

Phase 3 Summary Report

Activating Workplace Allies:

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

Project Overview

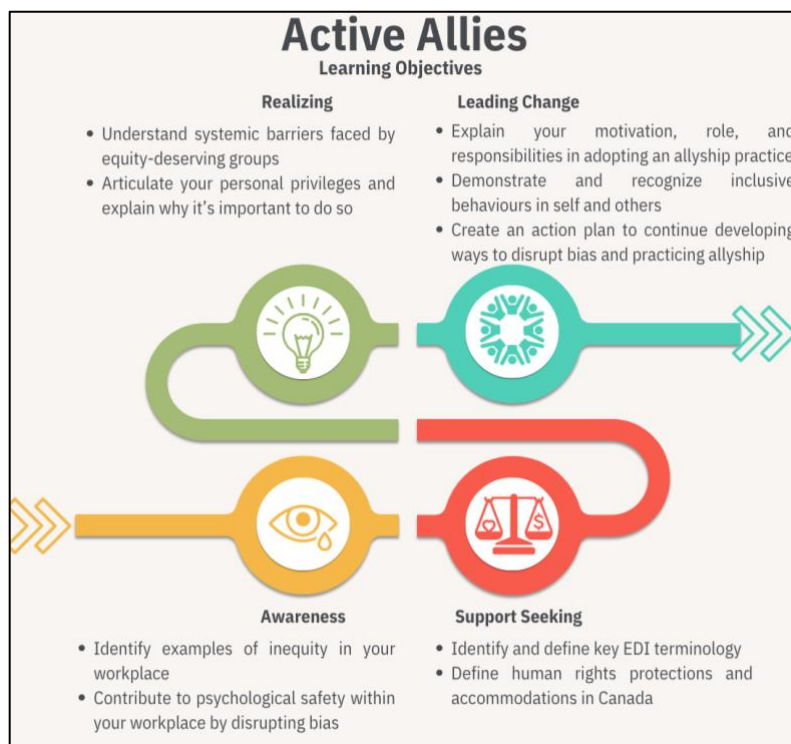
The mining industry and fundamental professions supporting the industry, such as engineering, are striving with varying degrees of success to recruit and retain a diverse and representative workforce. Underrepresented groups can help to fill projected labour gaps and aid in solving challenges faced by 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's mining and engineering workplace cultures 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 experiences and best practices into solutions to advance EDI in the Saskatchewan mining industry. Following the literature review phase, the study has three key data collection phases. In Phase 2, researchers interviewed 17 active allies identified by their peers. Many of these individuals are working to implement equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) changes in workplaces. In Phase 3 the *Active Allies* pilot course was designed and engaged 26 participants from the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. The final data collection phase will be held in 2023 when training solutions will be tested with a larger group of participants who are employed in the Saskatchewan mining industry.

Active Allies Pilot Course

In the third phase of the study, researchers designed an 8-module course to support potential allies in adopting a practice of inclusion. The online content allowed learners to asynchronously progress through 2 modules per week. Learning content included informative, professional produced videos which allowed 8 of the active allies from Phase 2 to share their perspectives on EDI and allyship.

Self-guided learning over the 4-week period was reinforced through self-reflection activities, interactive quizzes, and weekly small group discussions. Learning objectives, shown below, were aligned with the Equity Ally Activation Model (See the Phase 2 summary, for details on the model).



To support advancing to the **awareness** stage, participants analyzed scenarios of workplace inequities. As a result, they learned to recognize types of inequity, such as bias, discrimination, harassment, and microaggressions. Next, in the **support seeking** stage participants solidified their understanding of primary EDI terms — equity, diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality. Participants also learnt about the importance of formally reporting inequity incidents. Additionally, participants practiced active listening to know how to support those who may face inequities. Next, participants experienced a series of **realizing** moments in their learning community as they advanced their understanding of secondary EDI terms — human rights, psychological safety, privilege, and allyship — while reflecting on bias and truth and reconciliation. During the **realizing** stage, participants felt psychologically safe in their discussion groups and gained a greater acceptance of their own self-identity. Finally, in the **leading change** stage *active allies* recognized inclusive behaviours, established continuous learning

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plans, and articulated how they will disrupt workplace bias.

Study Phase Outcomes & Next Phase Outlook

As shown in the adjacent figure, key findings from the third phase show:

1. EDI language is an essential allyship competency
2. Psychological safety for all potential allies is critical to engaging in EDI learning
3. Rich learning exists in facilitating psychologically safe discussions between learning participants
4. The absence of organizational EDI strategies introduces a risk to the sustained activation of allies

Findings from this third phase will inform refining the *Active Allies* course and mobilization to the Saskatchewan mining industry in the next phase.

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