

The Nanisivik Legacy in Arctic Bay

A Socio-Economic Impact Study

Interim Report

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Introduction

Following a quarter century of operations, the Nanisivik zinc mine is scheduled to close down its operations this year. With road access to the community of Arctic Bay, the Nanisivik mine closure is expected to have significant impacts on that community. In addition to the loss workers from Arctic Bay, the closure is expected to impact the Arctic Bay community's business sector and potentially its access to services such as jet service, favourable sealift arrangements, and other spin-offs from the mine's presence in the region.

The level of understanding of the social and economic impacts of mines on remote communities and on Aboriginal communities has increased significantly over the past decade. For example, experience gained from the Golden Patricia and Musselwhite mines in north western Ontario, and from the Raglan Mine in Nunavik — among others — have been documented.¹ These studies demonstrate that experience with mines has much more significance than is represented solely by the economic dimension. Changes to individual self-esteem and self-identity; impacts on family cohesiveness and gender roles; and social implications of improved incomes and changing expenditure patterns can all be significant. Other work — such as a 1997 study of the economic impact of the Polaris mine on the community of Resolute Bay estimated the impact of that mine on local jobs and businesses.²

The closure of the Nanisivik mine needs to be assessed from a broad community development perspective. Such a perspective considers not only the "losses" that closure may bring, but also the strengths the community has developed during its experience with the mine. Dimensions of the positive legacy that may be anticipated for Arctic Bay include — amongst other things — the new skills acquired; job and business experience gained; improved economic independence; and, perhaps, increased confidence. These strengths may position the community to better achieve collective and individual goals.

Arctic Bay's history did not begin when Nanisivik started operations, nor will it end with the mine's departure. Nonetheless, the experience of the past three decades have influenced the community's evolution in important ways.

This report seeks to document and assess the legacy that Nanisivik has contributed to building the community of Arctic Bay. It will proceed from the point of view that the residents of Arctic Bay have played an active role in building this legacy and that they will continue to be active agents in shaping the "post-Nanisivik" future of their community.

The perspective that will guide the overall approach to the proposed research is based on the premise that the capabilities of residents of Arctic Bay to achieve individual, family and community goals have been influenced by the Nanisivik legacy. In practical terms, this perspective means that the study will not focus narrowly on "losses" (e.g. of jobs, income, businesses, services) that may result from the mine closure. These aspects are important and will be assessed. However, their significance depends on the ability of the community to use its strengths — some of which may have been developed in association with the Nanisivik experience — to move into the post-Nanisivik era of Arctic Bay's evolution.

¹ e.g. Windigo First Nations Council. 1993. "Evaluation of the Golden Patricia Agreement." Prepared by the New Economy Development Group. Also, Makivik Corporation, 1999. Raglan Mine Action-oriented social research program.

² Nunatsiaq News, May 18, 2001. Study by Faisal Arman for the GNWT.

Methods used to gather knowledge and data

In carrying out this project, we carried out two streams of research in order to provide a good perspective on both the subjective and the objective aspects of the Nanisivik legacy.

Kitchen-table visits and workshops provided opportunities for community members to express their personal observations, experiences and ideas. Community radio was used to talk about the research as it progressed.

This qualitative research stream is complimented by qualitative research focused on identifying objective aspects of the legacy. This second research stream assesses elements such as the impact of the mine on employment; income, and local business.

Together, these streams will provide perspective on how the mine is perceived to have influenced the local economy, family organisation and other dimensions of Arctic Bay's socio-economic life.

Structure of the Report

The report is organised in three parts. The first two parts set out the qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. Part One is an attempt to reflect the voices of those I spoke with. The text set in italics is what people said, as closely as possible using the words that were spoken. It is noted, though, that many of the conversations were carried out in Inuktitut, through a translator. Many of these conversations were taped, so that I was able to go back over the tapes to verify meaning and intent. Some narrative is provided (text that is not in italics) in order to provide some context to what people said.

In Part Two, the quantitative data is presented. This data provides a summary of the economic impact of the Nanisivik mine and town site for Arctic Bay. It also seeks to establish the relative importance of this data in the context of Arctic Bay's overall economy. Very little economic profile data was available from any local or territorial source. Hence I have attempted to assemble data from a wide range of local and government sources. Some of the resulting numbers are very solid, others are based on people's best guesses. The data presented should be looked at both as a best attempt at describing the local economy, as well as a model for identifying what data should be gathered and maintained at the community level.

Finally, in Part Three, I provide my perspective on the meaning and significance of the qualitative and quantitative data presented in the previous two parts. This is just one perspective — others will no doubt be able to use the Part One and Part Two data to generate additional or alternative observations, based on their own insights and perspectives. I have also introduced in this part findings and observations that have been made in other reports dealing with Nanisivik in the past. In this section, I have tried to use the "first person" narrative voice as much as possible, in order to emphasis the subjectivity of this section.

Part One: Voices Of Experience

Conversations with residents of Arctic Bay provided opportunities for many people to share their insight and experience about the impact that Nanisivik has had on their community and about the changes they expect to see when the mine closes.

