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# CDI Report

## Lessons Learned in Work Camp – Community Relations: Practices Making a Positive Difference

Prepared for the BC Natural Gas  
Workforce Strategy Committee

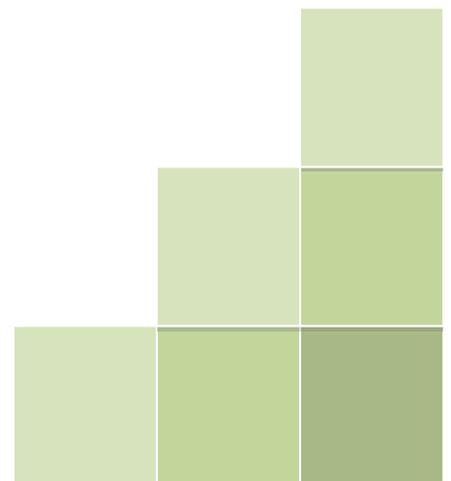
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## Accessing This Report

The reports from this project may be accessed through the Community Development Institute's website at: <http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects>.

### Project Reports:

1. Lessons Learned in Work Camp-Community Relations: Practices Making a Positive Difference: Summary Report
2. Best Practices Guiding Industry-Community Relationships, Planning, and Mobile Workforces

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## Introduction

British Columbia is on the cusp of a significant expansion of its natural gas industry. As the industry grows, its first choice is to hire locally. However, research indicates that the local labour force may not be adequate to support the rapid and considerable increases in demand expected in the region. If this is the case, industry will need to use various sourcing strategies, and rotational work practices including fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) work arrangements for permanent work.

Work camps are increasingly used to accommodate rotational workforces deployed for both construction and operational phases of resource development projects<sup>1</sup>. FIFO workforces and work camps are used in small community settings that have limited capacity to accommodate anticipated workforce needs<sup>2</sup>. They provide a means of accommodating large-scale temporary workforces while reducing infrastructure and housing pressures for nearby communities where limited housing options are available<sup>3</sup>.

Work camps are useful for accommodating workers in remote areas to which no main road exists. They also play an important role in the construction of pipeline projects where the location of the work constantly moves, making it impractical to relocate workers and their families from one community to another.<sup>4</sup>

The BC Natural Gas Workforce Strategy Committee was established to build capacity within industry, labour supply partners, and communities to address current and future natural gas related construction and operations diversification. The vision of the committee is of a BC natural gas industry that is endowed with the right number of workers, with the right skills, in the right places, and at the right time to enable its growth and diversification.

Work camps can take a variety of forms, depending on their purpose, the nature of work, size and their length of their tenure. There are closed camps (open only to client workers for the duration of a project), as well as open camps that provide temporary accommodations for anyone on a daily, weekly, or longer term basis<sup>5</sup>. Notwithstanding these differences, there are a number of common issues and challenges associated with this type of temporary, workforce accommodation.

BC is not the first jurisdiction to employ rotational work arrangements to meet the needs of industry operating in remote, sparsely populated areas. Industry use of mobile workforces has been accelerating since the 1980s<sup>6</sup> throughout Canada and around the world. Mining operations in Australia and Northwest Territories, oil sands development in Alberta, and LNG development in Australia all provide useful examples and lesson learned of these types of work arrangements.

## The Purpose of this Study

This research was commissioned by the BC Natural Gas Workforce Strategy Committee to gain a more robust understanding of rotational workforces and how these types of labour sourcing strategies could apply to the development and further diversification of the natural gas industry in British Columbia. To this end, the project involved a review of literature on issues and lessons learning from past experiences in employing rotational workforces. It included key informant interviews with a wide range of stakeholders including corporations, industry associations, local government, provincial government, community service groups, and labour. Particular attention was paid to issues related to the accommodation of rotational workforces within or around existing communities.

This report presents a synopsis of findings from the research. This synopsis highlights issues and promising practices in six key areas:

- 1) The Siting and Regulation of Workforce Accommodations.
- 2) Industry-Community Communications.
- 3) Community Investments.
- 4) Industry-Community Social Cohesion.
- 5) Monitoring and Accounting for Impacts and Benefits.
- 6) Maximizing Economic Spin-offs.

The goal of this research is to identify examples and practices from other jurisdictions that have helped to facilitate positive work camp-community relations, and lessons learned from practices that had negative consequences. The intent is to develop a base of knowledge in order to inform future industry players and communities and help them to facilitate arrangements that are beneficial to all relevant stakeholders in both the short and longer term.



