

# **Tracking the Social and Economic Transformation Process in Kitimat, BC: Methodology Report**

**Prepared by Laura Ryser and Greg Halseth**

**Community Development Institute  
University of Northern British Columbia**

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## Table of Contents

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	Page Number
Acknowledgements	2
Availability	3
Project Reports	3
Contact Information	3
1.0 Project Description	4
2.0 Methodology	4
Appendix A: Interview Materials for Winter 2012	7
Appendix B: Interview Materials for Fall 2012	12

## Acknowledgements

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In the winter and fall of 2012, our research team visited Kitimat to conduct interviews to explore and track the social and economic changes being experienced in Kitimat. This is part of an ongoing project and our visits will continue over the coming years. We wish to thank all of the residents, community groups, business members, service providers, industry leaders, policy makers, and municipal staff who took the time to help out and to answer our many questions.

Special thanks to our local partners and organizations who provided advice and input for this work including staff at the District of Kitimat, the Kitimat Chamber of Commerce, and the Child Development Centre. In particular, we would like to thank Margaret Warcup, Gwen Sewell, Trish Parson, and Martin Gould for all of their advice and for collecting and providing us with additional information.

At the CDI, we would like to thank Julia Schwamborn for her assistance with conducting interviews, as well as for her assistance with the analysis. We would also like to thank Kourtney Chingee, Devon Roy, Alike Rajput, Erin MacQuarrie, Virginia Pow, and Regine Halseth for their assistance with compiling media stories, and Kyle Kusch for his assistance with compiling background socio-economic data.

Funding for this project was provided by the Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies.

Laura Ryser and Greg Halseth  
Prince George  
January 2013

## **Availability**

Copies of this report have been provided to the Kitimat Public Library, the District of Kitimat, the Kitimat Chamber of Commerce, and the Child Development Centre. Copies of the report have also been provided to all participants. Reports have also been posted on the UNBC Community Development Institute's website: <http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute/research-projects>.

## **Project Reports**

- Methodology Report
- A Review of Socio-Economic Characteristics in Kitimat
- Tracking the Social and Economic Transformation Process in Kitimat: Interim Summary Report
- An Inventory of Community and Economic Development Strategies and Plans

## **Contact Information**

For further information about this topic and the project, feel free to contact Greg Halseth, Director of UNBC's Community Development Institute.

Greg Halseth  
Canada Research Chair of Rural and Small Town Studies  
Professor, Geography Program  
University of Northern BC  
3333 University Way  
Prince George, BC  
V2N 4Z9

Phone: 250-960-5826

Fax: 250-960-6533

E-mail: [halseth@unbc.ca](mailto:halseth@unbc.ca)

Website: <http://www.unbc.ca/community-development-institute>

# Tracking the Social and Economic Transformation Process in Kitimat, BC: Methodology Report

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## 1.0 Project Description

When major industrial investments come to small communities, the local social impacts can be significant and transformative. The town of Kitimat has been an industrial centre in northwestern British Columbia since the early 1950s. The town is now experiencing a large number of industrial construction projects that will change and renew the local economy. These construction projects will also impact and change the community. This research involves a long-term tracking study of the economic and social transformation processes now getting underway in Kitimat, BC.

The research will involve two aspects. The first is the tracking of available and emerging data on industrial projects, temporary and permanent workforces, and various other community economic and social development topics identified as important during these sorts of renewals. The second is the use of longitudinal, qualitative interviews with people involved in a range of community sectors to review how economic and industrial activity is reshaping and changing the community. The project work reported here was carried out by a research team from the UNBC Community Development Institute in the winter and fall of 2012 with the goal to track changes, pressures, and actions relevant to decision-making over community planning and infrastructure investments. This report includes a description of the methodology used to engage with community stakeholders and to track social and economic changes in the community.

## 2.0 Methodology

The data and information for this project was collected through a review of Statistics Canada Census data and from key informant interviews.

### *Census Data*

The Census is undertaken every five years and provides information on the age distribution and socio-economic characteristics of local populations. While Census data categories may change between Census periods, it is none-the-less possible to conduct an assessment of the population based on the following issues:

- The rates of population change,
- The changing age structure and household composition of the population,
- Employment and income characteristics, and
- Housing characteristics.

Caution must be taken when interpreting Census data for smaller communities. It is important to understand that Statistics Canada applies a rounding procedure to data in order to protect the anonymity of residents. For example, if there are 13 women employed in education, Statistics Canada will ‘round’ the number either down to 10 or up to 15. As such, totals for specific

categories do not always ‘add up’. Furthermore, Statistics Canada will not provide some types of data for very small populations in order to protect the identity of residents.