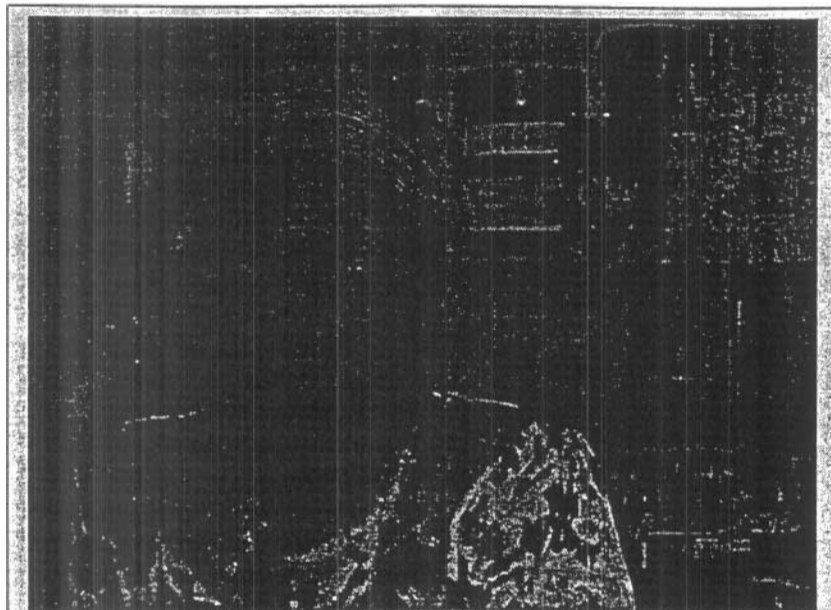
This part of the report is intended to reflect the ideas and observations that were expressed during these conversations. Many people spoke about similar issues and things they have experienced or observed. An attempt is made here to bring together these common themes. Although some narration is included, in order to add context to what was said, an effort has been made in this part to let the words — often spoken through an interpreter — speak for themselves as much as possible.

1.0 The Legacy of Nanisivik

The early days

During the early days, the surveying and exploration activities only took place during the spring and summer. However, my husband continued to work for the company throughout the year even after the southerners left, maintaining the buildings and equipment that was left behind for the following season.

We didn't have any washing machines at that time so I had to wash the very dirty clothing of the workers by hand. I got very tired and I still feel the stress from all those years of washing. — that's the negative side. I washed for both Qallunat and Inuit — maybe six people each season at that time. There were not even any washboards then. There was no payment for this work.



Qapik lived with her husband, Isaiah Attagutsiaq, at the beach below Nanisivik.

I remember using dog teams to get around and we did lots of walking at the time.

We were living along the beach over there. We were staking out the area. Then men would walk and walk. Their seal boots got worn out from so much walking so we had to repair them every day. - elder

Every day women had to work hard to repair the boots. These women never got paid for this work they did. Sewing, taking care of the children and washing the work clothing.

They used to land planes on the ice, before there was an airstrip in Arctic Bay. Back then we worried about how to get food in to Arctic Bay.

Nanisivik mine back then wouldn't allow me to work on skins and so on — no shacks — and so when they offered for us to move up to Nanisivik I wouldn't have been allowed to have a shack to sew at.

During the public meetings when the mine was being set up — at that time the mine was wanting people to work seven days a week. I said at least give us Sunday for a rest. They agreed and ever since that they gave Sunday off.

The community indicated during meetings that we did not want alcohol — that's what we agreed on. After a while, though, the company decided to bring in alcohol. Since Nanisivik was not a real community, and not part of Arctic Bay, they said we could not regulate them. At Nanisivik many people, both from south and north, were drinking and getting fired. They could not control their drinking. — elder man

Isaiah was the first person hired. He was then responsible to hire other local people. He would hire the most desperate people, that are most in need, without equipment like a skidoo or a boat. He would hire them for awhile until they would get a boat and then he would hire another person to replace them, so that they could get hunting equipment. The people who were orphans in Arctic Bay, who normally would not have anything for themselves, they were able to get money out of it and get their own equipment.

I lived at the beach while we were building the dock and the town site. Isaiah hired me from Arctic Bay. I'd work one week on site, then we'd be flown back to Arctic Bay by twin otter. My wife was patient. She knew I'd return with money. While Atagutsiak was there, there were more people from Arctic Bay working. After, people from other places worked there. — man

Nanisivik helped by providing employment — especially during the construction period.

I used to live at the beach with my parents. There was a small group of six families there because of the work. Women staying in the camp were often hungry. Only the employees were able to get food from the mine. They would sometimes go and bring some food down for their families. The men didn't have time to hunt since they spent all day staking the area for the mine. There were no boats to families from beach to out post camp. They were using dog teams at the time to take families back and forth from the camps to the beach. — woman

Social Impact of Nanisivik on Arctic Bay

... On individuals

Schooling

The Nanisivik School had no traditional program. So students there picked up better English skills than those who attended Arctic Bay school where they study Inuktitut. Also most students were Qallunat. It is the case that many positions in the Hamlet today require English skills, so many of those positions have been filled by people who attended Nanisivik school. — Inuk man

Those who speak English are more capable of

"Nanisivik had three influences over our way of life. One was access to alcohol. Another impact was exposure to technology — television channels from the south, radio stations from the south, the pool, and so on. A third impact was exposure to a different kind of social structure. Nanisivik was a Qallunat environment. Everything was structured and people learned that. This was a good thing for the younger generation."
JA

getting jobs, and earning money. In one way this skill is good — it allows them to communicate better. If there is something they don't agree with, or if they are not happy with a certain situation they can talk back and get their views across. - elder

