

# Gendered and Intersectional Implications of Energy and Resource Extraction in Resource-Based Communities in Canada's North

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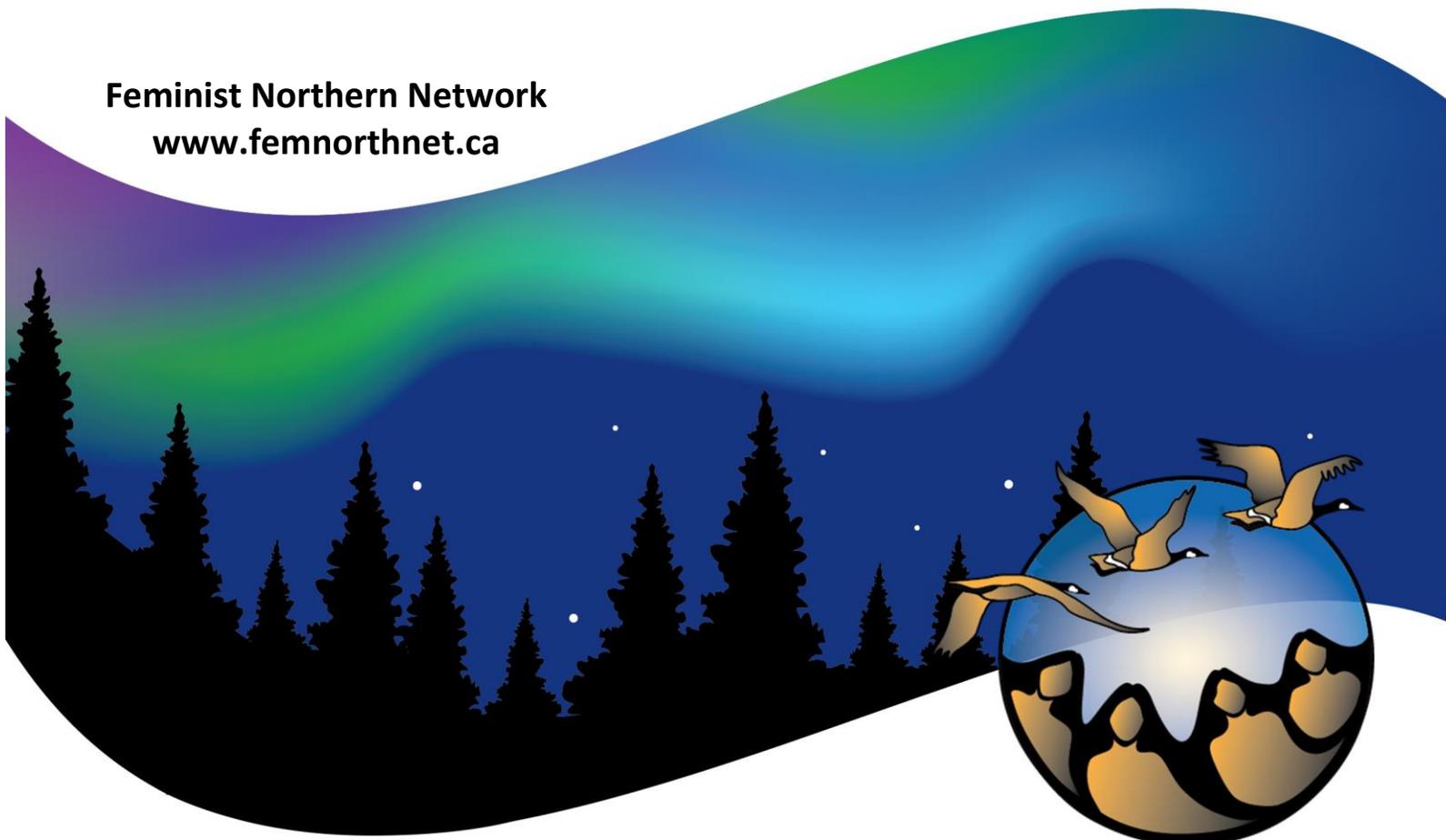
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We acknowledge our presence and work on Indigenous territories. We respectfully recognize the legacy of colonization upon Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