## The Siting and Regulation of Workforce Accommodations

Work camps typically do not conform to normal residential, business, or industrial zoning. There are also often special considerations with these types of temporary forms of accommodation that are not covered by normal building regulatory frameworks.

As a result, in many jurisdictions, temporary accommodations are subject to a complex patchwork of regulations that span numerous acts and ministries. These types of accommodations present a series of unique issues for local government staff in rural and remote areas and there is a steep learning curve with respect to responding to developments of this nature. In many communities, the regulations fall short of addressing some key concerns associated with these types of accommodations. Even when regulations do exist, there is little to no enforcement. Inconsistencies between jurisdictions and a lack of predictability concerning the regulation of work camps also impact timelines and costs for industry.

In light of these challenges, the notion of having a streamlined, one-window approach for regulating workforce accommodations has been suggested.

An increasing number of local governments are responding by developing new regulations and standards to guide work camp and industrial development. In a number of cases, governments have collaborated with camp operators to rewrite their bylaws and develop regulations to address issues such as those associated with noise, dust, and light from the camps. These partnerships have helped to ensure that the bylaws address community concerns while not imposing superfluous costs on camp operators.

One issue central to the regulation and permitting of work camps relates to clean up and decommissioning once the camp is closed or in the instance that the operator becomes bankrupt. Should a camp operator close and vacate an area without proper decommissioning of the site, a community can find

themselves saddled with the costs of removing items such as propane tanks and other hard to move items from remote areas difficult and expensive to access. While this is rarely an issue with the larger company work camps, with some smaller camps, in some cases, it is only once the camp is vacated that local governments have become aware of their existence.

In response, many local governments are requiring that camp operators submit a decommissioning plan/agreement as a condition of obtaining access to a site or as part of their operating permit. Some require camp operators to be bonded. Other jurisdictions are going further and creating regulations around remediation to guide the decommissioning of work camps and timelines for renewals<sup>7</sup>. To ensure compliance with regulations, some governments approve temporary work camps under conditional use permits of up to two years<sup>8</sup>.

### **Practices Making a Positive Difference in the Siting & Regulation of Workforce Accommodations**

Local government – industry collaborations formed to develop/rewrite bylaws that encompass the unique aspects of temporary workforce accommodations and guide the siting, development and decommissioning of work camps.



# Industry-Community Communications

At the heart of successful rotational workforce arrangements are strong and productive relationships between industry and their workforces and the communities they operate within or around. As with any relationship or partnership, open and regular communication is key.

Effective communication practices between communities and industry are essential; for sharing information about projects and resources, keeping all interested stakeholders aware of key developments, and raising, addressing, and monitoring issues

A diverse array of communication mechanisms are used in developing and maintaining community-industry relationships: i.e. public and town hall meetings; advisory committees and stakeholder panels; focus groups; industry leadership groups; open houses; community offices; comment boxes; surveys; and newsletters.<sup>9</sup>

## **Practices Making a Positive Difference in Industry-Community Communications**

- Mechanisms to ensure routine and regular communication between community stakeholders, government and industry players.
- Employing communication tactics and choosing representatives that are appropriate given the nature of the information being shared.
- Establishing clear terms of reference for multi-stakeholder groups including indicators to track performance on key initiatives.

The approach and mechanism(s) employed should be determined by the nature and sensitivity of the information being communicated. Experience has demonstrated that routine communication is critical, and that representation by senior management at formal stakeholder meetings is required<sup>10,11</sup>.

Industry leadership groups and interagency committees have been useful in enabling small local governments to efficiently engage and nurture working relationships with industry, senior government, and community stakeholders. Task forces, such as the Natural Gas Task Force in Pennsylvania and the Moranbah Cumulative Impacts Group in Australia have also been productive forums for strengthening community knowledge and engagement in the industry and for monitoring its impacts.

Such multi-stakeholder groups or partnerships have proven to be more successful when established with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, objectives, policies, and indicators to track performance. The support of adequate staff, skills, and financial resources has also been found to be a key success factor and, as such, training investments in areas such as conflict resolution, cultural awareness, and facilitation have been found worthwhile by some.



## Community Investments

Notwithstanding efforts and mechanisms in place to localize spending and taxation revenues from industry operations, communities closest to developments most often feel that they bear the brunt of costs and infrastructure pressures associated with an industry's presence. As a way of addressing these local concerns, direct investments in and/or donations to the local community are a common, and often key component of industry-community relationships.

