

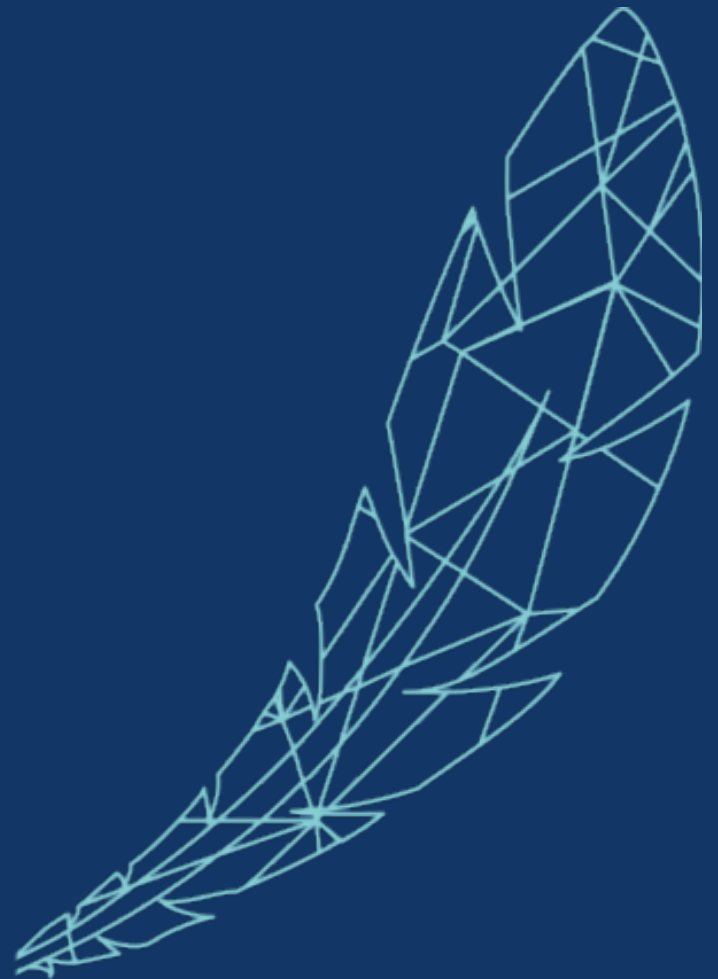


First Peoples
Innovation Centre

WHERE FIRST PEOPLE
CREATE PROGRESS

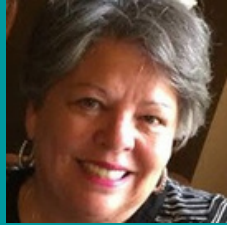
Activity Report

April 2023 – March 2024

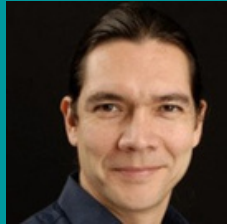




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01. Board of Directors



02. Message from

the Chair and Executive Director

Dear partners, participants, and friends,



PRÉSIDENT

Marco Bacon

We would like to express our deep gratitude to all our partners, whose support is essential to social and technological innovation rooted in Indigenous traditions. Thanks to this synergy, the FabLab has seen increased participation and strengthened skills among Indigenous youth.

Our results have strengthened our reputation and expanded our network across Canada. This success is built on the commitment of Indigenous youth and women, as well as the wisdom of Elders who pass on pride in identity.

We honour and celebrate the Abenaki, Anishinaabeg, Atikamekw, Cree, Innu, Maliseet, Mi'gmaq, Huron-Wendat, Mohawk, Naskapi, and Inuit peoples, whose cultures inspire our actions.



**DIRECTRICE
GÉNÉRALE**

Céline Auclair

We are proud to present this report covering our activities from April 2023 to March 2024. It highlights progress achieved through our collaboration with First Nations and Inuit communities in Quebec, as well as our expansion into New Brunswick (Fredericton) and Ontario (Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne).

