
of local co-operatives and small businesses, and through the growth of local municipal and political institutions. An increasing proportion of these jobs are being filled by Inuit, as their familiarity with southern education and job experience increases. As well, many jobs have been created in the Arctic by oil, gas, and mineral exploration and development. The co-operative efforts of government and private industry have resulted in technical and administrative training programs for numerous Inuit, and in good years, the provision of hundreds of jobs, many of which are seasonal.

Employment on drill-rigs and in exploration camps has generally been on a rotational basis, with employees being flown in from their home communities to work continuously for two or three weeks, and then being given a week or two off at home. There are two operating mines in the Arctic, and several dozen Inuit are employed in them and have their families at the mine sites. As a rule, Inuit men have taken on the manual work, and Inuit women the office jobs.

Economic development

Although major resource development projects in the Arctic have provided jobs and training for many Inuit, they alone cannot be the solution to the Inuit employment problem because there cannot possibly be mines and oil wells close to all 50 or so Inuit communities. Nor can government and service employment in these communities be the sole solution. Inuit have therefore pursued two strategies of economic development.

One has been to ensure that hunting, trapping, and fishing continue to be viable activities for all who want to pursue them. Indeed these activities are considered important not only for their economic contribution, but also because they are intimately linked to Inuit culture and identity. It is above all through hunting that Inuit expect to teach skills, knowledge, and appropriate behaviour to their children. And it is through hunting, and through the preparation and distribution of the kill, that the virtues of co-operation, patience, and sharing are reinforced and passed on. It is indeed because hunting is an affirmation of life itself to Inuit that they have consistently sought to ensure that all resource development activity in the Arctic is conducted and regulated so as not to jeopardize fish and animal life there, or the environment that sustains that life.

The other strategy has been to search beyond government and industrial employment for sustainable economic development within the Arctic, and to develop the necessary skills and ability among Inuit themselves. For many years, the co-operatives were an important vehicle for doing this. The first Inuit co-operative was established with federal government assistance in 1959. Practically every Inuit community