Integrating EDI:
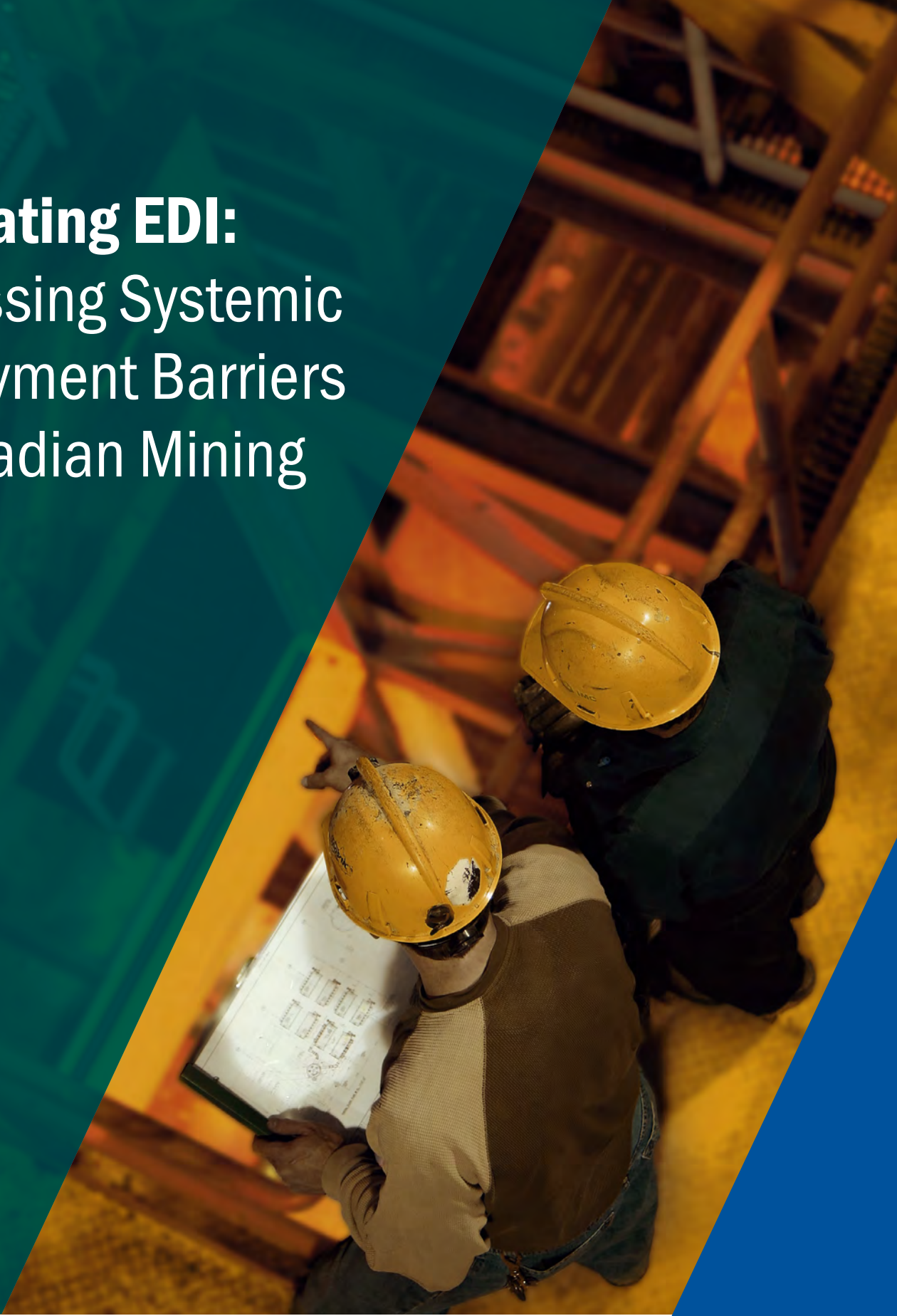Addressing Systemic Employment Barriers in Canadian Mining

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For more information, contact:
Mining Industry Human Resources Council
50 Frank Nighbor Place, Unit 105
Kanata, Ontario K2V 1B9
(613) 270-9696
research@mihr.ca
Or visit the website at:
www.mihr.ca

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Executive Summary

In the aftermath of a global pandemic, Canada's mining sector has faced high inflation, supply chain issues and increasing demand for critical metals to support new technologies.[1] The sector is now feeling the effects of labour market tightening,[2] putting pressure on companies to attract and retain talent. Achieving higher employment rates among equity-deserving groups,[3] including women, youth, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, racialized persons/visible minorities,[4] people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA,[5] persons with disabilities, and newcomers/immigrants,[6] will help the Canadian mining sector address current and expected labour shortages.

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1   IEA, *The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions.*

2   MiHR, 2023 *Canadian Mining Outlook*, 15.

3   A group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes.

4   Defined as group of people categorized according to ethnic (culture, language and religion) or racial (skin colour, hair texture and facial features) characteristics and subjected to discrimination on that basis.

5   Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning, intersex and asexual.

6   Statistics Canada's definition of immigrants encompasses those not born in Canada, including naturalized Canadian citizens, permanent residents and non-permanent residents. Non-permanent residents are persons who have claimed refugee status (asylum claimants), or persons who hold a work or study permit and their family members living with them, provided they have a usual place of residence in Canada. The term 'newcomer' is increasingly used to refer to people who have immigrated within the last five years.

Integrating EDI: Addressing Systemic Employment Barriers in Canadian Mining

While corporate commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are evident in Canada's mining sector, systemic employment barriers for equity-deserving groups persist. Key systemic barriers affecting the mining sector's ability to attract and retain talent from equity-deserving groups include leadership EDI knowledge and commitment gaps; a lack of information and knowledge of sector opportunities or career paths; difficulties balancing work and personal life; and non-inclusive workplace cultures. Addressing these barriers will require a holistic approach. To be effective, the impact of efforts must permeate all functional areas – from the C-suite to production – and be focused, managed, and monitored.

The Mining Association of Canada's (MAC) Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) Protocols on Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Workplaces, and Health, Safety, and Respectful Workplaces set out requirements for mining companies to develop and implement related corporate strategies.

Action plans are used by organizations to implement strategies and integrate EDI into all areas of talent management and workplace culture, including leadership commitment/ strategic planning; human resource (HR) policies and programs; talent attraction and recruitment; talent development and promotion; and talent retention. Building on the Protocols, sector-relevant tools and resources to help build corporate and facility EDI awareness and capacity, accountability, transparency and progression would bolster efforts to address systemic employment barriers within the mining sector. They can also equip organizations with enhanced strategies for overcoming challenges related to EDI implementation, fostering respectful workplace cultures and driving inclusive changes at all levels of the mining industry.

