Connecting Policy and Research
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Why governments need policy-research

An experiment: Metropolis

Some lessons and ideas
Why Governments Need Independent Academically-based Policy Research

To produce better evidence-based policy
To build research receptor capacity
To work horizontally
To mobilize stakeholders
The Original Problem

• inadequate federal capacity to address broad strategic issues
• disinvestment in capacity
• lack of external expertise
• numerous stakeholders but no coherent policy-research program
The Challenge

- to increase external research capacity
- to create a focus on policy issues
- to stimulate research use by stakeholders
The Approach

To develop multi-stakeholder partnerships

To develop policy-analysis institutes

To bring them together
Creating Network of Policy Analysis Institutes

- Centres of Excellence
  - five Centres
  - affiliating experts
  - 200 academics, double this number of graduate students
    - Leveraged Resources

Institutional Consortia:
- U de M
- INRS
- McGill
- York
- Ryerson
- U of T
- SFU
- UBC
- U Vic
- U of Regina
- U of Saskat.
- U of Winnipeg
- U of Alberta
- U of Calgary
- U of Manitoba
Bringing it together

Structural bonds:
• Interdepartmental Committee and local committees
• Centre management and advisory boards
• Centre domains
• International Steering Committee, Secretariat, other
• Project Team

Activity bonds:
• National and international annual conferences
• Workshops, seminars, ‘conversations’, brown bag lunches, etc.
...attended by ministers, officials, researchers, policy community, NGO’s, service providers, private sector
Communications

• Metropolis website – Centre websites
• Newsletters
• Centre newsletters
• JIMI (Metropolis Journal of International Migration and Integration)
• Special issues of journals (eg. Journal of Ethnic Studies)
• Journal articles
• Conference Proceedings and Reports
• Videos and radio documentaries
• Metropolis Institute
Outcomes . . . .

... and lessons

- Enormous enterprise
- International prominence
- Huge volume of research
- Large numbers of graduate students
- Spin-offs: graduate study programs, training for officials and for NGOs, data repositories
- Numerous links among researchers, policy officials and NGOs (national and international)
- Acclaim for policy excellence
Outcomes

... and lessons

• Different eco-systems
• University incentive structures
• Weak receptor capacity
• Modes and language of communication
• Silos everywhere
• Geography
• Timeliness
Outcomes …

... and lessons

• Academic engagement is essential for effective policy-research
• Demand led solutions are essential for solving policy-research problems
• Governments and universities must invest in bridging infrastructure and leadership