First Nations Technology Council

Reconciliation in Action: Pathways for Transformative Change and Allyship

September 25, 2023

About the Technology Council

- Indigenous-led not-for-profit mandated by First Nations leadership in BC to ensure Indigenous Peoples have the tools, education, and support to thrive in the digital age

- Our goal is to provide digital skills training to Indigenous learners, realize digital equity, and ensure First Nations individuals and communities across the province play an active role in leading and shaping technology

First Nations Technology Council

Why the Indigenous Leadership in Technology Project?

> *"[Technology] is part of what will be history in a few generations, and I think so long as we incorporate our culture and values into all aspects and components, we will see in and relate to technology. What can we put into technology that will harness and sustain our identity? I think if we can think in this way, we can invite more of our people into these roles and will see them staying there, so long as they can see themselves in it."* – [Community session participant]

- The digital economy in Canada is quickly expanding but few labour market intelligence tools meet the needs of Indigenous communities

- This project fills that gap by implementing data collection tools relevant to communities and producing information to enable access to opportunities in technology

- This research was conducted through the lens of self-determination and self-governance and provides evidence-based information on current digital inequity experienced by First Nations in BC

Communities, Nations & Language Groups

Anishinaabe

Anspayaxw

Batchewana First Nation

Beaver Lake Cree Nation

Bigstone Cree Nation

Binche Whut'en

Chawathil First Nation

Coldwater Indian Band

Cook's Ferry Indian Band

Cowessess First Nation

Cowichan Tribes

Cree

Dakota

Ditidaht First Nation

Driftpile Cree Nation

Dzawada'enuxw First Nation

Eabametoong First Nation

Ehattesaht First Nation

Esk'etemc First Nation

Fort Nelson First Nation

Gitanmaax

Gitwangak

Gitxsan

Haida

Haisla Nation

Halalt First Nation

Halfway River First Nation

Heiltsuk

Homalco First Nation

Lyackson First Nation

Lytton First Nation

Malahat

Mamalilikulla First Nation

Manitoba Métis Federation

McLeod Lake Indian Band

Métis (Red River Settlement)

Métis Nation British Columbia

Metlakatla First Nation

Miawpukek

N'Quatqua First Nations

Nadleh Whut'en First Nation

Nak'azdli Whut'en

'Na̱mgis First Nation

Nee-Tahi-Buhn Indian Band

Nisga'a

Nlaka'pamux

Nle?kepmx

Nooaitch Indian Band

North Fraser Métis Association

Nuchatlaht First Nation

Nuu-chah-nulth

Nuxalk First Nation

Ojibwe

Okanagan Indian Band

Old Massett Village Council

Onion Lake Cree Nation

Opaskwayak Cree Nation

Peguis

Splatsin First Nation

Spuzzum First Nation

Squamish Nation

St'át'imc

SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout)

Stellat'en First Nation

Stl'alt'imx

Stó:lō

Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation

Sumas First Nation

Syilx Okanagan

T'éxel'c (Williams Lake Indian Band)

T'it'q'et

T'Sou-ke Nation

Takla Nation

Taku River Tlingit First Nation

Tanana (Alaska)

The Key First Nation

Tk'emlúps (Kamloops Indian Band)

Tl'azt'en Nation

Tl'etinqox

Tla'amin First Nation

Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation

Tletinqox

Toquaht Nation

Ts'kw'aylaxw First Nation

Tsal'alh First Nation

Tseshaht First Nation

Tsi Deldel

Understanding the Landscape

Research was done to prioritize the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, families, communities, and Nations within the context of the past and their visions for their future. The Report explores crucial components to contextualize inequity, racism and settler-colonialism to ensure responsible storytelling is being situated in the report.

Responsible Storytelling and Providing Context

- Indigenous stories and research findings must be situated within a framework of inequity, racism, and the historical and contemporary context of First Nations Peoples in BC

- Decontextualized information can perpetuate harm by implicitly framing the socio-economic, political, and environmental disparity gaps as inevitable and unavoidable

