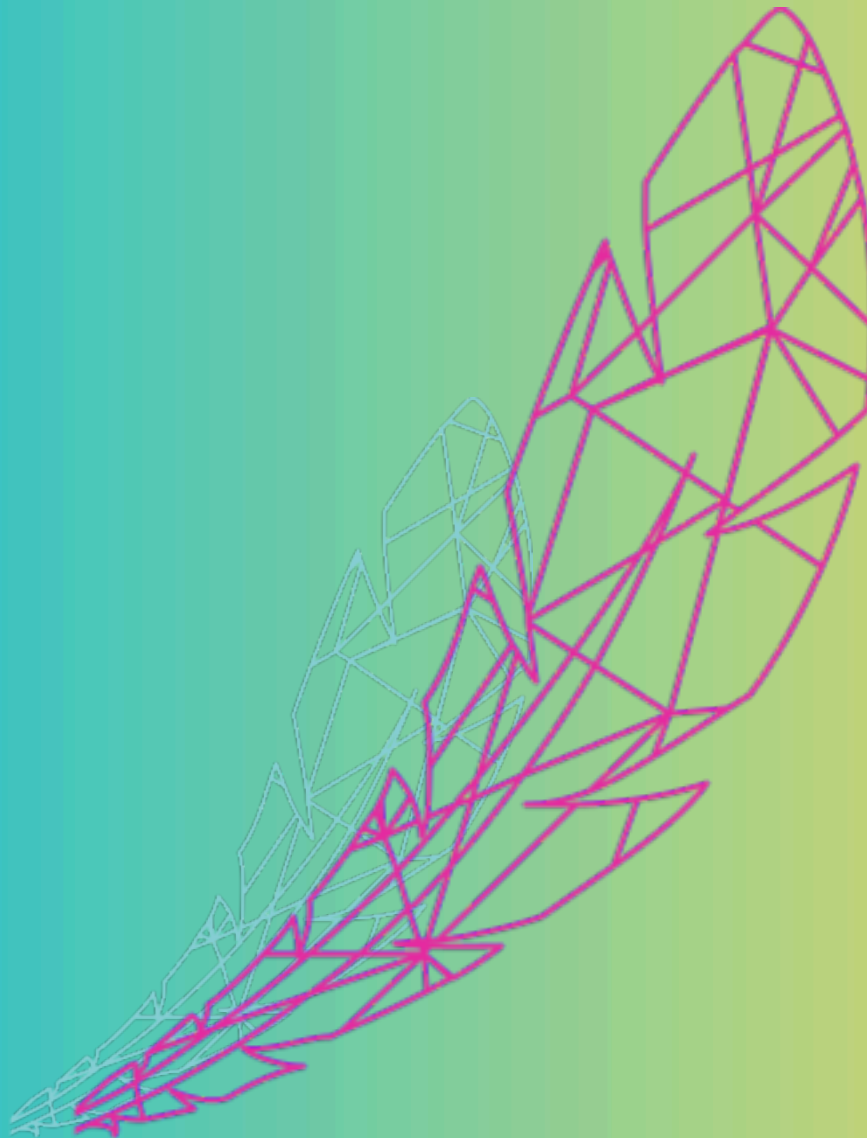


First Peoples  
Innovation Centre

WHERE FIRST PEOPLE  
CREATE PROGRESS

# Activity Report

## April 2024 - March 2025



# Board of Directors



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# 01.MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**MARCO BACON**

Chair of the  
Board of  
Directors

Dear partners, participants, and friends,

This 2024–2025 activity report highlights the richness of the initiatives led this year by the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC). It reflects the collective momentum driving our work, guided by a vision of social and technological innovation rooted in Indigenous traditions.

The Onaki FabLab, FPIC’s flagship program, continued to grow this year, welcoming an increasing number of young participants who strengthened their skills in digital fabrication, programming, and culture. Other FabLab initiatives were also further developed, including the Nomad FabLab, the Feminine FabLab, the Fixed FabLabs (Expansion), and the Advanced Program, expanding our reach across multiple communities. FPIC’s approach supports meaningful personal and professional development, reinforced by internally developed digital badges and, in the case of the Onaki FabLab, certificates issued in partnership with Cégep de l’Outaouais.