### ***Selecting Interview Participants***

In 2012, the CDI team visited Kitimat in March and September to conduct interviews with residents, service providers, local leaders, industry representatives, business leaders, and members of community groups. During our first visit, the interviews focused upon characterizing Kitimat in the years immediately prior to the current start-up of industrial construction projects. In the second visit, the interviews explored social and economic changes in the community, key pressures facing the community, the capacity of local groups, and how groups were working together both locally and with other groups around the region and province in order to access a broader range of expertise, information, and resources.

Participants were recruited through publicly available lists. During the first visit, a total of 42 people were interviewed, while 39 people were interviewed during the second visit. The in-depth interviews lasted between 25 minutes and 1.5 hours. A general breakdown of interview participants is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of Interview Participants**

Sector	First Visit		Second Visit	
	Number of Participants	% of Participants	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Community group	5	11.9	4	10.3
Business	4	9.5	1	2.6
Local government	12	28.6	15	38.5
Industry	2	4.8	1	2.6
Service provider	13	31.0	14	35.9
Seniors	6	14.3	4	10.3
Total	42	100.1	39	100.2

Source: Tracking Social and Economic Transformation in Kitimat Study.

### ***Research Ethics***

Research conducted by the Community Development Institute is bound by protocols at the University of Northern British Columbia that require all survey or interview guides be submitted to UNBC’s Research Ethics Board for review. A key component to this protocol is to provide research participants with a copy of the consent form (Appendix A for the winter 2012; Appendix B for the fall 2012) that outlines the purpose of the study, how the research process will protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and that their participation is voluntary.

## *Interview Questions*

The purpose of this project was to explore and track the social and economic changes in Kitimat. The reports associated with this project assemble a summary of key issues as identified from our interviews. A detailed description of questions asked in each section of the interview guides is provided in the appendices (Appendix A for the winter of 2012; Appendix B for the fall of 2012). In general, participants were asked questions in the following areas:

- background questions,
- benefits and concerns associated with large scale industry and economic development projects,
- local responses to pressures and opportunities that emerged,
- the structure and capacity of local groups,
- local and regional partnerships, and
- how these changes impacted the overall quality of life for residents.

## *Analysis*

During each interview, comments were recorded and notes were taken. A summary file was created for each interview and was sent to individual participants for their review and clarification. After a final summary file was created for each interview, qualitative analysis was done to identify, code, and categorize patterns and themes that emerged from the data.

Each table consists of theme headings and sub-headings. The theme headings are bolded and have a numerical count beside them of the total number of comments received for that particular topic. Under each theme are sub-headings that are in plain, non-bolded font. These cover the range of issues captured under a key theme. Beside each sub-heading is a numerical count of the total number of participants that raised a specific issue. When all of the sub-heading comments are added up, they indicate the number of times that a particular theme was raised.

## **Appendix A: Interview Materials for Winter 2012**

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1. Consent form
2. Interview guide



## **Tracking the Social and Economic Transformation Process in Kitimat, BC**

### **Interview Consent Form for Local Leaders and Service Groups**

**Purpose** – This project is being conducted by the Community Development Institute at UNBC. The purpose of this project is to examine the impacts of major industrial and economic projects in Kitimat, BC. It will examine the benefits, challenges, and tensions created across various facets of the community. It will also explore how the characteristics of place, such as community capacity, relationships, infrastructure, and institutions, shape the experiences with, and responses to, new development.

**How Respondents Were Chosen** – Interviews are being conducted with local leaders, economic and industry representatives, community groups, service providers, and residents who have an interest in, and can provide insights into, the impacts of major economic projects in Kitimat. All of these names come from publically available community listings. Interviewees were selected for their potential to provide information that can help to better understand community preparedness, as well as the impacts of major developments on workers, their families, and the community. The interview should take about 30-45 minutes to complete. This is the first interview in a process that will be repeated annually for the next 5 years.

**Anonymity And Confidentiality** - The names of participants will not be used in any reporting, nor will any information which may be used to identify individuals. All information shared in this interview will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked research room at UNBC and will be accessible only to the research team. The information will be kept until the final project report is complete. After which time, shredding and file erasure will destroy all information related to the interview.

**Potential Risks And Benefits** - This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. The project team does not consider there to be any risks to participation. We hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into issues relevant to community responses to, and impacts from, major economic developments.

**Voluntary Participation** - Your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may chose not to participate. If you do participate, you may choose to not answer any question that makes you uncomfortable, and you have the right to terminate the interview at any time and have all the information you provided withdrawn from the study.

