Indigenous Labour Market Information Survey and Skills Inventory (ILMI) Pilot

Biennial Report
2021-2023

AES Inc.
Growing Sustainable Partnerships

Submitted to:

Indigenous Affairs Directorate
Employment and Social Development Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction

Aboriginal Employment Services Inc. (AES Inc.) is pleased to present this biennial report that provides the results from the Indigenous Labour Market Information Survey and Skills Inventory Pilot (which will be referred to as the "Pilot" throughout this document) for the two fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. The key purpose of the Pilot is to test processes and tools that will improve First Nation communities' access to timely and useful community-level information about their local labour forces.

The two years covered by this report (2021-2022; 2022-2023) include the fourth and fifth years of full implementation of the Pilot. As was reported in the 2020-2021 Annual Report, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the community-level implementation of the Pilot. These impacts continued into 2021-2022[1] as subsequent waves of COVID challenged communities and changed approaches to work and training while also adjusting priorities. While the pandemic presented challenges, it's impacts also demonstrated the importance of having local, accurate, timely labour market information for Indigenous communities as they adjusted, adapted, and restructured programming.

The Pilot also adapted and adjusted to these needs by adding survey items on COVID impacts and response, adjusting data collection techniques with further support to on-line methods, and adapting Pilot training, engagement, and support tools to take advantage of on-line and hybrid models of delivery. This two-year period also demonstrated the relevance of the Pilot to Indigenous communities as it was expanded to include new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program Agreement Holders and communities, quickly growing due to demand from communities that had heard of the Pilot outcomes and wanted to participate.

This report focuses on these changes noted above and provides an update on progress that has been made in areas such as data collection, data analysis and usage, and an overview of some observed outcomes as reported by the participating communities. In addition to this brief introduction, the report consists of four main sections:

- **Section 2** provides a brief overview and context for the Pilot - outlining key activities, outputs and outcomes

- **Section 3** contains an analysis of the progress in expansion and data collection for the Pilot over the two-year period of 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

- **Section 4** provides an update on achievement of anticipated outcomes for the Pilot

- **Section 5** presents some selected results from an analysis of the labour market data collected by communities during this period (approximately 30,000 respondents)

---

[1] The continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the timing of the expansion of the Pilot led AES and ESDC to agree to produce a biennial report for this time period (2021-2023) rather than two annual reports. The Pilot will return to annual reporting as of 2023-2024.

2. Pilot Description

The *Indigenous Labour Market Information Survey and Skills Inventory Pilot* (the "Pilot")[2] was initiated in 2016-17 to determine how to fill a significant gap in quality and timely local labour market information (LMI) for many First Nations communities.

2.1   Pilot Rationale and Context

It is commonly understood and supported extensively in academic literature that quality labour market information is required to understand the skills and training needs, employment experiences, and educational profiles of local labour forces.[3] It has been recognized in various reports and reviews that there is a lack of up-to-date, on-reserve labour market information.[4,5]

This has direct and immediate impacts on First Nation communities' efforts to design effective employment and training programs, to continue to engage in economic development, and to improve service delivery for their members. LMI regarding job vacancies, skill sets, training needs, employment experiences and educational profiles across First Nation communities is integral to informed decision making. As Statistics Canada does not conduct the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for on-reserve communities[6], the aforementioned information is notably absent from Canada's statistical portrait.

To fill this information gap, Budget 2015 announced $12M over five years (2016-17 to 2021-22) to conduct an on-reserve LMI survey pilot to test processes and tools to improve the level of detail and timeliness of labour market information for First Nations reserve communities. The Pilot was initiated by ESDC in 2016-17 to determine how to fill a significant gap in quality and timely local LMI for many on-reserve First Nations communities. The Pilot has evolved, increased in scope and been extended since 2016-17 while maintaining the overall goal of facilitating a pathway along which participating communities:

- Collect and analyse meaningful data which is reliable, complete and timely
- Maintain full ownership of their data
- Use their own data and information to support policy development, program design, and service delivery in their communities

With this overall goal, the Pilot intersects with and directly supports some actions outlined in the Government of Canada's Action Plan for the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (2023-2029).* Specifically, the Pilot supports:

---

[2] The Pilot was originally titled the On-reserve Labour Market Information and Skills Inventory Project.

[3] Gunderson, M (2018) *On-Reserve Labour Market Information Pilot Project Literature Review Report: Labour Market Information Issues for Indigenous Peoples living On-Reserve*; AES Inc.