**CÉLINE AUCLAIR**

Executive Director

We extend our sincere thanks to our partners—both community-based and institutional—for their essential support. The recognitions received this year, including the Excelor Award, the nomination for the Thérèse-Casgrain Equality Prize, the Mercuriades Award, and our selection among Canada’s top ten innovators, reaffirm the relevance and impact of our work.

This report is a tribute to the dedication of our team and to the trust of all those who make FPIC a true space for transformation.

# 02. OUR VISION & MISSION

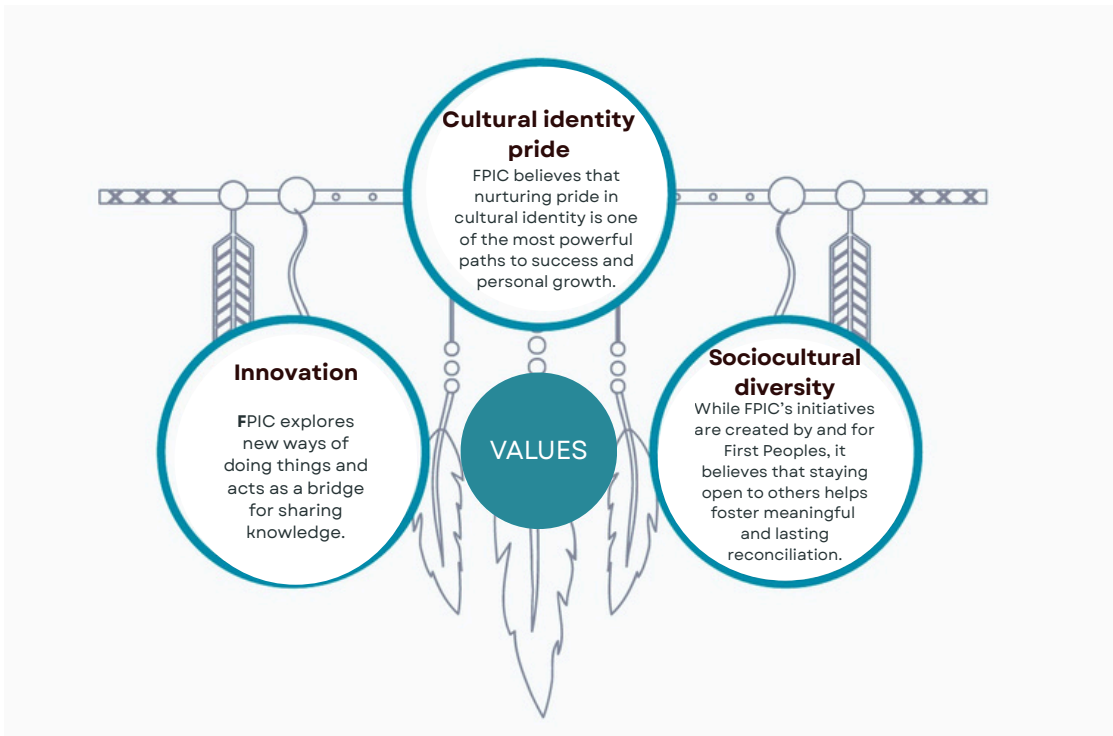
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## VISION

The First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) is recognized across Canada as a leading organization that promotes and inspires innovative social initiatives, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples collaborate in a spirit of lasting reconciliation.

## MISSION

Through its digital training centre, FPIC offers members of First Peoples the opportunity to develop innovative skills that support their full potential and autonomy while fostering pride in their cultural identity.



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

# 03. OUR JOURNEY

## KEY MILESTONES

**2025**

Finalist in the Thérèse-Casgrain Equality category, awarded by Québec’s Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

**2024**

Awarded the 2024 Excelor Award in the “Innovation” category by the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce.

**2022**

Adoption of a resolution recognizing FPIC by the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador.

**2021**

Recipient of the Special Jury Prize at the Youth Recognition Awards for Digital Literacy, presented by Printemps numérique.

