

Friday, July 22, 2005

Democratic Renewal, and Non-profits in the Place-Based Policy Era

Democratic Renewal

The shenanigans on Parliament Hill, the impression that parliamentary discourse has reached a new low in terms of civility, and a sense of a growing gap between electors and elected, have all kept the topic of democratic reform high on the public agenda.

In a recent presentation to CPRN's Board of Directors, Mary Pat MacKinnon, Director of CPRN's Public Involvement Network addresses the current malaise in Canada's democratic system, its causes and symptoms – popular alienation from the political process, resistance to change and so forth. She considers the contribution that deliberative processes can make to democracy and reviews a number of recent initiatives across the country (P.E.I., Ontario, B.C., N.B.) designed to effect democratic renewal.

She goes on to look at the role of institutional reform – of the electoral system, of political parties and legislatures themselves. MacKinnon emphasizes the importance of a cultural transformation that raises civic literacy and engagement between elections, and she raises questions about the role of the mass media in contributing to that change.

She concludes with a number of provocative questions.

To access or download a copy of her presentation, ***Democratic Renewal***, [click here](#).

The Non-profit Sector in a Place-based Policy World

The value of the non-profit sector has never been clearer. In addition to its age-old role of providing social goods and services that the market and public sectors have failed to deliver adequately, the sector is a key player in the new social policy era. So argues David Hay, Director of CPRN's Family Network, in ***The Social & Non-Profit Agenda***, a presentation to the VON Canada Education and Reflection Retreat in Toronto.

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