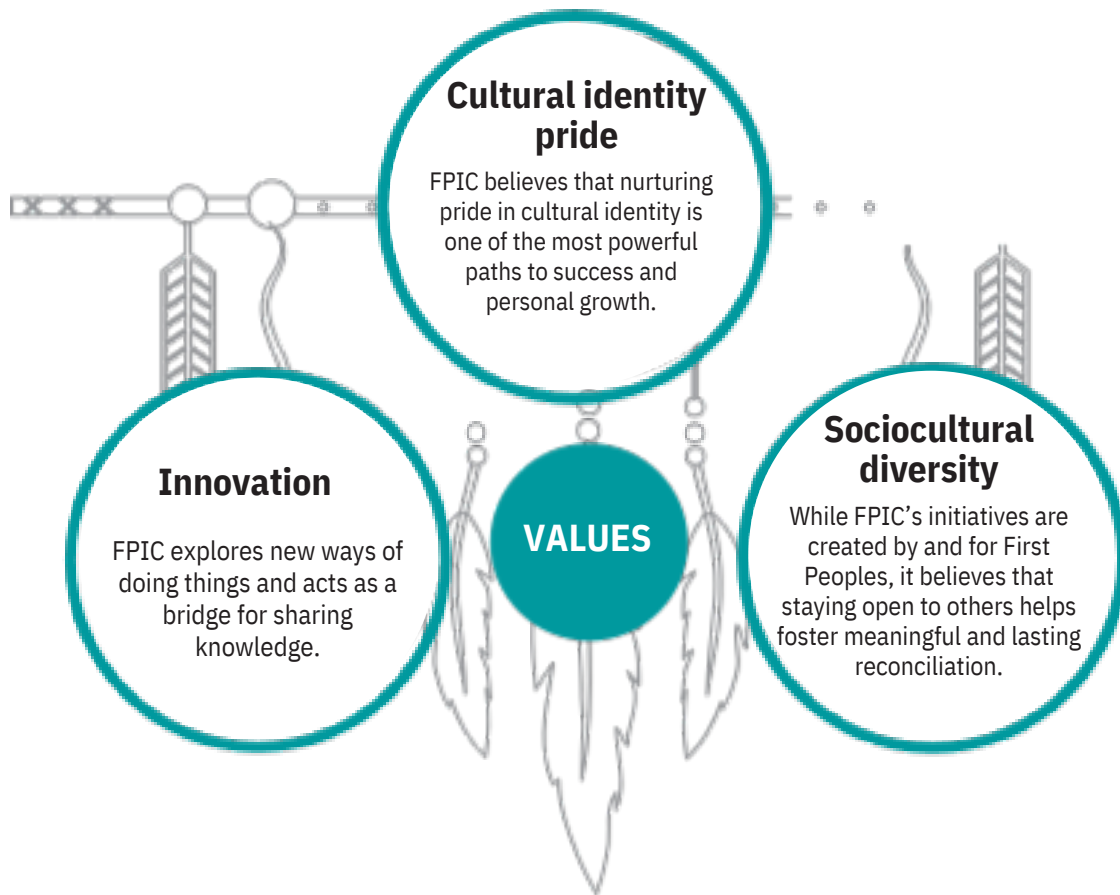
This year, we also began a certification process for the FabLab Onaki program. Despite challenges, our collaboration with Cégep de l'Outaouais continues to move forward toward official recognition of acquired skills.

Thank you for your commitment and trust.

03. Vision & Mission

The First Peoples Innovation Centre is recognized as a leading organization supporting innovative social initiatives that bring forward and activate the full potential of First Peoples, in a context of authentic and sustainable reconciliation.

Our mission: to help stimulate and support social and technological innovation among and with Indigenous peoples, both in urban settings and within communities, in a context that values and promotes cultural pride.



04. Objectives



Collaborate to showcase and activate the full potential of First Peoples



Support and inspire social and technological innovation within First Peoples communities.



Foster connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples

05.History

KEY MILESTONES

- 2012 – Creation of FPIC in Gatineau
- 2014 – Bell Let’s Talk Award
- 2017 – Finalist, Thérèse-Casgrain Equality Award (Quebec Secretariat for the Status of Women)
- 2018 – Creation of FabLab Onaki (first Indigenous FabLab in Canada)
- 2020 – L’Actualité Social Impact Award and Sun Life Favourite Award
- 2021 – Special Jury Prize (Youth Recognition Awards in Digital Literacy)
- 2024 – Resolution recognizing FPIC adopted by the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador



CURRENT MAJOR PROGRAMS

- Onaki FabLab
- Wawacte FabLab
- Nomad FabLab
- Ikwe Women’s FabLab
- Akwesasne FabLab, Ontario
- Fredericton FabLab, New Brunswick
- Digital Training Centre: Advanced Program



06. What is a FabLab?



A FabLab, or digital fabrication laboratory, is a place to create, learn, share, and invent – in short, a space where learning and innovation come together.

