

### Project Overview

The mining industry and supporting professions, such as engineering, are striving with varying degrees of success to recruit and retain a diverse workforce which is representative of local populations. 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) are 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 offer examples of successful implementation (Mining Industry Human Resource Council, 2018; Wells, Williams, Corrigan, & Davidson, 2018).

This multi-phase study — funded by International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII), Mitacs, Vanier Canada, and Women in Mining Canada — focuses on transforming experiences and best practices into practical solutions to shift Saskatchewan's mining and engineering workplace cultures to be inclusive and welcoming of all employees. The study uses a participatory research approach between industry partners and academic researchers. 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* course was created and engaged 26 participants from the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. Subsequently in Phase 4, 76 participants from the Saskatchewan mining industry completed the *Active Allies* course.

### Active Allies Course

In the third phase of the study, researchers designed an 8-module course to support potential allies in adopting inclusive practices. The online content guided learners through 2 modules per week. Learning content included informative, professionally 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 learned about the importance of formally reporting inequity incidents and practiced active listening to be receptive to supporting 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**

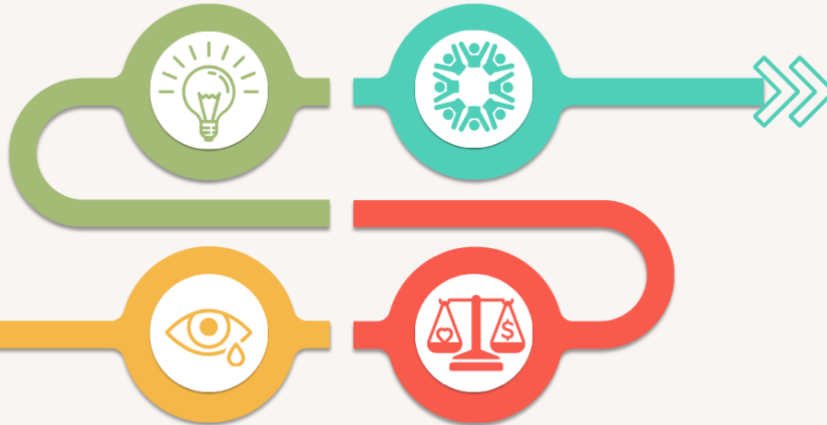
## Phase 4 Key Findings

### Realizing

- Significant increase in understanding secondary EDI terms (ex. privilege and allyship)
- The greatest increase to learn about the histories and experiences of marginalized groups, such as women and racialized people, was from those with no aspects of marginalized identity (i.e. straight, white, able-bodied men)

### Leading Change

- Participants are motivated to act as allies and as a result having more frequent EDI conversations and are being intentionally inclusive in their everyday actions
- Participants articulated continuous learning and accountability measures to sustain allyship practices



### Awareness

- Significant increase in understanding bias ( $p < .02$ ), microaggressions, discrimination, and harassment ( $p < .008$ )
- Significant increase in intentions to speak up when witnessing or experiencing forms of inequities ( $p < .04$ )
- Gained better understanding of themselves when reflecting on past workplace traumas

### Support Seeking

- Understanding of primary EDI terms increased significantly ( $p < .001$ )
- Increased confidence in discussing inequities faced by marginalized groups, such as disabilities ( $p < .001$ )
- Men indicated a “responsibility” and women indicating an increased “confidence” to formally report discrimination and harassment

stage *active allies* recognized inclusive behaviours, established continuous learning plans, and articulated how they will address workplace bias.

## Phase 4 Outcomes

A pre- and post-assessment questionnaire highlighted participants’ advancement due to the course. The adjacent figure summarizes key findings from the fourth phase. Overall, the phase four findings indicate:

1. Organizational EDI strategies may contribute to sustained activation of allies.
2. The largest improvements from pre- to post-training are related to EDI language.
3. Cross-industry training with a combination of course content and group discussion supports psychologically safe EDI learning.
4. A diverse workforce may have past experiences of trauma, so EDI training and supervisors need to be trauma informed.

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