
FedNor Youth Forum 2000
Conférence Jeunesse

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS





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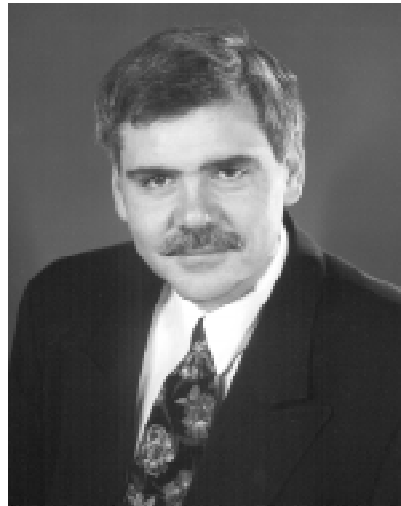
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Message from the Secretary of State

As Secretary of State responsible for Rural Development and FedNor, I am delighted with the response to Youth Forum 2000 and the outcome of the conference.

The one-and-a-half-day session raised a number of ideas and recommendations on how programs and policies can be developed for one of our most important natural resources – our youth. This input is important in order to provide guidance for the improvement of current programs or the development of new initiatives. Our efforts are geared at making a real difference for youth in Northern Ontario.



This event was held as part of our commitment to address concerns and challenges faced by the young people of Northern Ontario. There is no better way to learn how well employment-related programs and services are helping youth than to ask the people most affected.

The Forum itself resulted from FedNor's ongoing effort to improve programs and services for young Northern Ontarians. During an evaluation of the Youth Internship Initiative (YIP) in the fall of 1999, participants and employers identified the need for opportunities such as the Youth Forum to meet and network with other youth program participants.

The Federal Government is committed to provide meaningful opportunities for young Northerners. In November 1999, I had the pleasure of announcing that FedNor was making the Youth Internship Initiative a part of its ongoing programming. As of August 2000, FedNor had invested in excess of \$5 million to help more than 200 Northern Ontario interns enter the workforce and to make a smooth transition from school to work.

I would like to thank the 91 conference attendees who contributed their time, energy and ideas to our efforts to enhance employment and entrepreneurial-related programming and services for Northern Ontario youth.

We believe that creating opportunities for young Northern Ontarians to pursue meaningful career prospects is vital to a prosperous Northern Ontario. At FedNor, we are committed to doing just that!

The Honourable Andy Mitchell

Secretary of State (Rural Development) (FedNor)



Introduction

The following document profiles key findings and recommendations that emerged during FedNor's highly successful May 12-13 Youth Forum 2000.

This event gave 91 young Northern Ontarians the opportunity to help FedNor, the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario (FedNor), make an even greater difference in the areas of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

When consolidating participants' input, it was determined that most recommendations fell into one of six themes: Youth Internship Program, Involving Youth, School-to-Work Transition, Improving Education, Technology, and Building Our Northern Ontario Identity. Recommendations are being presented to offer a concise framework that will help FedNor respond effectively to these issues.

“Our role is to make sure there is a strong and sustainable Northern Ontario into the future.”

The Honourable Andy Mitchell

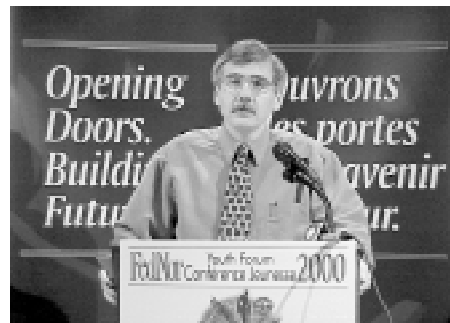
Understandably, since the vast majority of Youth Forum participants were current or former Youth Interns, many of the recommendations deal directly or indirectly with FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) and provide ways this program can be enhanced for future interns.

Others relate to issues such as education and training, making the transition from school to work, technology and how to promote Northern Ontario as a great place to live and work.

Young Northern Ontarians want to have opportunities to launch their careers in the north, to have education, training and the tools that will help them do so and to be part of helping the region put its best foot forward.