FabLabs provide an environment, along with the skills, materials, and state-of-the-art tools, that empower people everywhere to make almost anything. From community-based labs to advanced research centres, all FabLabs share a common goal: to make technological tools for creation accessible to everyone.

At the same time, FabLabs are part of a global network of makers – a place for peer-to-peer learning and a hub for research in digital fabrication. Together, they help shape the next generation of design and personalized manufacturing.

The FabLab network is an open and creative community made up of makers, artists, scientists, engineers, educators, students, and enthusiasts – both amateur and professional – spread across more than 100 countries, with over 1,750 FabLabs worldwide.

Onaki FabLab is the very first Indigenous FabLab in Canada.

ONAKI
FABLAB
2012

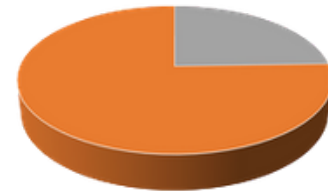
07. Onaki FabLab

The first Indigenous FabLab in Canada

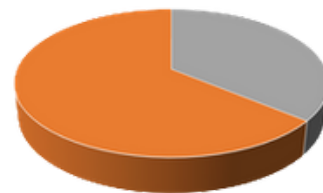
In 2023–2024, the Indigenous FabLab became a welcoming and safe space for creativity and innovation. Young people connected with their identity – Onaki, meaning “roots” in Anishinabeg – while building valuable skills in digital fabrication, programming, and electronics, opening doors to future opportunities.

Goals of the Onaki FabLab

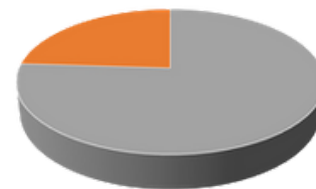
- Provide an innovative learning approach that reduces barriers to digital access while valuing and integrating Indigenous traditional knowledge.
- Encourage learning through observation, experimentation, and trial and error, in line with First Peoples’ ways of sharing knowledge.
- Celebrate Indigenous identities by creating a space where culture and innovation come together.
- Strengthen participants’ employability through personalized support, including needs assessment, labour market insights, job search training, and interview preparation.
- Foster talent development and build self-confidence to support successful entry into the workforce.



A graduation rate of
64.44%



An employment rate
of 36.67%



A return-to-
education rate of
16.67%

08. Nomad FabLab

Connecting with youth in Indigenous communities

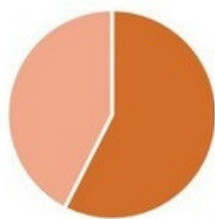
The Nomad FabLab reaches out to Indigenous youth aged 15 to 30 who are not currently in school or employed. Since its launch, FPIC has visited more than twenty communities, offering an engaging 8-week introductory program in digital fabrication technologies.

This hands-on training helps participants build skills through a wide range of creative projects, including custom clothing, musical instruments, jewelry, remote-controlled vehicles, drones, and artwork.

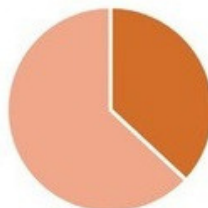
Its impact has been clear: many community leaders are now requesting the creation of permanent FabLabs following its visit.

GOALS

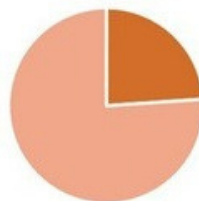
- Develop skills that can be applied to the creation of new business opportunities.
- Serve as an entry point to advanced training in digital fabrication.
- Encourage continued engagement in further educational pathways.
- Enhance participants' employment prospects.



A graduation rate of 58% was achieved.



An employment rate of 37% was achieved.



A return-to-education rate of 24% was achieved.

09. Feminine FabLab

Empowering Indigenous Women Through Digital Skills

FPIC has developed women-focused FabLabs to provide dedicated spaces where women can learn, create, and engage with digital technologies. Guided by a vision of a future where Indigenous women play a full and active role in the digital economy, this initiative aims to build familiarity with technological tools and prepare participants for careers in this field.