**2020**

Recipient of the “Social Impact” Award from L’Actualité magazine, and the Sun Life “Favourite Award.”

**2018**

Creation of the Onaki FabLab, the first Indigenous FabLab in Canada.

**2017**

Finalist for the Thérèse-Casgrain Equality Prize, awarded by Québec’s Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

**2015**

Bell Let’s Talk Award

**2012**

Establishment of FPIC in Gatineau.

## CURRENT MAJOR PROGRAMS

### Indigenous FabLabs

- Onaki FabLab – Cycle 1 (Gatineau, Québec)
- Onaki FabLab – Cycle 2: Advanced Program (Gatineau, Québec)
- Nomad FabLab
- Feminine FabLab
- Wawacte FabLab – La Tuque (Québec)
- Akwesasne FabLab (Ontario)
- Fredericton FabLab (New Brunswick)



# 04. What is a FABLAB?

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A FabLab, or digital fabrication laboratory, is a space where people can create, learn, share, and innovate. It is a place dedicated to learning and experimentation.

FabLabs provide a collaborative environment, along with access to skills, materials, and state-of-the-art tools, enabling anyone to design and build almost anything they can imagine. From community-based labs to advanced research centres, FabLabs share a common goal: to make technological tools for innovation accessible to all.

At the same time, FabLabs function as a global network of makers, a peer-to-peer learning environment, and a research space focused on digital fabrication—helping to shape the next generation of design and personalized manufacturing.

The FabLab network is an open and creative community 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.

The Onaki FabLab is the first Indigenous FabLab in Canada.

# 05. ONAKI FABLAB – Cycle 1: Discovering the Digital World

## A Space to Reconnect with One's Roots

This year, the Onaki FabLab provided Indigenous youth with a safe and supportive environment to reconnect with their identity while exploring technology. True to its name –Onaki, meaning “roots” in Anishinabeg–the program brings together tradition and innovation, helping participants develop practical skills in digital fabrication, programming, electronics, and design.



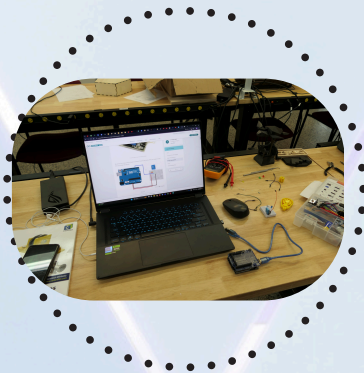
## Bridging the Digital Divide, Unlocking Potential

Far more than a technology program, the Onaki FabLab has helped reveal the potential of a generation often marginalized, by valuing experimentation and learning through trial and error. Cohort after cohort, a creative and innovation-driven Indigenous youth community has emerged–gaining confidence, skills, and greater autonomy.



## A Culturally Rooted Approach to Learning

The FabLab celebrated the diversity of Indigenous identities–Innu, Anishnabe, Maliseet, Cree, Inuit, Atikamekw, Wendat, and many others–in an environment of pride and exchange. By bringing together culture and technology, it enabled participants to reconnect with their roots while building skills for the future.



## Skills Put into Practice

After four months of training, participants complete a two-month internship in a professional setting, allowing them to consolidate their learning, build confidence, and gain their first hands-on experience in the workplace—often serving as a springboard toward employment, further education, or entrepreneurship.

### Recognized Learning

The skills developed through the Onaki FabLab are formally recognized through FPIC certificates, digital badges, and official recognition from Cégep de l'Outaouais, providing tangible value to participants' learning journeys.



### Encouraging Results

Among participants in recent years...

**76%**  
completed  
their training

Among these graduates, in the months following completion of the FabLab program...

**30%** of  
participants  
returned to  
education

**68%** of  
participants  
obtained  
employment  
following the  
program

## A Springboard to the Future

The Onaki FabLab offers far more than technical training—it equips young people for successful socio-professional integration. With the support of our partners, participants benefited from tailored services, including one-on-one guidance, résumé writing workshops, interview simulations, and team-building activities.

Since the beginning of the program, 14 cohorts have been delivered, made possible through careful planning, a dedicated team, and strong collective mobilization in support of Indigenous youth success.

