

Action Plan



**Opportunities @ Home
Hearst and Region**

February 2002

www.fnetbcfne.on.ca/YouthForum/Youth_Forum.html

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Introduction



The Issue

Youth are leaving the North – should we worry about it? Can we do anything to stop losing our youth? The answer to both questions is yes.

First we should be clear about the nature of the problem. To provide a common statistical basis about the issue, the Far Northeast Training Board (FNETB)¹ commissioned a demographic study, 'Youth Out-Migration from the FNETB Area' released in March 2001². Our major problem in the North is declining population overall and for youth. The problem is compounded because we are not attracting a large number of youth in-migrants³. The population in NE Ontario continues to decline while the population increases in the rest of the province. Between 1981 and 1996 the overall population of the Northeast declined by 6.2% while Ontario as a whole grew by 25%, a discrepancy of more than 30%⁴. These population trends are projected to continue. In Ontario between 2001 and 2011, total and youth populations are projected to each increase by 13%. On the contrary, in the Northeast, total population is expected to decline by 1.7% and youth population by 9%⁵. The losses are compounded when youths settle and raise their families elsewhere. These losses result in a lower birth rate and the consequential detrimental effects on the Northern economy extend into the next generation. The net effect is to drive population away and reduce the likelihood of attracting in-migrants.

Demographic changes specific to the Nord-Aski (Hearst and surrounding communities) area⁶ include:

- ▶ With 1,914 youth (7%), Nord-Aski is the third smallest subarea of the FNETB and almost the same size as Wakenegun.
- ▶ Population loss from 1981-2006 is expected to be -9.4% compared to provincial average increase of +50%. Losses are the third lowest in the FNETB area after Wakenegun and Timmins.
- ▶ Nord-Aski has fewer 15-19 year olds exiting as compared to other FNETB subareas. Three times more youth in Hearst remain with their parents after graduation as compared to the rest of the province.
- ▶ Similar to the North Claybelt area, more 25-29 year-olds leave than from the other cohorts.
- ▶ During 2001-2006, absolute net youth out-migration from Hearst is expected to be 225. 75 youth per year need to be retained or attracted to the Hearst area to compensate for out-migration.
- ▶ Hearst has far more francophones 15-29 years of age than in the general population (66% compared with 4.5% average in Ontario and 38% average in the FNETB region).

¹The FNETB area covers Northeastern Ontario stretching from the Tri-Town area in the south to the coastal communities of James Bay in the north. It is bound by the Quebec border on the east and by the communities of Chapleau and Hornepayne on its western side.

² Available from FNETB at 1-800-530-9176 or 705-362-5788 or on the FNETB website at www.fnetbcfne.on.ca/

³ Suthy Holler Associates, "FNETB Research Report, Youth Out-Migration from the FNETB Area", p32.

⁴ Ibid., p5.

⁵ Ibid., p9.

⁶ Corresponds to Nord-Aski Non Profit Development Corporation based in Hearst.

Introduction Continued...



- ▶ The stability of the francophone population is decreasing, i.e. they are becoming more mobile.
- ▶ The highest level of education for francophones is a slightly below the Ontario average (13% vs. 15.5% achieving college diplomas and 3.2% vs. 4.4% achieving university degrees).
- ▶ In the FNETB, more Anglophone females go to university than their francophone counterparts but still at half the rate of the provincial average.
- ▶ More rural youth tend to be employed in manual labour or skills and trades than urban youth.
- ▶ Fewer females participate in the FNETB workforce and at lower wages.
- ▶ Hearst jobs in the knowledge economy (considered critical for keeping up) are limited to a few Senior Management positions. Given the Hearst economy, we should see more knowledge-based jobs in Business and Finance plus in the Natural and Applied Sciences. But the numbers aren't there. Similar to the other areas of the FNETB, Hearst employs fewer people in new economy jobs in comparison to the rest of the province⁷.

Population loss, particularly the loss of the youth cohort, has been identified as a key issue affecting the development and economy of Northeastern Ontario. Across the Northeast, the effect of overall population loss is evident in reductions in the availability and levels of service. Obvious sectors include transportation (air, rail), health care and education. Youth understand this general economic situation and are influenced by existing trends when choosing to leave the North for educational and employment opportunities. One of these trends is a preference for urban centres even if a desired job were available in a smaller community⁸. Addressing the problem of Youth Out-Migration encompasses all aspects of Northern life in our small communities.