FedNor will use recommendations from this workshop to help develop programs and policies for the region's youth as part of its commitment to the community leaders of tomorrow. Investing in the youth of today will contribute to a prosperous Northern Ontario in the future.

A complete list of recommendations/suggestions is contained in appendix A.



The Honourable Andy Mitchell re-affirms his support for FedNor Youth Programs and Initiatives during a news conference.



Background

Youth employment and entrepreneurship are priorities of FedNor.

Through its access to capital, aboriginal, Community Futures Development Corporations, youth internships and other related programs and activities, FedNor has been successful in focusing on the needs of youth.

FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) is highly effective in assisting this target group. Launched in December 1997 as a pilot project, it became an ongoing FedNor program in November 1999.

The same year, a review of the initiative was conducted by an independent consultant, mainly by gathering information from former interns and their host organizations.

Here are some findings from the survey:

- 96% of former interns were currently employed and 92% were working in Northern Ontario.
- Over half (52%) of those employed remained with the host organization.

More than 40 per cent of the population of Northern Ontario today is under the age of 30. That is 340,000 individuals.

Statistics Canada

In this study, host agencies and interns recommended there be an opportunity for interns to network with each other. This supported an earlier suggestion for a youth forum in Northern Ontario to promote the program, examine youth employment issues and encourage youth networking.

In the fall of 1999, acting on these suggestions, FedNor staff began to organize a Youth Forum.

A consulting firm was hired to develop and deliver the Forum. A Youth Planning Group was formed to develop the

format and structure the event.

Members of the Youth Working Group included:

Sarah Anderson, *Parry Sound, Project Coordinator, Park-to-Park Trail*

Kim Bird, *Timmins, Development Officer, Aboriginal Business Canada Program*

Lee Anne Dell, *Sault Ste. Marie, Special Projects Officer, RAPIDS Community Investments Inc.*

Paul Denis, *Sudbury, COBSC Business Information Officer, Sudbury Regional Business Centre*

Christine Dodd, *Kenora, Marketing and Promotions Officer, Lake of the Woods Business Incentive Corporation*

Kimberly Fournier, *Timmins, Venture Centre*

Candyse Gurl, *Terrace Bay, Development Officer, Superior North Community Development Corporation*

Janet Mayes, *Thunder Bay, Executive Director, Northwestern Ontario Junior Achievement Council*



Jason McNeil, Terrace Bay, Financial Controller, Superior North Community Development Corporation

Denyse Nadon Holder, Timmins, NADF Account Manager, Aboriginal Economic Development for the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Caroline Vaillancourt, North Bay, SEB Coordinator

Youth Forum 2000 - Overview

Youth Forum 2000 was held in Sault Ste. Marie May 12-13 to address key employment-related issues facing young Northern Ontarians.

The event focused on postgraduate employment and entrepreneurship issues and opportunities for youth. It was also an opportunity to gather information for the development of policies and program relevant to Northern Ontario youth.

Target audiences included youth participating in FedNor's Youth Internship Program (YIP) and other FedNor youth efforts (such as the Shad Valley Program and the Business Solutions Competition). Ninety-one current and former youth program participants attended.

This event provided young people an opportunity to outline key employment-related issues they and their peers are facing as they embark on their careers. Conference participants also brought forth recommendations for further development.

Other forum participants included the Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State (Rural Development) (FedNor), and Federal Members of Parliament: Dr. Stan Dromisky, MP, Thunder Bay-Atikokan; Carmen Provenzano, MP, Sault Ste. Marie; and Brent St. Denis, MP, Algoma-Manitoulin; along with Steve Mahoney, MP, Mississauga West and Chair of the Prime Minister's Liberal Caucus Task Force on Youth Entrepreneurship. In addition, community stakeholders and FedNor staff participated in the forum.

The Open Space Workshop format, often employed in large meetings to promote creative thinking and group participation, was used to identify issues and discuss recommendations for FedNor regarding youth employment and entrepreneurship.