# 06. NOMAD FABLAB

## A Mobile Technology Hub Connecting Indigenous Youth

The Onaki FabLab model, developed in Gatineau, is now firmly integrated into FPIC's Nomad FabLab. By going directly into communities to meet youth where they are, this approach provides accessible, hands-on digital training that is grounded in their cultural realities.

With a mobile team and specialized equipment, participants explore digital fabrication technologies while developing their creativity, confidence, and sense of belonging.

### An Adapted and Inclusive Training Program

Over the past year, the participants explored a range of advanced technologies, including:

- Arduino programming (electronics)
- 3D printing
- Laser cutting
- Vinyl cutting
- CNC milling
- Digital embroidery

### During the 2024–2025 year:

- Nomad FabLab – Ekuanitshit
- Nomad FabLab – Waskaganish
- Nomad FabLab – Nemaska
- Nomad FabLab – Gesgapegiag

The 2024–2025 year marked a significant enhancement to the program, with its duration extended from 8 to 10 weeks. This change responds to the need to give participants more time to absorb technical concepts, explore their creativity, and complete their projects, with the ultimate goal of improving their employability.

It reflects FPIC's ongoing commitment to adapting its approaches to the realities of participants and maximizing the impact of its work within communities.

## 07. FEMININE FABLAB : An Empowerment Space

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To address the specific needs of Indigenous women and promote their inclusion in the digital economy, the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) established Feminine FabLabs—spaces exclusively dedicated to women. These environments provide access to new technologies and open pathways to careers in the digital economy. They also create opportunities for participants to launch their own businesses based on projects developed within the FabLab.

Between November 2021 and March 2024, FPIC led the project “Indigenous Women and Digital Skills: The ONAKI Concept”, in collaboration with Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) under the Women’s Program. This initiative made it possible to:

- Identify and address systemic barriers limiting Indigenous women’s participation in the Onaki FabLab;
- Strengthen and adapt the Onaki FabLab model to make it more inclusive and accessible.



With financial support from Québec’s Secrétariat à la condition féminine, FPIC successfully launched the Feminine FabLabs, an innovative initiative aimed at reducing inequalities in access to technology and digital training for Indigenous women.

Dynamic cohorts were established in Gatineau and in four communities: Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam, Pessamit, Kawawachikamach, and Val-d’Or.

Each FabLab brought together participants of all ages to develop skills in digital fabrication, while also benefiting from entrepreneurship and employability workshops delivered in collaboration with partners such as the FNQLEDC and the CDRHPNQ.



# 08. FIXED FABLABS : EXPANSION

## Accelerators of Innovation and Learning

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Over the past five years, Indigenous FabLabs have experienced remarkable growth, confirming the strength of the Onaki model. With the support of ESDC, FabLabs have been established in Gatineau, La Tuque, Akwesasne, and Fredericton.

### Expansion to New Brunswick – Fredericton FabLab

Participants completed a variety of projects that allowed them to apply their skills and creativity while reinforcing their knowledge.

Building on the competencies they acquired, participants applied key concepts in planning, design, technological tools, and craftsmanship.



### Expansion to Ontario – Akwesasne FabLab

Participants learned to design using Inkscape and bring their ideas to life by creating tangible objects—such as t-shirts, keychains, and coasters—using laser cutting and vinyl cutting tools.

They also explored a range of techniques, including sublimation, screen printing, and sewing, to personalize items such as mugs, bags, and even moccasins.