Background – Model Development

A Steering Committee (of representatives from the Far Northeast Training Board and community stakeholders from Kirkland Lake) in conjunction with a Coordinator (sponsored by the FedNor Internship program) developed a format for Youth Forums suitable for use across the Northeast. This approach was pilot tested and refined during the Kirkland Lake Youth Forum held in May 2001. Follow-up meetings provided a template for forum reports and action plans.

⁷Presentation by Chris Rees, Suthey Holler Associates. Also see Suthey Holler Associates, "FNETB Research Report (Companion Volume), Youth Out-Migration from the FNETB Area".

⁸ Ibid., p32.

Introduction Continued...



Local Forum

A local Steering Committee was formed with representatives from FNETB, CFI de Hearst, Nord-Aski Regional Economic Development Corporation, Université de Hearst, Collège Boréal, Ecole Secondaire de Hearst, the Youth Employment Counselling Centre, MNR, MNDM and FedNor to plan Hearst's forum. In February 2002, a Youth Forum held at the Knights of Columbus Cultural Community Centre considered the issues around youth out-migration for the Hearst region. The event (and subsequent follow-up sessions) was attended by 76 participants, including 49 youth aged 15-29, and 27 community stakeholders, from industry, small business and local governments. Due to bad weather and scheduling conflicts, the Hearst Forum consisted of one day with community participants followed by meetings with local high school youth and representatives from Constance Lake First Nations. Sessions were conducted in French except with the Aboriginal group when discussions were in English. During the forum, participants learned about the problem of Youth Out-Migration from the area and identified strategies that could help keep youth in the community of Hearst in Northeastern Ontario. Ideas generated by the three groups have been integrated into this single report.

Outcomes

Forum planning has endeavoured to assure that recommendations to address Youth Out-Migration will move forward. Recommendations will be moved as closely as possible towards implementation on two levels.

Seven similar forums are either complete or planned by the FNETB across Northeastern Ontario in Kirkland Lake, Timmins, Kapuskasing, Haileybury, Hearst, Moose Factory and Chapleau. From each of these Forums will come more information and ideas, some local and specific in nature, others with a more regional focus. The cumulative effect of this regional activity will be sets of statistical data which are comparable and can be updated. From this comes the potential, perhaps for the first time, to develop coordinated strategies based on a common factual basis. The Northeast will be able to speak authoritatively about solutions to the issue of youth out-migration.

Most important, though, is the response of communities at the local level. Following each local forum, the project will continue with dissemination of the recommendations and action plan to community constituents. Youth and stakeholders from the community, who developed the recommendations in this report, will play a critical role in transferring responsibility for action to the local level. If each small community implements a small portion of the recommendations, momentum will build and drive actions at the regional level.

By better understanding this issue and by finding the common ground for our geographically dispersed communities, we can keep more of our youth here and happy in the North East.

Recommendations



The strategies brought forth by the Hearst Region Youth Forum participants have been grouped into eleven recommendations as follows:

1. Offer more secondary and post-secondary education
2. Offer more social, cultural and recreational activities
3. Promote local jobs
4. Create a community fund for education
5. Support entrepreneurship and economic diversification
6. Honour youth volunteers
7. Promote Northern lifestyle
8. Promote Francophone identity
9. Develop a community identity
10. Promote gender equity in employment
11. Lobby to preserve fishing and hunting

Each recommendation is explained under four headings:

- ▶ Issue
- ▶ Opportunities @ Home
- ▶ Challenges.
- ▶ Summary

Opportunities @ Home is the theme for the Youth Forum and therefore a suitable heading for the positive potential of each recommendation.

These recommendations are based on the discussions of participants at the Hearst Youth Forum. A complete list of the discussion statements is in Appendix I. Full participant analysis of each statement is available from the Far Northeast Training Board at 1-800-530-9176 or 705-362-5788.