Corporate investment strategies may provide many different types of support, ranging from support for community safety initiatives, housing, health equipment and infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, physical infrastructure, community beautification, computers and other educational equipment, training programs, daycare expansions, environmental stewardship, recreation and tourism infrastructure, community development foundations, and events that nurture community cohesion<sup>12</sup>.

The provision of in-kind support, such as the temporary use of equipment to support road construction and grading, or a donation of new or refurbished equipment, constitutes another important means by which industries contribute to and gain social license from the communities in which they operate. Some companies have made their work camp meeting facilities available for community meetings and seminars. In Australia, the Wickham FIFO camp has a café that is open to both mobile workers and residents of nearby communities<sup>13</sup>.

Volunteer programs have been developed by some industry players to facilitate the sharing of workforce capacity to address local needs<sup>14</sup>. By encouraging and helping to connect their workers to volunteer opportunities in local communities, industry workforces become engaged in different community organizations and initiatives, for example serving on the board of community organizations, as members of volunteer fire-fighting crews, or aiding in

community clean-up events, for example. The structure and duration of shifts is often a key determining factor to enabling these types of employee involvement. These initiatives aimed at intermingling workforces within local communities have also proven instrumental in building and strengthening relationships between a mobile workforce and adjacent communities.

Regardless of the type of financial and/or in-kind support being furnished, investments and donations that have gone the farthest for industry - and had the greatest impact for communities - are those that have been strategically planned by industry, local governments, and other community agencies together. Conversations, initiated early on in the planning phase of industry and work camp projects, about the needs of both the community and industry can reveal areas in which investments would benefit both parties.

Rio Tinto Alcan, for example, through discussions with the community in Gladstone Australia, chose to target investments in that jurisdiction towards childcare, for which a current shortage (further exacerbated by the out-migration of childcare workers caused by rising costs of living in the community) was impeding the company's ability to recruit and retain workers. There are examples of companies investing in training equipment (i.e. simulators and mobile units) in order to develop the next generation workforce. Similarly, improved airport infrastructure and services that increase the connectivity of small towns and regional centres while also enabling better access for mobile workforces can be a powerful industry legacy investment<sup>15</sup>.

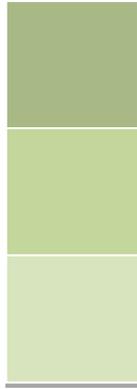
The conversion of temporary workforce accommodation, i.e. camps and trailers, into permanent housing and facilities is another long term legacy option that has been achieved in some communities. While not a feasible option in all cases due to costs (and the fact that work camp facilities are often disassembled and moved to other sites once a project is completed), some jurisdictions have worked with industry partners at the design and planning phase of project to have the structures built so as to be adapted for other uses once the project is completed. There are examples of local governments contemplating the conversion of work camps into seniors housing within their Official Community Plans<sup>16</sup>. Other communities have opened camps to provide accommodations for tourists and tourism workers once vacated or during economic downturns.

A promising practice has emerged from industry associations that have adopted a scaled up and coordinated approach in order to make larger and more significant types of community investments. These strategic and well-planned investment decisions have been the basis of successful industry

legacies. Lessons learned in establishing these long term investments suggest that these are particularly powerful when they are grounded in a longer term community vision that considers how the current project contributes to the community's growth and development prospects.

### **Practices Making a Positive Difference in Community Investments**

- Early phase collaborative discussions between industry, local government and community stakeholders to identify investments that would incur mutual benefits.
- Industry associations have adopted a scaled up and coordinated approach to legacy investments and programs in communities.
- Industry programs and initiatives to encourage and/or facilitate worker involvement in adjacent communities.
- Early contemplations of possible post-project completion uses or conversions for workforce accommodations.
- Cafes and meeting rooms on site at work camps that are open for use by residents and community groups.



## Industry-Community Social Cohesion

Beyond financial and in-kind investments, various manners of community engagement have proven beneficial in mitigating community concerns related to the social impacts of mobile workforces by connecting workers with local agencies and supports<sup>17</sup>. Some companies have also found a solid community engagement strategy to be helpful in recruiting and retaining workers<sup>18</sup>.

Initiatives that have involved inviting the community onto camp premises have proven to be particularly valuable in helping to shift local perceptions and foster positive industry-community relations. Before breaking ground on a site, providing local government and community member tours of the site and/or other similar facilities have proven to be effective. These tours can provide more information about the types of equipment, development, and operations that are being planned. Once built, work camp tours for schools, seniors, service providers, and local government leaders have been found to help improve local residents' perception and understanding about work camp accommodations and industry operations.