[4] OAG (2018) *Report 6—Employment Training for Indigenous People—Employment and Social Development Canada*

[5] OECD (2018), *Indigenous Employment and Skills Strategies in Canada, OECD Reviews on Local Job Creation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264300477-en

[6] Statistics Canada (2018), *Guide to the Labour Force Survey*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-543-g/71-543-g2018001-eng.htm

- *Action 30 - Continue to support Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Indigenous-led data strategies through legislative, regulatory and policy options to help ensure that First Nations, Inuit, and Métis have the sufficient, sustainable data capacity they need to control, manage, protect, and use their data to deliver effective services to their peoples, tell their own stories, participate in federal decision-making processes on matters that impact them, and realize their respective visions for self-determination (p. 32).* The Pilot directly supports this action by working with participating communities to co-develop data collection methods, approaches and systems, and to assist with the analysis of their own data to transform it into information and evidence that can be used to guide their decision-making and priority-setting at the community and First Nation levels.

- *Action 102 - Deploy necessary efforts to support Indigenous peoples' and communities' right to self-determination on socio-economic issues including access to post-secondary education, skills training and employment (p.47)*. The Pilot directly supports this action by providing the necessary LMI required by First Nations to effectively develop and deliver the programs and initiatives associated with accessing post-secondary education, skills, training and employment.

- *Guiding principle - measurable and accountable*. The Pilot works within this guiding principle by supporting data collection and reporting methods that prioritize Indigenous data governance and sovereignty.

2.2   Pilot Objectives and Scope

The Pilot's objectives are threefold:

1. To improve labour market information by supporting First Nations communities in their labour market planning and service delivery
2. To improve labour market information by supporting ESDC in policy and program design for labour market programming, including allocation of funds and decision-making
3. To provide First Nations communities with the financial and technical support required to collect and maintain labour market information throughout the Pilot and determine ongoing requirements to maintain LMI beyond the Pilot.

The Pilot results are expected to support:

- Efforts to reduce the skills and employment gaps, including:
    o Increased participation in the labour market
    o Increased participation in education and skills training
    o Increased employment
    o Improved linkages with employers
- Assist in meeting skill needs of employers
- Steps towards self-determination
- Improved access to funding and related resources
- Policy and program design
- Decision-making processes:
    o Community development and referral services; and
    o Labour market and social programs (e.g., ISET Program, Temporary Foreign Worker Program).

The initial scope for Pilot participation included community members 15 years or older living on-reserve in one of the First Nation communities associated with various ISET Program Agreement Holders that had volunteered to participate in the Pilot. Participating communities provided feedback indicating that the restriction to community members living on-reserve did not align with their programming or overall approach to labour market development. As of April 2021, the Pilot scope was expanded to include participating communities' members who are also living off-reserve. As noted in Table 2.1 below, the participating communities, as of April 2023 in the Pilot have an estimated population of approximately 214,950 members 15 years and older living either on- or off-reserve.

During 2021-2023, the AES Team through outreach and engagement activities approached the overall group of First Nation ISET Program Agreement Holders with information about the Pilot, inviting those who were interested to join the Pilot. There was not a selection process for Pilot participation– all First Nation ISET Program Agreement Holders were invited to participate. Onboarding new communities was done on a continuous basis depending on funding availability.

Table 2.1: Estimated Population by Agreement Holder

Agreement Holder	Estimated 15+ Population of Participating Communities[1]	% of Total Estimated Pilot Participation
First Peoples Development Inc. (FPDI) (MB)	54,067	25.2%
Community Futures Treaty Seven (AB)	24,315	11.3%
Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation (NL)	20,756	9.7%
Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ON)	15,900	7.4%
Anishinabek Nation (Union of Ontario Indians) (ON)	12,389	5.8%
Tribal Chiefs Employment and Training Services Association (TCETSA) (AB)	9,345	4.3%
Mikmaq Employment and Training Services (METS) (NS)	7,952	3.7%
Mamaweswen, The North Shore Tribal Council (ON) [3]	7,859	3.7%
Anishinabek Employment and Training Services (AETS) (ON)	7,590	3.5%
Kiikenomage Kikenjigewen Employment and Training (KKETS) (ON)	7,298	3.4%
Wikwemikong Development Commission (ON)	7,114	3.3%
Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC) (AB)	5,411	2.5%
MST Employment and Training Society (BC) [3]	5,235	2.4%
Moose Cree Training and Employment (ON)	4,871	2.3%
Wolastoquey Tribal Council (NB) [3]	4,473	2.1%
Walpole Island First Nation (ON)	4,018	1.9%
Tlicho Government (NT)	3,475	1.6%
Lillooet Tribal Council (BC)	3,030	1.4%
Miawpukek Human Resources (NL)	2,617	1.2%
ACCESS Employment Assistance Program (BC)[2]	2,000	0.9%
Okanagan Indian Band (BC)	1,805	0.8%
Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation (NL)	1,221	0.6%
Georgina Island First Nation (ON)	819	0.4%
Mushua Innu First Nation (NL)	818	0.4%
Selkirk First Nation (YT)	572	0.3%
Totals	**214,950**	**100%**