Education standards were higher. Expectations were higher. 80% of the students were from the south. There were no Inuktitut classes, all English. Arctic Bay is 80 to 90% Inuktitut speaking in everyday life. It's a living language here. Half of the population is unilingual Inuktitut-speaking, not fluent in English. - former student

It was good growing up at Nanisivik. The school had fewer students for each teacher and it had English classes. We learned English sooner. I had to learn Inuktitut reading and writing later, though. There was also more respect for teachers and for one another. Students from Arctic Bay can read fluently in Inuktitut. But English skills are also important. - another former student

Nanisivik school is really good — good discipline. Nanisivik school was more challenging than Arctic Bay. Those of us who grew up at Nanisivik have the ability to speak English. - another former student

Bilingual parents push their children more to do well in school. Some elders do tell people to learn two languages. - educator

The children who attend school at Nanisivik speak English sooner. That is important. They have more confidence and comprehend better. - a mother

Skills from Nanisivik

A range of skills have been gained or honed at Nanisivik. Some of these have been put to direct use in the hamlet:

There have been people from Nanisivik who have brought their skills to the hamlet. For example the heavy equipment operator, mechanic's helper, and truck drivers learned skills and got valuable "real work" experience at the mine.

Working at Nanisivik really helped me personally. The money of course. Also the skills I learned as mechanic's helper. Now the hamlet has a mechanic who also formerly worked at Nanisivik and that guy is now teaching his skills to another man. - former worker

My dad learned carpentry skills working for Pan Arctic. He then worked for Nanisivik and is now employed as a carpenter in Arctic Bay. - young woman

My father worked at Nanisivik for twelve years and learned carpentry skills. He carries these skills on today. When he earned money, he would help me out. - a hunter

Workers from Nanisivik have experience that can be used in the community of Arctic Bay. Some are thinking of business ideas (e.g. canteen).

Some missed opportunities were identified related to skills:

Inuit could have trained Inuit if they had hired more Inuit. We missed that opportunity. Those skills would have been available to the community even after the mine closed. - former worker

There was also a feeling that Inuit knowledge was under-valued and did not get the recognition it could have amongst southern workers:

The skills we know are useful. Even a big boss from the south — he needs help from our knowledge. Without our skills our environment will kill you. - elder who worked at the mine

Stress and quality of life

I have seen that people with work are under less stress than those who rely on social assistance. – health professional

The workers didn't get tired right away, but you could tell after awhile the stress that they felt. – elder

Work at the mine is very intense e.g. away from the home 72 hours each week.

My partner is happier (but more tired) when he has work. He's happy to be able to feed his family. For me, I don't have to worry about the cost of groceries.

I wish there was a support group for spouses. – wife of a worker

Workplace quality

The issue of workplace quality arose during one conversation:

I lived at the site but quit after three weeks — felt there was prejudice against Inuit and didn't feel like tolerating it. I liked the pay, but it wasn't worth staying in that situation. – former worker

Workplace harassment [check tape]

There were workplace issues — getting used to working with Qallunat, disagreements or conflicts, especially with supervisors, if an Inuk employee doesn't agree. We had an employment co-ordinator, but never a mediator.

Another person I spoke with talked about times when she, as an assistant at the school, wanted to bring some concerns about how a southern teacher was relating to Inuit students, but felt constrained because the teacher's husband was in a top job at the mine. How could she complain about the wife of the boss? There was no liaison process in place to facilitate communication with people from Arctic Bay.

... On Families

I would not say that the mine is generating work for me. – social agency worker

Living at Nanisivik

Our family lived with my parents at Nanisivik. My parents lived there — my mother stayed at home, my father worked. Our two children were too young for school. For my wife, it was too quiet at Nanisivik. – former worker

There was an impact on traditional life. We'd go hunting only once a year. But my father was an orphan, so my grandparents were not around. Our generation is mixing English with Inuktitut. We are losing some of the old words. – young woman

Nanisivik was a good place to live. It was quiet. If you were not into alcohol, people didn't bother you — they don't just pop in to visit like they do here. It was good for the children. There were not too many kids and they had a place to play together — play ground, pool, gym.

Early hour commute

I've always thought that more young people would be working if they didn't start so early. I've heard that young people would quit because they couldn't get up so early.

When I worked there in the 1990s I'd get up at 5:00 am, feed my 1 yr old daughter and drop her off at the baby sitter in time for me to catch the 6:45 am bus. If you missed the bus, the taxi cost \$100. I paid between \$150 to 300 per week for baby sitter. - woman

After unionization things got harder. Before, workers left Arctic Bay at 6:45 am. Now they leave at 5:45 because the guys who live at Nanisivik voted for an earlier start and they are in the majority.

The distance between Arctic Bay and Nanisivik created some constraints to workers asked to do overtime:

My husband bought a vehicle so he could do overtime without having to stay at Nanisivik over night. I'd have preferred buying skidoos.

Impacts on marriages and family integrity

For families where the spouse is working, I've seen there may be less interaction between husband and wife. Unlike work here in Arctic Bay, spouses working at Nanisivik can't drop by the house during the day.

