbanes-Oxley requirements imposed by securities legislation, which are rapidly being imitated here in

Canada. (Sarbanes-Oxley legislation was provoked by the Enron and other corporate debacles in the U.S. since 2000.) Meanwhile governments, reacting to their own “scandals,” are turning themselves inside out to tighten up contracting rules to the point where the administrative costs for both parties can exceed the value of the contract.

Clearly this is unsustainable. And it is not at all clear that it does much to restore the trust and accountability that citizens, shareholders and decision-makers are seeking.

What do citizens and shareholders need to know to be confident that governments and corporations are acting in their interest? As far as I can tell, no one has done the research.

One immediate reaction has been to turn to a third-party expert. Shareholders are to be protected by financial analysts and auditors. But the analysts were just as misled by the Enron situation as the shareholder was, and the auditors are writing opinions which take no responsibility for fraud or errors that did not come to their attention during the audit process.

Citizens, for their part, call for third-party oversight, such as auditors, but these agencies tend to weaken a government-citizen relationship that is already in tatters.

In CPRN's conversations with citizens, they are adamant about accountability. When asked, they say they want to know whether the hard-earned money they pay in taxes is being well-used.



They ask:

- Where did the money go?
- How do we compare with others?
- Are we making progress?
- How do we get a voice in decision-making?

They do not expect to make the decisions, and they do not want direct democracy. It is the quality of the relationship that matters – the right to have some influence.

Voting at the annual meeting or in the election just doesn't do it.

For more background, read Cathy Fooks and Lisa Maslove, *Rhetoric, Fallacy or Dream? Examining the Accountability of Canadian Health Care to Citizens* and Julia Abelson and François-Pierre Gauvin, *Transparency, Trust and Citizen Engagement – What Canadians Are Saying About Accountability*. Both are at www.cprn.org

Judith Maxwell
President

