

Resource Extraction Workshop Report

On March 28, 2012, Pauktuutit held a half-day workshop on resource extraction at this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM). The purpose of the workshop was to initiate discussion on the effects of resource extraction on Inuit women's health and well-being. Specifically, the Department of Socio-Economic Development was seeking direction from Pauktuutit's Board of Directors and AGM delegates on how the organization can work towards improving the health and well-being of women affected by mining activities in the Inuit regions. The following report outlines the main activities and outcomes of this workshop. It summarizes the presentations and discussions that took place at the event and outlines specific next steps for Pauktuutit moving forward.

The resource extraction workshop was organized around a panel of three guest speakers with expertise on mining in Nunavut. The workshop included this panel of presentations, a question and answer period with the panel members and then small group discussions of key questions related to the subject. The three panel presenters were Bruce Uviluq, a law student and negotiator for NTI, Warren Bernauer, a PhD Candidate in Geography whose research focuses on the Baker Lake Mine, and Melanie Sturk, Director of Attraction, Retention and Transition at the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR). The Board and delegates were engaged by this panel and enthusiastically contributed to the discussions that followed.

Summary of Panel Presentations

To begin the presentations, Bruce Uviluq gave a general presentation about "*Nunavut Land Claim Agreement* and how it relates to Nunavut Impact Review Board." He said that his overview was only to give more information about the *Nunavut Land Claim Agreement* and not to give advice to Pauktuutit. Bruce discussed the 25-year negotiation process of the land claim agreement, and explained how Inuit and all organizations in Nunavut, including major development proponents, must work within the agreement provisions related to resource extraction. Specifically, his presentation focused on *Article 12* and *Article 26* of the *Agreement*. These articles outline the processes that must take place for environmental impact assessments before any major development. For each assessment, public consultations must occur, during which Inuit can raise their questions and concerns. As well, the concerns of Inuit are represented by the elected public officials of the Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs). *Article 26* of the *Agreement* also obliges the proponent of any major developments to successfully negotiate an IIBA with Inuit before any major development is to start. Bruce emphasized the need for Pauktuutit to work within the land claim agreement provisions and to understand how the

agreement was negotiated to ensure Inuit and specifically women can be involved. There are opportunities for Pauktuutit to work within the agreement processes now and in the future so that they may represent women-specific issues related to resource extraction.

Warren Bernauer then presented on “Women and Mining in Baker Lake, Nunavut.” His presentation focused on Agnico-Eagle’s gold mine in Baker Lake, constructed in 2007 and operational until 2012. Warren discussed the key environmental and social impacts of the gold mine that his research explores, including both the risks to human health and animals. Warren explained that Inuit women are sometimes the group most vulnerable to the risks of resource extraction, and may also have limited access to the benefits of these mining activities. The specific issues faced by women include sexual harassment, exploitation, domestic violence impacts on wildlife and impacts on the environment. Despite these facts, Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) do not currently require a gender analysis. This means that supports needed for women as a direct result of mining activities—such as shelters and emergency housing—are not included in the impact review process, as witnessed in Baker Lake. As well, Warren discussed Areva’s Kiggavik proposal currently under review by the Nunavut Impact Review Board (NIRB). Areva is proposing a uranium mine and milling operation near Baker Lake, with construction to begin in 2017. Warren indicated that potential employment opportunities are often promoted as the benefits of mining proposals, though many community members feel the potential risks of such a project outweigh the benefits.

Melanie Sturk was the final presenter in the workshop, speaking on “Employment and Enterprise Opportunities for Women in Mining.” The presentation discussed MiHR’s goal to identify human resources challenges in the mining industry, and to find solutions through partnerships and collaboration. Melanie explained how women and Aboriginal people are significantly underrepresented in the labour force of Northern mines, though efforts are underway to increase employment opportunities for these groups. In fact, a recent study shows that although the mining industry has experienced a significant boom, women currently represent only fourteen per cent of employment in mines. Meanwhile, Aboriginal people make up only seven per cent of the mining labour force. This means that overall, less than one per cent of mine workers are Aboriginal women. In her presentation, Melanie indicated that many benefits exist to initiating a career in the mining sector for women and Aboriginal people. However, further research is required to fully understand the unique barriers and concerns of Inuit women in order to achieve equal representation in the labour force. Melanie explained that MiHR is highly interested in collaborating with Pauktuutit on this type of research, working together to increase the representation of Inuit women in the resource extraction industry.

Discussion and Recommendations

Following a brief question and answer period with the panel presenters, the delegation broke into smaller groups for discussion. In this break out session, the following discussion took place:

1. What are your concerns about the social and health effects of resource extraction in your regions now and in the future?

- Not having a voice;
- A lack of opportunities to collaborate and share information;
- Women don't know basic human rights;
- STDs/AIDS infection rates;
- Public intoxication in mining communities;
- The availability of child support services;
- Women's financial literacy levels and access to education and training;
- Divisions between people with different opinions about mining activities.

