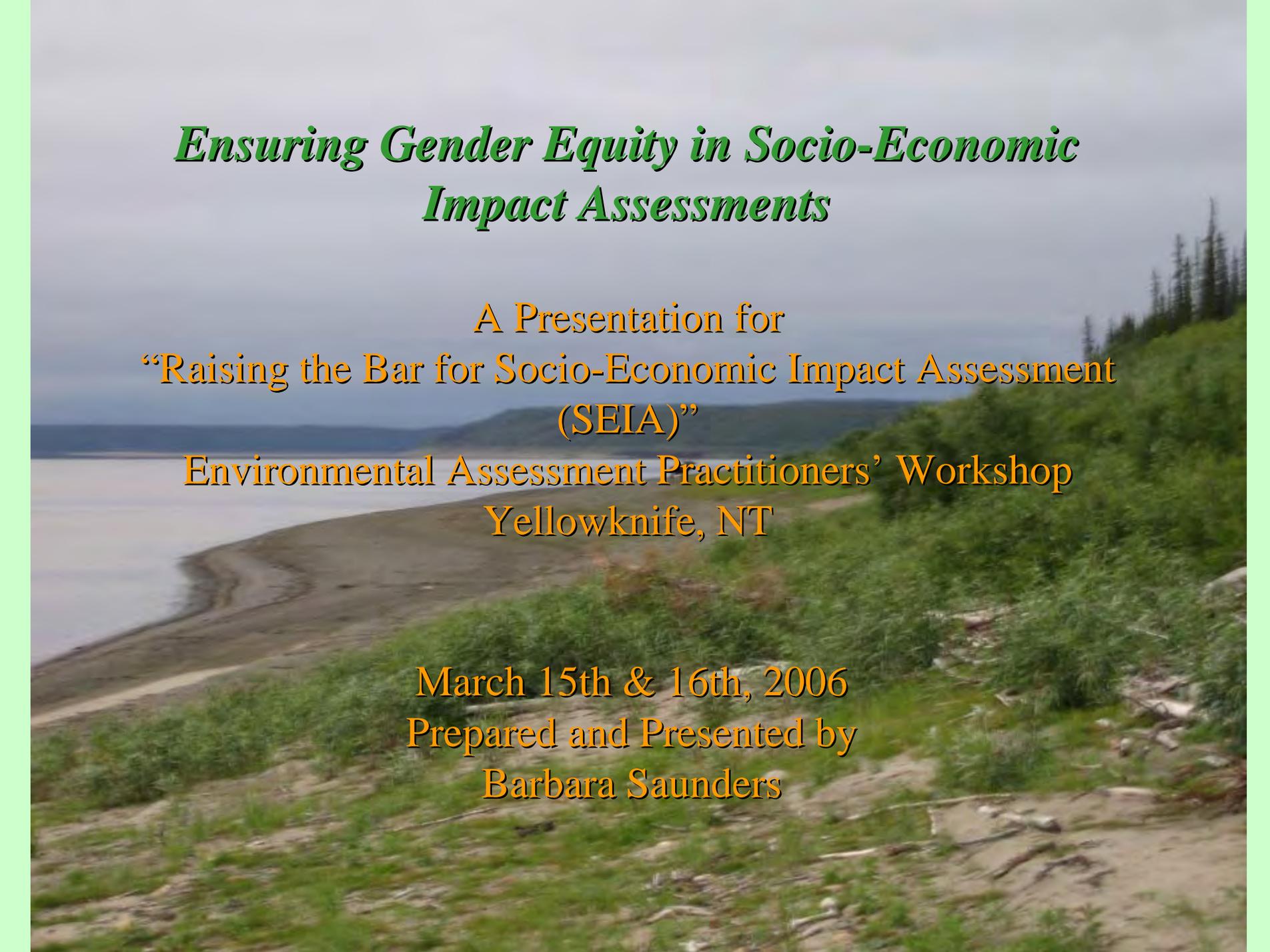


“Meaningful social and environmental change results from community empowerment of women in that community.”

(From: Gaining Ground: Women, Mining and the Environment. 2001. pg.17)





Ensuring Gender Equity in Socio-Economic Impact Assessments

A Presentation for
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GENDER EQUITY is the process of being fair to women and men.