Introduction

Although Canada's mining sector has enjoyed rapid growth over the last few years,[7] it is facing high inflation, supply chain issues and increasing demand for critical metals[8] in the aftermath of a global pandemic. The sector is now feeling the effects of labour market tightening,[9] putting pressure on companies to attract and retain talent. An analysis of labour market trends reveals that over the next decade "industry employment is projected to grow at the same time industry exits will surpass industry entries by 2%."[10] While this presents a challenge, it also creates opportunities for positive change in recruitment and retention efforts and for strengthening the mining workforce – including diversifying the sector's talent pool.

7   MiHR, 2023 *Canadian Mining Outlook*, 5.
8   IEA, *The Role of Critical Minerals in Clean Energy Transitions.*
9   MiHR, 2023 *Canadian Mining Outlook*, 15.
10   MiHR, 2023 *Canadian Mining Outlook*, 31.

Integrating EDI: Addressing Systemic Employment Barriers in Canadian Mining

Achieving higher employment rates among equity-deserving groups, including women, youth, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, racialized persons/visible minorities, people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA, persons with disabilities, and newcomers/immigrants, in Canada's mining sector will help address current and expected labour shortages. A diverse workforce has been shown to enhance revenue and performance, creativity, and innovation.[11] The mining sector can attract and retain diverse talent by advancing equity, valuing diversity, and practising inclusion. By embedding EDI principles and practices into strategies and operations, organizations can influence and transform the culture of the workplace. A welcoming, safe, and respectful culture will enhance organizational reputation with job candidates, local communities, and partners. EDI strategies need to be supported through policies, practices and evaluable action plans at the facility or site level, to meet their goals of attracting and retaining and benefitting from diverse talent.

Systemic barriers – defined as barriers that result from seemingly neutral systems, practices, policies, traditions or cultures, and that disadvantages certain individuals or groups of people. Systemic barriers disadvantage equity-deserving groups. They are present in all aspects of society such as employment, education, institutions, and health services and are not necessarily put in place intentionally.[12]

Systemic barriers negatively impact workplace experiences of equity-deserving groups and compromise the overall work environment. The negative impacts of systemic barriers may be compounded or made more complex for individuals experiencing intersecting or multiple forms of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, etc.). EDI strategies can address systemic barriers more effectively if they are applied at all levels of an organization using an integrated approach.

Following an investigation of systemic employment barriers impacting equity-deserving groups in the mining sector, this report identifies solutions and supports to address these barriers. The solutions focus on effective EDI practices which employers can adapt to their workplace contexts as they evaluate and make improvements to their EDI strategies. MAC's TSM EDI Protocol was recently published as the standard for EDI integration into workplace systems and cultures, performance measurement and assessment in the mining sector.[13] The findings of this study will also inform the development of tools and resources that align with this Protocol and can help employers take action to address barriers for equity-deserving groups.

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11   Momani, *Diversity Dividend*, 11.
12   Government of Canada, *Guide on EDI Terminology*
13   The Mining Association of Canada, *Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive,* 2.

Photo courtesy of Rio Tinto

Workplace Culture and Capacity

An organization's ability to reach its strategic EDI goals depends on several factors, including, an inclusive workplace culture. Strategy alone cannot determine culture.[14] The capacity of an organization to make informed EDI decisions and to act on them is crucial. EDI decisions and commitments made at the leadership level must be integrated through the organization – especially through the operational levels – to be successful.

Without a committed, evidence-based whole-of-organization approach, efforts will fall short of meeting EDI goals and the result will not meet the needs of the organization or of equity-deserving groups. An integrative approach incorporates EDI into policies, strategies, practices, staff development, workplace culture and evaluation/accountability mechanisms. Effective practices in integrating EDI within organizational strategies and operations are identified and shared in this report as replicable models.

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14   Based on the management concept that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." Attributed to Peter Drucker, Austrian-American management consultant, educator, and author.

Research Activities

This report analyzes the findings of both primary and secondary research. Primary research involved the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data obtained through two online surveys in the spring of 2023; one engaged individual members of the mining workforce ("Workforce Experiences Survey") and another engaged mining employers through staff leads or supports whose work is focused on EDI; reconciliation; environment, social and governance (ESG); HR or other areas of responsibility relevant to EDI ("Mining Employer Survey"). Secondary research involved a review of existing academic and grey literature from mining and related sectors.

The majority (69%) of Workforce Experiences Survey respondents identified as white, with 19% self-identifying as being a member of a racialized group and 19% as having some immigrating experience (5+ years in Canada). Most respondents were between 31 and 54 years of age. Over half of them (56%) were women while 41% were men. When answering about their sexual orientation, 94% of respondents identified as heterosexual and the remaining respondents identified as gay. Half of respondents hailed from Ontario with another quarter coming from British Columbia. Almost 90% of respondents had some kind of post-secondary education degree. (See Appendix A for more details on respondent demographics.)

The Workforce Experiences Survey data reveals limited diversity in the responding population. The smaller sample size and lack of diversity could indicate indifference toward research participation or could reflect a lack of diversity within the sector. It is important for individuals to feel safe and to feel that they will benefit from providing information. The sector needs to hear from diverse job candidates and employees about their needs and experiences to respond appropriately. For instance, previous research has noted that mining companies with a minimum of 30% female employees at all levels would be better positioned to create more supportive workplaces and to "address subtle or unconscious male-biased workplace dynamics."[15] Encouraging employee participation in related research would help the sector to develop more relevant solutions.

Respondents to the Mining Employer Survey represented different types of operations within the sector, with Mining Operations/Extraction, Mineral Exploration, and Construction/Mine Development being the most common. Just over half (12 of 21) of respondents represented large organizations (500 or more employees) while almost 40% (8 of 21) represented small organizations (less than 100 employees). A variety of regions were represented in the survey, with over half (12 of 21) indicating they operated in Ontario or British Columbia. (See Appendix A for further notes on survey methodology)

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15   Baruah, *Barriers and Opportunities*, 82.

Photo courtesy of Rio Tinto

Systemic Workforce Barriers in the Mining Sector

Mining labour shortages and associated challenges are leading employers to seek innovative solutions to talent recruitment and retention. Respondents to the Mining Employer Survey indicated a 'lack of candidates with proper training or experience' as the most cited workforce challenge faced over the past 12 months, followed by 'increased psychological health and safety issues'. Both issues may be influencing the third-most cited issue: 'staff turnover' (see Chart 1). Enhancing and integrating EDI efforts can help to address each of these barriers – which range from attraction and recruitment through development, promotion, and retention issues – by creating and supporting safe and respectful workplaces.