“The conference was a great idea. It is essential that youth are included in decision making, often I think their ideas/concerns are overlooked or not taken seriously.”

– Youth Forum Participant



Discussion Topics

As part of the “Open Space” format of the forum, a brainstorming session was held at the start of the conference to help identify the topics of discussion. Participants responded to the question, “How can we attract and keep young people in Northern Ontario?” Breakout sessions covered the following 29 topics:

1. Incentives for new graduates to come to the North.
2. Post secondary educators are, at times, 20 years behind in technology.
3. More to be said about industry and trades and technology in the schools.
4. Students to be more informed and trained in technology.
5. Get programs that are accessible for the North.
6. More accessible distance education programs for post-secondary studies.
7. Higher paying jobs for youth (including higher paying internships).
8. To encourage youth partnerships (non-native and Native).
9. Youth participation in decision-making.
10. Youth promotion in rural communities – “Our youth is our communities’ future.” We need to hit this home.
11. Diversify our economy (more to the North than natural resources).
12. Promote year round tourism.
13. Some type of network to link and promote communication between us all.
14. Building community support networks to keep people in the isolated northern communities.
15. Mandatory hands-on training for youth starting their own business in the North.
16. School-to-work transition programs.
17. Technical training (assistance programs).
18. Financial assistance for education and workshops that relate to our careers.

“We need your help to identify opportunities for development or enhancement of youth programs in Northern Ontario. We need your input to ensure our policies are relevant in today’s marketplace.”

The Honourable
Andy Mitchell



19. Funding private sector for youth employment.
20. Private sector needs funding to create employment for youth. Projects need funding from agencies and there needs to be more interaction between both parties.
21. E-commerce education so that students may stay in the North and run successful businesses from here and not have to go to the South.
22. To provide cultural training in order to bring business from abroad.
23. Improve transportation infrastructure.
24. Lower the cost of transportation.
25. More youth initiative programs (longer programs).
26. Create vibrant communities with facilities young people want.
27. More capital for non-profit organizations that have new programs beginning through internships but cannot support the programs once the internships are finished.
28. Competitive tax rates.
29. Industry mentoring.



Youth Forum participants receive instructions before start of the working groups.

These 29 topics were then divided into 10 categories. Participants chose which group to join for discussion purposes. Two rounds of breakout discussions were held where participants responded enthusiastically with more than 100 recommendations.

“The key to this problem (youth retention) is providing meaningful opportunities for youth to work in their chosen fields while gaining a viable income.”

Lynne Witty, Youth Forum Participant



Recommendations

For the purpose of this summary, recommendations have been grouped into six themes: Youth Internship Program, Involving Youth, School-to-Work Transition, Improving Education, Technology, and Building Our Northern Ontario Identity.

What follows are highlights of key recommendations and discussions as identified by Youth Forum participants.



Youth Forum participants select preferred topics for the working group sessions.

Recommendations will provide guidance for FedNor and will be shared with other government organizations and community agencies.

A complete list of recommendations/suggestions appears in Appendix A.

A) Youth Internship Program

It was recognized that FedNor's role in the area of youth employment and entrepreneurship has increased the awareness throughout Northern communities of youth as an important resource.

Participants felt the program could be further enhanced by making the Youth Internship Program (YIP) even more flexible. There were suggestions of having the option to modify funding for interns. For example, FedNor could fully fund the first year and share the cost with the employer in the second.

FedNor was encouraged to use a case-by-case approach to determine which internships should be considered for extended placements. It was suggested that in addition to salary, many employers also need operational dollars to support the position. Funding for professional development initiatives was also recommended.

A number of youth interns felt they would benefit greatly from having better access to outside training during their internship. This is especially important in cases where specific or high-level administrative or technical skills are needed to perform the job.

There were also discussions on diversifying the YIP. One option would be to offer shorter contracts in a variety of organizations. This would promote learning and networking between different organizations.

Another suggestion was to allow internships with private sector employers.

