



# GEARING UP CASE STUDY REPORT

**Copper Mountain Mining Corp & New Gold New Afton**



Developing Mining Talent Through Work-Integrated Learning



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Published April 2021

Canada

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.



# Gearing Up Case Study

## Volume 4

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The Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) is Canada's knowledge centre for mining labour market information (LMI). MiHR produces LMI for industry stakeholders to enable the sector to address labour market challenges such as recruitment, retention, workforce diversification and training.

MiHR's 2020 Canadian Mining Industry Labour Market 10-year Outlook report highlighted the potential need to hire approximately 80,000 workers in the next decade. Older workers are leaving, total enrolment across all 10 Canadian mining engineering programs is down 45% since 2015, and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) occupations are becoming more prevalent with the adoption of new technology. It can also take anywhere from two to five years to train a skilled worker for the mining industry.

## Where are companies going to find the next generation of mining talent?

There is no silver bullet to face this challenge. Industry needs to take a collaborative approach to grow the labour pool and to attract top talent – distinguishing themselves as employers of choice.

Industry also needs to make better use of all potential sources of talent. Women only made up 16% of the mining labour force in 2016, while internationally-trained professionals accounted for 13%.

To help shape the next generation of Canada's mining workforce, the Government of Canada provided MiHR with funding support through its Student Work Placement Program to create the Gearing Up program. Gearing Up brings mining employers, service providers, industry associations and post-secondary institutions together to create new work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities for post-secondary students to be better positioned to secure employment in mining.

Gearing Up changes the way students in mining-related post-secondary educational programs perceive, pursue and acquire the skills needed for in-demand mining careers. It offers wage subsidies to Canadian mining employers that create new WIL opportunities for students enrolled in STEM or business programs. Opportunities can include co-ops, internships, field placements, applied projects, capstone projects and case competitions.



Image courtesy of New Gold.



## Gearing Up wage subsidies are tiered to promote early attachment to, and diversity in, high-demand mining occupations.

An Employer is eligible to receive a maximum amount of \$7,000.00, representing 70% of a participant's compensation for WIL participants from under-represented groups (women in STEM, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, first year students, and visible minorities). An Employer is eligible to receive a maximum amount of \$5,000.00 representing 50% of a participant's compensation for all other WIL participants.



The following study showcases examples of how Gearing Up was adopted, what WIL placements are like, and the benefits to the companies, post-secondary institutions and students involved.



# CASE STUDY 7

# COPPER MOUNTAIN

Whether they are looking to explore a new field or have always dreamed of working in the Canadian mining industry, students find that co-ops, internships, field placements and other work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities are the best way to get a foot in the door in the sector. WILs are also a powerful tool for companies to find the best new talent. The Copper Mountain Mining Corporation utilized the Mining Industry Human Resource Council's (MiHR) Gearing Up wage subsidy program to extract the full potential of work-integrated learning.

Kayla Kapelari, a Copper Mountain Human Resources Coordinator, found out about MiHR's program through a colleague who attended a Gearing Up symposium in Vancouver. She said from her first application the process was quick and user-friendly.

"We have been successful every time we have applied, so it's been really good," she said. "If I have questions, MiHR responds really quickly and helps me with them."



**Kayla Kapelari**, Human Resources Coordinator at Copper Mountain Mining Corporation in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Gearing Up's wage subsidy application is submitted through an online form easily accessible on MiHR.ca. Companies can apply as many times as they choose, and support is always available.

Kapelari vouched for the program as a great introduction to mining for students, with other benefits to help them through their education.

**"Having these opportunities is an eye opener for a lot of people and it helps them get some work experience."**

- Kayla Kapelari

Copper Mountain strives to hire their co-op students as fulltime workers once they complete their post-secondary education. This was the case for Teagan Cartwright, a former Gearing Up student intern. She now holds a supervisory position as a Junior Metallurgist.



**Teagan Cartwright**, Junior Metallurgist at Copper Mountain Mining Corporation.



“When I was a student, my supervisor was really good at getting me involved and giving me challenges,” she said. “Now I’m the one overseeing it. It’s very interesting, I’m the one interviewing the students now so that’s kind of cool.”

Though she had never considered mining as a career prior to her internship, she is passionate about her job, particularly her work on environmental sustainability in mining.

