

SISARD Summary

Northern communities continue to face pressures to allow extractive resource industries to develop in their regions. In the past there have been few visible benefits to these communities from extractive projects and often these projects have produced a range of negative impacts. These pressures come at a time when these communities are faced with challenges that threaten their long-term sustainability and well-being. Recent research has shown where communities can negotiate more and improved benefits and better mitigate potentially negative impacts. At the same time, there is a need for research to help northern communities decide how best to translate the short-term benefits of extractive resource development into long-term sustainable futures and avoid an increase in path dependency on extractives.

This project builds on recent research dealing with extractive industry in the Arctic and expands it by focusing on how communities can best ensure that short-term benefits of extractive development are transformed into long-term sustainable activities through social innovation. It is built on an existing network of partners and academics that first looked at the social economy of northern Canada (SERNNOCa) and then looked at impacts and benefits from extractive resource development (ReSDA). This project will take this impact and benefit knowledge and use it to find ways of ensuring the long-term sustainability of Arctic communities. Discussions between partners and researchers have resulted in a series of suggested subprojects organized into four main challenge areas. Using social innovation:

- 1) how can we better manage the impacts of the extractive industries on northern communities? Subprojects: reducing conflicts around impact assessments, improving indicators, ensuring cumulative and health impacts are properly considered, and effective mitigation techniques.
- 2) how can we use extractive benefits to enhance northern food security and subsistence activities? Subprojects: general barriers to subsistence activities, extractive industry-related employment programs to support subsistence activities, food distribution systems in boom and bust periods.
- 3) how can we use extractive benefits to enhance community well-being? Subprojects: integration of traditional knowledge into development decisions, best case scenarios for community involvement in environmental impact assessment processes and impact benefit agreement negotiations, and best revenue distribution and saving schemes.
- 4) how can we use extractives to build capacity and diversify the economies of northern communities? Subprojects: training and education programs, migration impacts, best case employment structures, business development, supporting culturally-appropriate renewable economies, possibilities around remediation needs, using new infrastructure projects.

These subprojects will be interdisciplinary, developed and undertaken with the active and meaningful involvement of partners, involve a range of research methods and help build capacity by training community researchers and promoting the participation of students from the north. Each one will get direction and support from a northern partner. Government partners will help use research results to inform policy development. Educational partners will help develop curriculum materials based on our research. We will use a variety of knowledge mobilization tools developed previously. This project will result in research that will help northern communities to: better understand and monitor the impacts of resource development; use extractive industry benefits to enhance food security, subsistence activities, and local cultures; develop a better understanding of community well-being and how extractive projects can be used to support well-being; and discover better ways to use extractive industry benefits to build capacity and diversify their economies.