N* = 21 (MULTIPLE ANSWERS PERMITTED)

Challenge	Percentage
LACK OF CANDIDATES WITH PROPER TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE	76%
INCREASED PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES	57%
STAFF TURNOVER	52%
PROVIDING COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION AND/OR BENEFITS	52%
INCREASED PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES	48%
ABSENTEEISM/SICK LEAVE	48%
STAFF ADAPTATION TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES OR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES	43%
WORKPLACE CULTURE	43%
WORKPLACE HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION	33%
RE-INTEGRATION OF STAFF AFTER LEAVE (EDUCATIONAL)	24%
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE	5%
NO HR CHALLENGES	0%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER/NOT SURE	14%
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	14%

Respondents to the Workforce Experiences Survey said that the fly in-fly out requirements of mining work, its remote nature and irregular hours/shifts are top factors that lessen its attractiveness. Given the nature of the work, it is not surprising that balancing work with care responsibilities and personal health were also named as key factors (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Workforce Experiences Survey: Factors Affecting Attractiveness of the Mining Sector

N* = 28 ("LESSENS" OR "GREATLY LESSENS" ATTRACTIVENESS ON A 5-POINT SCALE)[16]

Factor	Percentage
FLY IN-FLY OUT REQUIREMENTS	68%
CHALLENGES BALANCING WORK AND CARE RESPONSIBILITIES (E.G., CHILD, ELDER CARE)	68%
CHALLENGES BALANCING WORK AND PERSONAL HEALTH (E.G., MENTAL, PHYSICAL HEALTH)	64%
REMOTE NATURE OF THE MINING WORK ENVIRONMENTS	57%
IRREGULAR WORKING HOURS/SHIFTS	57%
LACK OF ACCESS TO RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION FOR WORK/TRAINING	50%
CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT	43%
SAFETY CONCERNS	39%

Key systemic barriers, discussed below, are affecting the mining sector's ability to attract and retain talent from equity-deserving groups.

* Total number of respondents

16   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=28).

Leadership EDI Knowledge and Commitment Gaps

Employers who are unaware of the breadth and prevalence of challenges faced by equity-deserving groups may be contributing to widening inclusion gaps. While 86% of Mining Employer Survey respondents felt that there are employment-related barriers affecting people in the Canadian mining industry,[17] only a third of respondents had experienced inclusion barriers themselves.[18] This could be a reflection of the limited sample for this survey or could indicate that respondents' awareness of employment-related barriers stems largely through indirect means (e.g., through reading about them or hearing from others). This finding speaks to the importance of organizational training and/or managerial professional development on the issues facing equity-deserving employees as well as of enhancing representation of diversity across functional areas.

Decision makers have the ability and obligation to influence EDI strategies and related performance management. Tolerance for systemic barriers in the workplace has far-reaching implications for equity-deserving groups and the sector's ability to attract and retain talent. As one respondent said, "…many companies that are leading in EDI practices, aren't supporting their supervisors…"[19] This statement suggests that corporate directives are not always finding their way to all levels within organizations. In fact, 39% of Workforce Experiences Survey respondents shared that their mining work experience was extremely or very affected by a lack of EDI commitment at the leadership level.[20] Mining Employer Survey respondents also recognized that enhancing EDI commitment from leadership and building EDI awareness within leadership were top areas for improvement.[21]

17   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
18   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=18).
19   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).
20   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=28).
21   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).

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Lack of Information and Knowledge of the Sector

The majority (86%) of Mining Employer Survey respondents felt that a lack of available information about the mining sector and related careers may be hindering the sector's ability to attract and retain a diverse workforce. At the same time, just over a quarter (28%) of Workforce Experiences Survey respondents reported that they experienced the lack of available information about the mining sector and related careers as an employment barrier.[22] Further efforts to access potential job candidates and share information about opportunities throughout the career trajectory could be mutually beneficial. Examples of such initiatives could include awareness raising campaigns about opportunities within the sector to secondary and post-secondary students, with local communities, and with organizations that serve equity-deserving groups.

Difficulties Balancing Work and Personal Life

On-site mining operations located in remote environments are sometimes only accessible through air transportation (i.e., fly-in, fly-out). The structure of work in these circumstances is often coupled with irregular schedules or shifts. As a result, employees need to be flexible in how they manage the demands of their personal lives. As noted in Chart 2, 68% of respondents to the Workforce Experiences Survey felt that challenges in balancing work with care responsibilities (e.g., child, elder care) "Lessens" or "Greatly Lessens" the attractiveness of employment in mining.[23] Similarly, 64% said the same regarding challenges in balancing work with personal health (e.g., mental, physical health).[24] While these employment barriers can affect all job candidates and employees, the nature of on-site remote work will tend to affect family caregivers and individuals with pre-existing health conditions more than others.

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22 MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).
23 MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=28). Respondents who indicated they were "extremely" or "very affected" on a 5-point scale.
24 MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=28). Respondents who indicated they were "extremely" or "very affected" on a 5-point scale.

Workplace Culture not Inclusive

Organizations that do not value or promote an inclusive workplace culture risk their reputation with job candidates, employees, partners and the public. A lack of EDI within an organization is revealed through occurrences such as harassment,[25] discrimination,[26] bias,[27] and microaggressions.[28] Most mining sector employees who answered the Workplace Experiences Survey reported toxic workplace cultures within the sector:

- 86% of respondents witnessed or experienced negative comments, treatments or actions.
- 68% of respondents witnessed or experienced harassment.
- 64% of respondents witnessed or experienced discrimination.[29]

Most of the specific incidents described by the respondents occurred within the last five years.[30]

Examples of such experiences from the survey findings include:

- "Harassment and inappropriate touching. Dealt with, albeit after much process. Should have been dealt with sooner."
- "As a newcomer the acceptance of a foreigner is not always welcomed."
- "Bias and racial discrimination."

Suggestive of a relationship among male-dominated workplaces, organizational cultures permissive of exclusion and the lack of diversity, one respondent highlighted challenges they experienced when attempting to disrupt experiences of exclusion by raising their concerns:

- "Poor workplace behaviours against concerns women consistently bring forward to the company. Watching so many bad behaviours from male management be tolerated and women terminated for bringing concerns forward. The industry is far from friendly for anyone other than white men."

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25 Unwelcome conduct or comments that lead to adverse job-related consequences for an employee and affect the work environment.
26 An action or a decision that has the effect of treating a person or a group badly for reasons such as their gender identity and expression, sexual orientation or attraction, race, age, or disability.
27 Bias is a tendency, inclination or preference toward one thing over another.
28 Brief verbal or non-verbal discriminatory slights or insults targeted at an individual or group, often expressing hostile, derogatory or negative messages.
29 MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=28).
30 MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=13).

A. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment that deserves special note in corporate EDI strategies, policies, and procedures. Sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that detrimentally affects the work environment or leads to adverse job related consequences for the victims of the harassment."[31] A recent Canadian study of the prevalence of harassment and violence in the workplace reported that "just over two in five (43.9%) of survey respondents experienced at least one behaviour or practice of sexual harassment and violence in the past two years while at work."[32] Leveraging EDI efforts to address discrimination and sexual harassment will enhance the attractiveness of the sector to equity-deserving groups by improving workplace experience and sense of personal safety and comfort.

