

Gender Equity in Mining Works

Increasing Gender Diversity in Mining

In 2018, the International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) partnered with the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) to bring MiHR's Gender Equity in Mining Works (GEM Works) program to the Saskatchewan minerals sector.

Funded under IMII's Diversity & Inclusion Challenge Program, the project was a facilitated GEM Works Industry Cohort led by MiHR's inclusion and diversity subject matter experts and practitioners. As part of this cohort, MiHR supported a 10-member Gender Champion Taskforce of leaders working in Saskatchewan mining operations, production, and supply chain companies, providing training to Gender Champions and applying proven tools to identify and mitigate systemic barriers in current organizational policies, processes and procedures. The study showcases six specific examples of how GEM Works was adopted to review current practices and ultimately eliminate gender biases discovered in policies, processes, and procedures.

Policies and processes examined by participants:

- **Parental leave policy** to remove any unintentional barriers and inconsistent practices during employee on-and-offboarding.
- **A process was developed** to identify the risks associated with women working in non-traditional roles, particularly in regard to pregnancy safety.
- **Changed language** used in their parental leave policy to include both expecting parents.
- **Revised their subcontractor pre-qualification procedure** to ensure that related forms promote gender inclusion. Since taking part in the GEM Works exercise, they have noticed employees and subcontractors applying gender inclusivity in their daily conversations.
- **Created a gender equity policy** that would be included in their new employee orientation packages, resulting in positive feedback from new and existing employees.
- **Reinforced the Fairness in the Workplace Policy** with their staff and leaders and emphasized a set of standards on how to be equitable and professional in the workplace.

The evidence throughout the study indicated that GEM Works can provide tangible and measurable benefits for both individual organizations and the Canadian mining industry as a whole. Identifying change agents through a Gender Champions Taskforce and adopting a gender lens when reviewing and evaluating policies, processes, and procedures, offers an alternative, hands-on approach to inclusion initiatives. Organizational change may not occur overnight; however, the Canadian minerals and metals sector is constantly evolving and beginning to show signs of uptake.

The need to address barriers in attracting and retaining underrepresented groups, such as women, continues to grow. Constant evaluation of GEM Works is essential to ensure the program evolves to meet the new needs of industry and that inclusion and gender equity remain the driving force behind the program.

GEM Works – What is Involved?

Being a Gender Champion: Each company in the cohort identifies a Gender Champion from its executive team to form the Gender Champions' Taskforce. Champions then participate in a one-day Gender Champion Executive Development Session to drive organizational change towards a more gender-inclusive workplace. Upon completing the session, each member nominates two employees from their site to act as Change Agents. Nominated Change Agents form the Change Agent Committee. These individuals conduct the GEM Works Policy Review process and familiarize themselves with the Learn to Make a Difference eLearning modules. Over the course of the 12-month program each team consisting of one Champion and two Change Agents works through the process while learning about systemic barriers, identifying policies to review, and implementing changes to those policies.

The GEM Works Toolbox: A step-by-step guide for Change Agents to remove unintentional barriers to the inclusion of women in written policies, processes, and procedures. The GEM Works Toolbox corresponds to the Learn to Make a Difference eLearning modules.

Learn to Make a Difference eLearning Suite: Four online learning modules for Change Agents that explain how to proceed through the steps in the GEM Works program. The eLearning suite compliments and encourages the use of the GEM Works Toolbox, supporting organizations through its successful application. Change Agents use the Toolbox to identify and remove systemic barriers within their individual organizations' policies and procedures.

Gender Champion Neil Kodman said the GEM Works training and toolbox prompted additional changes to improve other systemic barriers with the company by updating company signage, job titles and job profiles that were gender focused. Benefitting from the exchange of practices and ideas at the Gender Champion sessions, Kodman said the Mosaic Company is looking to adopt a resource group, where female employees can meet and discuss any issues they may not feel comfortable discussing with their supervisor or with human resources.

“With the tools that they have and offer, I believe we were successful and will continue to work on gender equity and inclusion at Mosaic.”

Neil Kodman, Talent Specialist

[A full copy of the case study can be found here.](#)

Interested in learning more about GEM Works, visit [Gender Equity in Mining Works \(GEM Works\) - MiHR | Mining Industry Human Resources Council.](#)

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Duration: January 2019 to November 2020

Project Cost: \$136,261

IMII Contribution: \$100,389

Participating Partners: \$ 35,872