Strategic Areas

- Connectivity and Infrastructure

- Skills Development

- Employment and Business Development

- Technology and Innovation Leadership

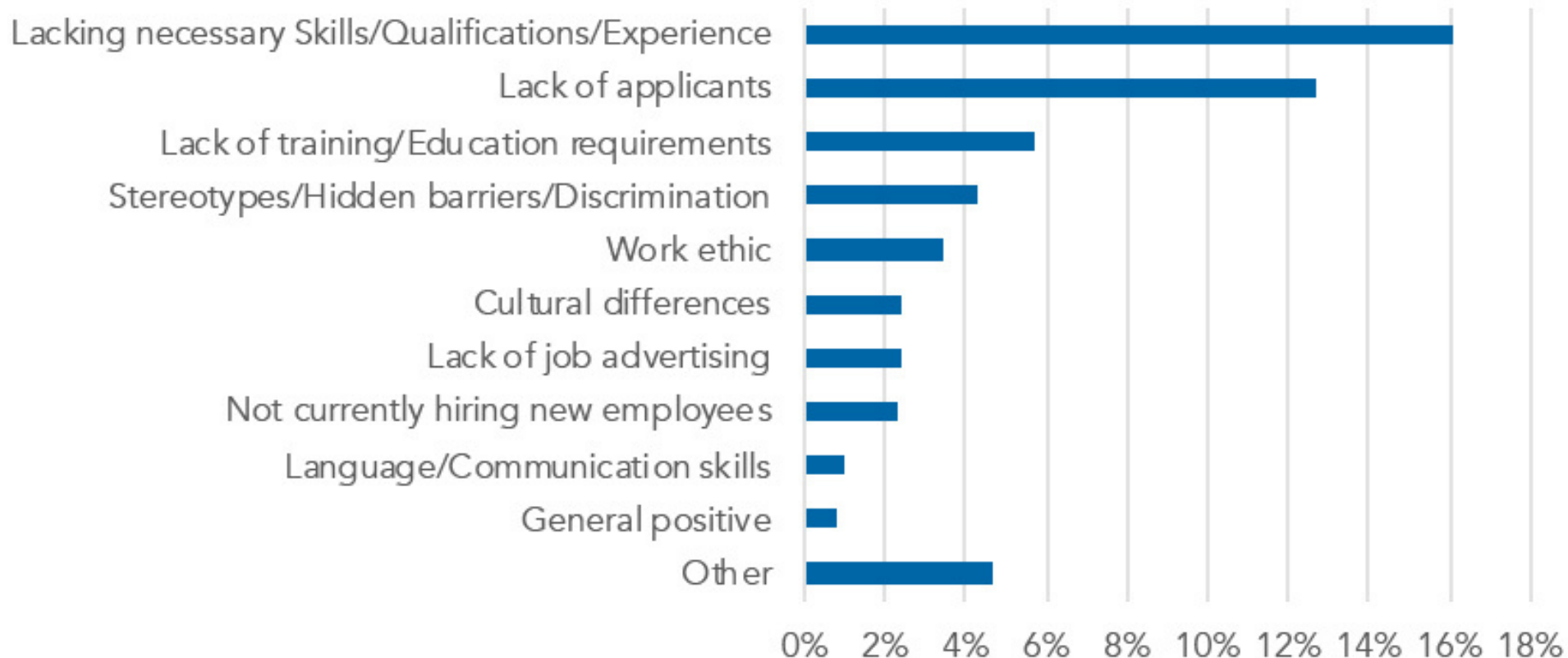- Governance and Self-determination

Key Findings: *Employment & Business Development*

Barriers to Improving Indigenous Representation in Technology: *Perspectives from Employers*

Barriers to hiring Indigenous employees according to employers

Barriers to Improving Indigenous Representation in Technology: *Perspectives from Indigenous People*