Oftentimes, perpetrators of sexual harassment prey on marginalized populations, such as: women who are young, divorced or separated, irregularly employed, Indigenous Peoples, newcomers, as well as women with disabilities, and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIA.[33] Canadian research has shown that women working in occupations traditionally held by men are far more likely to experience sexual harassment.[34] A 2021 global study found that 37% of women in mining reported experiencing sexual harassment in their workplaces.[35]

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31   Janzen vs. Platy Enterprises Ltd.
32   Western University, *Harassment and Violence*, 6
33   Elizabeth Broderick & Co., *Report on Workplace Culture*, 41.
34   Statistics Canada, 2021c.
35   Kansake, *Creating a Gender-Inclusive*, 9.

International research has also revealed that the higher rate of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, results in lower psychological and physical safety for women.[36] EDI efforts demonstrate organizational commitment to creating safe, positive workplace experiences for equity-deserving groups.

Indigenous women and girls, and 2SLGBTQIA individuals are at particular risk of sexual violence and harassment in the sector. For instance, a study of Inuit women with recent experience working in mining revealed that 40 per cent of the women responding felt unsafe in their community while nearly half had experienced sexual harassment at the mine.[37]

Accordingly, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) called upon the extractive and natural resources development industries to consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people in project design and operation.[38] Individuals who identify with more than one equity-deserving group are especially vulnerable. This call to action is an important reminder for employers to design EDI strategies with performance measures that demonstrate progress or reveal where change is needed to ensure workplace safety, particularly the safety of members of equity-deserving groups.

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36   *Enough is Enough.* Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, 20. This Australian study found that 74 per cent of women workers in the mining industry reported being sexually harassed in the last five years.

37   Czyzewski, *The Impact of Resource Extraction*, 56.

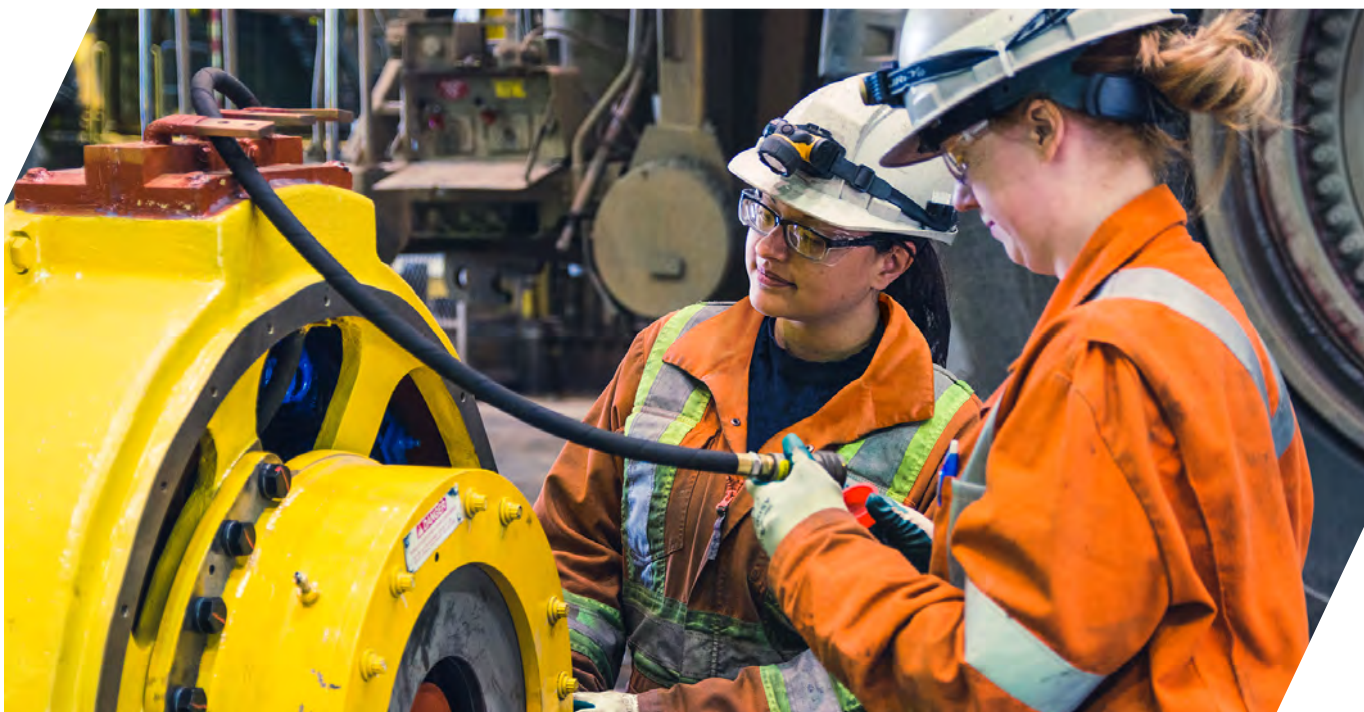38   MMIWG, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, 30.

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Photo courtesy of Iron Ore Company of Canada

B. Discrimination

Discrimination can take many forms in the workplace. Over half (56%) of Workforce Experiences Survey respondents reported experiencing discrimination-related barriers,[39] including racism, ageism, sexism, gender pay gaps and homophobia.[40] Two examples of discrimination identified by the survey respondents, racism and gender pay inequity, are discussed below as illustrations of how a culture of discrimination can affect organizational reputation as well as the employment and career prospects of members of equity-deserving groups.

Despite worldwide calls to condemn and eliminate racial discrimination,[41] it occurs every day in overt and more subtle forms.

'Everyday racism' focuses on race, colour or ethnic-based negative biases, stereotypes or prejudices and often takes the form of slurs, assumptions about ability, work ethic or honesty.[42] Canada's mining sector is burdened by the presence and impact of racism.

For example, in a recent small study of workers' experience in mining camps in Yukon and northern British Columbia, 45% of the research participants reported experiencing discrimination by race or Indigeneity.[43] Mining activities are also connected with negative impacts on local communities, particularly with respect to Indigenous women.

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39   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=34).
40   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=34; N=28).
41   United Nations, International Convention, 3.
42   Elizabeth Broderick & Co., Report on Workplace Culture, 48.
43   CCSG Associates, Never Until Now, 30. N=22.

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) found that Indigenous women are more likely to experience racism when mining activities take place near Indigenous or First Nations communities.[44] Building intercultural awareness and competencies in the sector through training efforts (e.g., MiHR's online training modules) can help to break down stereotypes and biases that fuel racism.

The gender wage gap, where pay inequity is based on gender, is a persistent problem around the world and in Canada. Although newer research suggests that the gender wage gap is narrowing, women in Canada continue to earn about 13 per cent less per hour, on average, than men.[45]

Gender-based pay inequities occur in many sectors, including mining: a 2010 national study that gathered baseline statistical data of women in the Canadian mining sector found that women in mining earn on average about 32 per cent less than their male counterparts, a figure that is significantly higher than the national average for all sectors.[46] In a smaller but more recent 2021 study of workers' experience in mining camps in Yukon and northern British Columbia, there was evidence of gender pay inequities, with women being paid less than men for the same work.[47] This barrier can be expected to impact attraction as well as retention efforts.