There is both a good side and a bad side to Nanisivik: A very negative side is that my daughter's marriage broke up and she left the community. So there are both sides, good and bad. - elder

I wish there was more time for us to spend together — its too much work. - spouse of a worker

Several parents commented on how working affected their children:

I left mine work because of our kids. My spouse and I both worked, and we worried a lot about our older sons.

The kids miss him during the day — they are happy to see him when he gets home. He has a little time to spend with them at the end of the day. - partner of worker

Miners at Nanisivik work on a two-week shift rotation, and this led to several comments about how shift work affected other family members:

Shift work is hard for the family: My husband works two weeks on day shift, then two weeks night shift. He likes the night shift, but the day shift is better for the family. - wife of shift worker

I hated it but it was normal. Night shift was easier for him, he slept more. - wife of another shift worker

Night shifts were hard on families. - an elder

A job is a job — if you don't like it, walk out. Our children were used to the routine of shift work. We would talk to them about why I had to work. in order to earn money to live. - former shift worker

When asked about relations between Nanisivik workers and people from Arctic Bay, some important insights were shared:

There were many different types of whites who passed through there. Some were respectful, some were self-centred. This mix has been the same over the years. There were those who did not respect married couples. They were not living as a community, but were there only to work. They would break up families. They were living without social rules and did not respect existing couples. There was no looking at the past. A man who is working at Nanisivik, his marriage breaks up. This hurts the children. I worry about them. - elder, woman

Guys at Nanisivik didn't care if Arctic Bay women were married or not. ... This abuse was abuse not only of women but of all Arctic Bay people. It was disrespect for the social structure of Arctic Bay, for the bonds of marriage between people. Alcohol was the driving force for all of this and the mine did nothing to put pressure on their employees. - young man

If a man at Nanisivik sleeps with a married woman from Arctic Bay, the woman's partner in Arctic Bay could threaten the guy at Nanisivik, take the situation into his own hands. He wouldn't just let it happen. He might also take it out on the woman, obviously. But when the southern guy leaves, the problem would be over. – elder woman

I have noticed this [lack of respect for marriage bonds] happening. This can cause problems — divorces, separations in families — when this happens it causes problems, but when the other guy leaves it usually gets resolved. This does affect the children, though. They are never the same. They see what is going on but won't talk about it. It is our understanding that these problems must be resolved by talking openly, with the entire family. As long as the parents talk it out together and resolve the thing — with the entire family [children, grandparents, ...]. Cheating causes very bad problems for the family. It may seem like fun, but it will catch up to you. – elder man

I'd personally go and haul my daughter back if she went out there! – a mother

Recently the mine has been reducing the number of families living at Nanisivik. This has changed the make-up — its become more of a mining camp mentality. There have been more problems recently. – RCMP

The underlying cause of these problems was identified to be alcohol:

Alcohol and drugs are the things that cause these problems. Bootlegging and selling drugs — its happening ever today. – elder man

When a man beats his wife everyday, the kids see it. What does this do to these kids? – man

If alcohol was not there, it would be less of a problem. Initial intention may not be criminal, but after alcohol, it leads to criminal acts. Alcohol is the one way to ruin a life. – elder woman

Impact of work on the family

In response to questions about how work at Nanisivik may have changed roles of parents in the family, responses overwhelmingly suggested that school, not work, is the factor of concern to people in Arctic Bay:

Most workers live in Arctic Bay and return each day. School has been in Arctic Bay for so long anyway. We are not together with our children anyway. When I was young, I learned how to hunt. The young girls learned how to make clothing. Today young people are at school all day. It is school, not work, that has changed this for us.

Its like any normal job. The parents come home every night, so they get to see their families. Na, there was no real impact [on the family left behind for the day]. – father of a worker

Its not Nanisivik that prevents people from continuing their traditional role — like a man hunting for food, or a woman making clothing. That role has changed, even without Nanisivik. All other communities are like that — they are more job focused now.

Further, one elder man noted that work is not incompatible with carrying on Inuit traditional activities:

Even Qallunat in Arctic Bay can hunt just as well as we do. People can work and hunt too. People will always be going out hunting here in Arctic Bay. When I was young, there were RCMP and missionaries and they would do good hunting. Today many Qallunat work at lot and have less time to hunt, but they still do it. They even go out by dog team. – elder

Other comments were made about the positive impact of work on individuals:

Before he had work, my husband was not sociable. Having a steady job helped him socially — he is friendlier, less depressed, easier to get along with in the family. He is a good father, able to balance work even when commuting back and forth.

Work was good for the family. It rubbed off on dependants, who would say 'I should be working too.'

I hope my children learned from my experience. Children learn by watching you do things. They may not decide to do the same thing you do, but they will see that people can do things. I have skidoos but no truck to take the family out to see the mine. The taxi was too expensive. My older sons did not get to see the mine. My younger one went out with the school and got to look in at the garage where I was working. — former worker

As a spouse, you'd wait all day for them to come back. Then they'd only stay up a few hours then go to sleep. — young woman

Social Impact of money earned

The income from Nanisivik is good for Arctic Bay. It helps people buy skidoos, houses, trucks. I like that he [husband] works like he does, at a steady job.. — young woman

The money is good — it's the way we live. It's the only thing. — former worker, now working in Arctic Bay

My partner gives me the money — I decide how it is spent.