“I think the most rewarding thing for me about getting to work in mining is I get to do what I can to make an environmental difference.”

Cartwright said she felt she was better able to grasp her education while putting it to use at the Copper Mountain mine and was quickly able to fit in and feel comfortable at work.

“I think confidence was a big challenge for me and I think that’s a common thing with a lot of students, they come in and are afraid to ask questions,” she said. “Even now working with students and supervising them, that’s a big one I always tell people, the more questions you ask the faster you’ll learn.”

She is very grateful for her co-op experience and mentioned that it forged her career path.

“I figured this was probably my best bet at trying to secure a job after graduation when you’re competing with so many people. It felt really good to work somewhere where they were happy to have me back and pushing to have me back, because graduating during COVID-19, the job market hasn’t been great.”

- Teagan Cartwright

Cartwright strongly advocated for her peers and other Canadian students interested in the mining industry to apply for co-op positions in their programs if possible, as work experience is highly valued by hiring companies.



**Renee Goold**, Senior Metallurgist at Copper Mountain Mining Corporation.

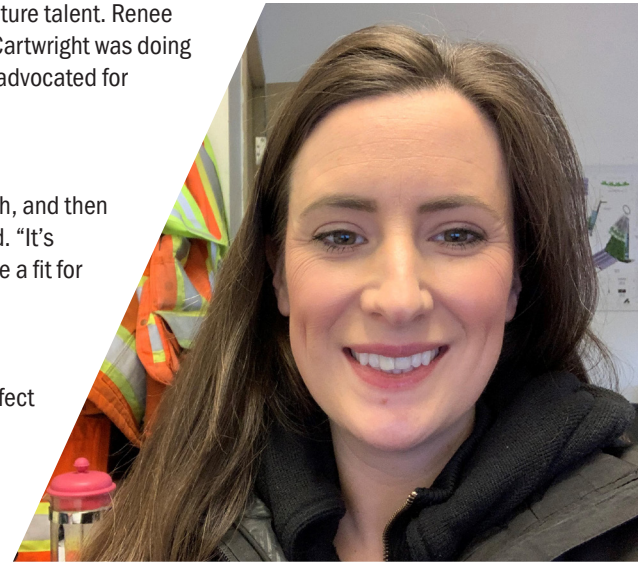
Mining employers also greatly benefit from the chance to train and develop future talent. Renee Goold, Senior Metallurgist at Copper Mountain, was on parental leave when Cartwright was doing her Gearing Up placement. However, upon returning, her colleagues strongly advocated for Goold to interview the recent graduate for a fulltime metallurgy position.

“Usually, we try to give little projects here and there for them to start and finish, and then it gives us a good idea whether they would be a potential candidate,” she said. “It’s basically an eight-month interview and we really get to learn whether they’d be a fit for our team or not.”

She said she didn’t need to talk to Cartwright for long to realize she was a perfect fit, and that she continues to be a strong contributor to their metallurgy team.

“Teagan’s someone you don’t need to babysit, you can just give her an instruction and she’ll roll with it, which is really nice,” Goold said. “So, it’s been easy since day one and she’s getting more direct with her emails and taking initiative so she’s really taken on that role quite seriously.”

She said WIL placements are extremely beneficial for students, whether they want to continue in the mining industry or not.



**“It gives a really good experience and it looks awesome on a resume. Knowing what to do in confined spaces, being aware of safety hazards, whether they stay in mining or go somewhere else, having that base knowledge of working around heavy equipment and various people is very useful for them in terms of their next job and their career ahead.”**

**- Renee Goold**

“It’s definitely a benefit for both the students and the company. For the students it’s just a snapshot, if they like it, great! If they don’t, they can have another snapshot of a different company or a different industry later on down the road, so it’s an interview on both ends.”

Kapelari concluded: “It’s been great for us and it’s a huge opportunity to hire students, so I definitely don’t hesitate to recommend Gearing Up.”

# CASE STUDY 8

# NEW GOLD NEW AFTON

Alicia Gallon, Human Resources Generalist at New Gold's New Afton Mine.



The Canadian mining industry has a wealth of jobs available, especially for youth - a highly sought-after demographic. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it harder for students and new graduates to enter the industry. The Mining Industry Human Resource Council's (MiHR) Gearing Up wage subsidy program has helped hundreds of students access and experience the industry through this difficult year.