“There is a great need for francophone professors. There are hardly any francophones enrolled in Ontario Faculties of Education.” – Education Panelist

1 - Offer more secondary and post-secondary education



The Issue

Hearst has both French and English high schools but because of its small size the English school has difficulty offering enough courses to meet the requirements for a secondary school diploma. English-speaking students from Constance Lake and Hearst must find other ways to complete their education. As for post-secondary education, the infrastructure is in place to deliver courses by distance education but few complete programs are available. Courses primarily in French offered by Collège Boréal's Centre for Excellence in Forestry of Northern Ontario (CEFNO) and Université de Hearst's General Arts programs; Northern College has no physical presence here. Students continuing their studies beyond high school must relocate to complete programs or to take courses in other fields. This means leaving their families along with additional moving and living costs. Their money is lost to the Hearst community as well as access to their skills as graduates, if they continue to work where they studied.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Offer more complete programs at high school, college and university levels.
- ▶ Encourage employees to take courses as a means to improve performance.
- ▶ Offer courses in flexible formats, e.g. part-time by distance education via internet and video conference.
- ▶ Offer co-op programs at the university level.
- ▶ Offer programs in Computers or Math.
- ▶ Offer night courses in visual arts to support the local culture.
- ▶ Offer a variety of specializations to support employment diversification.
- ▶ Determine programs to offer based on an analysis of what students are leaving to study.
- ▶ Increase flexibility of local post-secondary institutions for recognizing courses offered by other colleges and universities.

Challenges

- ▶ Finding reasonably priced student accommodation.
- ▶ Obtaining institutional funding to offer programs.
- ▶ Second year courses are not available in the region.
- ▶ Materials for certain programs such as science and engineering are very expensive.
- ▶ Difficulty in attracting teachers to the North.
- ▶ Grants need to support all kinds of educational programs (not just the forest industry).

1 - Offer more secondary and post-secondary education cont'd



Summary

Living at home while studying reduces the cost of college or university education. Staying in Hearst also helps students build networks within the community and increases chances they will continue to work in the North once their studies are completed. Furthermore, their contributions as graduates will help diversify Hearst's employment and cultural environments.

Hearst area youth are looking for educational opportunities in French and English that can be completed without leaving the community. Additional post-secondary offerings consistent with youth interests and the local job market of Northeastern Ontario will provide a basis for expanding existing education facilities (Collège Boréal, Université de Hearst, Contact North, Northern College). Although partnerships with industry, education and government will be needed to access additional funding, forum participants felt developing more post-secondary educational opportunities had the most potential to keep youth in the North.

"I graduated from pharmacy at the University of Toronto and now have students from Toronto who want to do placements in Hearst." – Pharmacist Panelist

"Returning to Hearst was a personal decision but a good decision for me. I went to Oshawa but didn't like the life style with long traveling time and little time at home. Camping was not the same, either." – Forest Industry Panelist

"I contacted three of my friends in the south. All recognize the better lifestyle in the North. Get involved in your community with your friends!" – Social Services Panelist

2 - Offer more social, cultural and recreational activities



The Issue

In Hearst, recreational activities for youth focus primarily on hockey. Youth are looking for fun and more activities to do with their friends. At the present time, they do not have an inexpensive place of their own that offers positive alternatives to drinking and taking drugs and to help keep them out of trouble.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Offer new sports such as baseball, soccer, basketball, volleyball, badminton, tennis, bowling, pool, football, gymnastics and boxing outside of school.
- ▶ Promote the benefits of team sports: fun, confidence, physical fitness, relaxation, teamwork, thinking skills, socialization.
- ▶ Promote outdoor activities such as snowmobiling, camping (summer and winter), hunting and fishing, skating.
- ▶ Offer recreational activities such as Go-Karts, Arcades.
- ▶ Offer and publicize cultural events such music, art, museum displays.
- ▶ Hold expositions of youth works of art.
- ▶ Establish a Book Club or a mini Chapters café.
- ▶ Establish an amateur theatre troupe.
- ▶ Offer workshops to develop the cultural side of the community.
- ▶ Create centres for laser tag and rock climbing.
- ▶ In summer, build a roller blade and skateboard park in the arena or other paved location.
- ▶ Open a recreational centre for youth (15 years and older) with a pool table, computer, small restaurant and a stage where youth can play their music. Have local bands perform in the evenings and on weekends. Hold dances on Saturday evenings.
- ▶ For youth (5-14 years), offer summer camps with diverse activities.
- ▶ Develop a centre with many diverse activities including tennis, ping pong and badminton.
- ▶ Develop a ski hill.
- ▶ Reverse tourist traffic: attract tourists from southern Ontario to the North instead of the opposite.
- ▶ Hire local guides for tourist attractions.
- ▶ Organize a youth telethon to raise funds to support a youth centre with many activities.
- ▶ Introduce a program in elementary and secondary schools to promote different cultural, sportive and social activities.