Money is the same as Food here. Nowadays we work very hard to get money. When I was young, we worked very hard to get food. It's the same thing. — elder

The money they earned was very beneficial to our family. We used it to buy clothing for the family, and food. — elder

Arctic Bay did affect Inuit who were not directly involved. Income allowed the whole family — the extended family — to buy boats and snow machines.

Nanisivik has benefited us as a family. Before my husband had work, we were struggling to get by. It was very stressful and depressing. His job let us afford things — the basics plus other things. This was more up-lifting. Life was less depressing after work was available. — woman

Relatives have benefited from income earned at the mine, because this money is shared. It does not stay just in the immediate family. I have a son working, for example. He buys me gas, aeroplane tickets.

Most of my earnings would go to the rent, groceries and power. There was not enough left over for major purchases. I don't have all the equipment needed for hunting — no snow machine. When I sell carvings my rent doesn't go up. — former worker

Sharing of the money earned:

My brother works at Nanisivik now. When he is off work he goes hunting with me — he supplies the gas for both of us.

People used the money earned very well — buying boats and outboard motors. At that time [during the early days] there was no store in Arctic Bay. People used their money wisely to buy harvesting tools. There are more things now to waste money on. Illegal things for example. Some are not wise in spending money. Things are more available now than in the past. The real benefit is for those who are careful with their spending. Mine work is very good for them. — woman

Money goes to rent instead of hunting tools. Some ignore their rent payments and they build up a big debt. They don't pay rent through payroll deductions — they should. Perhaps that could be arranged. We used to get a reasonable net pay. Now the rent increase deters some people from working. – woman

... On the Community

Social benefits to the community

A lot of good came out of Nanisivik: Getting to know people. Realising that not only Inuit eat seal meat. A woman from Newfoundland once came by to ask if I had any seal — I had never realised other people ate seal. Then she told me that the flippers are really good — Inuit don't eat the flippers! Now I know people from Newfoundland, Ontario. We socialised together, with families from the south. We'd have baby showers and picnics together. Our children went to school together.

We had good communication between the two communities — social activities together, hockey tournaments.

We used to use the pool. The recreation program at Nanisivik was great. We'd go there on the weekend. They should move the playground equipment here.

Keep Nanisivik open — it is nice to be able to get out of town. There are some people who never get out. Spring is the only time to go out on the land. With Nanisivik we have someplace to go all year.

This is the only community in Nunavut where you can go out on a day trip to visit someone you haven't seen for awhile.

Alcohol

The major negative impacts that people attributed to Nanisivik relate to increased availability of alcohol. The Nanisivik mine site was an "open" community in terms of access to alcohol. People could order it in from the depot in Iqaluit, at prices that were competitive with those in the south. While the mine had policies designed to prevent the effects of alcohol at work, there was, according to people we spoke with from Arctic Bay, no control of alcohol use when off the job. The people we spoke with brought up the issue of alcohol with no prompting:

Alcohol also became available, for the first time, because of the mine. – elder

Part of me is happy that Nanisivik is going to be closed, because of its impact on alcohol. I've seen people trade polar bear skins, carvings, sewing for Nanisivik alcohol. There has been less illegal alcohol coming into Arctic Bay since the RCMP set up here. - woman

People who are hired should follow company policy and should not abuse alcohol. It leads to self-destruction and breaks up marriages. The community's social life is affected. Both whites and local people need to be careful. Southern workers need local workers, so they should be careful in offering alcohol. Locals should be careful in accepting it. –elder

Some consequences of alcohol are that children get neglected because parents are drinking at Nanisivik or out there somewhere.. Alcohol had a big effect on our parents (the first generation living in Arctic Bay) It did affect families living at Nanisivik. Some would be drinking for the weekend. But they were in better control. The mine had a strictly enforced "no alcohol" policy in place. Government jobs at Nanisivik created more problems because no one was watching over them. Mine workers would have problems when friends from Arctic Bay came over and started drinking. Southern workers were not a role model — at parties they'd get just as drunk as anyone else.

Some miners would get alcohol and then invite Arctic Bay people to come for a drink. Sometimes Inuit employees would bring alcohol into Arctic Bay and drink at their place. Bootlegging was also a problem.

Without alcohol we could get along with each other, but with alcohol there were problems.

There is more drinking at Nanisivik now than before.

Alcohol was available and ruined some people's lives. Some people have had a rough life because of the alcohol. There have been marriages that have broken up.

They said there would be no alcohol, but there is alcohol. This continues to be a problem and it created social unrest.

At Nanisivik they used to have dances. That gave guys a chance to blow off steam. That was better than drinking at home then beating up your girlfriend.

Alcohol and weekend parties at Nanisivik led to marital problems.

There was a good aspect to the parties as well.

Did people buy more alcohol because they had a better income?

No. If people want it, they'll get it. Other needs become secondary.

Alcohol interfered with seasonal celebrations:

Once a year the mine held a Christmas Party. It was very stressful for us. It was a drinking party. - woman

The only negative impact was the alcohol. Occasionally at the New Years parties alcohol created problems. Arctic Bay is restricted, but people would bring it in illegally from Nanisivik. - another woman

Some people have learned to overcome the problems associated with alcohol:

The problem was alcohol. I was not a good drinker. But I put that behind me. - former worker

There have been some successes as well. Some people have stopped drinking, either on their own, or with support from friends, or with counselling support. The key thing is when they realise that alcohol isn't helping them or when they see the effect on their children.