The Internship Program could be further enhanced by creating partnership agreements between government agencies and allowing for referrals and transfers of interns between agencies. Involving interns in other departments would enrich their experiences and skill development. Summer internships were also suggested.

To assist with the transition into the workplace, it was suggested an Intern Welcome Package be created to include names of other current and former interns and frequently asked questions and answers.



Participants also felt that during the first few months, it was important for interns to have regular contact with FedNor staff and possibly links to mentors to assist them through their transition.

It was suggested that opportunities for international internships be explored, as well as internships with and for First Nations. Efforts could be made to promote internship promotions with multinational companies trading with firms in Northern Ontario.

Partnerships with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) may also provide opportunities for international experiences.

An intern headhunter could act as a clearing house, providing initial screening for employers, linking them with suitable candidates for their positions.

The current salary range for internship was considered low at \$25,000. It was felt the threshold should be increased to \$30,000 to \$32,000 per year as salary. It was also suggested an amount be included in the project budget to cover overhead, capital equipment, training, and travel costs for interns.

Strengthening communication among interns was also stressed.

Suggestions included having a newsletter for interns and employers and creating a database of Youth Forum 2000 attendees. This database could be used for longitudinal research and as a resource for input on relevant issues.

Development of a Youth Network was proposed to promote communications among current and former interns. This network could have a database of information about youth and be made available through the Internet.

As well, a youth-specific website and list serve could be created. A communication strategy for youth across Northern Ontario could be developed and there could be encouragement and support for co-operation and partnerships among youth, and the non-profit and private sectors.

To assist with their adjustment into the workplace, it was suggested that a standardized orientation program be developed for new interns. This could include linking new and former interns and encouraging a mentoring of new interns. As well, more information and support should be provided to employers throughout the experience.

“It is important that initiatives such as the FedNor Youth Internship Program continue to provide job opportunities for Northern Ontario graduates.”

Tracey McLeod, Youth Forum Participant



Youth Forum participants hard at work during one of the working group sessions.



B) Involving Youth

It was suggested that those planning economic development conferences be encouraged to provide youth with an opportunity to take part in those activities. This could involve dedicated sessions for youth and youth-related topics, and opportunities for them to interact with other conference attendees.

Additional marketing efforts and stronger partnerships with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) would help increase awareness of available employment programs by a larger group of youth in Northern Ontario. These marketing efforts could also promote the importance of youth involvement in community and economic development activities.

“Federal and provincial support must continue to both diversify and strengthen the economy of the north to increase the number of job opportunities.”

Grant Carlson, *Youth Forum Participant*

There are a number of activities that have supported and assisted youth involvement in decision making. These include making the Shad Valley Program permanent, youth loans through Community Futures Development Corporations and having easily accessible FedNor staff.

Throughout the North, there are many individual community programs that involve and assist youth. Youth Forum 2000 is another good example of involving youth and allowing them with an opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations.

To improve youth participation in decision making, they need to receive positive reinforcement and be given opportunities to participate and have their suggestions taken seriously.

C) School-to-Work Transition



Caroline Vaillancourt, member of the Youth Forum Planning Group, speaks to media following a news conference.

Participants felt the current co-op programs provide a good start for the school-to-work transition and should be increased at both the college and university levels. Placements could be increased by offering potential employers incentives for their first student placement.

Efforts should be made to work with northern educational institutions to help employers find placements. Partnering with industry would give young workers exposure to the latest technology.

It was suggested the private sector receive financial incentives to create employment for youth. A database of funding for private sector employers was proposed.

Incentives are helpful in encouraging both youth and potential employers to increase opportunities for youth. Youth should be encouraged by participating in business activities such as volunteering on boards of directors. When incentive programs are offered to industry, it was suggested the terms of the program allow for mentoring and support.



Youth must make important and stressful adjustments during the transition from school to work. Information and support should be provided early to help them prepare for the change. A transition program could cover such areas as résumé writing, dealing with rejection letters and the advantages of living in Northern Ontario.

A database to support linkages between youths was recommended. It was also suggested that a northern youth roster be established to help link employers who need workers and youth who need jobs.