Equity leads to equality.

(Status of Women Canada, “Gender-based analysis: A guide for policy making. 1996.)

GENDER EQUALITY means women and men enjoy the same status.

Women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results.

(Status of Women Canada, Gender-based analysis: a guide for policy making. 1996)

Embedded in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is the concept of equality that acknowledges that different treatment of women and men may sometimes be required to achieve sameness of results, because of different life conditions or to compensate for past discrimination.

Gender Based Analysis is:

- A process that assesses the differential impacts of proposed and/or existing policies/programs on women and men.
- A tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options.

Gender analysis is an essential element of socio-economic analysis. A comprehensive socio-economic analysis would take into account gender relations, as gender is a factor in all social and economic relations.

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Applied to environmental assessments gender analysis helps to:

- Identify gender based differences in process and participation
- Identify how different members of household, groups and societies relate to each other and how a planned development will change this relationship

- Reveal how development impacts women and men differently socially and economically
- Can reveal differentials in benefits
- Permit planners to achieve the goals of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and empowerment through designing policies and inclusive program strategies

Good Practice in Gender Analysis

- ✓ Uses plain language
- ✓ Requires expertise of equality issues
- ✓ Uses participatory action research
- ✓ Involves local residents
- ✓ Involves many women and equality seeking organizations.
- ✓ Requires quantitative and qualitative research data

Begin with asking:

- Who is the target (both direct and indirect) of the proposed research and assessment? Who will benefit? Who will lose?
- What specific measures can we take to encourage and enable women to participate?
- What are the barriers to women's participation (social, economic, legal, political, cultural...)?

What to do:

- Gain an understanding of gender relations.
- Recognize the ways women and men work and contribute to the local economy, their family and society.
- Apply GBA good practices

Questions for Scoping would include:

- How is quality of life different from women and men?
- What are the cumulative social impact issues? How have they impacted women/men?

- What do women think is important to the quality of life? How will this change with development?
- How much are women involved in decisions for the community?
- How much more development can a community take without losing what they value?

- Do women have equal capacity and resources to participate in all aspects of the assessment?
- What are the attitudes and perceptions of women/men about the development? And how do they think it will change the community?

Social well-being indicators would include:

- ✓ Teen birth rates
- ✓ Family violence complaints
- ✓ Rates of violence against women
(sexual assaults, sexual harassment)
- ✓ Social assistance cases
- ✓ Personal sense of safety

- ✓ Sense of personal and community empowerment
- ✓ Number of persons per dwelling
- ✓ Number of single mothers/fathers
- ✓ Parental support services
- ✓ Number of cases of workplace harassment
- ✓ Family & individual stress

Economic factors should include;

- ✓ Women employed by numbers and position
- ✓ Gender parity
- ✓ Pay equity scales
- ✓ Current wages and employment levels and by gender

- ✓ Women's participation rates in training and employment
- ✓ Number of child care spaces
- ✓ Analysis of particular barriers affecting women including workplace environment
- ✓ Income distribution by gender

Questions to ask during impact prediction:

- How will the project impact the longer-term interests of women?
- Will it affect equity, human rights, integration of work & family?
- How will relationships between women and men be affected?

- What are the anticipated effects of the project for women during each phase of the development?
- How will the development affect the capacity of women in study area communities to carry out everyday activities and to meet their own practical needs (such as food, shelter, income, childcare, eldercare, education, health)?

Identification of Mitigation Measures

Strategies plans and programs to alleviate or “fix” the issue necessarily involve all women and men who will be impacted and those who work in the specified area.

Determination of Significance

Women may have a different perspectives on what is considered significant.

The conclusions reached in some models leave room for bias that may affect women more than men.

Monitoring of impacts must be enforceable and accountable and transparent.

Community monitoring committees should be trained to monitor impacts and trends to changes as a result of the development.

Conclusion

The process of integrating the two SEIA and GBAs is a worthy endeavour saving time, energy and gaining support, wisdom, cooperation and equality.

“A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people-centered sustainable development.”

Beijing Platform for action, 4th UN World Conference on Women Beijing, 1995