2 - Offer more social, cultural and recreational activities cont'd



Challenges

- ▶ Creating acceptance for activities other than competitive sports.
- ▶ Developing appreciation for the arts through activities such as reading, discussions and museum visits.
- ▶ Preventing injuries associated with sports.
- ▶ Developing a win-win attitude toward competition.
- ▶ Obtaining funding to cover the cost of building sports and recreational facilities.
- ▶ Getting people involved. Part time work schedules make commitments difficult.
- ▶ Determining locations for facilities.

Summary

Hearst youth have many ideas for increasing the variety of social, cultural and recreational activities in their community. A youth centre with pool table, computer, restaurant and stage along with a Mini Chapters café, an amateur theatre troupe, art expositions plus indoor and outdoor sports would create new employment for youth as well as develop their talents and add to the community's cultural diversity. If our youth are satisfied while growing up here, as adults, they will likely return or stay in Hearst.

“Stop thinking there are no jobs and no businesses here– it's false! There are lots of possibilities here, especially with smaller employers.” – Youth Panelist

3 - Promote local jobs



The Issue

Many youth are unsure what career to pursue. Career information is often fragmented among different institutions and arrives too late to help youth make realistic choices. On top of this, youth don't know what local jobs are available. They are convinced that they must leave the area to find employment and, too often, see no compelling reasons to return after graduation.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Promote local job opportunities by holding career days in the schools as early as Grade 8.
- ▶ Present statistics about future trends, the advantages of working in the North and the realities of city life as evidence of local employment possibilities.
- ▶ Use all types of media to advertise job openings, e.g. television, Internet, radio, newspaper.
- ▶ Work with agencies such as Chamber of Commerce, Nord-Aski CFDC, HRDC, Ontario Travail, Centre d'excellence pour Jeunes Entrepreneurs and educational institutions (Collège Boréal, Université de Hearst) to promote local careers.
- ▶ Involve industry stakeholders in planning recruitment of youth.
- ▶ Start new businesses to enhance existing industries, products and services, e.g. in forestry, rural medicine and equipment built for the North.

Challenges

- ▶ Scarce employment opportunities in some sectors.
- ▶ Preparing youth to be entrepreneurs who make their own opportunities.
- ▶ Ensuring a supportive political environment.
- ▶ Overcoming reluctance to take risks.
- ▶ Improving communication among institutions.

Summary

Employers, schools and employment agencies need to work together to ensure youth know what jobs are available locally and the educational requirements to enter these fields. Students need comprehensive, realistic career information as early as Grade 8 and throughout high school to make the best career choices.

4 - Create a community fund for education



The Issue

Youth in Hearst traditionally remain with their parents longer than youth elsewhere in the province. Although staying at home while studying cuts the cost of post-secondary education, most Hearst high school graduates must leave to continue their studies. Incentives are needed to encourage their return after graduation.

Opportunities @ Home

A wide variety of companies, municipalities and other agencies in the Hearst region need to join together to provide loans without interest for high school students to attend post-secondary institutions. In return, the student would agree to return to Hearst to work for a specified number of years depending on the amount borrowed. This approach has worked in fields such as dentistry and medicine and can be targeted to specific local needs. The fund would be intended to minimize student debt load because employment after graduation is guaranteed. When loans are repaid, the fund will be replenished and available for other students.

- ▶ Establish government grants in co-operation with small business, e.g. boutiques, groceries, for students attending post-secondary educational institutions.
- ▶ Offer short-term lodging for students who do a work placement in Hearst because they probably already have apartments elsewhere.

