



FEM
NORTH
NET

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES; LOCAL WOMEN MATTER

Fact Sheet #1

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHERN COMMUNITIES; LOCAL WOMEN MATTER – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Canada's north is full of communities where resource extraction and development provides a hope for prosperity. But it can also come with

- the loss of traditional values and practices
- the potential for new family and social tensions, such as alcohol and drug abuse, and
- greater divisions between those with resource-based jobs and those without.

How can northern communities find ways to benefit from resource extraction? How do women fit into the picture? How can we ensure that diverse local women's views are heard, because their views matter?

This series of fact sheets aims to foster understanding about, and provide ideas for, how to develop resources in northern Canadian communities in ways that ensure women, children and their communities benefit.

A focus on the "Near North" in Manitoba and Labrador

Northern Canada is vast. Often it refers to the "Far North," the area north of the 60th parallel that includes the Arctic, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and northern parts of Quebec and Labrador.

A different part of northern Canada is often overlooked—the large territory north of provincial capitals but south of the 60th parallel. This part of the country contains 70 per cent of Canada's resource wealth and a fraction of its people. It is often called the "Near North" or the "mid-Canada corridor."

This is one in a series of ten fact sheets on women and resource development and extraction. All of the fact sheets are available at www.fnn.criaw-icref.ca and include additional resources on these topics.

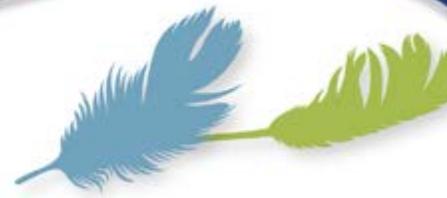
CRIAW-ICREF acknowledges its presence and work on Indigenous Territories. We respectfully recognize the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous Peoples.

This publication was created by CRIAW's Feminist Northern Network. For the full list of contributors refer to our website.

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The diverse local women whose stories and experiences appear in this set of fact sheets live in four Near North communities:

- Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador
- Labrador West, Labrador
- Thompson, Manitoba, and
- Norway House, Manitoba.

Our fact sheets are based on a six-year research and action project (2010–2016) that involved local northern women in a national network. Its goal was to respond to and influence resource development decisions in or near their communities.

Their communities have much in common. The land, animals, plants, huge stretches of muskeg, and rivers that have been or are being dammed make up the natural environment. The human environment includes a history of colonization for industrial or military purposes that began in the 1940s and 1950s.

Colonization & Resource Extraction

These fact sheets offer examples of how women in northern Canada are dealing with complex issues that arise from colonization and resource extraction. Core values and approaches that would contribute greatly to local northern women’s welfare and healthy, sustainable communities are offered.



“Churchill River, Labrador” by Michelle Cohen (2014)

The complex issues and conflicts around northern resource development are deeply rooted in history. It is only by understanding the national state’s history of colonization and the displacement of Indigenous people from their land, that we can work together to develop effective strategies for today.

Indigenous peoples in many northern communities have not experienced the same history of colonialism, development and land grabs as in more urban and southern parts of Canada. For example:

- Remote northern locations needed big investments to open them up to large-scale resource development. This started in the 1940s and 1950s in the four Near North communities we focus on in these fact sheets.
- While there are instances of northern Indigenous people being removed from their land, people in Labrador, for example, were not covered by *The Indian Act*, and were not forced to live on reserves. This is because Newfoundland & Labrador only entered Canada’s confederation in 1949. As a result, a basic connection to the land and knowing how to get sustenance from it remain strong.

In the 21st century, climate change and technological advances are opening up greater access to natural resources in the north. As natural resource supplies in the south are used up, resource extraction and development are likely to increase in Canada’s North.

Overview of the Fact Sheets

While each fact sheet tells part of the story, each one can be used on its own, too.

Fact Sheet 1 provides an *Introduction and Overview* to this set of fact sheets.

Fact Sheet 2, *Local Relationships with the Land and Water*, explores what it means to understand a perspective that reflects Indigenous values related to the land and water, and why this is important.

Fact Sheet 3 discusses how *Colonialism and its Impacts* have disrupted people's relationship with water and land. It describes how Canadian colonization aimed to destroy Indigenous cultures, values and women's respected roles.

Fact Sheet 4 zeroes in on *How Colonialism Affects Women*, explaining how it has changed and devalued women's roles in local communities.

Fact Sheet 5 traces the histories of how local people in northern Manitoba and Labrador were *Displaced from the Land* and what that means today.

Fact Sheet 6 considers what *Modern Resource Extraction* means for women, their families and communities. It also explores the political and global economic forces driving resource extraction in northern Manitoba and Labrador.

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Fact Sheet 7 outlines four *Northern Community Models that Value Local Women*. The models show a range of ways to engage local women in communities to influence and deal with issues that arise with local resource extraction.

Fact Sheet 8 looks at *How Local Women and Northern Communities Can Benefit from Resource Extraction*. It focuses on two ways to do this: 1) Impact Benefit Agreements and, 2) the Environmental Impacts Assessment process that happens before a major resource development project begins.

Fact Sheet 9 focuses on *Women Improving Community Well-Being*. Two examples are featured: 1) development of a Community Vitality Index in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador and 2) activism by women from Pictou Landing First Nation in Nova Scotia to stop pollution of their local water by a pulp and paper mill.

Fact Sheet 10 is about *Imagining Alternatives For Sustainable Resource Development*. It looks at approaches to resource development that exist in other parts of the world. Why not here? These approaches include: 1) recognition of Indigenous rights and control over traditional territory, 2) redistribution of wealth gained from resource extraction, and 3) adoption of slow and sustainable ways to use natural resources and 4) community engagement in decision-making that values diverse and marginalized women.

We hope that these fact sheets will help to inform discussions and foster the engagement of diverse, local women in decisions affecting resource development.



WWW.FNN.CRIAW-ICREF.CA



ABOUT FEMNORTHNET

Economic development centered around resource extraction is changing northern communities in Canada socially, economically, and culturally. FemNorthNet (or the Feminist Northern Network) documented and shared the experiences of diverse, northern women affected by these changes while supporting them in their work to strengthen and build resiliency within their communities. FemNorthNet was initiated by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) and supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. This network engaged over 30 researchers and community activists across Canadian universities, colleges, and northern community organizations, with community partners in Thompson (Manitoba), Happy Valley – Goose Bay (Labrador), and Labrador West (Labrador). Learn more at www.fnn.criaw-icref.ca.

Support the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

Since 1976, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) has been documenting the economic and social situation of women in Canada through ground-breaking feminist research. All CRIAOW activities flow from an overarching goal to provide tools to help organizations taking action to advance social justice and equality for all women.

As a non-profit organization and charity, CRIAOW's activities depend on the support of its members and donors from across Canada. All CRIAOW members receive the CRIAOW eNewsletter directly in their inbox, along with notices of new reports, policy papers, and fact sheets – like this one.

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