Promoting success stories about youth working in the private sector would increase awareness of the advantages of hiring young people and may help create new youth employment programs and initiatives. Promoting the benefits of mentoring could also encourage more public and private sector employers to become involved in youth employment programs.

The group recognized that there are barriers that limit industry's involvement with youth. One strategy could be to determine more accurately what occupations or skills employers require. These can then be matched more closely to training programs at colleges and universities.

D) Improving Education

Stronger partnerships between industry and post-secondary schools were suggested, including such activities as mini courses taught by industry staff, college/university teachers doing short-term secondments in the private sector, more co-op programs, and more information to schools about future job market trends in Northern Ontario.

Post-secondary educational institutions in the North should focus on offering courses for professions where there are high vacancy levels, such as medicine and telecommunications. Businesses could be encouraged to work more closely with post-secondary facilities to ensure their programs are as relevant as possible.

Efforts must be made to assist post-secondary institutions obtain and maintain up-to-date technical equipment and facilities.

FedNor's role in this area could include programs encouraging youth to try different trades, making shorter placements available, and providing more training to prepare students for the workplace.

The possibility of a Northern Ontario Virtual University or a "University Mall" was discussed.

It was also suggested that a youth intern position could be created to act as a broker between educational institutions, students and potential employers. This could lead to the development of an education information centre.

Additional Community Access Program funding that focuses on education was also brought up.

"The programs currently being offered by the government are an excellent way to expose or keep people in Northern Ontario."

Sarah Anderson, Youth Forum Participant



E) Technology

It was suggested that efforts should be made to encourage and support the improvement of telecommunication infrastructures throughout Northern Ontario. Participants also felt financial assistance should be made available to small businesses to aid them in their use of technology.

It was suggested an Internet-based networking tool be established and directed at interns. This tool would be updated regularly and include information not only about people, but also about programs and available services.

E-commerce is seen as a key growth area both for young entrepreneurs and young people seeking employment. It was recommended that awareness of e-commerce in Northern Ontario be increased through education programs, workshops, brochures, and seminars.

Community-based resource staff could ensure promotion and marketing of e-commerce, conduct training sessions and promote e-commerce as a tool to create business diversity. The priority for change has to be on training and awareness.

Some suggestions that came up for long-term consideration were that schools be encouraged to offer e-commerce courses, that innovations in infrastructure be supported and that there be a grouped innovation centre.

The need to use available technology for youth to communicate with each other was underlined.

F) Building Our Northern Ontario Identity

Some participants expressed concern that the reputation of our Northern Ontario post-secondary institutions did not match that of their Southern Ontario counterparts. It was felt efforts should be made to educate employers on the value and quality of our institutions and their graduates.



*Sault Ste. Marie, MP,
Carmen Provenzano thanks
participants for their input at
the Forum's closing session.*

In general, the advantages of living and working in the north need to be emphasized, including low cost of living, quality of life, ecotourism, healthy environment, natural setting and lifestyle choices.

Participants felt that keys to growth in Northern communities included greater marketing efforts on what they have to offer and increased co-operation on promoting the region and community development.

Participants also said that developing skilled and professional customer service throughout the service industry should be a priority. Residents should continually be educated on the impact tourism makes in their communities.

Participants also suggested that communities need to identify an inventory of resources and opportunities that exist, such as arts and culture, and promote these outside the area. More efforts should be made to educate people on what the region has to offer, other than forestry and mining.



There could be a Northern Ontario group with youth involved that develops long- and short-term plans to advertise and promote opportunities in Northern Ontario.

Communities must be encouraged and supported in the expansion of horizons and evolution to new economies. If development comes from the bottom up, it will help communities develop and start up diverse industries and non-traditional businesses. It was suggested that funding be made available for workshops that will help educate communities about these changes and opportunities.

Youth can be a vital resource in promoting community diversification. By working with young people, we can inform them of the opportunities in Northern Ontario. Another strategy would be to develop and sustain networks to keep youth who have left Northern Ontario aware of opportunities back home.



