

# The Repopulation Challenge

**David Bruce**

Director

Rural and Small Town Programme

Mount Allison University

[dwbruce@mta.ca](mailto:dwbruce@mta.ca)

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# Outline

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- Why Repopulation Matters
- A Livable Community
- Potential Target Groups and Strategies
- Role of Senior Levels of Government
- Role of Community
- A Process
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# Purpose

- Stimulate thinking and ideas
- Discussion
  - What individual communities and organizations might do / work on
  - What supports are need from senior levels of government

# Context

- Population decline in non-metro-adjacent
- Long period of economic adjustment
- Aging of the population
- Youth out-migration
- Lack of immigration in most rural communities (there are exceptions!)

# Why Repopulation Matters

- **Municipal**
  - Shrinking tax base
  - Rising cost of services
  - Shrinking size of potential labour pool
- **Provincial**
  - Thresholds for public services
- **Federal**
  - Fairness, equity, efficiency challenges
  - Infrastructure – maintain existing, build new
- **Economic Development and the Private Sector**
  - Fill job vacancies

# A Livable Community

- **What makes this place a livable community?**
  - Economic opportunity
  - Access to services
  - An overall good quality of life

**Defined on individual terms!**

# Potential Target Groups

- Retention of existing population
  - Youth (individuals)
  - Young families
  - Seniors
- New populations to rural areas
  - Urban residents
  - Immigrants
- Repatriation (most difficult!)

# Youth - 1

- Why young people leave:
  - Employment and income generation (pay off student debts)
  - Education
  - “See the world”
  - Sex matters – choice of life partners

# Youth - 2

- Youth strategies
  - Involve youth in meaningful ways in planning for future
  - Identify opportunities for employment / business creation (must be proactive)
  - Connect youth with existing programs (general lack of awareness)
  - Involve business community (information sharing, apprenticeship, and mentorship)
  - Youth want / need high speed IT

# Seniors

- Good health care services
- Barrier-free and maintenance-free housing
- Age in place rather than move several times
- Community social supports / networks needed
- Marketing costs associated

# Immigration - 1

- How many non-Canadian born residents are in your community?
- How many of them do you know?
- What have you done to make them feel welcome?

# Immigration – 2

- Must be economic opportunity
  - Immigrant investors
  - Immigrant workers (family class)
- Must be a welcoming community
  - Prepared for and ready to accept and integrate immigrants
- Health and education services tailored to their needs

# Immigration – 3

- Multistakeholder group
  - Role of local businesses important
- Local or regional immigration plan
  - Opportunities
  - Strategies
  - Targets
  - Ideally this is part of a larger plan for rural repopulation
- Diaspora and working with existing immigrants as contacts

# Repatriation

- Former residents
  - Motivated by family / social ties
  - Economic opportunity must be present as well
  - Individuals will place different emphasis on these two items
- New residents
  - Quality of life
  - Marketing costs
  - Risks to the existing population (rising land prices!)
  - Seniors want health care and housing

# A Welcoming Community - 1

- Employment opportunities.
- Be hospitable and friendly towards newcomers.
- Personal and community services, which respect different traditions and cultures.
- Affordable and appropriate housing.
- Presence of settlement agencies/multicultural associations

# A Welcoming Community - 2

- Appropriate cultural and recreational activities.
- Public education on cultural issues and anti-racial issues for local residents before and after newcomers arrive.
- Spirituality usually important - churches should play an important role in seeking out and involving newcomers.
- Resources on cultural issues in schools and libraries.
- Involve children in learning about different cultures.

# Role of Senior Levels of Government - General

- Repopulation cannot be forced – create conditions
- Invest in critical infrastructure
- Manage natural resources
- Invest in entrep. development and business financing
- Maintain key public services
- Invest in human resource and skills development
- Ensure appropriate regulations: land use, trade, etc
- Support regional economic development plans

# Role of Senior Levels of Government - Specific

- Information about population issues, policies, and programs
- Build capacity (assist, support, train, etc)
- Invest in local settlement services
- Encourage and support repopulation plans where appropriate
  - Linked to economic development plans
  - Economic opportunity, services, quality of life
- Deal with challenges associated with credentials, accreditation, etc

# Role of Community

- Collaborative with senior levels
- A welcoming community
- Repopulation plan
  - Fit with economic development plans
  - Fit with labour force development plans
- Be realistic
  - What makes this place different or better?
  - Individual freedom and choice
  - Must be a local desire and viability

# A Process

- Organize multistakeholder group
- Assess the local / regional population trends
- Decide which population(s) to target (youth, immigrants, expatriates)
- Understand the needs of each
  - What kind of economic opportunity
  - What kind of services
  - What defines quality of life for them
- Establish two linked plans
  - To attract / retain population
  - To develop a welcoming community

# Summary - 1

- Individuals see economic opportunity, access to services, and the possibility of a good quality of life
- Defined on their own terms
- Will be different among youth, immigrants, expatriates, and others
- Potential for success if plans developed at community or regional level

# Summary - 2

- Active involvement and participation from a wide range of community and regional stakeholders
- Tied closely to economic development and labour force development plans of each region
- Not every community can realistically expect to hold or grow their population

# Small Group Discussion – Part One

- What are your specific (re)population challenges?
- What have been your successes and challenges in responding to these?
- How welcoming is your region to people of diverse colour, race, ethnicity, and religion? What is your evidence?
- What are the positive attributes of your region that make it attractive for people? (immigrants, seniors, youth)

# Small Group Discussion – Part Two

- What supports from senior governments are needed for:
    - Development agencies
    - NGOs
    - Municipalities
- ... to develop and implement repopulation strategies?

# Useful Resources

- Rural and Small Town Programme
  - <http://www.mta.ca/rstp/rstpmain.html>
- Rural Repopulation Discussion Paper
  - [http://www.rural.gc.ca/researchreports/popresearch/repop\\_e.phtml](http://www.rural.gc.ca/researchreports/popresearch/repop_e.phtml)
- Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletins
  - [www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/21-006-XIE/free.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/21-006-XIE/free.htm)
- Canadian CED Network
  - <http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/home.asp>
- NS Office of Immigration
  - <http://www.novascotiaimmigration.com/>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
  - <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.html>
- Atlantic Metropolis Centre
  - <http://www.atlantic.metropolis.net/>