[1] Based on Indigenous Services Canada estimates of the age 15+ population as of December 2022 and adjusted by the ISET Program Agreement Holder in cases where this estimate was felt to be inaccurate. Note that each community is encouraged to develop their own estimates and lists to provide updated estimates.

[2] ACCESS is an urban ISET Program Agreement Holder so does not have specific associated communities. The estimated population number is based on clients served and not community populations.

[3] Agreements are made directly with the participating First Nations within these organizations

2.3   Pilot Organization, Structure and Funding

The overall approach to designing and implementing the Pilot is based on the principles of co-development which has evolved over the course of the Pilot with ongoing engagement and consultation among key stakeholders at each stage of the Pilot. Extensive efforts have been made to co-develop a vision and co-implement a strategy that aligns with the principles of reconciliation and movement

towards "nothing about us without us", particularly as it relates to the collection and ownership of the LMI data for specific First Nation communities. For the Pilot, the co-development principle has been implemented via the following examples of ongoing actions and decisions within the Pilot context:

- **Determining scope and definitions** – the Pilot has relied on individual communities to determine who is a *community member* according to their own definitions and criteria. Another example of co-development is how the initial restrictive scope of only members living "on-reserve" was not serving the purpose of the Pilot in developing labour forces or addressing labour market needs so the scope was expanded to include community members living both on- and off-reserve.

- **Timing and flow of data collection** – initially the Pilot was designed to collect annual LMI with a community-based selected time period for data collection. This has evolved through co-development and now varies considerably from community to community. Some communities collect data annually from community members, while others have determined that every two years or so is sufficient for their purposes. Similarly, some communities concentrate their data collection in a specific time period, while others find it more practical and beneficial to have data collection ongoing throughout the year. Communities participate in the Pilot according to what makes sense for their community, which itself tends to evolve with changing priorities, available personnel, and leadership.

- **Type of data collected** – While the initial Pilot survey instrument was largely based on the Labour Force Survey as a starting point, this has evolved through co-development to implement changes suggested by communities to focus on various additional areas such as employment and training challenges, training needs, skill inventory components, and community services. In addition, there has been requests to develop an employer survey to better understand labour market demand.

- **Type of support offered** – Communities have very different needs regarding support to implement the Pilot resulting in the development of support that is flexible and on-demand and can be tailored to address specific requirements. This is an example of co-developing this aspect of the Pilot according to what is needed, rather than assuming every community will receive the same level or type of support.

- **System functionality** – The ILMI System began as a relatively rudimentary data collection system. This system has been further co-developed to include various features and functions that have been identified by communities through ongoing discussions as either necessary or desirable improvements to increase their own capacity to collect, analyse and use the Pilot data. This has included such as making linkages to their own case management systems, file extractions, using their own servers, developing on-demand reporting, and on-line survey administration.

- **Data ownership and data sharing** – Co-development is also illustrated in the use of detailed data sharing agreements. While each community owns their own data, there are explicit data sharing agreements that enable AES and ESDC to work with the anonymized data to monitor the overall Pilot performance, undertake summary analyses, and understand overall trends and considerations in Indigenous labour market development.

- *Analyses and reporting* – Co-development has also been a guiding principle in the continued development of analyses and reporting areas for the Pilot. The development of on-demand reporting is guided by the communities' requests for summary reports, infographic requests, and tailored analyses. This area continues to evolve with ongoing input from communities as they move from a focus largely on data collection to include data usage within their priorities.

- *Feedback mechanisms* – Co-development benefits from ongoing engagements and discussions with communities participating in the Pilot. These discussions occur via the one-on-one support provided through ongoing engagement and support activities provided by AES support team members, as well as through the meetings with the Pilot working group established by ESDC, and an operations group that involves representatives from multiple communities and AES support team members.