2. What can Pauktuutit do to ensure that women's health issues in relation to mines are addressed?

- Encourage women and board members to attend consultations;
- Draft submissions requesting the sexual harassment policies of mining companies;
- Collaborate with Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council;
- Pass resolutions specific to mining;
- Make submissions and presentations in communities;
- Secure funding to conduct research (intervener fund);
- Hold workshops or focus groups for women in mining communities;
- Keep up-to-date on the status of mining projects and relevant deadlines;
- Take opportunities to learn about mining and impacts (especially about clean-up and underground);
- Learn more about enforcing agreements and Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs);
- Access resources from the organizations or companies to do workshops, programs, etc for the communities;
- Have an office for women, information booth for awareness;
- Advocate for women to be tested for contaminant levels in their bodies in relation to mining activity;
- Launch a women's shelter or support existing shelters;

- Create resources about specific workplace harassment policies (Zero tolerance for verbal abuse and psychological harassment);
- Create positive messaging for men and women in mining communities “We can stand up too” posters or “a woman is a person too” (phrases in Inuktitut);
- Advocate for counselors on the mine sites;
- Create resources, such as brochures/ pamphlets with FAQ for women who work in mines (could be about what does sexual harassment look like? And what to do if harassment happens to you).

3. A) What are the organizations and structures in place for Inuit women to voice their concerns?

- Inuit Regional Orgs (work with women’s representatives);
- No structures in place for women to voice their concerns or lack of awareness of those structures and how to access them;
- Structures in place have not always made space for women;
- local women’s groups;
- Hamlets;
- Health Committees;
- Inuvialuit Corp;
- Wellness Centres;
- Regional Corporations;
- Regulatory Bodies;
- QIA, NTI, and women representatives of these organizations.

B) What are their limitations?

- They may have no authority, but rather just be a place to air frustrations;
- Most organizations do not have an actual mandate to enforce regulations on mines;
- Most organizations do not have the jurisdiction to prevent mine development if the women do not support it;
- Potential conflicts of interest as a result of organizations collecting revenues from mining projects;
- People at these centers may not be qualified to handle our concerns or may not know how to address them;
- Women may be consulted but then have no direct influence;
- Women may be heard but then there is no follow-up action;

- The structure of meetings do not provide an opportunity to actually affect change, but rather to “let Inuit speak”;
- “It’s like they just want me to go there to talk and vent about my concerns and frustrations. That’s not politics, that’s therapy!”
- Will the concerns we raise be confidential?

These discussions identified a pressing need for Inuit women to know about their specific rights in relation to mining activities. To meet this need, information must be shared regarding the gender impacts of mining and ways to mitigate these impacts must be considered.

Next Steps for Pauktuutit

- Collaborate with Qullit Nunavut Status of Women Council for input;
- Seek funding to conduct research on women’s health and well-being in relation to mining activities;
- Seek funding to conduct research to improve consultations with Inuit women during the Environmental Impact Assessment review process;
- Keep up to date on the status of mining projects and relevant deadlines;
- Submit written requests for information including sexual harassment policies of specific mining companies;
- Seek funding to provide anti-harassment training to mine employees—including targeted messages for women in mines (What does sexual harassment look like? What to do if it happens to you?); and
- Seek funding to promote Inuit women’s engagement within resource extraction sector (possibly through creating a two-page fact sheet containing ideas for possible engagement).

Pauktuutit Board Resolutions

Following the workshop, the Pauktuutit Board of Directors passed two resolutions specific to mining. The first resolution commits to working to address the impacts of resource extraction activities on Inuit women’s health and wellbeing. Specifically, the Board resolved that Pauktuutit:

- Conduct qualitative research to inform a gender-based analysis of the impacts of resource extraction on the social determinants of Inuit women’s health through the participation of youth and elders to identify the social, cultural, and sexual health implications of resource extraction industries;

- Raise awareness among northern governments, communities and resource extraction companies of the concerns, priorities and needs of Inuit women in regards to resource extraction development; and
- Work to empower women, youth and elders to help mitigate the negative impacts of resource development including sexual commodification, fly-in fly-out work rotations, increases in sexually transmitted infections (STIs), substance abuse and family violence, etc.

The second resolution passed involves improving effective consultation with Inuit women in relation to mining developments. Specifically, the Board resolved to seek funding to:

- Further identify barriers to Inuit women being able to effectively participate in consultations with mining development initiatives;
- Identify best-practices to encourage the effective participation of Inuit women in consultations; and
- Develop best practice guidelines on effective consultation practices and circulate these to relevant agencies including Regional Inuit Organizations, Land Claims Organizations, Inuit women's associations, community organizations and hamlets, etc.

Questions, Comments, Concerns

If you have questions or comments about this report, please contact:

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