44   Bond and Quinlan, Indigenous Gender-based Analysis, 43.
45   Pelletier, The Gender Wage Gap.
46   Women in Mining, Ramp UP, 9.
47   CCSG Associates, Never Until Now, 22-23. N=22.

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Photo courtesy of Iron Ore Company of Canada

C. Accommodating Persons with Disabilities

Another workplace condition that can negatively impact the workplace experience is a lack of accommodation for persons with disabilities. Mining sector employers need to understand the needs of persons with disabilities to effectively retain and maximize the potential of existing employees as well as attract employees from this equity-deserving group. Potential and current employees may be deterred from seeking or retaining employment, owing to concerns about safety and/or inadequate accommodation.

However, individuals may be hesitant to inquire about or request the necessary changes.[48] Previous research has shown that employer lack of awareness regarding accommodations for disabilities is one of several factors inhibiting employment rates in the sector.[49]

48   MiHR, *Take Action*, 20.
49   MiHR, *Take Action*, 20.

D. Isolation

Many individuals from equity-deserving groups experience feelings of isolation and of being excluded from peer groups in the workplace. Inclusion, which can be described as "the feeling of belonging in your organization and team, feeling treated with dignity as an individual, and feeling encouraged to fully participate and bring your uniqueness to work every day"[50] is often elusive for equity-deserving individuals. A 2022 study of belonging in the Canadian mining sector found that individuals who identified as female and as racialized felt the least sense of belonging.

Those who identified as non-binary, third gender and other gender expressions, as well as those who preferred not to identify, also scored low on belonging.[51] For newcomers to Canada (including international students), isolation can extend beyond the workplace to include challenges integrating into the community.[52] EDI efforts in the workplace can help reduce the sense of isolation for equity-deserving individuals by raising awareness of the issue and prompting changes that promote belonging and empowerment.

50   Coffman, *The Fabric*, 2.
51   Carter, *Belonging*, 22.
52   Conference Board, *Making Rural*, 21.

Intersectional Identities

Individuals with intersectional identities, that is, who identify with more than one equity-deserving group, are confronted with particularly high inclusion barriers. For example, a major study recently showed that women face negative bias[53] not only because of gender, but also because of race, sexual orientation, disability, or other aspects of identity. These intersecting identities subject women to more frequent microaggressions and present more barriers to career advancement.[54] For example, a study by the Firelight Group, Lake Babine Nation, and Nak'azdli Whut'en found that Indigenous women in the resource economy are often exposed to racism and discrimination in the workplace, which extends to employment opportunities and wage inequality.[55]

This illustration of multiple occurrences of discrimination towards individuals who identify with more than one equity-deserving group (i.e., Indigenous and women) shows how equity-deserving groups are vulnerable to systems and organizations that do not value EDI. They are at higher risk of pay inequity, being passed over for promotions and other discriminatory acts. For example, the gender wage gap discussed earlier, widens for groups, such as women who are racialized or experiencing disability, where intersecting barriers are at play.[56]

Barriers and their Impacts

Collectively, the systemic barriers faced by equity-deserving groups hinder individuals and organizations from realizing their employment and organizational goals. Addressing these barriers requires an integrated approach to creating inclusive workplaces. To be effective, the impact of efforts must permeate all functional areas – from the C-suite to production – and be focused, managed, and monitored. Solutions to addressing systemic barriers effectively, ranging from corporate commitment to establishing integrative EDI goals and strategies across functional areas to managerial training and awareness raising to build capacity at the facility or site level and transforming workplace culture, are shared in the next chapter. (See Appendix B for a matrix of barriers and where they impact talent attraction, recruitment, development, and retention efforts).

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53   A tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against something or someone.
54   LeanIn.Org, Women in the Workplace, 20.
55   Firelight, Indigenous Communities, 20-21.
56   Canadian Women's Foundation, The fact about the Gender Pay Gap.

Photo courtesy of Agnico Eagle Mines Limited

Solutions and Recommendations

Many existing practices for enhancing mining sector EDI capacity can serve as replicable models. MAC's TSM Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Workplaces, and Safe, Healthy, and Respectful Workplaces Protocols provide standards that set criteria for member companies to meet. Implicitly, the Protocols suggest tools and resources that will help build capacity and address systemic barriers to equity within the mining sector. Organizations operating in the mining sector are driven to address EDI and/or reconciliation issues for several reasons. Table 1 shows a summary of the types of drivers and company motivations for addressing EDI and/or reconciliation as indicated by Mining Employer Survey respondents.

Driver Category	Motivation for EDI/Reconciliation Efforts
Leadership Commitment/ Strategic Planning	• Improve and monitor Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) performance. • Required by Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) and Economic.and Community Development Agreements (ECDAs). • Operate in accordance with core values. • Pressure from the Board of Directors. • Business performance, effectiveness and continuity. • Support corporate brand and reputation.
HR Policies and Programs	• Ensure alignment between corporate strategies and EDI. • Set EDI expectations. • Model and set a supportive workplace culture. • Create a safer, respectful and inclusive workplace. • Facilitate local hiring. • Manage costs. • Mitigate risks.
Talent Attraction and Recruitment	• Strengthening mining labour force. • Maintain community relations (e.g., with local First Nations communities). • Support the labour pool for the sector.
Talent Development and Retention	• Improve and support workplace health and safety. • Strengthen positive corporate culture. • Facilitate innovative thinking and problem-solving through a more diverse workforce. • Enhance productivity. • Limit recruitment costs and staff turnover.

Integration of EDI into company strategies, policies, practices, staff development, culture and evaluation/ accountability mechanisms is critical to ensuring EDI goals are truly met. Action plans are used to integrate EDI into all areas of talent management and workplace culture, including leadership commitment/strategic planning; HR policies and programs; talent attraction and recruitment; talent development, promotion and retention. Table 2 shows these themes and examples of associated actions, as a map of effective practices to address barriers to EDI. The common themes are then discussed in more detail.

Table 2: Map of Effective Actions to Address Barriers to EDI

Action Plan Theme	Examples of Actions
Leadership Commitment/ Strategic Planning	• Align EDI with corporate commitments and core values. • Develop a plan/strategy for EDI and/or reconciliation. • Commitment statement or code of conduct regarding EDI and/or reconciliation. • Integration of EDI and/or reconciliation into key functional activities such as recruitment, communications, performance, promotion, discipline, compensation, communications, contracting/supply chain, monitoring, evaluation and public reporting. • Report to the Board of Directors regarding EDI and/or reconciliation.
HR Policies and Programs	• Policy regarding EDI and/or reconciliation. • Policy for anti-harassment and discrimination. • Programs to advance human rights, EDI and/or reconciliation in the workplace. • Mechanisms for reporting harassment/ discrimination that support confidentiality and protect against reprisals. • Staff positions dedicated to supporting EDI and/or reconciliation. • EDI goal setting and performance management. • ESG goal setting and performance reporting.

