

#3 Measurements of social and economic impacts of resource developments

by Andrey Petrov, University of Northern Iowa

In this study, researchers tried to answer the question, “How are we measuring social and economic impacts of resource development on Northern communities?” To answer this question, researchers need to know: What methods are being used? What works best? Is there anything preventing these methods from working well?



First, researchers have to find “social indicators”. Social indicators are anything that show the wellbeing of a community - for example, crime statistics are often used to show whether a community is doing well or poorly. These indicators should be clear and there should be a way to measure them. Choosing the best social indicators can be a difficult task. Good indicators can help us find simple ways to measure very complex changes. Good indicators allow communities to monitor and control the impacts of developments for themselves. Communities are becoming more and more involved in figuring out what impacts should be measured and watched.

Different northern regions approach this kind of research very differently. This makes it difficult to compare social impacts across regions. By sharing this work on social indicators we could make it easier to share data across the north. Being able to share information across the Arctic would help to make this work more successful.

Recommendations:

- ⇒ Create a plan for identifying, using and measuring social indicators.
- ⇒ Be sure to that social indicators cover a whole range of different social issues.
- ⇒ Develop monitoring systems, including systems for community self-monitoring. Usually social change happens slowly and over time. Continuing to measure social indicators over a longer amount of time gives communities and researchers a clearer idea of what is happening.
- ⇒ Collect more data. If researchers don't have enough data to work with, then they cannot make good predictions and conclusions.
- ⇒ Develop social indicators that are specifically for the north instead of using social indicators from other places.
- ⇒ Include more community-based and qualitative research methods.
- ⇒ Create a set of standards that everyone can use to guide impact monitoring.
- ⇒ Make sure that measuring social indicators and doing impact monitoring is not too expensive, so that smaller projects and communities can also have the tools and techniques they need to monitor the impacts of resource development



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