Challenges

- ▶ The community fund may compete with other existing local bursaries.
- ▶ Determining who will administer the fund.
- ▶ Enforcing requirements to work in Hearst after graduation
- ▶ Not all companies are willing to hire a graduate without experience.
- ▶ Demonstrating the value to the company and government for making these loans. Alternatively, taxes may have to be raised to cover the cost of the loans.

Summary

A community fund will encourage co-operation from industry, municipalities and government to provide a quality workforce to meet future needs. It will help draw graduates back to Hearst by guaranteeing employment so they can become active participants in the Hearst economy.

5 - Support entrepreneurship and economic diversification



The Issue

Hearst has an impressive record of entrepreneurship. Its three large mills show the community's reliance on forestry and provide a strong base for expanding into value-added industries. Youth need to be prepared for this new type of workplace—one where they need to create their own opportunities as entrepreneurs.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Develop a program to teach youth the requirements for starting a business. Encourage existing entrepreneurs to take advantage of this program as well.
- ▶ Encourage youth to take initiative and identify new industries for the North.
- ▶ Create jobs in cultural sectors, e.g. photography, publishing, theatre, music.
- ▶ Inform youth about possible careers and possibilities to exploit in Hearst, e.g. bringing tourists to the North rather than the Northerners always being the tourists.
- ▶ Open manufacturing of other products besides wood, e.g. shoes, clothes, snowmobiles, drinks, glasses.
- ▶ Support new solutions and have an open attitude to change.
- ▶ Exploit our forests to the maximum. Find other uses for the forest, e.g. ingredients for medications, new materials from plants.
- ▶ Transform our primary resources such as wood and minerals, e.g. into furniture, prefabricated houses, to create more jobs.

Challenges

- ▶ Changing attitudes that there is nothing to do in the North.
- ▶ Changing the life style of youth when they know no other way.
- ▶ Addressing declining population.
- ▶ Sustaining long-term commitments.
- ▶ Obtaining funding through grants and other sources.
- ▶ Overcoming climate limitations and distances from government.

Summary

Although forestry will likely continue to be Hearst's primary economic driver, entrepreneurial skills will enable youth to create their own opportunities. Long term goals to diversify into value-added industries have the potential to build a stronger economic base for the community and attract or retain youth by increasing the variety of available jobs. Financial support from government is definitely needed to make this transition.

6 - Honour youth volunteers



The Issue

Although many organizations benefit from youth volunteers, too often they are forgotten and their contributions overlooked. Without public recognition, recruitment of new volunteers continues to be a challenge.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Hold a soirée to reward the youth volunteers in the community.
- ▶ Provide gifts such as local handicrafts as tokens of recognition.
- ▶ Publish names and contributions of volunteers to recruit others and to market the quality of life in the community.

Challenges

- ▶ Finding an organization to take responsibility for the event.
- ▶ Obtaining funding for the event.
- ▶ Making sure the list of volunteers is complete.
- ▶ Establishing different categories of volunteers.

Summary

Recognition can help youth volunteers get paying jobs as their work becomes known to the public and prospective employers. Positive experiences also encourage others to become involved. The celebration is a way to build rapport among the people of Hearst so that youth will want to stay or return.

"I picked Hearst because my wife likes the North and I wanted live in a French speaking community." – Physician Panelist

7 - Promote Northern lifestyle



The Issue

Many Northerners don't recognize the value of their Northern lifestyle. Beautiful surroundings close to nature and outdoor activities, opportunities to work and live in French or English, friendly people that know each other by name and the comfort of safe neighbourhoods are not available elsewhere. Youth who have not lived in the city may not realize the costs of hectic city life where traveling eats up several hours per day.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Promote the quality of life in the North, e.g. sports, recreational and cultural activities, lower cost of living, safer, less stressful, better quality of family life, close to outdoor activities.
- ▶ Youth who have lived elsewhere present testimonials in the schools about the advantages of living in the North vs. Southern Ontario.
- ▶ Promote Hearst's celebrities.
- ▶ Prepare a pamphlet about the town.
- ▶ Attract students to complete a work term in Hearst.
- ▶ Find alumni from universities and colleges that are Northerners.
- ▶ Use the community radio and newspaper to challenge youth to remain, return or bring others.
- ▶ Establish a recruitment centre and personnel specifically assigned to attracting people to Hearst but who work with other programs, e.g. funders.