Action Plan Theme	Examples of Actions
Talent Attraction and Recruitment	• Using inclusive language in job descriptions and job postings. • Reflecting diversity in communications, public relations and advertising. • Engaging external equity-deserving groups and communities or related support organizations. • Processes for requesting and supporting workplace accommodations in keeping with legislation. • Ensuring equity in benefits and compensation.
Talent Development and Promotion	• Training to support staff awareness, respectfulness and inclusion. • Training to support equitable managerial decision-making (e.g., unconscious bias). • Mentoring and coaching programs. • Auditing allocation of staff development and promotional opportunities to support equitable opportunities and outcomes.
Talent Retention	• Structures such as staff committees, equity-working/ advisory groups or employee resource groups. • Programs advancing human rights, EDI and/or reconciliation in the workplace. • Exit interviews and other evaluative mechanisms and auditing of related data. • Staff EDI/reconciliation training and professional development. • Employee wellness initiatives (e.g., mental health supports, access to gym or fitness). • Support with child/elder care responsibilities.

Leadership EDI Commitment / Strategic Planning

A commitment by organizational leadership, including a Board of Directors, and supported through strategic planning, are common elements in plans to address EDI systemic barriers. For instance, a code of conduct is used in 95% of the organizations that answered the Mining Employer Survey.[57] Ensuring that organizational strategies address EDI as well as truth and reconciliation involves applying these lenses to operational decisions. The result is the integration of EDI and reconciliation solutions into key organizational activities and the overall culture.

Mining Employer Survey respondents said that the top five areas for improvement with respect to recruiting, retaining and realizing the potential of talent from diverse groups in their organizations were:

1. Enhancing EDI commitment from leadership.
2. Building EDI awareness within leadership.
3. Supporting understanding and awareness among staff.
4. Collecting and analyzing relevant data.
5. Building a respectful, inclusive workplace culture that values diversity.[58]

These results demonstrate an understanding of the importance of EDI leadership, continuous learning and monitoring in order to establish and support a supportive workplace culture.

HR Policies and Programs

HR departments create support systems for employees that advance equitable policies, programs and processes. In addition to providing standard organizational services for recruiting, developing and managing the performance of staff, HR also supports organizational culture. Mining employee respondents to the Workplace Experiences Survey stated that they were aware of various HR policies and programs to help address workplace barriers. Examples shared include respectful workplace policies and flexible work options (e.g., reduced hours, job sharing, remote or virtual working options, flexible scheduling).[59]

Understanding the demographics of the workforce is an important step to creating a supportive culture and enacting systems that address specific needs. According to the Mining Employer Survey, the most common elements of employee demographic data collected were gender identity, Indigenous identity and age. (See Chart 3 – Mining Employer Survey: Demographic Data Collected by Employers.) Other types of demographic data were not collected as often (e.g., disability, newcomer), potentially leading to gaps in systems designed to support the workforce, limiting the capacity to provide necessary accommodations and helpful supports.

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57   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
58   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
59   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).

Integrating EDI: Addressing Systemic Employment Barriers in Canadian Mining

N* = 21

Category	Percentage
GENDER IDENTITY	86%
INDIGENOUS IDENTITY	71%
AGE	57%
VISIBLE MINORITIES/RACIALIZED GROUPS	29%
DISABILITY	24%
ETHNICITY	19%
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	19%
DON'T KNOW	5%
NEWCOMER (IMMIGRATED WITHIN THE LAST FIVE YEARS)	5%
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	5%

Talent Attraction and Recruitment

The need to draw from a more diverse talent pool influences employers' attraction and recruitment efforts. The majority (71%) of Mining Employer Survey respondents have programs in place to attract and recruit diverse candidates (e.g., women, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, racialized persons/visible minorities, people who identify as 2SLGBTQIA, persons with disabilities, newcomers, and youth).[60] Workplace Experiences Survey respondents shared examples of company efforts to attract and recruit diverse talent, including work-life integration policies (e.g., minimum vacation time, right to disconnect policy); housing or food supports (e.g., meals provided for workers during shifts, housing subsidy); and support with transportation (e.g., drivers license training, access to vehicles, company shuttle, transit subsidy).[61]

These examples demonstrate an understanding of the needs of job candidates and of creating responsive solutions to employment barriers.

Similarly, the need for meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities is well-recognized. Such efforts are called for in national and international statements, including UNDRIP,[62] the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA),[63] the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action,[64] and the National Inquiry of Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice,[65] Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs), and the TSM Indigenous and Community Relationships Protocol. Engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities through reconciliation, decolonization and respect for human rights is essential to establishing equitable and mutually beneficial collaborations.

* Total number of respondents

60   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
61   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).
62   United Nations, UNDRIP, 25.
63   Government of Canada, DRIPA.
64   Government of Canada, Truth in Reconciliation, 10.
65   MMIWG, Reclaiming Power and Place, 30.

Talent Development and Promotion

Organizational actions for advancing EDI typically include solutions to develop and promote diverse talent. Such actions can take many forms, such as employee training, scholarship opportunities, career development opportunities, reward and recognition programs, among others. About half of Mining Employer Survey respondents said they identify and support a pipeline of diverse leaders in all areas and at all levels of their organizations.[66] Over 60% also reported having programs to develop and/or promote and retain diverse talent, including performance and compensation equity and related professional development opportunities such as mentoring, coaching and leadership training.[67] Actions such as these positively influence workplace culture and can support the measurement of organizational performance toward EDI goals.