## 1. Key Messages

1. Resource development and extraction activities are having **significant adverse effects on Northern and remote communities**. The literature identifies impacts in housing, access to health services, culture, safety, transportation and many other areas (see Table 1). Women and marginalized groups within the communities, including Indigenous people, disproportionately experience these negative effects.
2. **Current regulatory mechanisms**, including environmental assessment (EA) and gender-based analysis (GBA) frameworks, **provide neither a systematic, comprehensive analysis of the gendered and intersectional impacts** of resource development and extraction, **nor any guidance on how to mitigate these impacts**. In addition, the **regulatory mechanisms are not integrated across sectors or jurisdictions**, despite the fact that **significant opportunities for their coordination exist**.
3. Impact and benefit agreements (IBA) may have some potential to distribute the benefits of resource development more equitably. But because IBAs are usually private, confidential agreements, often between resource extraction companies and Indigenous Nations and communities, there is **little evidence on how or if IBAs use gendered and intersectional analyses**, or on how these agreements interact with public regulatory mechanisms. Once these agreements are made, it is difficult to reopen negotiations to address future or unforeseen impacts.
4. Both public regulatory processes and private agreements are time-limited and finite. As a result, **communities are left to address both the longer-term and cumulative impacts** of resource development and extraction activities.
5. Public discourses related to resource development and extraction primarily address the environmental and economic implications. **Public discourses regarding the gendered and intersectional impacts of these activities are not well established**.
6. **Few groups and researchers are working to identify and address the gendered and intersectional impacts of resource development and extraction**. Those that exist are mainly outside government and industry.
7. **Communities require sufficient and on-going resources to consult on resource development projects and to identify, monitor, and address the impacts** on diverse and marginalized members of their communities over time.
8. **Promising practices for considering and responding to gendered and intersectional considerations are multidisciplinary**; they can be drawn from a range of sectors, fields, and disciplines.
9. **Research funders can support capacity development for undertaking gendered and intersectional research** on resource development and extraction.

## 2. Executive Summary

### Introduction

Northern and remote communities that are home to natural resources endure economic boom and bust cycles that accompany resource extraction and development. Public discourses around resource development often focus on economic growth and employment, though increasingly governments require industries to address environmental repercussions. The economic and environmental costs and benefits of resource development are important, but too often these aspects are emphasized at the expense of appreciating the deep and lasting social and cultural effects on communities. Resource development of all kinds place strains on the physical and social infrastructure of communities, affecting the tax base, the availability of affordable housing, access to health services, and transportation systems, among other things. Resource development also affects community life, both when large numbers of workers migrate in and when they leave. Further, the costs and benefits of resource development are not evenly distributed across populations or communities. Women and other marginalized populations, including Indigenous people, people with disabilities, seniors, and recent immigrants, disproportionately experience these and other negative effects of resource development. In addition to the social and cultural effects, the gendered and intersectional effects of resource development are often invisible in research, policy development, program implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

### Objectives

The Feminist Northern Network (FemNorthNet) undertook this research to increase understanding of, and support action on, the gendered, intersectional impacts of resource development in the Canadian North. We sought to answer three main questions:

1. What **research, tools and policies exist** and/or are planned to address the implications of resource extraction in Canada's northern communities from a gendered, intersectional perspective?
2. What are the **structural opportunities, innovations and barriers** in Canada's federal and provincial policy and regulatory mechanisms to ensure a gendered, intersectional analysis?
3. What **actions are required and by whom** to ensure a gendered, intersectional analysis of the impacts of northern resource extraction?

### Approach

We began with the extensive literature database developed by FemNorthNet, a SSHRC-CURA funded project of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA-W-ICREF), and systematically searched relevant databases for new information about the gendered, intersectional dimensions of resource development. We focused on recent literature and populations not previously highlighted in our work, such as youth, seniors, and men. We also conducted a web-based environmental scan of government departments, industry associations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and consulted with a number of stakeholders about whether or not their work

included attention to the gendered, intersectional aspects of resource development. We reviewed gender-based analysis (GBA) and environmental assessment (EA) policies and practices across federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada to determine the extent to which these complementary policy mechanisms are being used to address the gendered and intersectional dimensions of resource development.