Janet Mayes, member of the Youth Forum Planning Group, introduces the upcoming discussion group.

Conclusion

Youth Forum 2000 accomplished what FedNor set out to do – bring together young people embarking on their careers to hear what they had to say about the employment-related issues and challenges facing them and their peers.

Ninety-one young people had the opportunity to network with colleagues from across Northern Ontario and help FedNor make an even greater difference in the areas of youth employment and entrepreneurship.

FedNor accomplished these goals as a result of the forum:

- Young Northern Ontarians had the opportunity to discuss post-graduate employment and entrepreneurship issues and opportunities for youth;
- Useful information was gathered to develop policies and programs relevant to Northern Ontario Youth;
- FedNor was able to profile its programs directed at young Northern Ontarians as well as the federal government's successful efforts in youth employment, business development and retention programs; and
- FedNor is now using the information collected during the Forum to implement clear and measurable activities to enhance youth employment and entrepreneurship initiatives. These activities will form the basis of an Action Plan that will help FedNor deliver initiatives that best meet the needs of Northern Ontario's youth.



Algoma-Manitowlin, MP, Brent St. Denis with Youth Forum participants from his riding, during opening dinner.



In evaluating the Forum, 86 per cent of participants felt they had an opportunity to express their ideas and concerns. Responses indicated sessions were very effective, creative and well organized. Other feedback pointed to the Forum format as a highly productive way of accomplishing a lot in a short time.

Several participants recommended that future conferences be spread over a longer time frame to allow discussion on a greater number of topics.

Seventy per cent of participants felt their participation in Youth Forum 2000 will have a positive impact on government programs and policies. One participant commented that FedNor and the government should, "... listen to what we said. There are some great ideas that should be heard."

The conference was a great opportunity for young people to network among themselves and also to share ideas with FedNor. Many hope that such conferences will be planned in the future.



Sharon Taylor, FedNor staff (far right) discusses a suggestion from Youth Working group.

"What we are looking for is your action plan about what we need to do to ensure we have the right set of tools to assist the young people of Northern Ontario in developing careers, developing jobs and giving you the opportunity to make your futures in Northern Ontario."

The Honourable Andy Mitchell

More than 100 recommendations were brought forward by conference attendees. The recommendations provide some specific directions for FedNor, other government organizations and community agencies to attract and keep young people in Northern Ontario.

Some of the ideas generated relate directly to FedNor's Youth Internship Program and how it can be further enhanced. Others address issues such as transition from school to work, education and training, and marketing Northern Ontario.

In keeping with its commitment to youth, and their employment-related issues, FedNor will continually strive to develop programs and events that best meet the needs of Northern Ontario's most valuable resource – its future leaders!



Appendix A

Recommendations/Suggestions

The following list represents a comprehensive inventory of all recommendations, suggestions and ideas brought forward by participants during the Youth Forum. It should be noted that some of the ideas/suggestions listed below are preliminary thoughts that, because of time constraints, were not fully elaborated on. They have been included here to fully reflect the wide range of ideas and input brought forward by participants.

Youth Internship Program

1. Two-year Internship Program – 2nd year subsidized at 50 per cent.
2. Evaluate Internship midway – interview to ensure tasks are being completed.
3. Open Youth Internship Program to private sector employers (and offset training costs).
4. Increase salary of interns.
5. Develop a resource bank with names and qualifications of interns.
6. Create a network of fellow interns and a support system.
7. Improve training – better access based on location and more dollars.
8. Improve planning and job descriptions – intern involvement.
9. Hold an annual event for interns – develop an association.
10. Create a youth website where youth interns, etc., can keep in touch and up to date with each other, have other youth readily accessible for information and support.
11. Introduce summer internships.
12. Make internships available (on flexible/variable time frames).
13. Allow interns to divide time between private and non-profit sectors.
14. Provide capital funding to support intern positions, based on need.
15. Have a mentorship program for interns and other youth workers.
16. Train interns in fundraising.