Corporate capacity to recognize, develop and promote diverse talent starts with raising awareness of EDI issues. Over 70% of Mining Employer Survey respondents have training programs in place to address harassment, human rights and/or discrimination and promote a respectful workplace culture.[68] Just over half have 'Indigenous awareness and inclusion/truth and reconciliation training' and the same proportion of respondents offer training on 'gender diversity and inclusion.'[69] Similarly, most Workforce Experiences Survey respondents completed such training with half having completed training specifically on harassment, human rights, individual and systemic discrimination. (See Chart 4 – Workforce Experiences Survey: Training Completed for details.) These types of training set the tone for a workplace culture that embraces and supports EDI, particularly when conducted regularly.
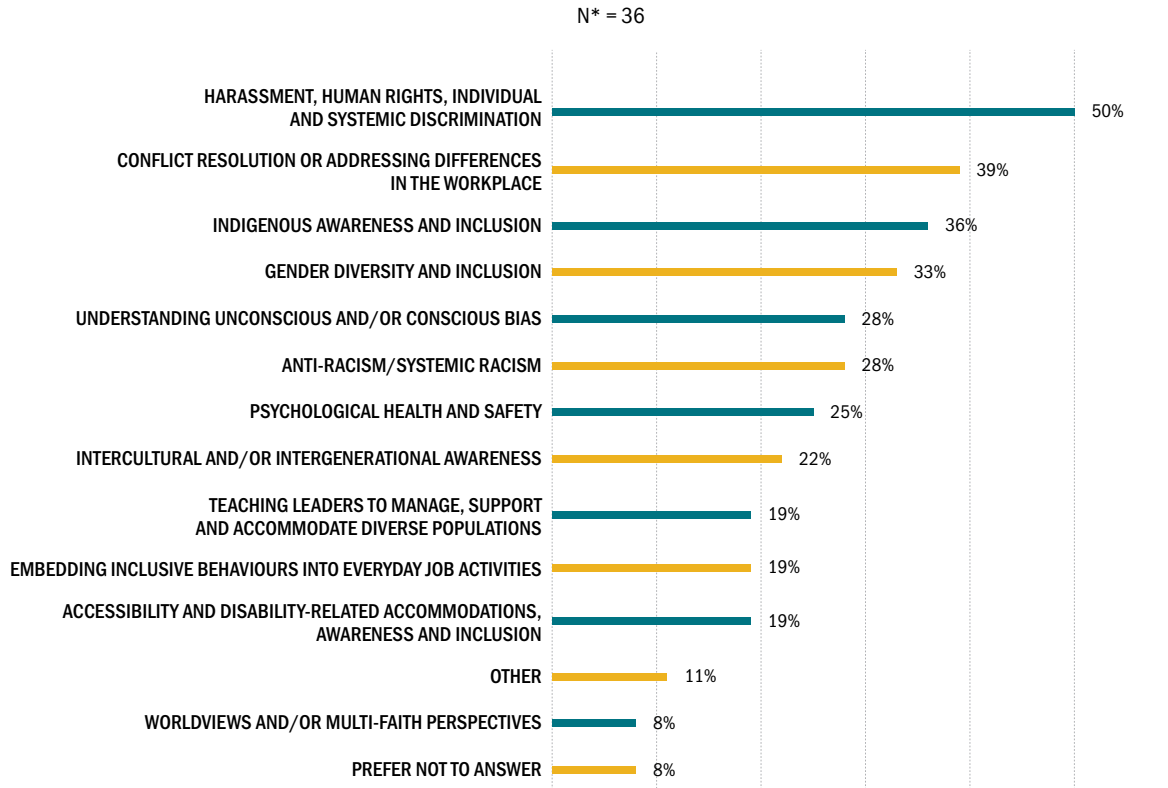
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66   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).

67   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).

68   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).

69   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).

Integrating EDI: Addressing Systemic Employment Barriers in Canadian Mining

N* = 36

Category	Percentage
HARASSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, INDIVIDUAL AND SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION	50%
CONFLICT RESOLUTION OR ADDRESSING DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKPLACE	39%
INDIGENOUS AWARENESS AND INCLUSION	36%
GENDER DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	33%
UNDERSTANDING UNCONSCIOUS AND/OR CONSCIOUS BIAS	28%
ANTI-RACISM/SYSTEMIC RACISM	28%
PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	25%
INTERCULTURAL AND/OR INTERGENERATIONAL AWARENESS	22%
TEACHING LEADERS TO MANAGE, SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATE DIVERSE POPULATIONS	19%
EMBEDDING INCLUSIVE BEHAVIOURS INTO EVERYDAY JOB ACTIVITIES	19%
ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS, AWARENESS AND INCLUSION	19%
OTHER	11%
WORLDVIEWS AND/OR MULTI-FAITH PERSPECTIVES	8%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	8%

Talent Retention

Efforts to retain diverse talent begin with a culture of respect and inclusion. Workforce Experiences Survey respondents highlighted a variety of organizational efforts to retain diverse talent, including:[70]

- Employee wellness initiatives (e.g., mental health supports, access to gym or fitness).
- Employee resource groups.
- Pay equity initiatives.
- Support with childcare/care responsibilities.

These kinds of initiatives demonstrate employer awareness and recognition of some of the systemic barriers facing equity-deserving groups, such as balancing work with care responsibilities and personal health.

Some respondents also revealed that training is provided in their organizations for:[71]

- Leaders to manage, support and accommodate diverse populations.
- Embedding inclusive behaviours into everyday job activities.
- Accessibility and disability-related accommodations, awareness and inclusion.

Training in these areas supports management and supervisors in the daily integration of EDI into workplace activities. Ensuring employees are able to receive EDI informed support from managers helps create a safe, inclusive culture that positively impacts retention.

* Total number of respondents

70   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).
71   MiHR 2023 Workforce Experiences Survey Analyses (N=36).

Creating an Inclusive Workplace Culture

To create an inclusive workplace culture, employers must also value diversity. By developing an understanding of the unique needs of equity-deserving groups, employers can design informed and integrated EDI strategies and action plans. Integration of EDI means going beyond overarching EDI strategies and commitment statements to applying an EDI and/or reconciliation lens to organizational activities, infusing EDI/reconciliation into project management phases, and establishing EDI competency goals for all employees.

EDI training and capacity building will enable baselines to be set and for competencies to be integrated into roles and into performance management systems. Other signs of inclusive workplace cultures include the use of inclusive language, equitable compensation and benefits, health and safety measures, and workplace accommodations, to name a few. (See Table 2- Map of Effective Actions to Address Barriers to EDI for additional ideas.)

Monitoring and Evaluation

Tracking and analyzing the results of organizational EDI efforts empowers a continuous cycle of improvement. Ensuring that measures reflect what matters starts with the organizational EDI strategy and related goal setting. While over 80% of Mining Employer Survey respondents had a policy specifically designed to address anti-harassment and discrimination,[72] only 52% of respondents had conducted baseline assessment of EDI factors in the workplace (e.g., barriers, demographics, workplace culture, employee engagement/belonging, etc.).[73]

The lower level of EDI data tracking suggests that gaps in programming and other potential solutions may be going unrecognized. There are many published examples of best practices across sectors, including mining, of tracking and reporting on diversity data, such as the use of diversity dashboards, annual objectives, diverse representation targets and others.[74] These can be adapted and used to track an organization's EDI strategy and goals, as they related to its EDI drivers and to the TSM EDI Protocol.

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72   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
73   MiHR 2023 Mining Employer Survey analyses (N=21).
74   See for example, MacDougall, *Diversity Disclosure*, 65-81.

Conclusion

While corporate commitments to EDI are evident in Canada's mining sector, systemic employment barriers for equity-deserving groups persist. Corporate objectives related to innovation, creativity, health and safety, reputation and investment and talent management call for the implementation of integrative EDI strategies across functional areas within mining organizations, including measurable targets. The TSM EDI Protocol outlines performance indicators for leadership and strategy, and for advancing, monitoring, and reporting on EDI at the facility level.[75] Specific guidance, tools and resources that complement these indicators would aid mining companies in achieving their EDI goals and in attracting, developing and retaining qualified talent. Examples include creating and actioning an EDI strategy; policy and procedure exemplars; advice on connecting with communities of interest and gathering and managing demographic and other relevant data; as well as a slate of training options addressing various EDI topics. The result will support organizations, communities and individuals in realizing their talent and equity goals.