To support this vision, an inclusive program model was implemented with the financial support of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and the ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS), among others.

The project has led to several key recommendations, which will be tested in upcoming cohorts of the Feminine FabLab to further improve accessibility for Indigenous women.

In 2023, three cohorts were delivered in Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit, and Kawawachikamach. Three additional cohorts are scheduled for 2024.

GOALS

- Enable Indigenous women to reach their full potential and fully participate in the digital economy.
- Build confidence in a supportive and empowering environment, within a field that has traditionally been male-dominated.
- Create opportunities to modernize Indigenous art and knowledge through the use of digital technologies.
- Enhance the recognition and value of Indigenous culture and knowledge
- Support the development of social entrepreneurship aligned with the values of Indigenous women.



Women of all ages interested in starting a business or learning digital fabrication



Recruitment of participants interested in diversifying their income by developing product prototypes that can later be produced at scale..



10. Growth of the Onaki FabLab

Fixed FabLabs: Expansion

In 2023–2024, the Onaki FabLab experienced significant growth, strengthening its role as a driver of innovation and skills development for Indigenous youth. Through its innovative learning approach, it has enabled many young people to build both technical and transferable skills essential to their personal and professional development.

Originally established in Gatineau, Québec, the Onaki FabLab has expanded its reach to new regions, including La Tuque (Québec), the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne (Ontario), and Fredericton (New Brunswick).

This expansion reflects a growing need for safe, culturally relevant spaces that support Indigenous youth in their learning journeys and in exploring new technologies.

The Fixed FabLabs: Expansion program is built around five core areas of technical skills:

- **Graphic Design:** Developing proficiency with digital tools for visual creation, illustration, and 2D and 3D modeling.
- **Prototyping:** Experimenting with and building functional models using equipment such as 3D printers and laser cutters.
- **Programming:** Introducing coding and computer languages to create interactive applications and connected objects.
- **Ideation:** Fostering creativity and supporting the development of innovative projects that respond to community needs.
- **Fabrication:** Building practical skills in electronics, mechanics, and assembly to transform ideas into finished products.



Akwesasne FabLab
Graduation Ceremony



FabLab in La Tuque



FabLab in Fredericton

Lasting Impact and Growing Recognition

The success of the Onaki FabLab is reflected not only in the motivation and engagement of its young participants, but also in the growing interest from communities and partners.

Its expansion into new regions is paving the way for greater recognition and creating new opportunities to further develop this unique learning model—one that supports the future of Indigenous youth.

11. Advanced Program – Digital Training Centre

To support the professional advancement of its participants, FPIC has developed an advanced five-month training program for graduates of the Onaki and fixed FabLabs across three provinces.

Through hands-on, applied learning, participants engage in a comprehensive curriculum covering a range of digital technologies, including coding (Python, HTML), graphic design, and advanced 3D modeling software such as Autodesk Revit. This approach allows participants to strengthen both their technical and transferable skills in a practical, real-world context.



Autodesk Revit was used to develop a 3D model for a new kitchen design.