Community liaisons, stationed in the community early in the planning phase and throughout the full duration of a project, are employed by many industries to provide a constant face and personality for a project within a community. These individuals can be key in nurturing local relationships and maintaining the routine communications and interactions necessary. Ensuring that these liaisons have sufficient knowledge and authority to speak and make decisions on behalf of the company, as well as on behalf of contractors, has shown to be important.

Having a mechanism and process for grievances and complaints has also been found to be a key aspect of industry-community relations. Experience has demonstrated the value of having a single process for the main company and its contractors.

A common challenge of work camps relates to the behaviour of workers both on and off of the camp premises, as these impact local perceptions concerning crime and safety. There are different industry models used to address behavioural and safety concerns in work camp settings. As one component of the contract between the resource company and the work camp operator, work camp management may be responsible for managing the behaviour of workers in camp<sup>19</sup>. In some cases, camp committees are responsible for enforcing camp rules and regulations, monitoring the maintenance and development of work camp accommodations, as well as addressing grievances on a monthly basis<sup>20</sup>.

Camp committees may have representation from industry, the workforce, and the work camp management<sup>21</sup>. As a way of addressing local concerns, these committees can include representation from nearby communities. Communities, through community advisory committees or otherwise, are also being increasingly engaged in the drafting of work camp codes of conduct. Investing these committees with a decent degree of decision-making authority has shown to be key to their success.

Work camp protocols, policies, and codes of conduct have become industry-wide tools used to address community concerns around safety, as well as to facilitate productive working environments. These tools have become key components of workforce contracts and are included in the orientations for both employees and contractors<sup>22</sup>.

Some camp operators have allowed community advisory committees an opportunity to provide input on the nature and scope of a social code of conduct as a way of ensuring that these address local concerns. In a number of instances, code of conduct agreements have been designed to guide behaviour both on work site/camp premises and in nearby communities, thus encompassing curfew restrictions, protocols for guest visitors to work camp sites, and expectations around public intoxication.

Another industry approach to addressing community concerns around safety has been to invest resources to ensure adequate personnel are in place to foster positive behaviours in both work and community environments. For example, some industries have developed behavioural safety coaching programs<sup>23</sup>. Other industries have hired security personnel to accompany workers visiting nearby communities.

Local governments have helped to address perceptions of safety by requesting and publishing crime and traffic statistics, which, in many cases, do not substantiate community fears. When these reports were combined with other programs such as work camp tours and initiatives to engage industry workers in community events and organizations, it became easier for these perceptions to be addressed.

### **Practices Making a Positive Difference in Community-Industry Social Cohesion**

- Prior to breaking ground on a project, the provision of tours for government and community stakeholders of other similar facilities to show the types of equipment, development, and operations being contemplated.
- Community liaisons that are able to serve as a spokesperson and serve as a conduit for relaying and addressing community concerns on behalf of the entire project (including contractors).
- Codes of Conduct that apply to behaviour both on camp premises and within adjacent communities, are developed with input from community stakeholders and signed by employees and contractors.
- Addressing community fears and perceptions of crime and safety by monitoring crime statistics and creating opportunities for the community to see the camps/work sites and interact with the workers.
- Grievance and complaints mechanisms to track the number, nature, and responses to community concerns.



## Monitoring and Accounting for Impacts and Benefits

Depending on the size and duration of a project, industry may opt not to provide work camp accommodation for their workforces. There may also be a lag time between when the work begins and when workforce accommodations are in place. In these cases, companies and contractors end up purchasing homes, renting accommodations, or occupying RV parks and campgrounds in nearby towns and cities. This influx of workers can have the effect of intensifying housing pressures for residents, businesses, and service organizations in the region.

Increased housing and rental prices, higher property taxes, lack of affordable housing, and low accommodation vacancy rates are common characteristics of housing markets in these boomtowns<sup>24</sup>. Studies have identified several groups that are at-risk to be impacted by housing pressures during periods of rapid growth, including Aboriginal residents, students, single parents, low-income senior women living alone, people with physical and mental health disabilities, households with disabled children, students, and other youth<sup>25</sup>. Reports suggest that in boomtowns, the working poor find it increasingly difficult to address their housing and basic living needs such as food and heat<sup>26</sup>. Displacement and increased homelessness (explicit and hidden) also result in heightened demand for social services in these communities<sup>27</sup>.