Remarkable  
Results



# 09. ONAKI FABLAB – Cycle 2: Advanced Program



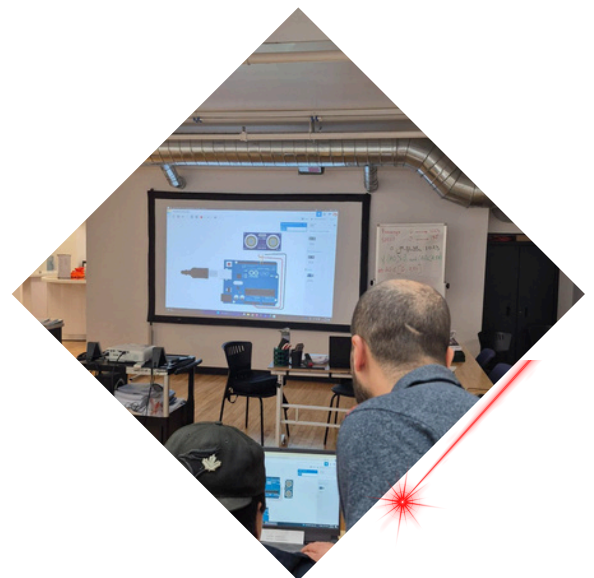
The advanced program or FabLab Cycle 2, was launched on November 18, 2024, in collaboration with partners, including Innovation 7. From the outset, participants were introduced to the fundamentals of Revit, including the modeling of walls, doors, floors, and furniture, as well as collaboration tools and the use of the Autodesk Construction Cloud (ACC) platform.

The program quickly evolved into a multidisciplinary, hands-on approach. Participants explored a range of technologies such as Inkscape, laser cutting, sublimation, screen printing, and sewing. Through these activities, they designed and produced various items—keychains, t-shirts, bags, and more—while developing skills in graphic design, 2D/3D modeling, and the use of industrial equipment.



Subsequent cohorts incorporated modules on smart technologies and programming. Through practical projects, participants learned to code, design innovative solutions, and use software such as Adobe Illustrator and Fusion 360.

The program also aims to strengthen participants' digital autonomy, enabling them to create and manage websites in support of community or entrepreneurial initiatives.



# 10. INDIGENOUS CUISINE – Elders Engaging with Youth



In 2024, through the QADA program, the First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) implemented the project “Indigenous Cuisine: Elders Engaging with Youth.” Across six Indigenous communities, culinary workshops brought together Elders and youth enrolled in the Onaki FabLab and the Nomad FabLab.

This initiative strengthened intergenerational connections while promoting the transmission of traditional knowledge related to food.

Elders were involved from the earliest stages of the project, playing a central role in planning, community outreach, and the facilitation of workshops. Their participation helped highlight traditional culinary practices, reduce social isolation, and support their personal well-being, while also fostering curiosity and cultural pride among youth.



## Highlights

- 80 Elders participated
- 85 youth engaged
- 26 workshops delivered
- 6 communities reached: Gesgapegiag, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam, Nutashkuan, Waskaganish, Kitigan Zibi, Gatineau
- Transmission of traditional knowledge
- Strengthened intergenerational dialogue
- Satisfaction rate: 95%

# 11. DID YOU KNOW?

## NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

The First Peoples Innovation Centre (FPIC) celebrated National Indigenous Peoples Day at Place Laval in Gatineau with a vibrant program featuring dances, songs, games, and traditional foods.

Supported by Canadian Heritage and the City of Gatineau, the event created a meaningful space for connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. It highlighted the richness and diversity of Indigenous cultures through both contemporary and traditional expressions, embodying a true moment of sharing, tradition, and reconciliation.



## NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

On September 30, in observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, FPIC took part in commemorative activities to honour the memory of the children who never returned home, pay tribute to residential school survivors and their families and communities, and raise awareness of the intergenerational impacts of these institutions.

Through its participation, FPIC reaffirmed the importance of the reconciliation process and the message “*Every Child Matters*,” symbolized by the orange shirt—a powerful reminder of the cultural loss, loss of freedom, and harm to self-esteem experienced by generations of Indigenous children.



## VISIT BY YOUTH DELEGATION FROM FRENCH GUIANA

### Inspiring Encounters at FPIC!

We had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation of youth from French Guiana. They shared their knowledge, traditions, and craftsmanship with participants from the Onaki FabLab, creating a meaningful cultural exchange.

Our guests also had the opportunity to discover the innovative projects developed at the FabLab, with the support of our dedicated team members.

FPIC's Executive Director, Céline Auclair, also took part in this enriching exchange, presenting the Centre's mission and activities.