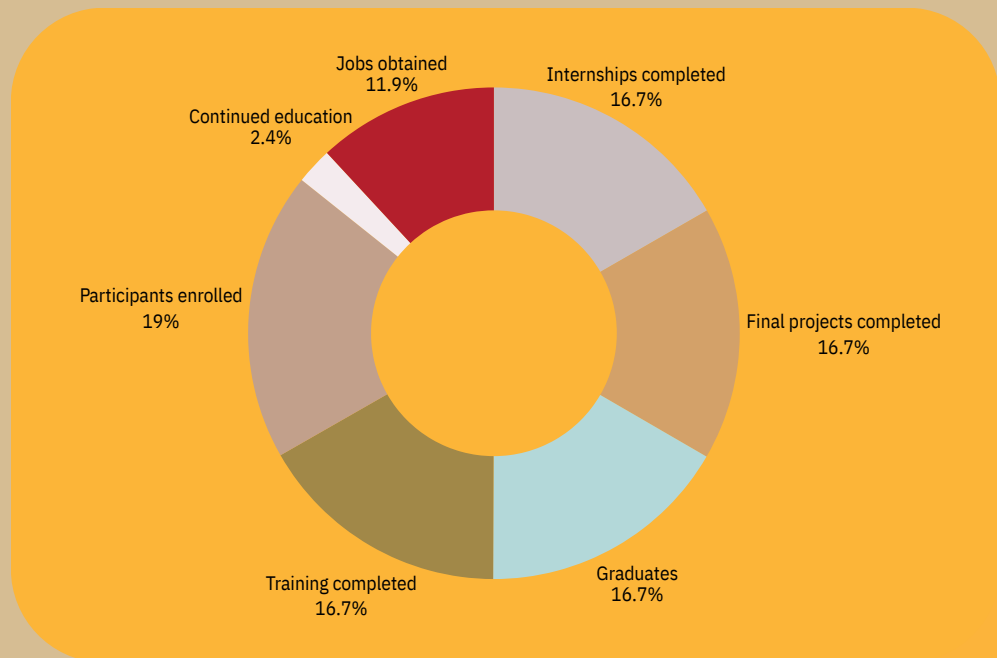


Before: Full 3D modeling of the condominium complex using Autodesk Revit

Upon successful completion of the four-month training component, Indigenous youth have the opportunity to take part in a one-month internship, providing valuable work experience and helping bridge the transition into the job market.

The program is delivered in close collaboration with partner organizations such as Innovation 7, Coding for Veterans (Cyber Skills for Canadians), and Full Fathom Five Design, helping to facilitate potential job placements by leveraging established networks and industry connections.

**Significant Progress
and
Encouraging Results**



12. FabLab Program in Correctional Settings:

As part of a partnership between the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) and Correctional Service Canada, an innovative initiative was launched to provide specialized training in digital fabrication to Indigenous inmates.

This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to supporting social reintegration by equipping participants with technical skills that can be applied in the job market.

A Program Designed to Be Structured and Accessible

Through a duly signed standing offer, FPIC delivered a two-week training program across three correctional facilities in Québec.

This program enables participants to gain practical knowledge in:

- 3D Printing: Design and production of three-dimensional objects;
- Laser Engraving: Customization and cutting of a variety of materials;
- Vinyl Cutting: Creation of designs and lettering for different surfaces;
- Heat Press: Transfer of visuals onto textiles and other materials.



13. A Strategic Partnership for the Future

FPIC and Cégep de l'Outaouais join forces to support the success of Indigenous youth

In September 2023, the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) and Cégep de l'Outaouais entered into a ten-year agreement aimed at improving access for Indigenous youth to training aligned with the digital economy.

This partnership makes it possible to recognize learning acquired at FPIC through college-level certifications, while also engaging industry partners in the development of training content.



Outcomes

- Introduction to digital fabrication
- Access to recognized training programs
- Development of transferable skills
- Increased interest in pursuing further education
- Expanded opportunities for employment or entrepreneurship

14. Exploring INDIGENOUS CUISINE

As part of the QADA program, the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) implemented the project “Indigenous Cuisine: Elders Engaging with Youth,” aimed at fostering the social participation of Indigenous Elders.

This initiative offers intergenerational culinary workshops that bring together Elders and Indigenous youth aged 15 to 30 who are experiencing school disengagement and are currently participating in FPIC’s digital training programs (FabLabs).



From the very beginning, the team prioritized close collaboration with Elders to ensure the project was developed and implemented in a respectful and inclusive way. Their active involvement in planning meetings enriched the process through their wisdom, lived experience, and deep understanding of the cultural and social realities of their communities. This approach also enabled Elders to play a direct role in community outreach and engagement with partner organizations.



The project team began by recruiting a project coordinator, planning activities, and acquiring the necessary materials for the culinary workshops. Partnerships were established, and consultation committees were formed with Elders who wished to be involved. Community partners were also engaged to co-organize the workshops.

As a result, workshops were delivered in six communities: Gesgapegiag, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Nutashkuan, Waskaganish, Kitigan Zibi, and Gatineau.



15. What's going on here?

At FPIC, ideas come to life through a wide range of activities, both internal and external, thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of First Peoples communities.

From training and mentorship to creation, community engagement, and knowledge sharing, these initiatives reflect our strong commitment to social, cultural, and technological innovation.

Entrepreneurship Training for Women's FabLab Participants

In March 2024, participants in the Feminine FabLab in Gatineau had the opportunity to take part in a training session on business planning and entrepreneurship, delivered by the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Economic Development Commission (FNQLEDC).



