



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
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CANADIAN APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL POLICYMAKING: MEASUREMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE.

OECD Conference on Environmental Justice

May 28, 2024



Canada 



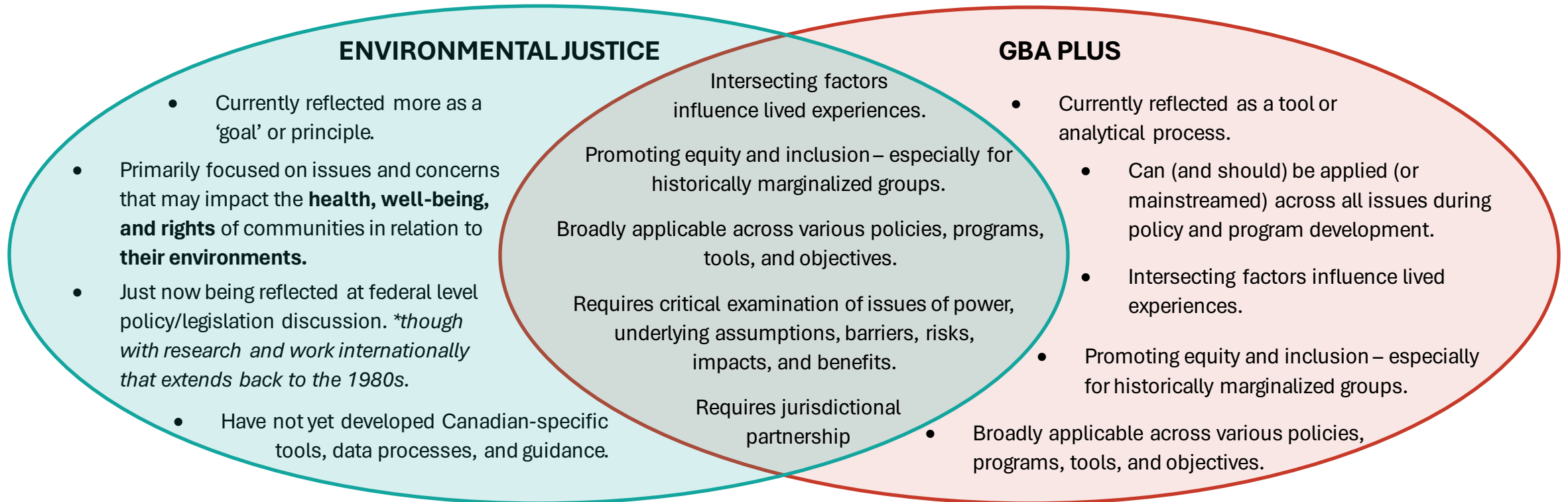
PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Challenges and opportunities with Canada's environmental policy assessment tools
- Early learnings within the context of the development of national environmental justice and racism policy
- Closing reflections – the importance of lived experience and meaningful engagement

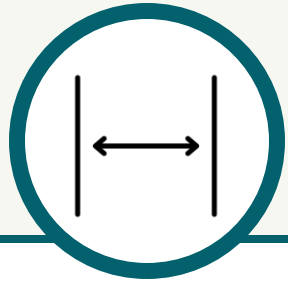


ADVANCING EQUITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL SPACES

Federally, GBA Plus supports the development of responsive and inclusive initiatives, including policies, programs, and other initiatives.



GBA PLUS: IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES



Gaps in disaggregated data make it challenging to understand how diverse groups experience inequality.



GBA Plus as a tool/lens/process is not well understood, which has hindered its ability to be embedded in decision-making processes.



Metrics and indices to measure the distributional impacts of climate or other policy are underutilized.



ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- The institutionalization of environmental justice federally is in its early stages and focused specifically on environmental racism.
- A baseline study is necessary to understand the distribution of environmental racism within the Canadian context.
- These efforts may inform broader environmental equity interventions such as cost benefit analysis.

BILL C-226: *National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act*

National Strategy

3 (1) The Minister must develop a national strategy to promote efforts across Canada to advance environmental justice and to assess, prevent and address **environmental racism**.

3 (3) The strategy must include:

(a) a study that includes

- (i) an examination of the link between race, socio-economic status and environmental risk, and
- (ii) information and statistics relating to the location of environmental hazards; and

(b) measures that can be taken to advance environmental justice and assess, prevent and address environmental racism and that may include

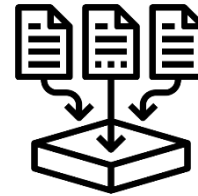
- (i) possible amendments to federal laws, policies and programs,
- (ii) the involvement of community groups in environmental policy-making,
- (iii) compensation for individuals or communities, and
- (iv) the collection of information and statistics relating to health outcomes in communities located in proximity to environmental hazards.





DATA CONSIDERATIONS

- Proposed legislation emphasizes the importance of quantifiable linkages
 - Clear indices, indicators and targets will be critical to support comparisons – a **“pile of data”** is not a meaningful outcome
 - **Qualitative narratives** will be essential to supplement quantitative outputs (see example on next slide)
- EJ focus is community-level, requiring geographically specific information to be used – **selection of datasets/indicators will be critical**
 - Many federal data collection, disaggregation and dissemination activities but not necessarily at the same level of granularity



DATA COLLECTION

The mandate commitment and C-226 reflect expectations for clear, ongoing EJ data linkages and tools (potentially similar to the USEPA’s EJScreen).

EJ issues often occur at community levels; data may not meet granularity expectations (e.g., consistency and availability of municipal-level or rural data), be consolidated, or be widely shared.



ANALYSIS

A quantitative focus won’t tell the whole story – narratives that reflect cultural context and history are essential for data to convey a meaning or intent (both collection and use). The risk of misleading data “piles” is considerable.

The analytical approach also needs to have a clear hypothesis (e.g., indicators or targets) that reflect context and perspectives – different communities may have different hypothesis about what constitutes EJ and success.



BALANCING QUANTITATIVE DATA WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

- **Aamjiwnaang First Nation** is a community located in an area known as 'petrochemical valley' where citizens breathe some of the most polluted air in all of Canada.
- The First Nation is exposed to benzene levels above the acceptable level of risk for developing cancer, and the levels of benzene have been steadily trending upwards over previous years.

"For over a century, the people of Aamjiwnaang have been forced to endure disproportionate environmental and health impacts from toxic industrial pollution in our territory"

- *Chief Christopher Plain, Aamjiwnaang First Nation*





KEY LEARNINGS



Taking time to build relationships allows for honest conversations and effective collaboration.



Treat communities as partners in not only identifying issues but realizing meaningful solutions.



Understanding the context of a community, including lived experiences, can highlight procedural and recognitional barriers/opportunities.



Empower communities with the knowledge and evidence to pursue environmental justice.



ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY

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