Challenges

- ▶ Converting a city person from the south into a Northerner.
- ▶ Limited variety of businesses and services few choices of clothing stores.
- ▶ Creating effective testimonials for outside the region.
- ▶ Obtaining funding.
- ▶ Ensuring appropriate balance between English and French to make people feel comfortable.

Summary

Promotion of Northern lifestyle needs to highlight the advantages of small Northern communities that are unavailable in bigger, southern cities. It needs to focus on building pride in our Northern heritage that will encourage youth to stay or come back.

8 - Promote Francophone identity



The Issue

The Hearst region has the highest concentration of Francophone population (66%) in all the FNETB subareas. This represents almost twice the average for the FNETB region (38%) and six times the provincial average (11%).

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Encourage other francophones to come to Hearst. Use the slogan “You can live completely in French in Ontario”.
- ▶ Use French media to promote achievements of francophones in the region.
- ▶ Offer programs in French as a Second Language plus Translation and Interpretation at college and university levels.
- ▶ Promote French culture by having a carnival or festival “franco”.
- ▶ Establish an “office des affaires francophone et autres” in Hearst.
- ▶ Target French speaking travelers from other provinces and countries.

Challenges

- ▶ Developing tolerance for other linguistic groups.
- ▶ Updating transportation facilities.

Summary

A francophone identity can provide a basis for promoting the region.

“There are more opportunities than you first think. Local employers are more likely to give local youth a chance.” – Journalism Panelist

9 - Develop a community identity



The Issue

Like so many areas in Northern Ontario, the Hearst region is made up of small communities of several thousand people near the Highway 11 corridor. Mattice, Hearst, Calstock, Jogues and the Constance Lake First Nations struggle with the same environment and search for solutions to similar needs. Yet each is also proud of its linguistic and cultural differences. Unfortunately, Francophone, Anglophone and Aboriginal perspectives often divide rather than pull the communities together.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Develop a regional vision for the communities of Mattice, Hearst, Calstock and Jogues.
- ▶ Work together to improve the quality of community life, e.g. develop more ideas two heads are better than one and create more cultural, employment and recreational opportunities.
- ▶ Support commercial and cultural exchanges to promote understanding of realities in other municipalities.
- ▶ Encourage regional contractors.
- ▶ Develop a community organization to represent the Nord-Aski region.

Challenges

- ▶ Overcoming language and cultural differences among Anglophones, Francophones and Aboriginals.
- ▶ Avoiding competition with other regions, e.g. Kapuskasing.
- ▶ Averting assimilation by larger centres.
- ▶ Maintaining enough power to preserve identity and effect changes.

Summary

While respecting the priorities and values of different cultures and communities in the Nord-Aski region, individuals need to find ways to work together to build healthier, tolerant communities with strong identities and the power to effect change essential to helping youth develop pride in their heritage and community.

10 - Promote gender equity in employment



The Issue

Although young women in FNETB area generally achieve higher levels of education than young men, their participation in the labour force is lower. Are well-educated young women in the North choosing not to participate in the labour market or can they not find jobs suitable to their levels of education? Furthermore, we cannot overlook the fact that employment in the forest industry remains almost exclusively dominated by males.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Make better use of the 'Association Parmi-elles'.
- ▶ Establish a special fund for women, e.g. starting a business, child care, studies.
- ▶ Increase awareness of gender equity issues through forums, publicity and articles.
- ▶ Offer studies in traditional and non-traditional areas of interest to women, e.g. Sociology of Women, Teaching, Home Care, Trades and Skills; offer programs here so women will remain in Hearst.

Challenges

- ▶ Overcoming salary inequities.
- ▶ Providing child care and maternity leave.

Summary

Achieving gender equity involves attracting females to non-traditional roles early in their education as well as in post secondary institutions. Providing incentives for women to choose careers in male-dominated fields such as forestry can help to open doors to gender equity in employment.