Commemoration of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) marked the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by opening its doors to the public at its premises located at 85B Promenade du Portage. Throughout the day, participants were invited to take part in commemorative activities. This initiative was made possible through the financial support of Canadian Heritage.

Participation in the First Nations–Québec Regional Economic Circle

In September 2023, FPIC took part in the First Nations–Québec Regional Economic Circle held in Uashat mak Mani-Utenam. This participation reflects the Centre's commitment to actively contributing to discussions on First Nations economic development and to strengthening relationships with regional and national partners working toward a more prosperous and equitable future for Indigenous communities.



Celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day

On June 21, 2023, the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) marked National Indigenous Peoples Day by organizing a series of community-oriented activities.

This event provided an opportunity to engage with community members and partners in a spirit of recognition and respect. FPIC extends its sincere appreciation to all those who participated in this important day of reflection and celebration.



16. The Core Values that Guide FPIC

FPIC promotes the core values that guide its strategic direction:

INNOVATION

FPIC is committed to exploring new approaches and serves as a catalyst for knowledge sharing.

IDENTITY PRIDE

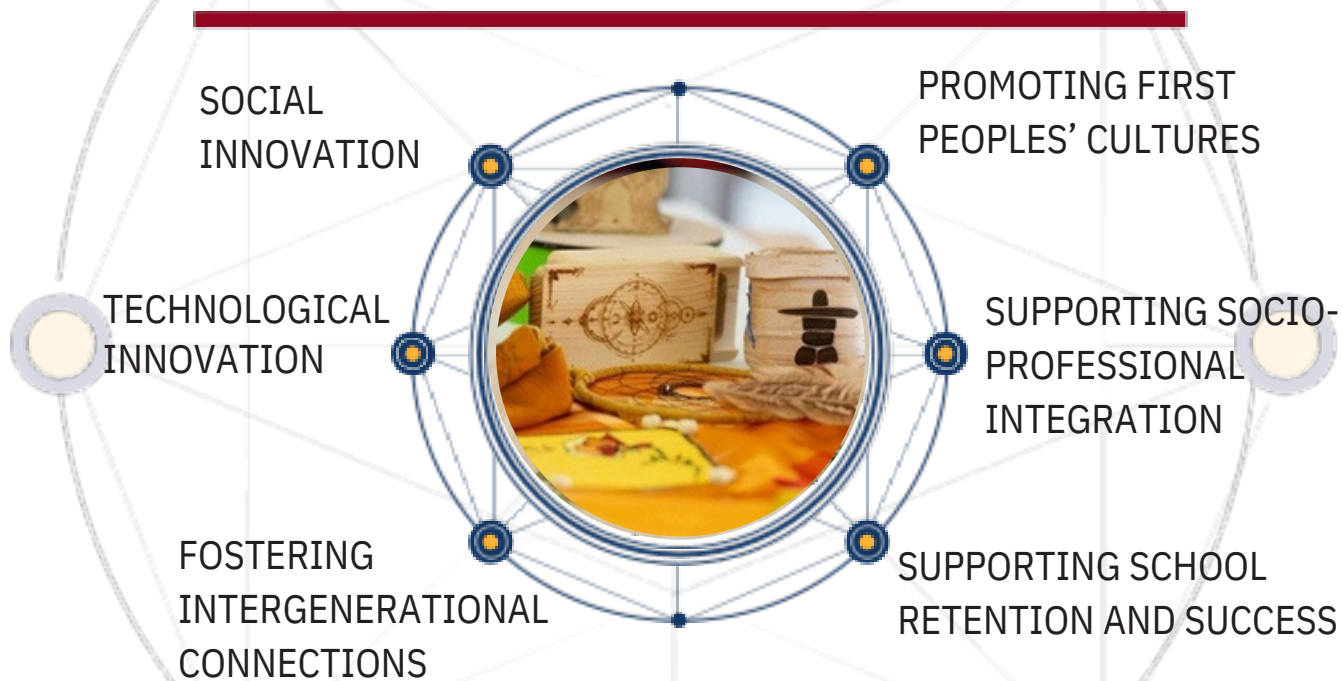
FPIC believes that nurturing pride in cultural identity is one of the strongest drivers of success and personal growth.

SOCIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

While FPIC's initiatives are created by and for First Peoples, the organization believes that openness to others enriches its work and contributes to meaningful and lasting reconciliation.



17. More engaging: Our Areas of Action (2023–2024)



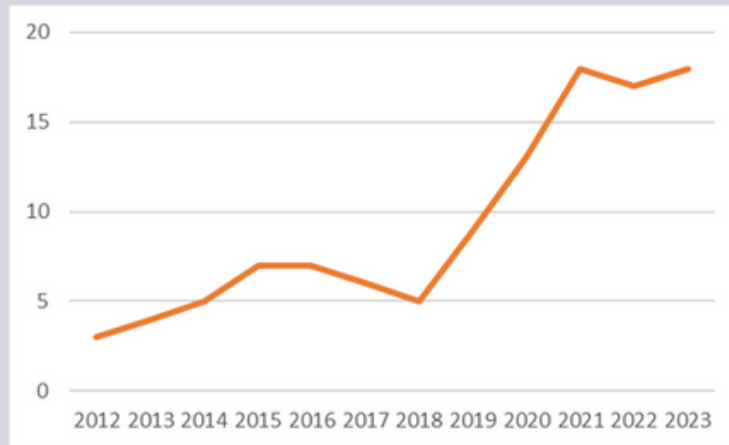
- Over 60 partners
- 18 programs delivered
- More than 100 collaborators
- Over 30 volunteers

- 590 participants
- 120 youth aged 15 to 30
- 15 Elders
- 700 school-aged youth

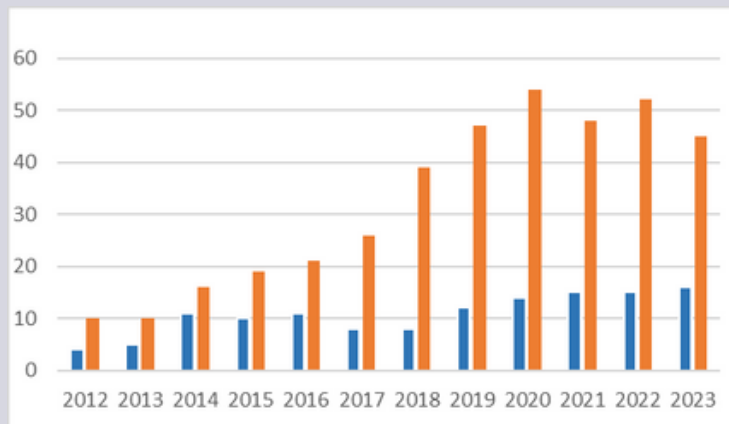
THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS!

18. Statistical Trends

Growth in the Number of Projects



FPIC Partner Network



■ Social Partners ■ Financial Partners

19. Public Appearances (2023–2024)

During the 2023–2024 year, FPIC actively participated in various regional committees and collaborative forums. In particular, FPIC took part in the third edition of the First Nations–Québec Economic Circle, held on March 24, 2023, in Gatineau. This event provided an opportunity to showcase the Centre’s work by offering participants and members of the organizing committee promotional items designed by FPIC.

FPIC is also working in collaboration with Innovation 7 (i7) to develop a project management training program that will enable participants to obtain the CAPM (Certified Associate in Project Management) certification and support them in accessing professional opportunities.

Over the past year, the certification of FPIC’s training programs has become a key priority to ensure formal recognition of its educational offerings. This process not only validates the quality of the training provided, but also strengthens participants’ employment prospects. FPIC aims to offer digital badges, college-level certifications, and, in the near future, university-level certifications.

In addition, FPIC is actively collaborating with CORCAN, a special operating agency within Correctional Service Canada, to develop a training program for Indigenous inmates across several correctional facilities in Québec. This initiative aims to equip participants with digital fabrication skills, thereby improving their employment prospects upon reintegration into the workforce.

FPIC consistently uses these platforms to promote and advance the interests and priorities of Indigenous communities, while strengthening its presence and impact at the regional and national levels.

20. Partner Network

The First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) continues to make significant efforts to build and strengthen a robust network of partners to support the implementation of its programs. Collaboration with targeted and credible partners remains a key priority for the organization.

In light of the strong results achieved through its programs and the growing interest from Indigenous communities, funding partners continue to renew their confidence in FPIC.





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