



For Immediate Release

A Reason to Stay: NPI and SÉO Northern Ontario Youth Out-Migration Survey Results

March 10, 2022 - The importance youth play in fostering sustainable, prosperous Northern Ontario communities cannot be understated. However, out-migration of young individuals continues to be a reality. Just how big is this issue and what are the reasons for leaving?

A Reason to Stay: Retaining Youth in Northern Ontario, the latest paper by Société Économique de l'Ontario (SÉO) and Northern Policy Institute (NPI), help to answer these questions. As well, the paper explores youth interest in becoming an entrepreneur in their home communities.

Based on a survey in the fall of 2021, almost half of Anglophone and Francophone respondents indicated that they wished to stay in Northern Ontario. Additionally, the survey also found that the boomerang concept—that people return back to their communities—is present. While an overwhelming majority reported that they knew someone who had left the community to live elsewhere, a majority also knew someone who had moved back to the community.

Regarding entrepreneurship, almost half of survey respondents indicated they wanted to become entrepreneurs. Anglophone respondents were more likely to seek capital or help with evaluating a business plan, while Francophone respondents expressed interest in mentorships and having access to co-working space.

"Finding ways of reducing youth out-migration is very important to us, and the fact that this study indicates that entrepreneurship is a viable path for youth is positive, and that is in part why we have developed our JeunInno program as well as our Youth Component within our provincial virtual business incubator. For youth, the opportunity of creating their own future, having flexibility and being able to stay in their hometown is very enticing, and in turn helping in part with the youth out-migration situation!" stated Monique Hébert-Bérubé, Economic Development Director, SÉO. "This study reinforces our position and helps us better understand youth motivation and needs".

When looking for solutions to youth out-migration in Northern Ontario, nature in the North is a marketable feature when speaking to Northern Ontario youth. The survey results also highlight that attracting more diverse employment and entertainment opportunities to the area and developing the proper infrastructure to support these new businesses could be helpful.

LINK: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/a-reason-to-stay>



This report was created as part of the **Northern Analyst Collective**. This project allows members to “time share” a professional policy analyst. By merging our collective resources, we can ensure that the smallest municipality or local charity can access high-end skills at an affordable cost. For more information on the program [click here](#).

The youth out-migration survey is part SÉO's Youth Innovation project which is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The goal of the project is to combat youth out-migration from small Francophone communities by encouraging people to contribute to the development of their communities.

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Media Interviews: SÉO Economic Development Program Manager Monique Hébert-Bérubé, Author Andre Ouellet, and NPI Research Manager Rachel Rizzuto are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

About Société Économique de l'Ontario:

The Société Économique de l'Ontario (SÉO), established in 2001, is a provincial network with a professional team that takes an innovative approach to economic development, entrepreneurship, employability and immigration. SÉO engages all of the Francophone and bilingual community's stakeholders in fostering the prosperity of Ontario and Canada.

