

# Building First Nations Communities

As part of its mandate to foster community sustainability, FORED has incorporated an outreach program to First Nations communities as a major part of its programs.

Over the past year, this commitment has brought FORED into working relationships with more than 60

First Nations communities. This has taken the form of providing facilitation and logistics support to a series of

First Nations workshops examining issues pertaining to

resource development in First Nations communities.

All participants were First Nations individuals involved in resource management and economic development in their communities.

The scope of issues discussed could fill this publication. The following is a sample of Aboriginal

*“Working relationships with more than 60 First Nations communities.”*

perspectives we learned through participation.

#### **Respect the Land.**

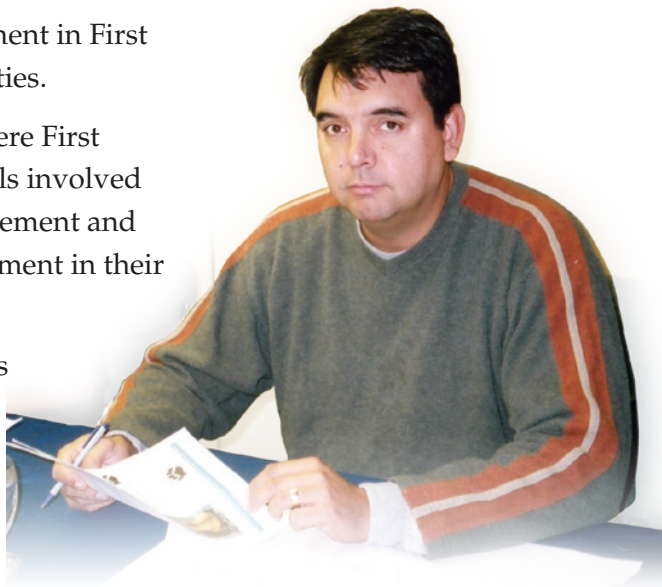
In recent months, First Nations have been allocated thousands of hectares of forests for economic

development. Their primary concern, repeated in each workshop, is to restore much of this forest land and then develop it according to traditional values.

*“First Nations are weary of short-term skills training for short-term businesses.”*

#### **Involve the Community**

Decisions on economic development in First Nations communities are not made



in a top-down fashion. Much of the discussion focused on the need to inform and involve the community in each stage of development. Funding for community consultation is a major concern.

#### **Training for the Next Century**

First Nations are weary of short-term skills training for short-term businesses.

Time and again reference was made to the need to train a

generation of economic leaders and managers.

#### **Engage the Young**

Many First Nations share the concern that the young people with real potential are being lost to the cities. As First Nations contemplate a future with increased autonomy, they are seeking ways to ensure that today's youth will be there to guide a new beginning.

#### **Strengthen Communities:**

Things taken for granted in the cities such as daily courier service, high speed Internet

and local bank branches are unknown in many First Nations communities. The challenge

*“Funding for community consultation is a major concern.”*

this poses to equal economic participation for First Nations is daunting.

#### **Networking:**

While professionals in the city can meet peers in a number of settings, First Nations professionals often have to

*“Ways to ensure that today's youth will be there to guide a new beginning.”*

drive 300 kilometres to talk to a counterpart in another Band.

These perspectives and many others provided FORED with an important insight into the challenges faced by First Nations in

creating sustainable communities.

This knowledge will be a foundation for future programs.

