

The Arviat Community Training Initiative

Context

The Kivalliq Region of Nunavut, including the community of Arviat, has a long history of exploration and mining. When Agnico Eagle made the decision to move forward with the construction of a gold mine at Meadowbank in 2009, the number of employment opportunities rapidly increased, and many residents of Arviat quickly found work at the site. However, the Hamlet (municipality) of Arviat realized that many of the employment opportunities could not be fulfilled by local residents due to gaps in training or experience. With the support and guidance of the town's mayor, council, and administration, the Community Economic Development Officer (CEDO) developed the Arviat Community Training Initiative, a collaborative strategy to open further employment opportunities to Arviat.



Description of Measures Implemented

Working with the Government of Nunavut, Inuit Organizations and mining companies, the Hamlet of Arviat sought out job opportunities in the mining industry in the Kivalliq Region for which the required training and skills could be offered in Arviat, using available resources. Three programs were created:

- 1. The Arviat Diamond Driller Training Program (ADDTP):** Surface diamond drilling was identified as being particularly suitable for a training and employment initiative. The standard entry-level course for a Driller's Helper was 10 weeks long – long enough that graduates would be competitive in the field, but short and compact enough to be offered locally. Drilling was in demand around the territory at various exploration projects and was not dependent on an operating mine. In addition, some Arviat residents had experience drilling in the exploration industry, including one resident who could serve as an instructor. Funding and in-kind support was secured from Agnico-Eagle Mines, Boart-Longyear Drilling, Forage Orbit-Garant Drilling, the Kivalliq Inuit Association, the Kivalliq Mine Training Society, the Government of Nunavut's Department of Economic Development & Transportation, and the Government of Canada. Northern College, of Kirkland Lake, Ontario, was selected as the training partner, due to their curriculum availability and experience working in remote locations.
- 2. The Work Readiness Program (WRP):** This three-week pre-employment program provides potential Agnico Eagle employees basic training in areas such as conflict resolution, time management, employer expectations, stress management and personal development. Its objective is both to introduce people to the mineral industry and to develop the non-technical skills and the confidence needed to achieve rewarding careers.
- 3. The Arviat Welding Trade Readiness Program (AWTRP):** Developed in cooperation with Northern College and Agnico Eagle, this program's goal is to increase the numbers of local Inuit employees in the skilled trades, particularly in the mechanical trades. The Hamlet of Arviat secured the required funding to upgrade the training workshop and install welding bays and equipment.

Every year, the hamlet calls a meeting of all stakeholders, where the challenges and successes of the previous year's training and employment programs are discussed, including the current state of the mining industry and projections for future needs and projects. This helps identify industry and community needs and the potential courses that could be added to the training and employment program plans of the Hamlet of Arviat.

Results

The first two intakes of the ADDTP were offered in 2011–12. Each lasted 10 weeks and started with 12 students. Of the 24 students enrolled in the first year, 21 successfully completed the program. The program has since been offered four more times, the most recent in May–June of 2015. To date, a total of 66 students have completed the program.

The WRP was first offered in Arviat in 2013 and has since been offered seven additional times, with each intake accepting around 15 students. While employment opportunities are not guaranteed to graduates, the program continues to be in very high demand, increasing from 30 applications during the first intake to 117 applications in the most recent intake. The reason for the increase in applicants is that the WRP has a strong wellness and personal development component that extends beyond employment opportunities, such as critical self-analysis and individual goal setting. Graduates of the program have reported better confidence and self-esteem.

The AWTRP has now been offered twice, with a third intake scheduled in 2016. While the first two intakes of the program focused on basic welding and cutting skills and techniques, the Hamlet of Arviat is currently working with Agnico Eagle and Northern College to modify it to include more mechanical skills in the hope of finding candidates for apprenticeships in heavy equipment mechanics and millwrights.

Lessons Learned

The approach that the Hamlet of Arviat has employed for the last several years in developing training and employment programs has been successful for various reasons, including:

- Sourcing capable partners and placing an emphasis on developing strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders.
- Constant communication with stakeholders, particularly the mining companies and key funding bodies, has helped the hamlet to plan to meet the needs, goals, and objectives of its community members and all stakeholders, and to identify opportunities for training programs.
- Working to understand local challenges and barriers to employment. Focusing on training that could be done locally, which has helped to address two of the major challenges to ongoing training: the high cost of travel and support for students studying outside of the community; and the high non-completion rate of such training programs. Students tend to be more successful when they are able to remain in their homes and be supported by their families, friends and community.



Arviat Diamond Driller Training Program

- Recognizing both the opportunities and limitations of what can be done locally, in Arviat, and identifying practical opportunities that are within the hamlet's capacity to offer.

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