Alicia Gallon is a Human Resources Generalist at New Gold's New Afton Mine in Kamloops, British Columbia. She heard about the program after her supervisor attended one of MiHR's Gearing Up symposiums in 2018. She applied for the wage subsidies and has taken full advantage of all the program has to offer ever since.

"We have hired 89 students through the program," she said.

Gearing Up's wage subsidy application is submitted through an online form easily accessible on MiHR.ca. Companies can apply as many times as they choose to, and support is always available from start to finish.

Gallon also said hiring students through Gearing Up has been very valuable for their company, as young workers bring a new set of eyes and enhance the bandwidth of other staff.

**"We always get a fresh perspective from students, especially when it comes to safety. Students also help free up our staff to do more technical tasks while students can pick up those introductory skills."**

**- Alicia Gallon**

Having experience with co-op work terms herself, Gallon said it is very important for students to be able to get work-integrated learning in addition to classroom education.

"I think it's probably the most valuable thing a student can do prior to graduating," she said. "We do exit interviews with the students and often get feedback that now that they've worked in mining, they are going to seek out courses to learn more about mining."



Samantha McNeill, a fourth-year natural resource science student at Thompson Rivers University had a co-op placement at New Gold's New Afton Mine through Gearing Up in her third year.

She said this opportunity allowed her to do a lot of things that were outside her comfort zone that she had never experienced before. Along with newfound knowledge about the mining industry, she said her co-op helped her develop valuable professional skills.

"I entered this position with very limited knowledge of the mining industry and as a result I did learn a lot about it during my experience," McNeill said. "I also learned many skills related to communicating professionally, including verbal communication and presentation skills. I think those were the most valuable for me."

McNeill was offered an extension of her co-op term.

"I was originally signed for an eight-month position, and it was extended to a full twelve-month position," she said. "That allowed me more time to grow in a professional sense within a position that I already felt familiar with, it was a great way to learn and develop skills in a different way than most co-ops offer."



While she described her career direction as preferring to see where the wind takes her, she said she would consider and be happy working in mining. She would also recommend it to her peers.

"There's so much opportunity to learn and make connections, and it's such an innovative sector that's always changing," McNeill said.

**"It was a very challenging and rewarding experience that allowed me to work in a high level, fast-paced environment while receiving mentorship and numerous learning opportunities. I'm very grateful for this experience and I feel like it will help shape my future roles as a working professional."**

**- Samantha McNeill**

**Mary-Beth Harrison**, Senior Human Resources Advisor at New Gold's New Afton Mine.



Mary-Beth Harrison is New Afton's Senior Human Resources Advisor. She spoke on behalf of McNeill's supervisor, Luke Holdstock, regarding her environment co-op position.

"Their team had a lot on the go this year, so she was able to get involved with projects she wouldn't normally have been in as a co-op student," she said. "She successfully implemented multiple initiatives just like they would have expected a full-time permanent employee to have. She got exposed to a bunch of things she probably wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise and really grew in her meeting facilitation, presentation, prioritization and even understanding in areas like stakeholder engagement which I wouldn't say is standard for co-op students."

Like McNeill, students have a lot of potential to make a significant impact during their internships. Harrison said the only challenge with McNeill was learning to manage her and other workers while working from home during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"She managed through it, so her dedication was appreciated," she said. "Managing from home is a challenge in itself but for students or new professionals it's an even bigger challenge because they're not used to doing that, they don't have the direction from someone, but her supervisor said she managed that really well."

Harrison also spoke to the usefulness of WIL placements for both students and employers.

**"It teaches students the things that the classroom doesn't teach them which is the reason we tend to hire our great co-op students again afterwards. You can tell the ones who've gone through co-op terms or internships are always just that much more prepared and ready and their education is just a bit fuller."**

**- Mary-Beth Harrison**

WIL placements have also greatly benefited New Afton Mine.

"We end up being able to have students work on projects that we maybe don't have time for other people to initiate," Harrison said. "It's always appreciated when we have new sets of eyes, we have also used Gearing Up for our miner cohort program where we take people who have never been miners before and train them to be underground miners."

Harrison concluded that the miner cohorts and students funded through Gearing Up brought new perspectives and challenged the way work was done by asking questions, consequently enhancing their own learning experience.





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