Rising housing costs during boom periods can impact a community's ability to recruit and retain professionals in a range of community sectors, such as local government, health, social services, education, daycare workers, police officers, business, arts and culture, and tourism and recreation<sup>28</sup>. It can lead to the out-migration of professionals and seniors, with profound longer term impacts on the capacity and resiliency of the voluntary sector<sup>29</sup>. Housing pressures impact recruitment and retention within the business sector, resulting in lower quality of services, limited retail and economic diversification, and even business closures<sup>30</sup>. Small businesses can further become "adversely affected when

‘overflow’ accommodation such as hotels, caravan parks and campgrounds is fully occupied by contractors and resource service industry workers, thus limiting tourism, casual visitors, and other business people”<sup>31</sup>.

Social impact assessments (SIAs), conducted typically as part of the environmental impact assessment process, provide an important baseline and starting point for identifying and addressing impacts such as those outlined above. When required as part of the project approval process, SIAs comprise a useful and proactive tool for highlighting and addressing impacts. However, in most jurisdictions, for those projects that are not subject to an environmental assessment, SIAs occur on a voluntary basis only. In addition, even when SIAs are conducted to include plans for addressing and mitigating impacts, communities often await final investment decisions by industry before implementing infrastructure upgrades and housing developments, by which time the solutions are too late.

It is often considered to be too risky for industry to support housing projects, due to the myriad of market forces at play. Timely responses to housing pressures have been further hampered by bank policies. In smaller, unstable housing markets, banks have required housing developers to provide significant deposits, purchasing commitments, or long term leases in order to obtain financing<sup>32</sup>. Responses to housing pressures have also been impeded by limited access to land as a result of unresolved Aboriginal land claims, proximity to protected agricultural land, the lack of Crown land released before industry construction begins, and complex processes required to obtain approval to transfer Crown land from other mining, forestry, or environment government ministries<sup>33</sup>.

A key lesson learned with respect to mitigating the negative reverberations of an industry/workforce influx has thus been around *readiness*. Engagement and planning on the part of local governments in response to early signs of growing pains, and even market failure in the case of the housing market, are key to mitigating the negative impacts of a boomtown scenario. Communities that develop and/or update their land release strategies well in advance of large-scale industrial projects to include provisions concerning the pace of development on land sold or transferred by the provincial government, place themselves in a much better position to respond and benefit from the influx<sup>34</sup>. Similarly, proactive investments to ensure physical infrastructure, such as water, sewer, and roads are in place in advance of rapid growth position communities to mobilize and respond to rapid increases in population in a timely manner. Ensuring that the timing of housing supports or the

construction of work camps is aligned with the commencement of work has been found to be key.

In addition to these various proactive steps, there are also a number of program supports that have proven successful, such as affordable social housing funds and subsidized rent programs<sup>35</sup>. Most often deployed by senior levels of government, the success of these programs has been contingent on program criteria that accurately reflect the cost of living in boomtown settings. In most boomtown scenarios, it is not just those households that would typically qualify as being “low-income” that are unable to afford rents. Some jurisdictions, such as Labrador City, have been successful in advocating raising the low-income cut-off for affordable housing in the community, thus expanding the population who would then qualify for supports.

Housing subsidies have also been used as a tool to retain residents in the community. In some cases, these subsidies have been created through the contributions of industry. In other jurisdictions, agreements between industry and community organizations have been developed to purchase homes and provide housing subsidies to retain key professional positions in the community: police officers, health professionals, or local government officials.

Housing pressures have prompted local governments and community organizations in a number of jurisdictions to develop collaborative structures and initiatives with industry to ensure rental assistance programs are in place, as well as to assist those who have been displaced<sup>36</sup>. For example, in Australia, industry has worked collaboratively with the Department of Communities to support the Rent Connect Program which provides assistance to residents at risk of being displaced due to rising rental costs<sup>37</sup>. In Australia, there are several examples of housing committees/task forces and community-senior government-industry partnerships that have been formed to develop housing strategies and affordable housing projects<sup>38</sup>.

Community Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs) offer a more formal mechanism for outlining the impacts, detailing the responsibilities and commitments of all interested parties and outlining a plan for sharing the benefits through employment and/or economic development provisions. To date, IBAs have been used mainly with Aboriginal communities. In Nunavut and Northwest Territories, IBAs are required by legislation; elsewhere they are used mainly as a means of gaining access to resources on or near lands claimed by Aboriginal communities through potential or established aboriginal or treaty rights. They have evolved in part to reduce uncertainty and potential delays in developing mining projects. IBAs can help solidify necessary community support for projects that companies need while at the same time accruing to Aboriginal groups the recognition, respect, and various economic and social advantages such as employment, investment, and funding that they are seeking<sup>39</sup>.

