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Perspectives from the Future of the Mining Workforce: Data and Voices from Early-Career Geoscientists

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The mining industry is evolving rapidly in response to technological advancement, the energy transition, and shifting societal expectations. At the same time, a new generation of geoscientists is entering the workforce with perspectives shaped by a digitally connected world. Individuals graduating in 2026 have grown up with smartphones, real-time data access, and integrated technologies, raising important questions about how well current approaches to recruitment, training, and professional development align with workforce expectations.

This study presents a mixed-methods assessment of early-career perspectives on the future of the mining workforce, integrating global survey results with qualitative interviews from professionals within their first eight years in the industry. Survey data capture trends in career motivations, perceived preparedness, evolving skill requirements, and long-term outlook, including perspectives on emerging competencies such as data analytics and interdisciplinary collaboration. Interviews provide deeper insight into lived experiences, including transitions into fieldwork, adaptation to legacy systems, and gaps between academic training and industry demands.

In addition, this work explores the growing importance of online community in supporting a geographically dispersed workforce. As geoscientists are no longer required to live in traditional mining hubs, many benefit from increased flexibility, but may also experience isolation from peers who understand the challenges of rotational work and remote, high-stress environments.

Selected interview excerpts are accessible via QR code in a podcast-style format, allowing conference attendees to engage directly with participant voices. By combining quantitative trends with personal narratives, this work highlights technical, social, and logistical challenges facing early-career professionals and identifies opportunities for more adaptive, inclusive, and future-focused approaches to workforce development in the mining industry.