Below are three main parties involved in the Pilot along with their roles and responsibilities:

- **Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) –** The ESDC team is actively working and engaging with AES Inc., ISET Program Agreement Holders, First Nations communities and other key stakeholders (e.g., Assembly of First Nations) in an ongoing manner. The main roles and responsibilities of ESDC with respect to this Pilot include:
    o Working with AES Inc., ISET Program Agreement Holders, and First Nation communities throughout the project development and data collection process to inform the overall Pilot design based on rationale and anticipated outcomes;
    o Engaging with and keeping stakeholders informed of the Pilot processes and ensuring active participation;
    o Facilitating linkages of the Project Team, ISET Program Agreement Holders, and First Nations communities with key ESDC resources such as the Canada Job Bank, other sources of LMI, technical resources, and literature;
    o Receiving and reviewing summarized (aggregate) data from the Pilot on an ongoing basis to monitor progress; and
    o Providing oversight of the funds allocated to AES Inc.

- **AES Inc. –** AES Inc. has been funded by ESDC to develop and implement measures, including processes and tools, which support ongoing collection of LMI that is: (1) annual at a minimum, (2) ongoing (throughout the Pilot and beyond) and (3) local (community level). AES Inc. is working closely with ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nations collecting data over the course of the Pilot to fine-tune processes and approaches, including funding approaches. AES Inc. holds sub-agreements with all participating ISET Program Agreement Holders or First Nations communities who are participating directly in the Pilot. The main roles and responsibilities of AES Inc. include:
    o Developing funding agreements between AES Inc. and ISET Program Agreement Holders and providing funding;
    o Developing privacy and confidentiality agreements between AES Inc., ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nations;
    o Engaging and conducting community consultation with participating ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nations;

- Co-developing tools and processes with participating ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nations communities to enhance data collection of on-reserve LMI data;
- Providing on-going support and training to the communities;
- Developing and providing participating ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nations with access to a secure database to store and access individual-level data;
- Developing First Nations Community Job Banks with linkages to the National Job Bank; and
- Conducting and supporting analysis of LMI data.

- **ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nation Communities –** ISET Program Agreement Holders and some First Nation communities are funded directly through agreements with AES Inc. The remainder of participating First Nation communities are funded through sub-agreements with their associated ISET Program Agreement Holders. The ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nation communities work closely with the AES Inc. Project Team to assist with design and implementation of the Pilot. The main roles and responsibilities of the ISET Program Agreement Holders and First Nation communities include:
    - Conducting surveys of their on-reserve working-age population;
    - Developing and maintaining a skills inventory of their working age community members;
    - Using the skills inventory to help link community members with available jobs and/or skills development and job training;
    - Providing aggregate data to ESDC to support program decision-making and design; and
    - Assisting in ongoing monitoring, reporting and collections of lessons learned and promising practices.

Funding for the Pilot is provided via a contribution agreement between ESDC and AES Inc. who then signs individual agreements with participating ISET Agreement Holders or directly with Indigenous communities (if they are not participating under an ISET Program Agreement Holder). Amendments to the original 2017 contribution agreement between ESDC and AES Inc. are as follows:

- Original Agreement ($3,419,233 – signed November 2017)

- Amendment for implementation and data collection funds to communities to flow through AES Inc. ($6,745,603 – signed January 2019)

- Amendment to extend the Pilot project end date due to pandemic ($0 – signed November 2020)

- Amendment for Pilot expansion to include additional communities and members living off-reserve ($8,800,000 – signed October 2021)

- Amendment to extend the Pilot project end date ($0 – signed February 2023).

Table 2.2. outlines the Pilot funding allocation by fiscal year including extensions and expansion amounts according to signed amendments as of March 2023.

Table 2.2: Pilot Funding Allocation

	ISET Program Agreement Holders and Communities' Data Collection	Services to ISET Program Agreement Holders and Communities	Total Funds Allocated
Year 1 – 2017/18	$0	$288,089	**$288,089**
Year 2 – 2018/19	$1,085,262	$954,087	**$2,039,349**
Year 3 – 2019/20	$794,609	$1,011,235	**$1,805,844**
Year 4 – 2020/21	$871,899	$970,146	**$1,842,045**
Year 5 – 2021/22	$3,729,646	$1,557,952	**$5,287,598**
Year 6 – 2022/23	$1,221,665	$1,787,032	**$3,008,697**
Year 7 – 2023/24	$2,657,930	$2,035,284	**$4,693,214**
TOTAL Allocation	**$10,361,011**	**$8,603,825**	**$18,964,836**

2.4 Pilot Logic/Theory and Anticipated Results

To assist in monitoring and reporting on results for the Pilot, AES Inc. developed a logic model outlining activity groups, key outputs, and anticipated outcomes. This logic model continues to be updated and revised as the Pilot evolves.