“Look for gaps in services and get the expertise to fill them.” – Tourism Panelist

11 - Lobby to preserve fishing and hunting



The Issue

Northern youth recognize fishing and hunting as part of the Northern way of life. Although meant to preserve our natural resources, restrictions are frustrating to understand and detract from these popular recreational activities. In fact, some long-time residents are so exasperated that they plan to leave the North. Furthermore, decreased fishing and hunting adversely affects tourism and adds more economic hardships to struggling areas.

Opportunities @ Home

- ▶ Provide better information about regulations.
- ▶ Lower 'youth' prices for permits.
- ▶ Hold sessions to gather input from youth and to share information.
- ▶ Organize 'all inclusive' hunting and fishing trips for tourists, i.e. everything is done for them.

Challenges

- ▶ Preserving endangered wildlife and other natural resources for the future.
- ▶ Preventing pollution from increased fishing and hunting.
- ▶ Hunting and fishing limits cannot be increased if the number of wildlife is low.
- ▶ Avoiding over-reactions and exaggerations.
- ▶ Avoiding poaching and refusing to follow regulations.
- ▶ Finding ways to effectively lobby the government to simplify laws and ensure their effectiveness.

Summary

Conservation and eco-tourism are aimed at preserving our natural resources for future generations. Youth need to be well-informed about fishing and hunting issues to become effective lobbyists to maintain our Northern life style.

Action Plan for Implementation



The purpose of the Action Plan is to identify initiatives that will facilitate the transfer of responsibility for implementing Youth Forum recommendations to appropriate local organizations.

The Action Plan for the Recommendations consists of four strategies, each of which is described below:

- A.** Get Back Into Communities
- B.** Inform Community Groups about Youth Forum Recommendations
- C.** Build Momentum of Local Support to Address Youth Out-Migration
- D.** Build Bridges to Develop Regional Strategies to Address Youth Out-Migration

A. Get Back into Communities

Informing the general public is the first step in implementing the recommendations. The entire community of Hearst needs to know that the implementation phase of the project is now under way because awareness of the results creates motivation for change.

Action

The release of the Action Plan will take place during a press conference attended by the sponsors and participants of the Youth Forum as well as members of the general public.

An advertising campaign will take place to support the release of the Action Plan. This will ensure that the citizens of Hearst are aware that the implementation phase of the project is underway.

B. Inform Community Groups about Youth Forum Recommendations

Informing community groups about the Youth Forum recommendations is another key step in implementing the results of this project. Youth and community players will need to work together with youth and community players who are committed to making changes needed to attract or keep youth in the community.

Action

The report will be sent to all interested or affected local and regional community leaders, organizations and municipalities. Doing this will raise awareness of the recommendations brought forth during Youth Forum. This report, together with the reports from the other Youth Forums being held in the Northeast, will ultimately be posted on the Youth Forum web site in PDF format for any individuals or organizations wishing to download the document. The Forum web site can be found at www.fnetbcfne.on.ca/YouthForum/Youth_Forum.html.

C. Build Momentum of Local Support to Address Youth Out-Migration

The recommendations cannot be implemented without local participation. Steps will be taken to get key community members involved to build local support for actions which address youth out-migration.

Action

Partners will be recruited to help build community buy-in for the recommendations outlined in this report. Partners may be community participants of the Forum, youth participants, as well as members of the general public.

Furthermore, community leaders, organizations and municipalities will be presented with an opportunity to do their part in ensuring the implementation of recommendations. During presentations, key community players will be invited to involve themselves in effecting change.

The cumulative effect of individuals and organizations taking small actions across the Hearst region and ultimately across the Northeast will lend credibility and substance to efforts to attract and retain youth.

D. Build Bridges to Develop Regional Strategies to Address Youth Out-Migration

The Hearst forum is one of seven taking place across Northeastern Ontario. All forums will be looking at ways to address youth out-migration. The FNETB steering committee has taken steps throughout this project to develop regional strategies that will help all of Northeastern Ontario achieve its objective of alleviating the out-migration of youth.