**Research Results** - In case of any questions that may arise from this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Greg Halseth (250-960-5826, halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. The interviews will be recorded for accuracy and a copy of the notes will be shared with you to ensure accuracy. All participants will receive a copy of the final project report. The final report will also be posted on the Community Development Institute's website.

**Complaints** - Any complaints about this project should be directed to the Office of Research, UNBC (250) 960-6735, or email: reb@unbc.ca

**I have read the above description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study.**

---

(Name -please print)

(Signature)

(Date)

**TRACKING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IN KITIMAT  
INTERVIEW GUIDE**

---

Interviewee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Connection/Role in the Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: Start \_\_\_\_\_ Finish \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Comments on Interview:**

**Opening Questions**

What is your name and how long have you lived in Kitimat?

Can you briefly describe the role(s) that you play in the community?

**Background Questions**

I would like to talk about the period prior to the 2008 global economic downturn. How would you characterize Kitimat's:

*Prompts:*

Economic structure

Local government

Employment opportunities

Opportunities for women

Opportunities for youth

Recreation and civic programs

Infrastructure (roads, pool, etc.)

Community / voluntary groups

Social Services

Retail services

How have these characteristics changed since the 2008 global economic downturn?

*Prompts:*

Economic structure  
Local government  
Employment opportunities  
Opportunities for women  
Opportunities for youth  
Recreation and civic programs  
Infrastructure (roads, pool, etc.)  
Community / voluntary groups  
Social Services  
Retail services

### **Benefits**

Thinking back, what do you think have been some of the benefits or positive impacts of previous industrial or large-scale economic development projects in the community?

*Prompts: For ...*

Workers  
Families  
Community groups  
Local businesses  
Local government

### **Concerns**

Thinking back, what do you think have been some of the concerns or negative issues created by previous industrial or large-scale economic development projects in the community?

*Prompts: For ...*

Workers  
Families  
Community groups  
Local businesses  
Local government

### **Services**

Prior to 2008, do you think local services were successful in meeting the needs of residents so they could pursue opportunities created through those industrial or large-scale economic development projects?

*Prompts: For ...*

Workers  
Families  
Community groups  
Local businesses

Thinking back, what additional services or supports, if any, do you think were needed to address local needs?

## **Community Economic Development**

In terms of community economic development, what do you think are some of the key opportunities for your community?

In terms of community economic development, what do you think are some of the key challenges for your community?

How would you characterize the level of cooperation among local community and economic development groups?

How would you characterize community efforts to encourage or attract more entrepreneurs or businesses?

## **Quality of Life**

Prior to the 2008 global economic downturn, how do you think industrial / economic development projects impacted local quality of life?

*Prompts:*

Voluntary organizations

Recreation or social groups / programs

Infrastructure

Family

## **Concluding Question**

From the experiences you have had in the community, do you have anything else that has not been touched on here that you would like to comment on?

## **Appendix B: Interview Materials for Fall 2012**

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1. Consent form
2. Interview guide

## **Tracking the Social and Economic Transformation Process in Kitimat, BC**

### **Interview Consent Form for Local Leaders and Service Groups**

**Purpose** – This project is being conducted by the Community Development Institute at UNBC (Greg Halseth and Laura Ryser). The purpose of this project is to examine the impacts of major industrial and economic projects in Kitimat, BC. It will examine the benefits, challenges, and tensions created across various facets of the community. It will also explore how the characteristics of place, such as community capacity, relationships, infrastructure, and institutions, shape the experiences with, and responses to, new development.

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**Research Results** - In case of any questions that may arise from this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Greg Halseth (250-960-5826, halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. The interviews will be recorded for accuracy and a copy of the notes will be shared with you to ensure accuracy. All participants will receive a copy of the final project report. The final report will also be posted on the Community Development Institute's website.

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**I have read the above description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study.**

---

(Name -please print)

(Signature)

(Date)

**TRACKING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION PROCESS IN KITIMAT  
INTERVIEW GUIDE**

---

Interviewee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Connection/Role in the Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: Start \_\_\_\_\_ Finish \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed in round one.

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**Comments on Interview:**

**Section A: Background Questions**

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A1. How have the following characteristics changed in Kitimat over the past six months?

*Prompts:*

- Economic structure
- Local government
- Employment opportunities
- Opportunities for women
- Opportunities for youth
- Recreation and civic programs
- Infrastructure (roads, pool, etc.)
- Community / voluntary groups
- Social Services
- Retail services

A2. What do you think have been some of the benefits or positive impacts of industrial or large-scale economic development projects in the community over the past six months?

*Prompts: For ...*

- Workers
- Families
- Community groups
- Local businesses
- Local government

A3. What do you think have been some of the concerns or negative issues created by industrial or large-scale economic development projects in the community over the past six months?

