

Research Assistant Opportunity
Casual Position
Mining and Communities: A Literature Review

Start Date: April-May 2026

Overview: This project aims to assess community members' perspectives on mining activities. Barrick Mining Corporation is one of the world's largest mining companies; however, despite its global success, the company suffered a major setback with the bi-national Pascua-Lama gold and copper project, located over 4000 m.a.s.l. in Alto del Carmen on the Chile-Argentina border (Haslam, 2018; Wight, 2024). Community opposition to the project's social and environmental impacts was central to the project's cancellation, a conflict that was amplified nationally and internationally through NGO advocacy. Eight years later, Barrick has returned to the area with the El Alto Mining Project, which has recently secured environmental approval. This time, the company claims to have engaged in "direct and constructive conversations with the community", who reportedly expressed interest in renewed investment and development opportunities. Yet, this is the same community whose opposition led to Pascua-Lama's cancellation, and some stakeholders are already opposing the new project. This evolving context offers a timely opportunity to deepen research on community perspectives of mining and contribute to scholarship on socio-environmental justice and sustainable community development. The research's objective is to examine what has changed at both the company and community levels that could enable the El Alto project to move forward by addressing three research questions: 1) How can mining be conducted more sustainably? 2) How can companies build collaborative relationships with communities that have historically opposed large-scale mining? and 3) What factors may be reshaping community perspectives towards mining?

Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

The primary job duties for the research assistant will include:

- Conducting a literature review and stakeholder identification on Barrick's history, the Pascua-Lama project, stakeholders and the community of Alto del Carmen

The successful candidate will work with and directly report to Dr. Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce at Athabasca University. Dr. Ordonez-Ponce will provide adequate training for the conduction of the required tasks, but previous experience in the mentioned duties is expected from the candidates.

The project is funded by Athabasca University Faculty of Business.



Qualifications:

- Experience with the review of academic and grey literature
- Spanish reading skills
- Good data management skills
- Ability to work independently, comply with deadlines and schedules, follow instructions but also contribute with own perspectives

Amount of hours: between 50 and 60 hours, not renewable

Anticipated average hours per week: depending on when the position is filled (the work should be conducted before the end of July 2026)

Location: The position can be done virtually from anywhere in Canada

How to apply:

Qualified individuals are encouraged to submit their application by email to Dr. Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce at eduardo.ordonez@athabascau.ca. Applications should include (as a single PDF file) a brief cover letter that summarizes your skills, interests and experience relevant to the position; a current resume or curriculum vitae; an unofficial copy of your transcript; and the contact information for 2 references.

Evaluation of applications will begin immediately and will continue until a suitable candidate is found. All applicants are thanked for their interest in this position; however, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

We are committed to employment equity and encourage applications from women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.

For more information on this Research Assistant Opportunity, please contact Dr. Eduardo Ordonez-Ponce at eduardo.ordonez@athabascau.ca.