75   The Mining Association of Canada, Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Methodology Notes

The Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) designed and hosted two online surveys to collect primary data on systemic barriers to inclusion in the Canadian mining sector. Potential respondents were informed that the findings would inform the development of resources and tools to address workplace barriers and support workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and reconciliation within the sector. The confidential online surveys were conducted concurrently and were live from May 3 to June 5, 2023. Each survey asked for a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The survey links were then shared through various channels, including MiHR's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), professional networks, including the members of MiHR's Inclusion and Diversity Standing Committee (IDSC) and Safe Workplaces for All Committee, and relevant online communities within MiHR's ENSEMBLE: The Mining Diversity Network. Additionally, targeted email invitations were sent to subscribers of MiHR's HR Prospector newsletter. This multi-channel approach aimed to reach individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Furthermore, efforts were made to ensure accessibility by providing the survey in English and French.
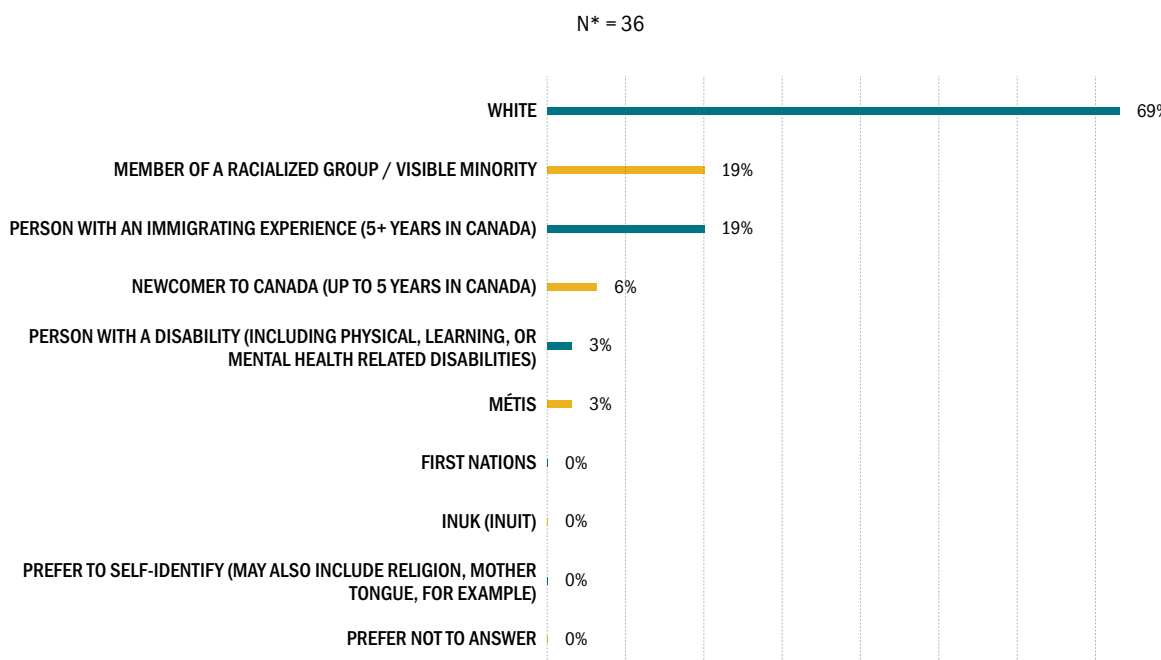
Workforce Experiences Survey

The Workforce Experiences Survey targeted current or former workers in the mining sector. It focused on employment barriers that individuals face while training, seeking employment and pursuing mining careers. There were 36 completed workforce surveys.[76] The majority (69%) of respondents identified as white, with 19% self-identifying as being a member of a racialized group or visible minority and also 19% as having some immigrating experience (5+ years in Canada). (See Chart 1 – Workforce Experiences Survey: Respondent Identifiers for more details on respondent self-identifiers.) Most respondents (72%) were between 31 and 54 years of age. Half of respondents hailed from Ontario with another quarter coming from British Columbia. Respondents had involvement with organizations of various sizes: almost half represented small organizations (less than 100 employees) while over one-third were from large organizations (500 or more employees).

Mining Employer Survey

The Mining Employer Survey targeted leaders responsible for or that provide key support for advancing EDI and/or reconciliation on behalf of their organizations. It focused on identifying and addressing systemic workforce barriers. There were 24 completed employer surveys. Respondents represented organizations with operations in a variety of regions of Canada, but primarily in Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.

Chart 5: Workforce Experiences Survey: Respondent Identifiers

N* = 36

Identifier	Percentage
WHITE	69%
MEMBER OF A RACIALIZED GROUP / VISIBLE MINORITY	19%
PERSON WITH AN IMMIGRATING EXPERIENCE (5+ YEARS IN CANADA)	19%
NEWCOMER TO CANADA (UP TO 5 YEARS IN CANADA)	6%
PERSON WITH A DISABILITY (INCLUDING PHYSICAL, LEARNING, OR MENTAL HEALTH RELATED DISABILITIES)	3%
MÉTIS	3%
FIRST NATIONS	0%
INUK (INUIT)	0%
PREFER TO SELF-IDENTIFY (MAY ALSO INCLUDE RELIGION, MOTHER TONGUE, FOR EXAMPLE)	0%
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER	0%

* Total number of respondents

76   There were an additional 15 respondents who answered only the first three questions. Their answers have been removed from the data set.

Matrix of Systemic Barriers

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Leadership EDI knowledge and commitment gaps	●	●	●

Gaps in leadership EDI knowledge result in an under-developed EDI strategy. EDI commitment gaps similarly impede decision-making and negatively affect organizational reputation with job candidates and employees from equity-deserving groups as well as communities.

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Lack of information and knowledge of the sector	●		●

Job seekers who lack information and knowledge of the mining sector will not be aware of job opportunities. Individuals employed in the sector may have limited knowledge of potential career paths/trajectories and may look outside the sector for promotion or a change.

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Difficulties balancing work and personal life	●		●

Job candidates from equity-deserving groups who anticipate difficulties in balancing the nature of mining work with their personal lives may not apply for roles in the sector. Employees may leave the sector for alternate work arrangements.

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Workplace culture not inclusive	●	●	●

There are many ways in which the experience of a workplace culture that is not inclusive impacts employees, teams and organisations as a whole. These may affect job candidates or employees at any point in their employment journey and organizations across functional areas as well as in terms of strategic effectiveness.

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Harassment, including sexual harassment	🟡	🟡	🟡

Harassment, including sexual harassment, can have a negative impact at any point in the employment journey, from the job interview, through development and promotion opportunities, to ongoing work.

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Lack of accommodation	🟡	🟡	

A lack of accommodation can have a negative impact at any point in the employment journey, but is most likely to be experienced during the job interview/start phase (e.g., limited technology options for conducting interviews), and when training and promotion opportunities arise (e.g., no training support offered for individuals with learning disabilities).

Barrier	Talent Attraction and Recruitment	Talent Development and Promotion	Talent Retention
Isolation			🟡

Isolation may be experienced at the job interview/start phase but is most likely to be experienced over time (e.g., being repeatedly passed over for promotion or when there is a lack of valuing diversity in the workplace).