### **Practices Making a Positive Difference in Monitoring and Accounting for Impacts & Benefits**

- Proactive investments by both local and provincial levels of government to ensure that physical infrastructure is in place to support rapid growth.
- Advocating for an increase to the low-income cut-off to account for boom-time economic realities and to allow single income families and low-income workers to qualify for housing support programs.
- Collaborations between industry, local governments and service providers to negotiate agreements to purchase homes designated to recruit and retain community service professionals such as police and health professionals.
- Short-term subsidies providing six months of assistance for residents impacted by rapid increases in housing costs.
- Collaborative industry-government-community structures and initiatives to monitor housing impacts and provide assistance to those who have been displaced.



## Maximizing Local Economic Spin-offs

A potential downside of industrial work camps is reduced opportunities for rural and remote communities to realize economic benefits from large-scale industrial projects<sup>40</sup>. This is largely due to the containment of workers in work camps, mostly during construction periods, and the outsourcing of supply, service, and labour contractors to distant urban centres<sup>41</sup>.

Community stakeholders often feel conflicted over the containment of temporary workers at work camp accommodations. While containment is seen by some as preferable in terms of reducing the disruption to the community, it also reduces economic spin-offs to local businesses.

Rural and small town entrepreneurs are challenged in obtaining tenders for supply, maintenance, and service contracts due to the small scale of their operations, as well as their limited access to capital, skills, infrastructure, and equipment<sup>42</sup>. Often, the product and service demands of large workforces exceed the capacity of local communities. In some cases, industries, work camp operators, and contractors already have national and global supply arrangements.

In most jurisdictions, industry is subject to various taxation regimes, royalty fees, and industry revenue programs. Some jurisdictions have established mechanisms such as the Impact Fee in Pennsylvania to ensure that the lion's share of industry royalty and taxation revenues are reinvested in the specific regions and communities from which they originate. However, in most cases, these investments tend to be diffused across a broader region.

Access to the spending and taxation benefits associated with industrial work camps is often a sensitive issue for small communities who bear the brunt of the infrastructure and service pressures of development and boomtown scenario. Many local governments are seeking recognition from higher levels of government of the impacts and costs that they incur in the wake of industrial

developments. In addition, an increasing number of examples such as the Gladstone Engineering Alliance are emerging whereby businesses are working together and forming conglomerates so as to scale up their capacity and function at a scale that will enable them to win business contracts with industry.

Community IBAs often incorporate inclusion of adjacency principles that encourage or establish targets for local hiring and suppliers that meet industry requirements<sup>43</sup>. Industry is increasingly adopting more flexible procurement policies that encourage local content where possible, while subsequently prioritizing the purchase of goods and services at regional, national, and then international levels<sup>44</sup>. In addition, lessons can be learned from local governments and chambers of commerce that have been chosen to be proactive and entrepreneurial in identifying and responding to the growing array of product and service needs of work camps.

Work camps have evolved from temporary trailers to resort-style lodges<sup>45</sup>. While the scope and array of services varies widely based on the size and duration of a work camp, in a competitive labour market, the services and amenities offered at the camps are playing a more important role in the recruitment and retention strategies for industry projects. As a result, industry standards for work camp food, sleeping arrangements, and amenities have changed and improved<sup>46</sup>.

Larger modern camps are being built with convenience stores, vending machines, and licensed or 'wet' lounges along with communications infrastructure and various business supports<sup>47</sup>. In response to issues and costs associated with worker isolation, loneliness, depression, and anxiety, a variety of health care services, and particularly those addressing mental health, are now being provided in work camps. In some LNG projects, health teams have been recruited to promote healthy living through fitness and nutrition programs, deliver physical and mental health services, and conduct health and behavioural risk assessments. In the Shetlands, local businesses and mental health charities have promoted life coaching programs to mobile workers.

Recreation and social programs have also been shown to play an integral role in workforce satisfaction and the retention of workers by improving the livability of the work camp environment, as well as by providing ways to strengthen workforce cohesion. Concierge services, fitness trainers, and lifestyle or recreation coordinators have been used to connect workers with ongoing activities, such as sporting or card tournaments, social events, and even community volunteers, for workers in camp<sup>48</sup>.

This expanding array of products and service demands emerging in work camps presents a potentially lucrative economic opportunity for nearby communities. It also strengthens the argument in favour of having camps being less contained and sited closer to town. Examples exist of work camps sourcing a wide range of products and services from adjacent communities such as contracts for taxis and bus companies, beauty salon services, tax services, accounting, office equipment rental businesses, heavy equipment rental businesses, tire shops, legal advice, and aggregate (for well pads).