Figure 2.1 below highlights the six main anticipated outcomes of the Pilot. The more immediate or early outcome includes:

- **Outcome #1** *(Immediate):* Increased First Nations' communities' expertise to conduct surveys and develop and maintain skills inventories based on data collected within communities

The anticipated mid-term and long-term outcomes include:

- **Outcome #2** *(Intermediate):* Improved timeliness and detail of labour market information (LMI) for First Nations communities

- **Outcome #3** *(Intermediate):* Increased First Nations' communities' expertise in using LMI to identify priorities and make decisions regarding employment and training programming and economic development

- **Outcome #4** *(Longer-Term):* Improved program design and service delivery for labour force and economic development among First Nation communities

- **Outcome #5** *(Longer-Term):* Increased capacity of Government of Canada to make informed policy and program design decisions for Indigenous labour market programming and other ESDC labour market programs

- **Outcome #6** (*Ultimate Outcome*): Reduced skills and employment gaps within First Nations communities when compared with non-Indigenous populations.

Figure 2.1: Indigenous Labour Market Information Survey and Skills Inventory Pilot Logic

ACTIVITIES

Planning	Funding	Developing	Collecting	Analysing	Reporting	Linking

OUTPUTS

| workplans, working group meetings, method reports, lit reviews, | agreements, contracts, funds | training materials, workshops, support lines, databases, methods, survey instruments, protocols, tools | Interviews, data, files, consent forms, completed surveys, lessons learned, best practices | coding, tables, summaries, findings, recommendations | decks, presentations, reports, quarterly updates, infographics, tailored reports | partnerships, job postings, training opportunities, action plans, programming, policy development |

Increased First Nations' expertise to conduct surveys and develop and maintain skills inventories based on data collected within communities

OUTCOMES

Improved timeliness and detail of First Nations labour market information (LMI)

Increased First Nation communities' expertise in using LMI to identify priorities and make decisions regarding employment and training programming and economic development

Improved program design and service delivery for labour force and economic development among First Nation communities

Increased capacity of GoC to make informed policy and program design decisions for Indigenous labour market programming and other ESDC labour market programs

Reduced skills and employment gaps in First Nations communities

3. Overview of Pilot Progress (2021-22; 2022-23)

## 3.1   ILMI Pilot Expansion Results – Significant Growth

Despite the challenges initially encountered with the pandemic and the subsequent recovery period, the Pilot grew significantly and rapidly over the two-year period of 2021-22 and 2022-23. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, increased engagement with ISET Program Agreement Holders and communities by AES Inc. and ESDC resulted in a significant increase in participation. The number of participating communities more than doubled increasing from 44 in March 2021 to 114 by March 2023. Similarly, the number of participating ISETS also more than doubled from 11 in March 2021 to 25 in March 2023.

Figure 3.1: ILMI Pilot Expansion Results – Communities and ISET Program Agreement Holders
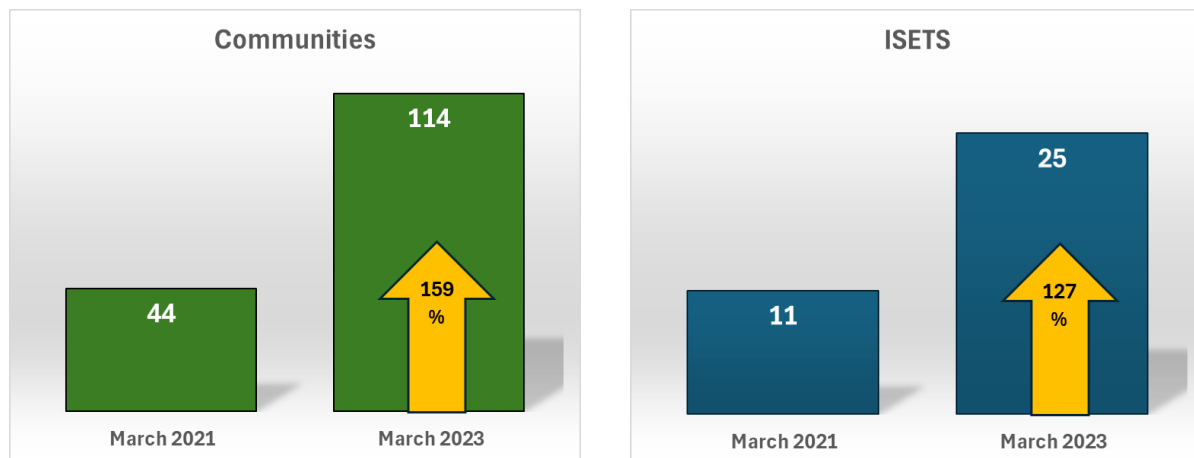
The population within the Pilot scope (community members 15+) also grew substantially due to both the increased number of participating communities, and the scope expansion to include community members living off-reserve. Overall, during this period, Pilot coverage increased from an estimated 36,340 to 214,950 community members which represents nearly six-fold growth (491%) (see Figure 3.2). Approximately one-third (32%) of this growth was attributable to the expansion in number of participating communities' on-reserve populations being added in the Pilot, while the remainder (68%) was due to the expansion in Pilot scope to include community members living off-reserve from all participating communities.