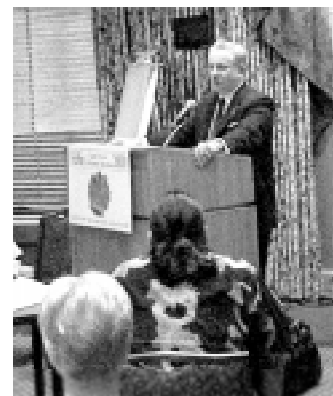
“Support of local business and organizations, hiring and/or mentoring recent grads is essential. It seems as though a great number of youths are leaving the region out of frustration with the lack of employment opportunities.”

*Jodi Harris, Youth Forum Participant
and member of Planning Group*



Youth Role

17. Increase capital for youth quality of life initiatives (i.e., recreation, infrastructure).
18. FedNor should provide regional youth ambassadors.
19. Develop a website for youth in similar industry (with biographies and contact information).
20. Design and implement a youth network.
21. Provide web discussion groups for youth.
22. Determine what existing networks work for youth, utilize and promote them.
23. Develop a compendium of youth programs/services.
24. Encourage and support youth groups and align them with other organizations.
25. Facilitate meetings between organizations with similar project interests and concerns surrounding youth.
26. Provide opportunities for youth to meet and exchange ideas and information with those who can be of assistance.
27. Create trade missions with youth to travel to Southern Ontario to promote networking.



Steve Mahoney, MP, Mississauga West and Chair of Prime Minister's Liberal Caucus Task Force on Youth Entrepreneurship delivers a highly motivating speech to Youth Forum participants.

“You can be entrepreneurial in social avenues. You can help in volunteer ways in an entrepreneurial spirit.”

Steve Mahoney, MP, Mississauga West and Chair of the Prime Minister's Liberal Caucus Task Force on Youth Entrepreneurship

School to Work Transition

28. Implement a mentoring program (youth and industry).
29. Implement a transition program – career planning; resume feedback, rejection letters, income support to address barriers – transportation/childcare, student debt levels; in partnership with colleges and universities and community organizations (Chambers, etc.).
30. Promote the benefits of co-op programs to the private sector.
31. Provide industry with funding for co-op placements (maybe first year only).
32. Develop a database of individuals who work/study in certain disciplines (matching process).
33. Integrate a transition program in the curriculum.
34. Implement a public/private sector program aimed at hiring youth/young adults.



Improving Education

35. Improve access to education through information technology (develop connections for post secondary education).
36. Develop an education broker – research available distance education programs in general and promote them in the north – provide career/academic training.
37. Specialize and provide programs that meet the needs of industry and community.
38. Improve existing system and infrastructure for distance education.
39. Recognize cross-functional degrees and certificates, e.g., logging and business, trade skill and academic theory.
40. Provide information about funding sources for students, including scholarships and bursaries.
41. Have technical skills training commence in secondary schools.
42. Improve distance education opportunities.
43. Develop co-op programs with private and educational organizations.
44. Encourage the private sector to partner with educational institutions.
45. Improve communication between business and government, business and educational institutions.
46. Enhance technology education and equipment at education facilities.

“By continuing to expand and open businesses in our communities, there are more and more opportunities for youth to return to the communities where they grew up to begin their careers.”

Angela Halvorsen, Youth Forum Participant

Technology

47. Build infrastructure (with government assistance); build the demand.
48. Provide financial assistance to small businesses toward improving technology.
49. Conduct training and awareness in e-commerce.
50. Use technology as a focus for Northern Ontario economic diversification.
51. Support and encourage improved networks across Northern Ontario.
52. Improve telecommunications infrastructure and make it available to all throughout the North at an affordable cost.
53. Implement technology exchanges (i.e., with developing countries).
54. Provide funding to support equipment purchases for technology and telecommunications.