Some more proactive communities have been successful in harnessing that potential by compiling a list of local vendors, including information about their products, pricing, capacity, and contact information – and approaching industry with this information early in the planning/development process. Local businesses have leveraged the economic potential of work camps by specifically targeting workforce needs. This has involved first determining what the product and service needs of mobile workers were and then catering to them: expanding the menu offerings of local restaurants, for example, to include food preferences of the workers. Several business expos and trade shows have been organized to provide an opportunity for industry to meet with local and regional vendors and obtain information about what they could offer.

In situations where the camp is relatively close to a community, provision of routine transportation (free shuttles, taxis or fee for service buses) to/from adjacent towns has shown to be beneficial in terms of enabling workers better access to local shopping and services.

The duration of shifts at work camps has also proven to be significant in determining the extent to which mobile workforces patronize local services. While longer shift rotations (i.e. seven days and more) enable workers time to fly home during their days off, with shorter shifts workers are more likely to remain in the region, become involved in the community and patronize local services. While these shift rotation schedules are sometimes determined through labour negotiations, in recognition of the implications to local businesses, a promising practice has emerged from companies working with local communities to structure their work schedules.

There have also been a number of examples of industries and communities working together to strengthen the capacity of local business. These include community forums to share information about potential business opportunities, local business organizations and industry working in partnership

### **Practices Making a Positive Difference in Maximizing Local Economic Spin-Offs**

- Businesses working together to scale up and compete effectively for industry service contracts.
- Local businesses taking a proactive approach with industry, compiling a list of local product and service vendors and holding forums to allow industry and local businesses to come together and explore sourcing opportunities.
- Community-industry partnership initiatives aimed at building the capacity of local businesses to respond to product and service sourcing opportunities associated with work camps/industry developments, i.e. procurement boot camps, industry-supported business incubator facilities, and mentoring programs.
- Companies seeking input from community advisory groups on the structure and duration of work shift rotations.

to deliver procurement boot camps and programs to familiarize local business with industry tendering processes, such as the LNG Buy-BC Program<sup>49</sup> and NDI's Supply Chain Connector<sup>50</sup>. In some jurisdictions, industry is also supporting business incubator facilities and business mentoring programs<sup>51</sup>.

In some cases, post-secondary institutions have collaborated with industry and communities to develop best practice guides for procurement in resource-based sectors. For example, the Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining at the University of Queensland published a best practices procurement guide for Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) working in the mining, oil, and gas sectors<sup>52</sup>. These initiatives

broaden business capacity by enhancing their understanding of the criteria used to evaluate procurement bids, including the financial and technical capacity, management structures, and past performance in order to determine the stability of the supplier<sup>53</sup>.



This research into practices and lessons learned in fostering positive work camp-community relations has revealed a wealth of diverse and promising examples. BC has much to gain by looking to the experiences and approaches tried and tested in other jurisdictions. Should British Columbia see the growth of temporary workforces with the future development of its natural gas industry, all parties stand to benefit from productive relationships and this research contains some useful lessons for facilitating such relationships.

Three key themes run through the findings:

- 1) The research has shown the value of taking an approach to community readiness that both addresses the challenges and seeks to harness the significant potential of temporary workforces within communities.
- 2) The examples of practices making a difference highlight the pivotal importance of effective and meaningful collaboration and communication between industry, local government, and community agencies, and stakeholders. These relationships are critical for industry seeking to obtain and maintain a social license to operate within a region. They are also key for communities seeking to maximize the long term benefits of industrial development.
- 3) Finally, the research underscores the benefits of pragmatic readiness: having these relationships and conversations between industry, local government, and communities established early and continued throughout the entire project.

## A Compilation of Practices Making a Positive Difference...

The following is a compilation of practices making a difference in fostering positive work camp-community relations that have been highlighted throughout the report.