Individuals are learning from experience — passing on experience to their families and are able to advise young ones how to behave toward alcohol.

However, there are also suggestions that substance abuse is getting worse:

I see problems with drugs and alcohol getting worse — I also see young girls getting into trouble at Nanisivik parties.

Recommendations were offered that might help to avoid similar problems in the future:

We should have had more access and input to the company, so we could suggest how they could relate to Arctic Bay. The company should have restricted or controlled alcohol. People from Arctic Bay got their alcohol from Nanisivik. - adult woman

While the effect of alcohol was pointed out by nearly all of those we spoke with, it was also noted by a few that Nanisivik was not the only source of alcohol:

Arctic Bay is not really a dry community. You can get a permit to import alcohol. However, you could buy it from Nanisivik faster. It would cost more though — \$100 for a 40oz. — woman

Other observations

Its not necessarily the families where people are working that suffer problems.

For people who didn't work at the mine they have had more negative experiences. The mine never met the employment target. There was someone hired to help hire people — help people with applications etc — but he was only there one year. Nanisivik never had an Inuk in management.

The separation of Nanisivik from Arctic Bay was noted as perhaps mitigating the level of social impact on the community:

The costs of Nanisivik to Arctic Bay have been minimal. Lots of potential negative impacts were minimised by cultural separation. Arctic Bay and Nanisivik have been fairly separate. Arctic Bay is not a mining community. The mine had a built-in social barrier that may have limited interaction — few miners came into Arctic Bay, for example.

Arctic Bay was a traditional community, Nanisivik was strictly Qallunat, so there wasn't much influence. As a result, though, some opportunities were missed.

In general, I don't see people who work at the mine crossing paths with me professionally. — RCMP

Community change not associated with Nanisivik

Many people who we spoke with noted that Arctic Bay has undergone lots of social change that they do not feel were caused by the Nanisivik development:

Big changes have taken place over the past 30 years, for example in the way we raise our daughters. In the past we passed on knowledge of how to make clothing — prepare skins and sewing skills. Today young people are more work-oriented, trying to make money. They need money now. No one is assisting me in doing these things [sewing], so I cannot pass on my skills. —elder

Its not the jobs that are prevents people from learning hunting skills. It's the school system. The school prevents these hunting skills or these sewing skills to be passed on to the children, because the children need to go to school every day — that's mandatory. They have to be in school every day. So school has more of a negative side to it when compared to Nanisivik. Nanisivik only creates employment. It did not take away the children from learning the skills. — father of a worker

Those who are twenty years old or less have never seen traditional skills in practice. They have never seen how an igloo or sod house could be kept warm, for example.

There are only a handful of elders who know the really traditional life. They need to stay alive long enough. The youth could record the stories. Elders can pass our knowledge on through the schools.

Young people now, they will start a family, even though they have no skills or haven't finished school. They are just relying on handouts from people to survive. In the past we would watch out as a family group for our young people, as they were growing, to see if they were ready/capable to get a spouse. We'd watch for them. Today, though, young people in the communities are mingling with each other. There is no limit to say that you've reached that certain point where you are ready to find your soul-mate. There are now no restrictions in terms of relationships. I feel they should have a job or some source of income before they start having children. They

aren't using the elders' system today — asking advice from us. Our skills on raising children should be passed on.
- elder

In the old days the family was in one place. Children, parents and elders all together. Elders would provide advice on raising children. Today, children are at school and not with their elders. Elders were the supervisors, enforcers. Today there are no supervisors for children. After school they go around breaking things. There needs to be someone or something in place to supervise the community, to monitor what's going on. Until we have this, we are like people without arms. We are not giving the children direction.
- another elder

Since I was here years ago, I have seen that the community is getting more into religion. The community seems to be working together more. Arctic Bay seems to be a warm community.

Economic impact of Nanisivik on Arctic Bay

... On the whole community

Economic benefits to the whole community

Cheap transportation costs benefited everyone. The income earned benefited families and the money was spent in Arctic Bay.

At that time [during the early days], it had a big impact for the entire community. It seemed like we were making lots of money — maybe 10 of us earning \$6 per day. I used money I earned to buy a canoe and rifles. — elder

When Arctic Bay was starting to form people were hungry most of the time. I left Arctic Bay to go to Pond Inlet in the 1960s. After I returned in 1982, I saw that people were less hungry. People who worked at Nanisivik could buy gasoline and snow machines. They could hunt more caribou and that would be shared with the whole community. Today, caribou is still shared, but the caribou are not so much in the region right now. Nanisivik did affect Inuit who were not directly involved. Income allowed the whole family — the extended family — to buy boats and snow machines. — another elder

Many people expressed appreciation for give-outs from the mine at Christmas:

The mine used to give out food boxes and turkeys and gas for the elders to hunt for the community feast.

We'll loose the Christmas boxes, turkeys, fruit that the mine gave to every household in Arctic Bay.

Job opportunities for community members

A key research question related to employment was whether people who wanted work were able to find work at Nanisivik. Some responses help to provide insight into this question:

Nanisivik was strictly focussed on business. They never really made accommodations for the local workforce, the way Pan Arctic had.