55. Open source policy.
56. Make technology available at a lower cost.
57. Improve public accessibility to technology.

Building Our Northern Ontario Identity

58. Implement high school presentations – jobs are available in Northern Ontario; have former interns give testimonials.
59. Remove stigma/stereotypes of living and working in Northern Ontario, i.e. regarding education facilities.
60. Promote the more relaxed lifestyle in Northern Ontario through marketing commercials, educating university graduates that the region is a viable alternative.
61. Continue and increase funding of Northern Ontario arts and culture.
62. Finance projects that promote Northern Ontario's identity outside the region, i.e. arts and culture.
63. Market one community at a time – TV commercials, ads to focus on attractions in each community.
64. Improve marketing of Northern Ontario tourism – the outdoors, for example.
65. Community-based/community-to-community linkages.
66. Develop a collection of Northern Ontario history stories that serve the purpose of uniting Northern Ontario communities – including cross-cultural segments.
67. Sponsor a YIP-type program to bring Southern Ontario students to experience Northern Ontario communities and opportunities available here.
68. Have high school grads return to give testimonials.
69. Promote awareness and encourage participation in SuperHost Training throughout Northern Ontario.
70. Develop regional marketing plans that link communities together.
71. Implement team marketing of the region to international markets.
72. Encourage and support co-operation and partnerships among youth, non-profit and private sectors.

“Entrepreneurism is an attitude. It can mean bringing your life experience to work every day in any job that you do. That is why it is so exciting.”

Steve Mahoney, MP, Mississauga West and Chair of the Prime Minister's Liberal Caucus Task Force on Youth Entrepreneurship



Mr. Mitchell offers encouragement to Youth Forum participants.

73. Identify target markets (niches within Northern Ontario).
 74. Encourage hospitality training for entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.
 75. Develop incentive programs to encourage sponsorship of major events.
 76. Encourage and support private sector involvement in year-round tourism planning and policy initiatives.
77. Provide better access to capital for business development in tourism.
 78. Support business planning training with a focus on the tourism industry.
 79. Develop volunteer-based tourism incentive programs.
 80. Develop short destination marketing and vacation options.
 81. Increase promotion of the north by “packaging” it.
 82. Provide marketing education for small business.
 83. Raise awareness of cultural tourism.
 84. Promote Northern Ontario tourism in the off season.
 85. Promote government programs available to assist tourism development.
 86. Statistics promoting the region’s positive benefits.



Thunder Bay-Atikokan, MP, Dr. Stan Dromisky and Andy Mitchell answer media questions.

Other

87. Make copy of FedNor report from Youth Forum 2000 available to youth that were not present at the event, i.e., through a website.
88. Share the Youth Forum participants and invitation list with regional events that can be profitable to youth.
89. Encourage the development of non-traditional industry sectors while sustaining existing industry (i.e., promoting and developing Information Technology, while maintaining forestry and farming sectors).
90. Higher salaries for youth to encourage in-migration to the north (workers); critical mass will attract new employers as well as improved local care and coverage flexible hours.



91. Implement tax relief for employers and employees.
92. Encourage and support the use of both official languages in the workplace.
93. Provide better transportation services, price and infrastructure.
94. Develop a database of databases – have a central database that is easily accessible listing Northern Ontario services, statistics, etc.; have it available at schools, libraries, Community Futures Development Corporations and Economic Development Corporations.

Ninety-six per cent of the people coming out of the FedNor Youth Internship Program are finding permanent employment as they leave the program. Ninety two per cent of that employment is occurring in Northern Ontario.

FedNor Internal Review, 1999

95. FedNor to invest with new private sector businesses to take on funding.
96. Develop international partnerships, alliances and mentorships to share experiences, provide support, etc. (partner with communities facing similar challenges).
97. Implement cultural sensitivity training for employers, especially government agencies.
98. Encourage empowerment – positive reinforcement in the workplace.

99. Promote existing young entrepreneurship programs.
100. Ease restrictive fishing permit regulations.
101. Develop a program to educate people on youth-related programs – go to high schools, universities.
102. Enhance day care – quality, affordable, accessible, and reflecting local cultures.
103. Encourage employers to provide stress relief days
104. Valuing options.



FedNor's Youth Forum 2000 participants.