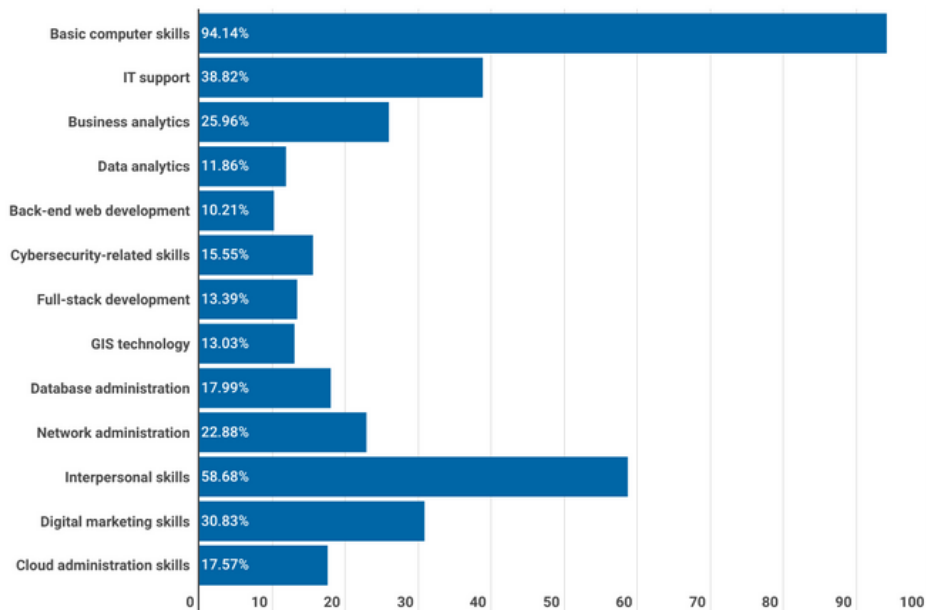| Barriers to accessing tech opportunities	% of ILIT participants who have experienced barrier
Not enough financial support to go to training or education (e.g., income to support family while being in training)	69.6%
Not aware of training and tech opportunities	64.1%
Lack of access to training programs to expand my skills	62.9%
Limited time because of having to work to support myself and family	59.9%
Not knowing other people in tech	59.7%
Living in a place with few work opportunities	53.1%
Limited time because of family and community commitments	51.2%
Lack of access to tutors and education support	49.7%
Level of personal confidence	49.4%
Specific learning needs or style (e.g., hands-on versus theoretical)	49.3%
Lack of cultural understanding in workplace (e.g., cultural obligations after a death)	42.2%
Experiencing or knowing that I may experience racism at work	42.2%
Not sure how to connect to potential employers	41.7%

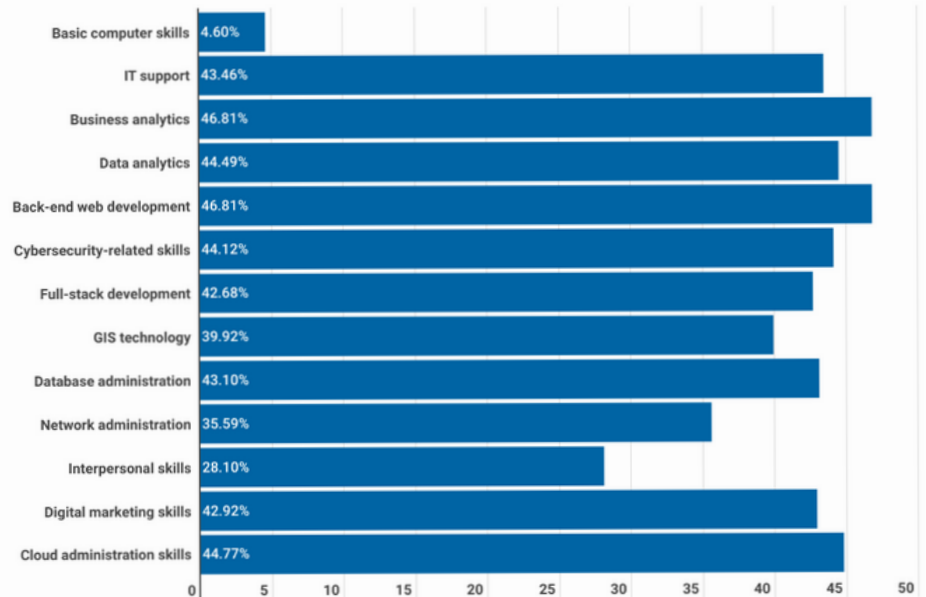*Table 4. Barriers to accessing tech opportunities.*

Key Findings: *Employment & Business Development*

There is a notable difference between the skills that ILIT participants have and the skills they are interested in developing, a key opportunity for technology training and education.

I have skills in:

Skill	Percentage
Basic computer skills	94.14%
IT support	38.82%
Business analytics	25.96%
Data analytics	11.86%
Back-end web development	10.21%
Cybersecurity-related skills	15.55%
Full-stack development	13.39%
GIS technology	13.03%
Database administration	17.99%
Network administration	22.88%
Interpersonal skills	58.68%
Digital marketing skills	30.83%
Cloud administration skills	17.57%

I am interested in developing skills in:

Skill	Percentage
Basic computer skills	4.60%
IT support	43.46%
Business analytics	46.81%
Data analytics	44.49%
Back-end web development	46.81%
Cybersecurity-related skills	44.12%
Full-stack development	42.68%
GIS technology	39.92%
Database administration	43.10%
Network administration	35.59%
Interpersonal skills	28.10%
Digital marketing skills	42.92%
Cloud administration skills	44.77%

Strategic Area Overview

Skills Development

- From work to school, health care, and political engagement, widespread adoption of digital society discriminates against those who lack the skills that are needed to access information, programs, supports, and vital services that are often exclusively accessible online