The agreement said there would be 60% Inuit employment. That never happened. I worked during the surveying and town site construction period. After that, I got a job with the hamlet. I applied for work at Nanisivik later on. I was told I'd receive an answer but never got a response. I used to go up to Nanisivik on my own to look for work. I'd be told all the openings were full and that they would let me know. I never got a response. Lack of

education was probably why I was not re-hired. So, people need to be more educated. There are people who are very good workers but who don't speak English. We don't have high school education. – elder man

Anyone can get money by working at the mine. Those who are less fortunate can go and work and get equipment, like a boat, that they wouldn't have been able to get otherwise. – elder woman

Opportunities for jobs and income weren't exploited as much as possible.

Most permanent jobs are filled by people from the south. Most of the summer students hired at the mine were children of employees.

At the beginning, people with physical skills were hired to provide labour. In the past ten years, it has been mostly people with better education who got hired. People with physical skills, but who don't have education have been less able to get work in the recent past. For a period of time, in the early 1980s, we had a good liaison person who was a long-time resident of Arctic Bay.

I worked there during once, then got a job in Arctic Bay. Later when I applied for work again I wasn't selected... [nonetheless...] Nanisivik provided an opportunity for people from Arctic Bay to work. We live on money now, so its very important to be able to earn money.

They are now mostly hiring young people for casual work. Most of the casual jobs are for guys, not women.

Promotion into supervisory positions was generally unsuccessful. Related partly to education. If they were promoted — and a few were — people would tend to drop out or seek other work.

My partner worked steady for several years. Then the mine wanted to shift him to a 12 hour shift and he would have had to move to Nanisivik. They would not have let him bring us along.

Other people seemed to be able to find work when they wanted it:

Nanisivik was important as a way to earn money, but there was not much opportunity. Some people would not be hired when they tried. For me, though, they always gave me work when I called them up. I'd decide to work when I needed money to support my family.

In addition to apparent education barriers to employment, the intensity of the work experience seems to have deterred some:

You need to get up way too early in the morning — that's the way I see it. – young man

The Mine is a long way off from here. The bus leaves early in the morning. If you miss it by even a few minutes, you miss the day. If the mine was closer, more would have kept their jobs. – father of a worker

Nanisivik helped by preparing people to live in a work routine — early rising to catch the bus. For young people this was difficult. For adults these early mornings are similar to what hunters do and what women do. They had the choice to move to Nanisivik. Bill Hughes was the employment counsellor — they had the choice and from Nanisivik it was not so early. – elder

I don't agree [that the mine did what they could to hire local people]. Maybe that's what they see, but from here, if you apply and you don't get a response, you will feel they are not doing enough. They should have initiated training programs. Don't require school levels to get in, but do it on-the-job.

Impact on traditional economy

The important link between employment at Nanisivik and the traditional hunting economy was made repeatedly during conversations with Arctic Bay residents:

Balancing work and hunting was a challenge. When pelt prices were good, some would quit work.

Nanisivik has been one of the few ways for people to earn some money over the winter, say, so they can go out on the land later in the year. – hunter

Even though there were both negatives and positives, we will miss it. The hunters will have no way to earn income to support their hunting. – elder

In the earlier days, when we used dog teams there were fewer rifles. Nanisivik allowed for the purchase of hunting equipment which was shared with other people. –elder

When I get paid, then I go out hunting. That when I can buy the gas. Right now it takes 35 gallons to go where the caribou are. At ~\$20 for 5 gallons [equals \$140]. – former worker

Because of Nanisivik, more people were able to get jobs. This enabled them to get hunting equipment. – elder

Women who were unemployed were able to get money by sewing things for sale to people at Nanisivik.

Spin-off business opportunities

The mine helped the co-op at that time. They bought lots of things back at that time, and that helped the store.

Nanisivik has had relatively little impact on the local business community. Things could have been different. The mine should have been more visible in the community so opportunities would be known. Would need government assistance too.

Over six years I have seen only a few from Nanisivik. – local outfitter

Our sewing group hasn't really benefited — we had no connection to the mine. Besides, we did not have enough time to do more work. We make things for local demand and for HTO sports hunts. – woman

Impact of Nanisivik on Arctic Bay Infrastructure and Services

Hamlet safety

Nanisivik has provided an important safety valve for Arctic Bay — they have trained disaster response people and back-up power sources. The GN only has one back-up generator that it can mobilize. Sanikiluaq was lucky that its generator went out when it was the warm season. Here in minus 40 weather, you'll have 4 hours before everything is frozen up.

Housing

We moved 11 GNWT units from Nanisivik here (along the road and across the water) and used the process to train people in the trades.

Access to capital projects

We have no infrastructure for business development — incubator mall, tourism centre. We expect that the closing of Nanisivik will galvanize government attention and bring some of our projects forward on the agenda.

Fifteen years ago we didn't get accepted in the community pool program. Because Nanisivik had a pool we were not eligible. [Reference to a program that established portable pools inside municipal buildings when they were not required for water truck storage in the summer].

Arctic Bay is as nice or better than Pond Inlet — they have the facilities like a fabulous visitor centre. We have the jet. Arctic Bay was marginalized because it's a smaller community. I don't see that it got short-shrift because of Nanisivik.

Government treats people unequally. Arctic Bay gets nothing while Igloolik and Pond Inlet get nice things. They focus on the large communities. Small community have nothing at all from government.