**Figure 3.2: ILMI Pilot Expansion Results – Coverage of Community Members**
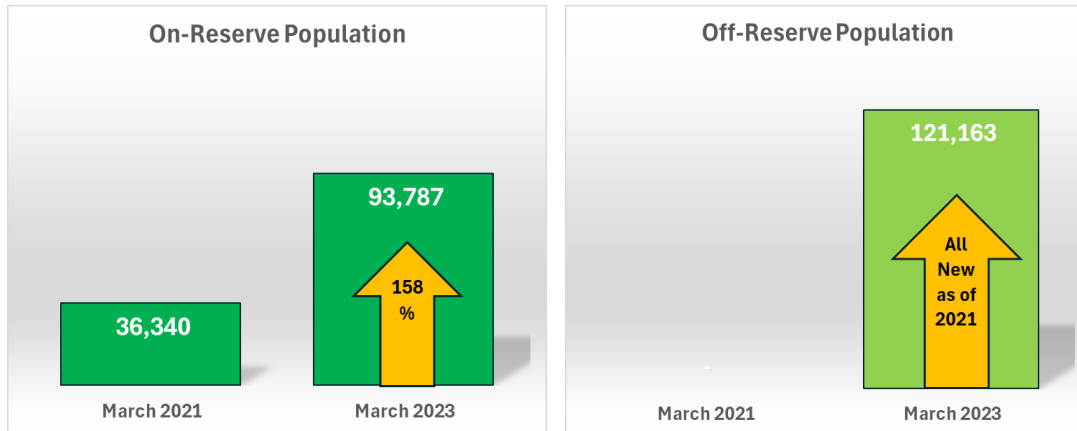
This magnitude of growth required substantial increases in engagement, training and support by the AES Inc. team to bring communities on board, assist with developing their data collection capacity, survey monitoring, and eventual data analysis and usage. During this period, the AES team increased from one to three staff assigned to ongoing direct engagement, training and support along with increased resources from the systems and analysis teams.

3.2   ILMI Pilot Data Collection Results – Significant Progress

Examined by quarter, the number of completed surveys across the two-year time period increased overall with a low of 894 survey completions in Q1 of 2021-22 to a high of 5,922 in Q4 of 2022-23. As illustrated in Figure 3.3, the last three quarters of 2022-23 showed substantial increases over previous quarters in the period. Data collection with community members living off-reserve has consistently increased over the period which is to be expected as the Pilot scope was broadened as of Q3-4 2021-22.