- This lack of skill is systemic: it is intricately connected to the historic and contemporary impacts of colonization and is a continuation of the long legacy of discriminatory educational policies, practices, and approaches
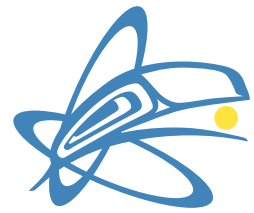
Key Findings: *Skills Development*

I didn't even know why I couldn't go to school for years; I tried for years and walked out for years, then it dawned on me it was because of residential school. I couldn't cope in the classroom. I worked in the school district and helped kids and youth but when it was time for me to be a student, I couldn't do it, I would walk out. I was encouraged by teachers because I was smart enough. Didn't realize for a long time and then, 'Oh, that's why it is.' Then worked in residential school org and realized. I also have family that have top-notch education and no problem for them. I do well in school, but I have a track record for not succeeding so the band won't sponsor me. I'm not the same person I was years ago. I'm a lot more confident and just looking for opportunities." – [Community session participant]

1/4 of respondents listed fear of school because of "my or my family's experience with residential school, day school or education system," as a barrier to accessing tech opportunities

Key Findings: *Skills Development*

How to Address These Barriers?

1. **Indigenous-Led Education**

2. **Easing the Transition from Secondary to Post-Secondary Education**

3. **Remote Education**

4. **Internships and Work-Integrated Learning**

5. **Recruitment and Building Awareness and Understanding of Technology Programs**

"It's really important to avoid this white saviour mentality of, 'You are so lucky we are here; we've come to educate you.' It really needs to be in partnership with the communities. And if it is an Indigenous-specific role, it must be an Indigenous person holding that role. And if you can't find somebody who has the qualifications, then you find someone who's willing to learn and you train them to have the qualifications to hold that role." – [Interviewee]
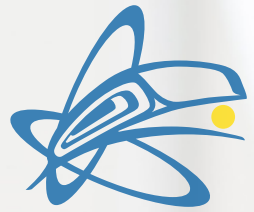
How Are We Responding?

1400+ graduates since 2017 and growing!

The Technology Council offers:
- 18 fully funded skills development programs designed for Indigenous learners
- Comprehensive supports - cultural, educational & financial

Respond to the #1 barrier and contribute to our Bursary Fund. Learn more: https://technologycouncil.ca/bursary/

Strategic Area Overview

Connectivity and Infrastructure

- In a world that is increasingly mediated by digital technologies, the lack of reliable, affordable, high-bandwidth internet denies Indigenous Peoples the ability to fully exercise their human rights and impedes the implementation of their inherent rights to self-governance and self-determination

Key Findings: *Connectivity and Infrastructure*

> *". . . The only place in town where young people can access internet to do homework or anything requiring more than the minimum upload or download speed is at a college's regional location. Every time we went in and out of this tiny building, there were at least four or five teenagers crammed under this tiny little overhang because it was raining. They were trying to access internet to do homework and they didn't even have laptops. They're trying to do their homework on their smart phones, using the internet."* – [Interviewee]

- In British Columbia **94%** of households have access to broadband speeds of 50/10 Mbps
- Only **40%** of rural communities and **38%** of rural Indigenous communities have access to the same speeds
- **40%** of respondents in living remote areas access the internet at their band office compared to urban areas (12%)