Transportation

We used to have to travel to Resolute by plane to get out. Its much easier with jet service. It also means we have fresh produce. Also, we can order more equipment on the ships that come in for the mine. It is also important for medical travel. Other benefits are more directly for the workers at the mine.

The ship that brought in supplies helped people bring in equipment — trucks, boats, snow machines. Arctic Bay will still be able to bring in boats, but the freight rate will be higher.

With the mine bringing in cargo, we were able to ship things for a lower rate than it would have been.

Store merchandise is cheapest here vis-à-vis other communities — prices will go up when the mine closes.

The loss of jet service will impact people going to the hospital.

With both mines shutting, the jet service won't stick around. That'll increase freight costs and grocery bills.

Cruise ships start in Greenland — people fly to Greenland, cruise to Nanisivik then fly south on the jet and a new group flies in. Probably a total of 400 people passing through here each summer, but not much impact in Arctic Bay. Last year there were none. Ice conditions are finicky up here, so I don't know if cruises will prove viable over the long term.

Loss of mine cargo ships will mean less sea lift. Fewer Coast Guard people passing through.

Environmental impacts

Environmental impacts that were not a key focus of this socio-economic assessment. Some of the concerns and observations and observations that were made include:

The stream which was our source of drinking water started to change colour, to turn a brown colour — this was our only source so we had to drink that water. - elder

I am concerned about lead in the animals there — caribou, ptarmigan, seals taste different. Its from the flying tailings dust. I'm also concerned about my health — they test us for lead every six months. - former worker

Twin Lakes get a strong south wind. That may be a problem. I worry about clean up
- former worker

2.0 Social and Economic Impacts of Closing Nanisivik

On individuals and families

Loss of Income

We have not made plans yet for when the work ends. – wife of a worker

When the mine closes, their first priority will be to find a job. Even if its not in the community, they'll look for a job, anywhere they can. – father of a worker

Elders who rely on income from family members will have less to distribute. Adult workers who earn money give some to elders who distribute to other family members. Plus, for an elder who owns a house — they get money from adult children who are working to help pay the bills. – woman

When I think about it closing, I feel lost — I will have no place to sell my carvings. Right now I plan to spend time making carvings to sell to the mine guys before they go. After that, I plan to start making large carvings to send to galleries in Toronto. – carver

The layoffs will lead to an increase in clients for us. Some will get benefits. The number of jobs in Arctic Bay is only increasing slowly.

Guys who are working there now will experience a big impact. They'll be back to hunting and welfare.

Some comments were made recognising that turnover has meant individuals have experienced job loss before:

Loss of jobs is going to affect people and their families since there is no alternative work here. People have always lost their jobs — turnover — so it may not have that big an impact. They also have options. But families have depended for a long time on their parents income from the mine.

My father and relatives really helped. People with few relatives will have more problems when they loose their jobs. – former worker

Loss of work

In addition to loss of income, loss of jobs may lead to other impacts:

I expect that when people loose mine jobs, they may suffer from feelings of inadequacy.

When the mine closes, 12 to 15 people will be out of work. That will hurt.

On the whole community

I'm not sorry its going — I'm not glad its going. I do think there will be an effect.

When the mine shuts, it will be hard for the first couple of years. As if we've lost someone important. But people will get over it. It will become a memory. No lasting effect, except for whatever takes over the site.

A period of uncertainty

Much of the impact of closing the mine won't be determined until we know what the plans are for the future of the Nanisivik infrastructure and site. – hamlet politician

In terms of the impact of closure — its too soon to tell. It depends what, if anything, will be done with the Nanisivik town site. Also there are diamonds being explored at Brodeur Peninsula. We'll know in a couple years if this will lead to mining. – Qallunat resident

Loss of job opportunities

When the mine closes people will suffer because there will be less money to earn. - elder

Out migration from Arctic Bay

It is recognised that when the mine closes, some people may need to leave Arctic Bay if they are going to use their skills:

Its closure will affect them [mine workers]. They'll have to look somewhere else and may have to leave Arctic Bay in order to maintain their job experience. For those who are half way to getting their job experience/skills, they will have to do something to complete this. – hunter

Workers will have to look somewhere else and may have to leave Arctic Bay in order to maintain their job experience. For those who are half way to getting their job experience/skills, they will have to do something to complete this.

When the mine closes my husband may look for some other mine work — he has heard about something around Rankin.

On Infrastructure and Services

Loss of jet service

Most people we spoke with noted the importance of the jet service that has been associated with the Nanisivik mine. Many believe that jet service may be suspended when the mine shuts down, because of the amount of business the mine generates for First Air. This concern is expressed regardless of what decision is made about the Nanisivik airport.

Loss of jet service will affect groups [hunters, tourists] coming in. It may also increase air costs. This will also affect other people in Arctic Bay because freight costs will increase. – outfitter

We are going to miss the fresh food when the jet is gone. Vegetables, fresh bread won't travel well on the short-hop flights.

Shipping

With closure of the mine, there will be fewer ships — maybe only one government and one Northern ship. Now there are maybe ten per year.

We've been spoiled. Whenever I need something I can get it quickly through Nanisivik. We are a lot richer because of Nanisivik. More money here, say, than Grise Fiord or Pond Inlet. More snow machines. The freight is cheaper. –former worker

People could order equipment by sealift. In the past it took a whole year, with Nanisivik equipment came sooner because the cargo ships came earlier. - elder