Figure 3.3: Survey Completions by Quarter
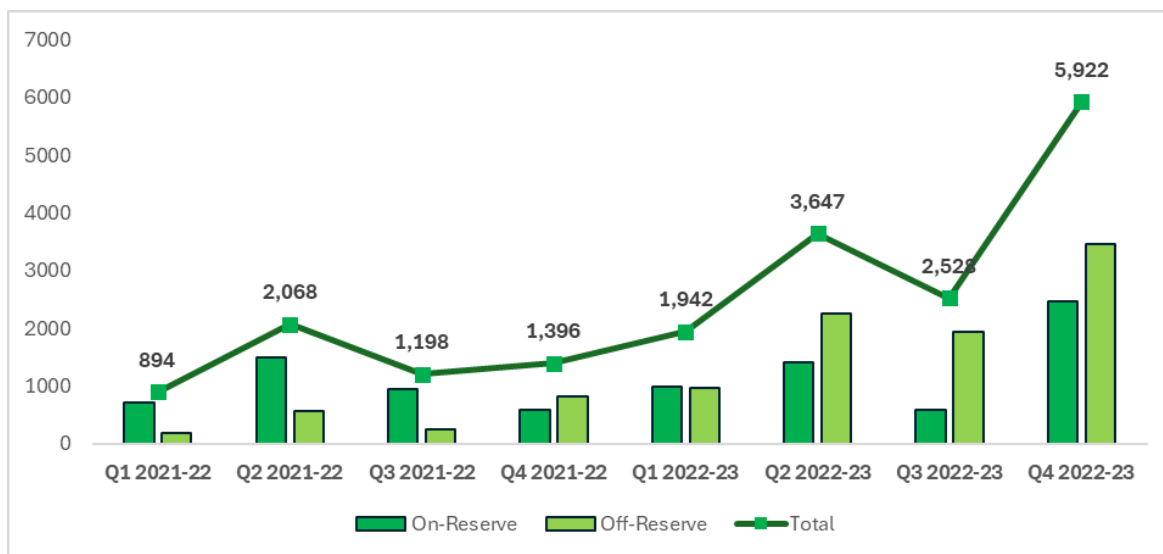
The intention built into the Pilot methods is that communities will attempt to contact community members (both on and off reserve) annually to participate in the survey and update their information. Longitudinal data is an important component of LMI, as it allows communities to identify changes and trends occurring among their community members as they engage with the labour market and participate in training and employment programs. As illustrated in Figure 3.4, much of the growth in survey completions is attributable to an increase in unique individuals participating in the Pilot. This has occurred particularly with the expansion of scope to include members living off-reserve and several new communities joining the Pilot in late 2021. It is anticipated that the total number of surveys will proportionally increase more rapidly than the total unique individuals as the Pilot moves into 2023-24 assuming the number of communities remains the same, and individuals are asked to complete the LMI Survey a second or third time.

Figure 3.4: Individuals Surveyed by Quarter
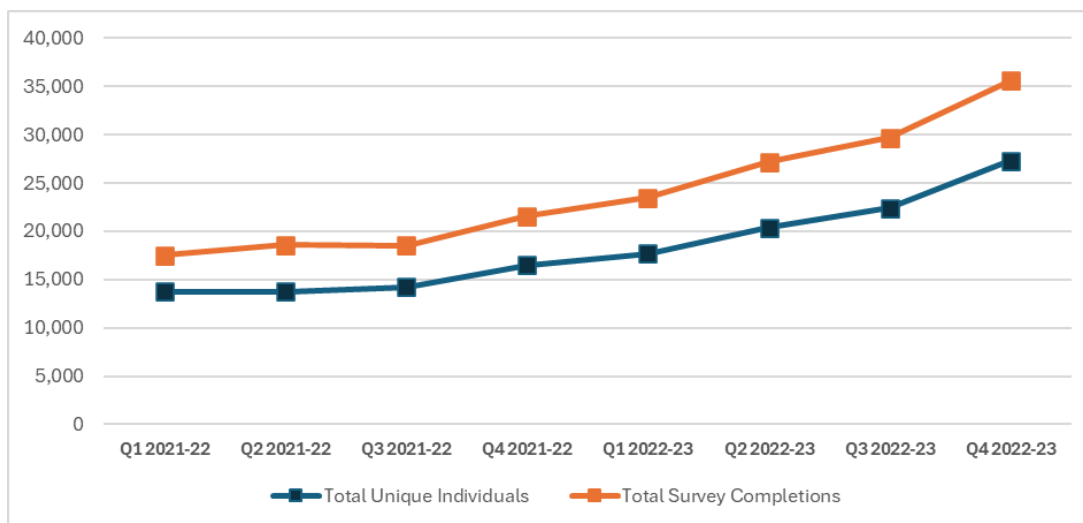
As indicated in the previous Annual Report (2020-21), the pandemic essentially shut down data collection for most communities as they responded and tried to adjust staffing, data collection approaches, and managing community priorities. As illustrated in Figure 3.5, data collection has continuously increased over this two-year period to surpass pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 3.5: Survey Completions by Year and Place of Residence
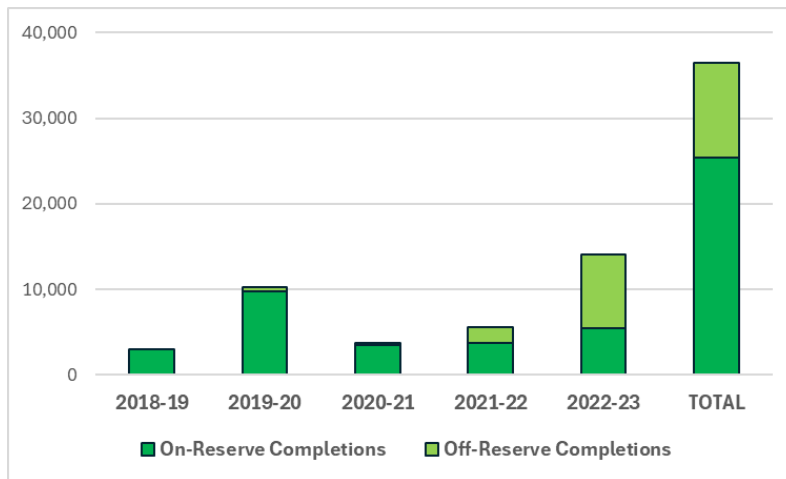
4. Preliminary ILMI Pilot Results