## 12. 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 vehicle for knowledge transfer.

### IDENTITY PRIDE

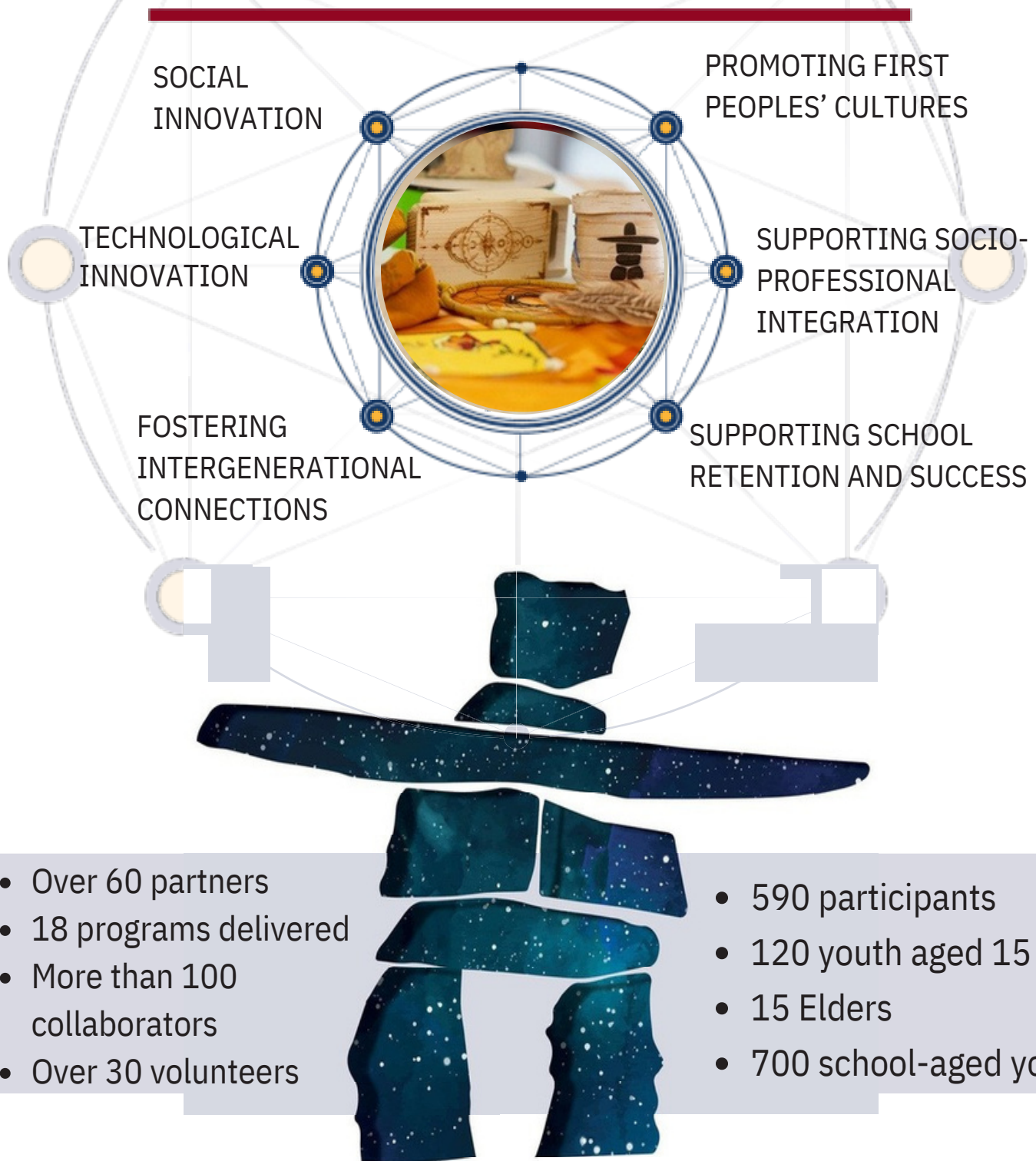
FPIC believes that fostering pride in cultural identity is one of the strongest drivers of success and personal growth.

### SOCIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

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



# 13. More engaging: Our Areas of Action (2024–2025)



**THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS!**

# 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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