Key Findings: *Safety in the Workplace*
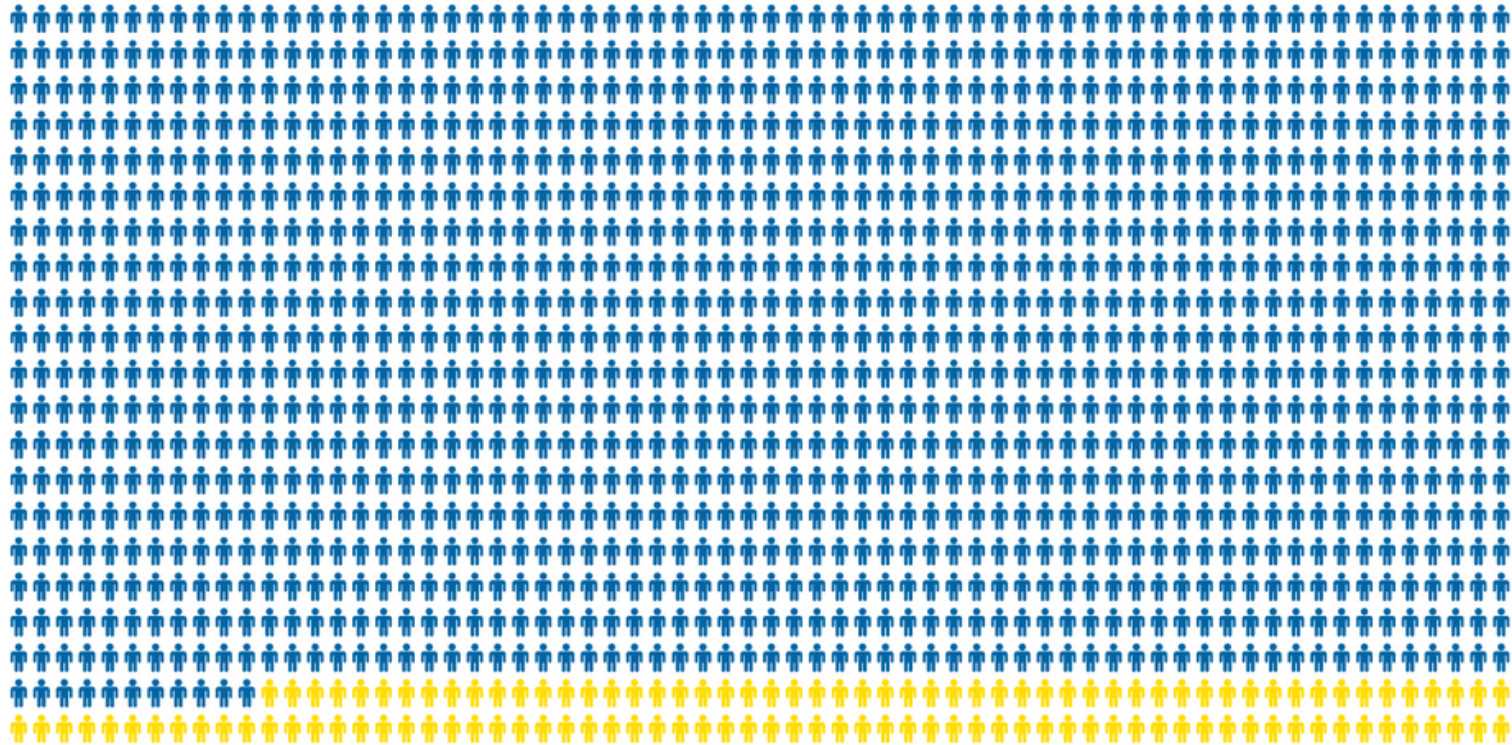
● Indigenous perspective ● Employers

42% of Indigenous respondents experience or know they may experience racism at the workplace

4% of employer respondents suggested that stereotypes, hidden barriers, or discrimination were barriers to hiring Indigenous people

Key Findings: *Safety in the Workplace*

> *"We did a survey of corporate Canada. The majority of companies don't even know what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's corporate Call to Action is, let alone have a response strategy. We've noticed a great engagement gap. These companies are not even engaged to know what their barriers are, to know what their challenges are."* – [Interviewee]

50% of employers surveyed agreed with the statement

"Our organization is doing enough to create a more inclusive environment to increase the number of Indigenous employees in our organization"

38% of Indigenous respondents reported not feeling welcome at workplaces and

42% reported experiencing a lack of cultural understanding in the workplace.

Key Findings: *Safety in the Workplace*

The most popular priorities are all policies that do not require active strategies to recruit and retain Indigenous people

Recruitment and retention strategy	Proportion of employers using this strategy
Equality of treatment	34%
An accepting, respectful, and nonjudgmental work environment	31%
Pay equity	31%
Competitive salary and benefits	30%
Meaningful work (i.e., have purpose at work)	30%
Cultural diversity in the workplace	28%
Opportunities for professional growth and development	27%
Support cultural holidays, family commitments, and protocols, such as taking time off work to take care of children or to grieve a death*	24%
Potential for increased responsibility	23%
Provide necessary technology (e.g., laptop) to work*	22%
Organization policy that respects Indigenous culture	21%
Career development plans	20%
I don't know	9%
We don't have any strategies in place to retain or recruit Indigenous employees	21%

What can you do?

Learning is Doing

Learn about:

1. Historic and ongoing colonialism and the impacts.

2. Covert forms of racism and the emotional tax on equity deserving groups - micro-aggressions, emotional labour, power/privilege and white supremacy culture

3. Resiliency and how to celebrate the diversity of Nations across Turtle Island

4. Allyship and the path forward

Bridget George, Illustrator

First Nations Technology Council

Thank you!

How to get in touch:

Web: **technologycouncil.ca**

Email: **industry@technologycouncil.ca**