## Results

The results of our literature review and environmental scan led to nine key conclusions:

1. Resource development and extraction activities are having **significant adverse effects on Northern and remote communities**, in relation to housing, access to health services, culture, safety, transportation and many other areas. Women and marginalized groups within the communities, including Indigenous people, disproportionately experience these negative effects.
2. **Current regulatory mechanisms**, including environmental assessment (EA) and gender-based-analysis (GBA), **provide neither a systematic, comprehensive analysis of the gendered and intersectional impacts** of resource development and extraction, **nor any guidance on how to mitigate these impacts**. In addition, the **regulatory mechanisms are not integrated across sectors or jurisdictions**, despite the fact that **significant opportunities for their coordination exist**.
3. Impact and benefit agreements (IBA) may have some potential to distribute the benefits of resource development more equitably, but there is **little evidence on how or if IBAs use gendered and intersectional analyses**, or on how these agreements interact with public regulatory mechanisms. Once these agreements are made, it is difficult to reopen negotiations to address future or unforeseen impacts.
4. Both public regulatory processes and private agreements are time-limited and finite. As a result, **communities are left to address both the longer-term and cumulative impacts** of resource development and extraction activities.
5. Public discourses related to resource development and extraction primarily address environmental and economic implications. **Public discourses on the gendered and intersectional impacts of these activities are not well established**.
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7. **Communities require sufficient and on-going resources to consult on resource development projects and to identify, monitor, and address the impacts** on diverse and marginalized members of their communities over time.
8. **Promising practices for considering and responding to gendered and intersectional considerations are multidisciplinary**; they can be drawn from a range of sectors, fields, and disciplines.
9. **Research funders can support capacity development for undertaking gendered and intersectional research** on resource development and extraction.

## Conclusion

Despite the significance of resource development and extraction for the Canadian economy and society, regulatory mechanisms fail to address the significant impacts of 'development' on a majority of Canadians, and continue to perpetuate disproportionate negative impacts on many marginalized groups. A disturbing trend is the privatization of agreements with industry through IBAs, which can skirt existing public regulatory frameworks. Further, neither public nor private frameworks address the cumulative impacts experienced by communities in the North. Northern communities continue to be invited to participate in assessment processes and IBA negotiations without sufficient support to engage diverse members of their communities. Our research also illustrates that there is considerable discontinuity between government commitments to gender-based analysis, diversity, and resource development.

Policy incoherence in relation to resource development and extraction can be linked, in part, to significant research gaps, including: a lack of overlap between environmental and social science research in this area; little research on gender and resource development, with the important exception of a growing body of research related to Indigenous women; knowledge gaps about the impact of resource development on people with disabilities, recent immigrants, those identifying as LGBTQ or two-spirited, and people who are homeless; and limited attention to the gendered experiences of men and boys.

Fortunately, the policy environment offers some critical opportunities for action in the coming years. In 2015-2016, the federal government demonstrated a renewed commitment to GBA and created interim principles that affirm the need to consult with and consider the effects of resource development on communities, including in the context of Indigenous rights. Given these recent, high-level commitments, it may be **an opportune time to advance the full development and integration of GBA and EA across jurisdictions**. At the same time, increased investments in GBA and EA combined with the stated desire of the federal government to strengthen research relations has created an excellent **opportunity for leadership in promoting gendered and intersectional analyses of resource development**. Natural Resources Canada is well-positioned to take on this leadership role, in collaboration with other departments and research funding agencies. **New collaborative research opportunities** for social sciences research would **enable greater synergies between resource development and social sciences research** as well as between researchers, nongovernmental and governmental organizations.

Our research provided further evidence of the profound importance of attending to gender and diversity in resource development and extraction. When gender and diversity are not considered in EA processes and related research, women and other marginalized populations in Canada's Northern communities continue to bear the burdens while others reap the rewards. By ensuring an integrated regulatory environment using GBA and EA frameworks, together with greater collaborative research on the social, gender and cultural impacts of resource development, there is an important opening for change that can benefit a greater number of Canadians.

Knowledge mobilization products and resources are available at: [www.femnorthnet.ca](http://www.femnorthnet.ca).