- Local government–industry collaborations formed to develop/rewrite bylaws that encompass the unique aspects of temporary workforce accommodations and guide the siting, development, and decommissioning of work camps.
- Mechanisms to ensure routine and regular communication between community stakeholders, government, and industry players.
- Employing communication tactics and choosing representatives who are appropriate given the nature of the information being shared.
- Establishing clear terms of reference for multi-stakeholder groups including indicators to track performance on key initiatives.
- Early phase collaborative discussions between industry, local government, and community stakeholders to identify investments that would deliver mutual benefits.
- Industry adopting a scaled up and coordinated approach to legacy investments and programs in communities.
- Industry offering programs and initiatives to encourage and/or facilitate worker involvement in adjacent communities.
- Early contemplation of possible post-project completion uses or conversions for workforce accommodations.
- Cafés and meeting rooms at work camps that are open to residents and community groups.
- Prior to breaking ground on a project, the provision of tours for government and community stakeholders of similar facilities to show the types of equipment, development, and operations being considered.
- Community liaisons who are able to serve as spokespersons and as a conduit for relaying and addressing community concerns on behalf of the entire project (including contractors).
- Codes of Conduct that apply to behaviour both on camp premises and within adjacent communities, are developed with input from community stakeholders and signed by employees and contractors.

- Addressing community fears and perceptions of crime and safety by monitoring crime statistics and creating opportunities for the community to see the camps/work sites and interact with the workers.
- Grievance and complaints mechanisms to track the number, nature, and responses to community concerns.
- Proactive investments by both local and provincial levels of government to ensure that physical infrastructure is in place to support rapid growth.
- Advocating for an increase to the low-income cut-off to account for boom-time economic realities and to allow single income families and low-income workers to qualify for housing support programs.
- Collaborations between industry, local governments, and service providers to negotiate agreements to purchase homes designated to recruit and retain community service professionals such as police, teachers, and health professionals.
- Short term subsidies providing six months of assistance for residents impacted by rapid increases in housing costs.
- Collaborative industry-government-community structures and initiatives to monitor housing impacts and provide assistance to those who have been displaced.
- Businesses working together to scale up and be compete effectively for industry service contracts.
- Local businesses taking a proactive approach with industry, compiling a list of local product and service vendors and holding forums to allow industry and local businesses to come together and explore sourcing opportunities.
- Community-industry partnership initiatives aimed at building the capacity of local businesses to respond to product and service sourcing opportunities associated with work camps/industry developments, i.e. procurement boot camps, industry-supported business incubator facilities, and mentoring programs.
- Companies seeking input from community advisory groups on the structure and duration of work shift rotations.

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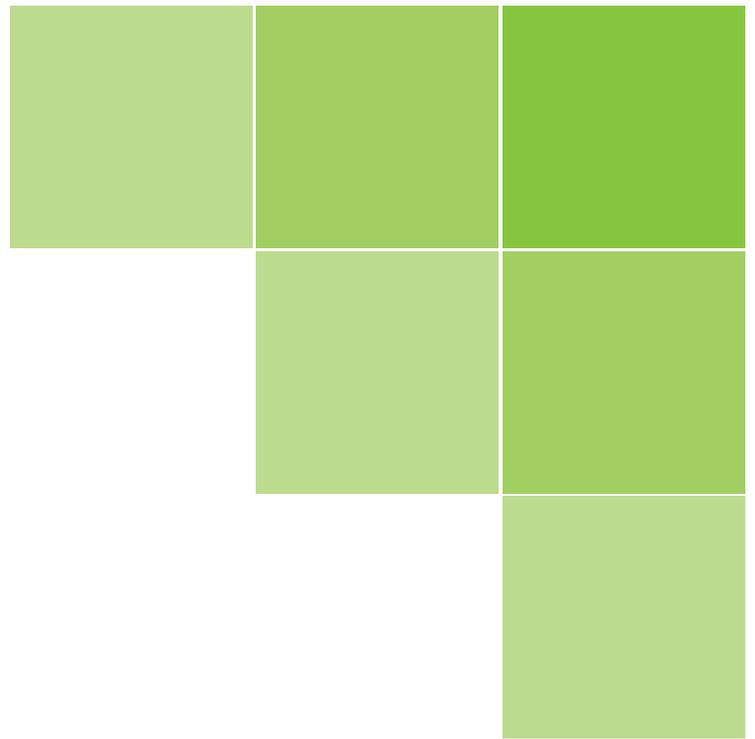
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## **The Community Development Institute at The University of Northern British Columbia**

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at UNBC was established in 2004 with a broad mandate in the areas of community, regional, and economic development. Since its inception, the CDI has worked with communities across the northern and central regions of British Columbia to develop and implement strategies for economic diversification and community resilience.

Dedicated to understanding and realizing the potential of BC's non-metropolitan communities in a changing global economy, the CDI works to prepare students and practitioners for leadership roles in community and economic development, and create a body of knowledge, information, and research that will enhance our understanding and our ability to anticipate, and develop strategies for, ongoing transformation. The CDI is committed to working with all communities – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to help them further their community and regional development aspirations.