

## Phase 2 Summary Report

# Activating Workplace Allies:

A study on the recruitment and retention of women in Saskatchewan mining and engineering

### Project Overview

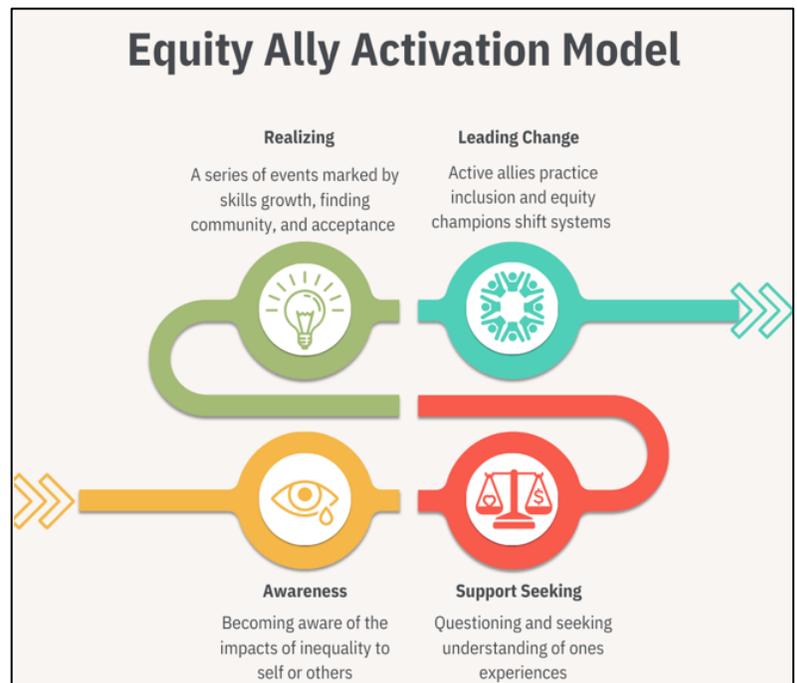
The mining industry and fundamental professions supporting the industry, such as engineering, are striving yet struggling to recruit and retain a diverse and representative workforce. Underrepresented groups can help to fill projected labour gaps and aid in solving challenges faced by the industry. Such shifts are necessary, because workplaces that embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) have been found to be more profitable, more innovative, and better places to work (BCG, 2018; Catalyst, 2016; Noland, Moran, & Kotschwar, 2016). Despite many studies which document recommendations to improve workplace inclusion and diversity, few show examples of successful implementation and case studies (Mining Industry Human Resource Council, 2018; Wells, Williams, Corrigan, & Davidson, 2018). This multi-phase study will put recommendations into action to shift Saskatchewan mining workplace culture to be inclusive and welcoming of all actual and potential employees.

Using a participatory research approach between industry partners and academic researchers, this multi-phase International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) and Mitacs-funded study focuses on how to transform and implement experiences and best practices into solutions to advance EDI in the Saskatchewan mining industry. The study involves three key data collection phases. First, researchers interviewed “equity champions”, individuals who are presently working to implement equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) changes in workplaces. Second, a pilot study will be conducted within the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in 2023 to implement gender equity solutions. Last, equity solutions will be implemented at a Saskatchewan mining site in 2024.

### Insights from Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Allies

The second phase of study followed a review of existing literature which described challenges experienced by underrepresented people and explored activating allies as a potential solution. The second phase of study was designed to fill gaps in the literature and explore EDI in practice. During Phase 2, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with seventeen participants identified as allies by their peers. Participants shared

insights from their EDI journeys. Themes resulting from the data analysis were used to confirm and refine the Equity Ally Activation Model, shown below.



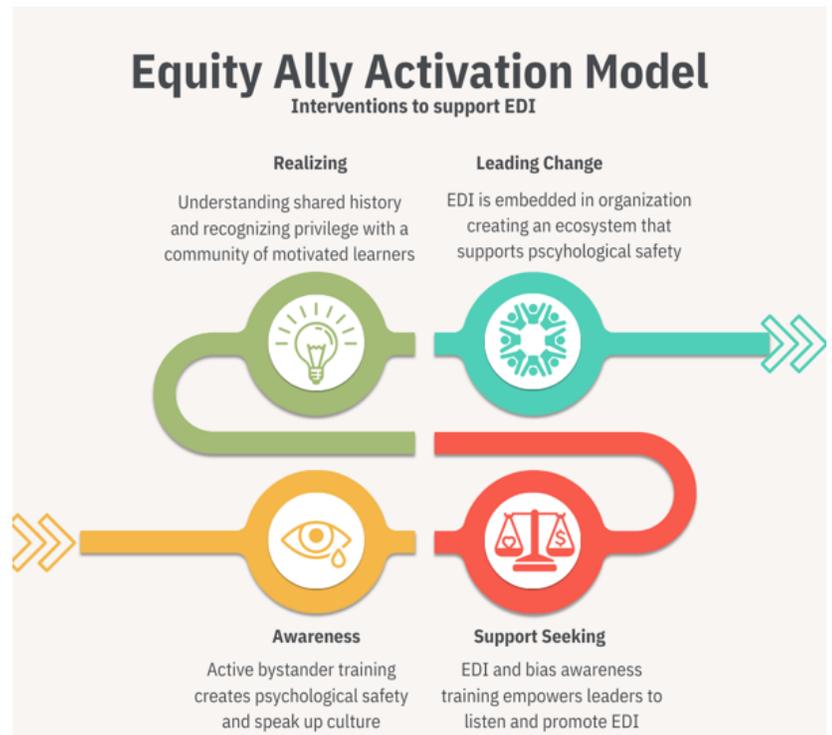
In the **awareness** stage, participants felt excluded, frustrated, shamed or like they were between two worlds. As a result, they did not always speak up when witnessing or experiencing inequity. Next, participants felt confused in the **support seeking** stage as they navigated potential shifts in their perception of the psychological safety of their environment. Depending on the available support structure and their own capacity, participants may seek to exit organizations at this stage. Therefore, a supportive EDI ecosystem in an organization is important for retention. Next, participants experienced a series of **realizing** moments where they sought out community to learn about EDI, bias, truth and reconciliation, and privilege. During the **realizing** stage, participants felt supported by others and gained a greater acceptance of their own self-identity. Finally, in the **leading change** stage *active allies* practice inclusion and work to shift perspectives of others. Further, *equity champions* sought out roles to expand their impact and shift systems. During the **leading change** stage participants felt humbled at the complexity of social challenges and are motivated to lead change

### Study Phase Outcomes & Next Phase Outlook

Key findings from the second phase show:

1. Allies are activated when advancing past a “realizing stage” on their EDI journey and within a supportive ecosystem of an organization.
2. Organizations can tap into a potential ally’s motivation and values by providing resources and opportunities to create ecosystems that support activating more allies.
3. Equity champions are experienced and activated allies who are driven and resourced to lead EDI change within their organizations.

Findings from this second phase will inform creating EDI training programs and interventions, shown on the right. These interventions will be designed to *Activate Allies* to adopt inclusive behaviours and empower *Equity Champions* to shift systems and implement equitable programs. The resulting interventions will be piloted in the College of Engineering in Phase 3 of the study and later implemented at a Saskatchewan mine site in Phase 4.



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