

There was a sense of isolation expressed by the participants but the explanations for that isolation were varied. Some argued that isolation was the result of geography - that is distance from the centre. Isolation was also linked to climate. But the isolation from the "outside" did not immediately translate into a local isolation. While issues were raised about adequate services in the Prince George area, poverty rates, and unemployment, there was also a very strong sense of community that infused the discussion throughout the day.

The question of a Northern identity raised many interesting points. For some there was very much a sense of a Northern identity. This identity was equated with an independent pioneering spirit. A northern identity was also equated with the types of industries that dominate northern towns. Again, climate and distance from large urban centres were identified as factors informing a sense of difference in the North. Diversity was another characteristic noted. First Nations, immigrants, individuals who have relocated from urban centres, in addition to those born and raised in Prince George, comprise our vision of a northern community. The size of the community also seemed to affect self identification. It was commented that Edmontonians are less likely to view themselves as Northerners because of their urban setting. It was further argued that "a community focus" was more likely in centres with smaller populations, although others conceded that being small can lead to racism as newcomers or persons of different backgrounds may be more likely to be treated in a discriminatory fashion. While some participants raised questions about whether or not there was an identifiable identity, many felt that there was a Northern identity and that there was pride associated with identity. It was clear that the North does not want to be part of the South, does not want the pity of the South and must speak louder to have its voice heard.

#### ***Working Group Discussions: Afternoon***

Discussion Questions: What are the international issues important to our community? What capacity do we have to address these issues? What constraints do we face?

The afternoon session was designed to focus on the international-local nexus with the end to providing tangible and realistic recommendations for capacity building in the North. The issues identified as important to our community were wide ranging and included international trade, women's issues, circumpolar issues, the environment (especially with respect to forestry and mining issues) and the impact of globalization. The importance of considering First Nations voices, perspectives and skills was also articulated.