Action

In order to help build bridges and develop regional strategies across Northeastern Ontario on how to address youth out-migration, the FNETB steering committee has developed the format and process for a regional report. The regional report will consist of the findings and recommendations from all seven forums.

Furthermore, the recommendations from all seven forums will be distributed to all pertinent regional stakeholders in an attempt to prepare them for possible future regional presentations and requests.

Conclusion



Conclusion

The goal of the Hearst Youth Forum is to create an Action Plan to help the Nord-Aski region deal with out-migration of its youth. The recommendations outlined in this report identify specific actions for Hearst and area.

The responsibility now shifts to the Hearst community to implement these recommendations. Effective change will require full support from all community levels: government (municipal, regional, provincial and federal), business, industry, education, volunteer groups and individuals. By working together to make small, incremental changes, the community can make a difference to keep our most valuable natural resource of the future—our youth.



Process for Developing Recommendations

Participants worked in groups to develop statements proposing a specific action, which could be taken to encourage youth to stay in or return to the North. Each statement began with “We can retain/attract youth by ...” and was completed by an action intended to create opportunities at home for youth. Each group was mixed, with both youth and stakeholder participants, and generated 5 statements, which were transcribed onto sheets. Back in plenary, the statements were posted, with similar ideas grouped together, and explained so that the larger group could understand the intent of each proposal.

Once all ideas were posted, participants signed up for discussion groups. Discussion was based on generating the 'plus', 'minus', and 'interesting' (PMI) points as well as background information about the propositions.

PMI results were presented to the large group and then posted for participants to add additional information. In plenary, the group identified ideas which were 1) the most effective in the long term 2) the most likely to get buy-in and 3) the easiest or quickest to implement. The discussion statements selected by the participants became Recommendations that form the basis of the Action Plan.

The detailed analysis for each of the following discussion statements is available from the Far Northeast Training Board, 1-800-530-9176 or 705-362-5788.

Discussion Statements (in random order)

WE CAN RETAIN OR ATTRACT YOUTH BY . . .

- ▶ Offering sports and non-competitive recreation (for life experiences).
- ▶ Encouraging youth to become entrepreneurs and putting their original ideas into practice.
- ▶ Helping and supporting taking risks in offering new programs that target youth with post-secondary education.
- ▶ Offering more choice from a variety of stores to create more employment and make the town more attractive.
- ▶ Offering more university and college programs.
- ▶ Offering more choice in college and university programs. Offer complete programs and bursaries.
- ▶ Offering more post-secondary courses (and entire programs) in the Hearst region.
- ▶ Creating a community financial resource for education, e.g. loans without interest.
- ▶ Increasing the bursaries offered to students.
- ▶ Valuing youth volunteers.
- ▶ Recruiting youth to get involved in the community; recognize those involved.
- ▶ Creating Abitibi educational exchanges at university and college levels—real life experiences that will promote our region.
- ▶ Establishing value for the quality of family life.
- ▶ Promoting the quality of life in the North. Example—recreational and cultural activities, cost of living.
- ▶ Identifying the stability of life.
- ▶ Promoting the possibilities for sports, cultural, educational, artistic, economic and commercial activities in the region.
- ▶ Marketing the quality of life.
- ▶ Selling our francophone identity.

- ▶ Valuing future and immediate employment opportunities in our community.
- ▶ More promotion in schools (as early as Grade 8) of local job opportunities.
- ▶ Work terms/education in tertiary sectors.
- ▶ Valuing and communicating job opportunities (using statistics).
- ▶ Informing about career choices.
- ▶ If you come from the North, you will have a job because your qualities for the job are known.
- ▶ Being more preventive than reactive.
- ▶ Preventing—not reacting.
- ▶ Communication among the communities of Mattice, Hearst, Calstock, Jogues.
- ▶ Developing a regional vision for the communities.
- ▶ Opening the doors to females.
- ▶ Establishing more commerce—more new businesses and stores, e.g. Wal-Mart, Suzy Shier.
- ▶ Protesting the fishing and hunting laws.
- ▶ Developing more social, cultural and tourist activities.
- ▶ Offering more bursaries and possibilities for graduates.
- ▶ Diversifying employment.
- ▶ Providing more post-secondary courses (college and university).