*Prompts: For ...*

Workers

Families

Community groups

Local businesses

Local government

A4. Over the past six months, how do you think industrial / economic development projects have impacted local quality of life?

*Prompts:*

Voluntary organizations

Recreation or social groups / programs

Infrastructure

Family

## **Section B: Community Economic Development**

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B1. How would you characterize the level of cooperation among local community and economic development groups over the past six months?

B2. What have been some of the key pressures that the community has faced with the influx of large scale industrial development?

B3. Do you recall the key actions that residents took to respond to these pressures / events?

B4. Did your organization play a role to respond to these pressures / events? If yes, please explain.

B5. What other organizations played a central role to respond to these pressures / events?

B6. What additional changes, investments, or planning do you feel are needed to respond to the pressures facing the community?



## Section C: Services

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C1. Does your organization have a board of directors?

- Yes (if yes, please go to question C2a)
- No (if no, please go to question C3)

C2a. If yes, how many board members does your organization have?

C2b. If yes, please list the types of board members that have been recruited (i.e. local representatives from local council, industry, business, or First Nations groups).

C3. How many members currently make up your organization?

C4. Are there any changes in the key services / supports provided by your organization?

C5. Has the focus / activities of your organization changed over the last six months? If yes, please explain the factors that have influenced these changes.

C6. How has your board membership changed over the past six months?

C7. How has your membership changed over the past six months?

C8. Has your organization experienced any changes with its logistical capacity over the past six months?  
*Prompt: office space, equipment, staff, volunteers, etc.*

**Section D: Partnerships**

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D1. Does your organization have any partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government **inside** of the community?

- Yes (please go to question D3)
- No (please go to question D2)

D2. If no, what have been some of the key challenges / barriers to forming **local** partnerships?

*Prompt:* not needed, lack of staff, limited availability, lack of interest, personal conflicts, lack of resources, lack of meeting space

D3. If yes, have there been any changes with your **local** partnerships over the past six months? If yes, please explain.

D4. Please list all the partnerships your group has with groups <b>inside</b> the community	D5. How would you rate the effectiveness of these partnerships with groups <b>inside</b> of the community?					
	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't know

D6. What were the key benefits / outcomes of **local** partnerships?

*Prompt:*  
 change in products / services / events / activities,  
 sharing of resources,  
 sharing of information / expertise,  
 transfer of skills,  
 technical support,  
 change in administration / organizational structure,  
 change in regulations,  
 new operational protocols,  
 more funding,  
 more community support,  
 expanded operations,  
 expanded networks

D7. What made the **local** partnerships function effectively or not effectively?

*Prompt:*

routine meetings,  
 equal sharing of responsibilities,  
 common interests / goals,  
 complementary expertise,  
 access to a broader range of resources,  
 timely completion of tasks,  
 governance structure formalized,  
 clear responsibilities

D8. Have any **local** partnerships been terminated / added over the last six months? If yes, can you describe the circumstances that influenced this decision?

D9. Does your organization have any partnerships with volunteer groups, businesses, institutions, government **outside** of the community?

- Yes (if yes, please go to question D11)
- No (if no, please go to question D10)

D10. If no, what have been some of the key challenges / barriers to forming partnerships with groups **outside** of the community? *Prompt:* not needed, lack of staff, limited availability, lack of interest, personal conflicts, lack of resources, lack of meeting space

D11. If yes, have there been any changes with your partnerships **outside** of the community over the past six months? If yes, please explain.

D12. Please list all the partnerships your group has with groups <b>outside</b> of the community	D13. How would you rate the effectiveness of these partnerships with groups <b>outside</b> of the community?					
	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Not Effective	Very Not Effective	Don't know

D14. What were the key benefits / outcomes of partnerships with groups **outside** of the community?

*Prompt:*

change in products / services / events / activities,  
sharing of resources,  
sharing of information / expertise,  
transfer of skills,  
technical support,  
change in administration / organizational structure,  
change in regulations,  
new operational protocols,  
more funding,  
more community support,  
expanded operations,  
expanded networks

D15. What made partnerships with groups **outside** of the community function effectively or not effectively?

*Prompt:*

routine meetings,  
equal sharing of responsibilities,  
common interests / goals,  
complementary expertise,  
access to a broader range of resources,  
timely completion of tasks,  
governance structure formalized,  
clear responsibilities

D16. Have any partnerships with groups **outside** of the community been terminated / added over the last six months? If yes, can you describe the circumstances that influenced this decision?

### **Concluding Question**

From the experiences you have had in the community, do you have anything else that has not been touched on here that you would like to comment on?