4.1   Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes

The anticipated outcomes for the Pilot were identified in collaboration with the Pilot working group members in the early stages of Pilot development. These outcomes have been updated as the Pilot evolves. As outlined previously in the Pilot Logic Model (Figure 2.1), the anticipated immediate and intermediate outcomes for the ILMI Pilot are:

- **Outcome #1** *(Immediate):* Increased First Nations' communities' expertise to conduct surveys and develop and maintain skills inventories based on data collected within communities

- **Outcome #2** *(Intermediate):* Improved timeliness and detail of labour market information (LMI) for First Nations communities.

- **Outcome #3** *(Intermediate):* Increased First Nations' communities' expertise in using LMI to identify priorities and make decisions regarding employment and training programming and economic development

During this two-year period, the Pilot ILMI was successful in making progress towards achieving each of these outcomes.

4.1.1   *Increased expertise in conducting surveys/skills inventories*

Training on survey methods and monitoring is provided by the AES Team to all participating communities. In addition, ongoing support to communities' field staff for data collection, data cleaning/coding, and reporting is provided on demand throughout the year. The AES Team monitors support requests to determine if additional training or adjustments are needed throughout the year. In addition, a working group made up of community survey team members meet on a quarterly basis to network, share approaches, and provide feedback to the AES Team on any issues or challenges with the survey instrument, implementation, and ILMI system.

Depending on the size of the community, there is on average two to four staff members directly involved in the data collection for each community, and then another two to three staff members at the ISETS Agreement Holder level who are involved in Pilot implementation. ***This translates to an estimate of 340 survey field staff within communities and an additional 65 staff at ISET Program Agreement Holder level supporting survey implementation***.[7] As a result, over 400 people have been trained by the AES Team on the following:

- Survey theory and practice overview
- Confidentiality and data security
- Questionnaire development
- Building survey frames
- Data collection methods
- Interviewing techniques

---

[7] The actual number of trained individuals is higher given staff turn-over (particularly over the pandemic period), and inclusion of summer students.

- Data entry and data cleaning
- NOC, NAICS and CIP coding
- Use of ILMI database
- Monitoring response rates and survey implementation
- Development of queries and reporting

As of the pandemic, training transferred from primarily in-person to online synchronous, facilitated sessions with the AES Team. Training during the period covered by this report is now more of a hybrid model depending on the preference of each community. Training has also become more modular with multiple sessions of 1-2 hours in length. Ongoing training is provided to keep communities' survey teams updated on changes to the ILMI system, new reports available, and new survey modules. Training sessions are usually community-specific focused on the survey team within a specific community or specific ISET.

The training and support have contributed to communities' survey teams developing expertise in conducting surveys/skills inventories. Many individuals participating in training have had limited prior experience with systematic data collection, survey methods and coding. The training and support from the Pilot combined with ongoing field experience have resulted in knowledgeable, capable survey teams available in communities to add capacity to their existing data collection and analysis resources.

4.1.2   *Improved timeliness and detail of labour market information*

For most communities participating in the Pilot, this is the first time they have had access to systematic labour market information collected from their community members. Of particular interest and relevance is the skills inventory that is being developed for each community along with the expressions of areas of interest regarding future plans for training and employment, and specific challenges and barriers to training and employment. As outlined in Figure 4.1, there are four core survey modules for the ILMI that are designed to provide LMI for various uses. These modules each collect data from community members that can be used for individual purposes (e.g., matching an individual with an employment opportunity), or analysed together for community-level purposes (e.g., priority setting, budget development). The ILMI system that has been developed to support the Pilot has the functionality of an interactive database that a program officer (with the proper security clearance) can use to identify 10 individuals in the community who are interested in training in construction trades to link with a partner employer interested in 1st year apprentices. As well, the ILMI system can be accessed to answer community or cohort-level questions such as what are the most frequently cited employment challenges cited by community members under 30 years of age.

Figure 4.1: ILMI Core Survey Modules and LMI-based Decision-Making Uses at Community Level
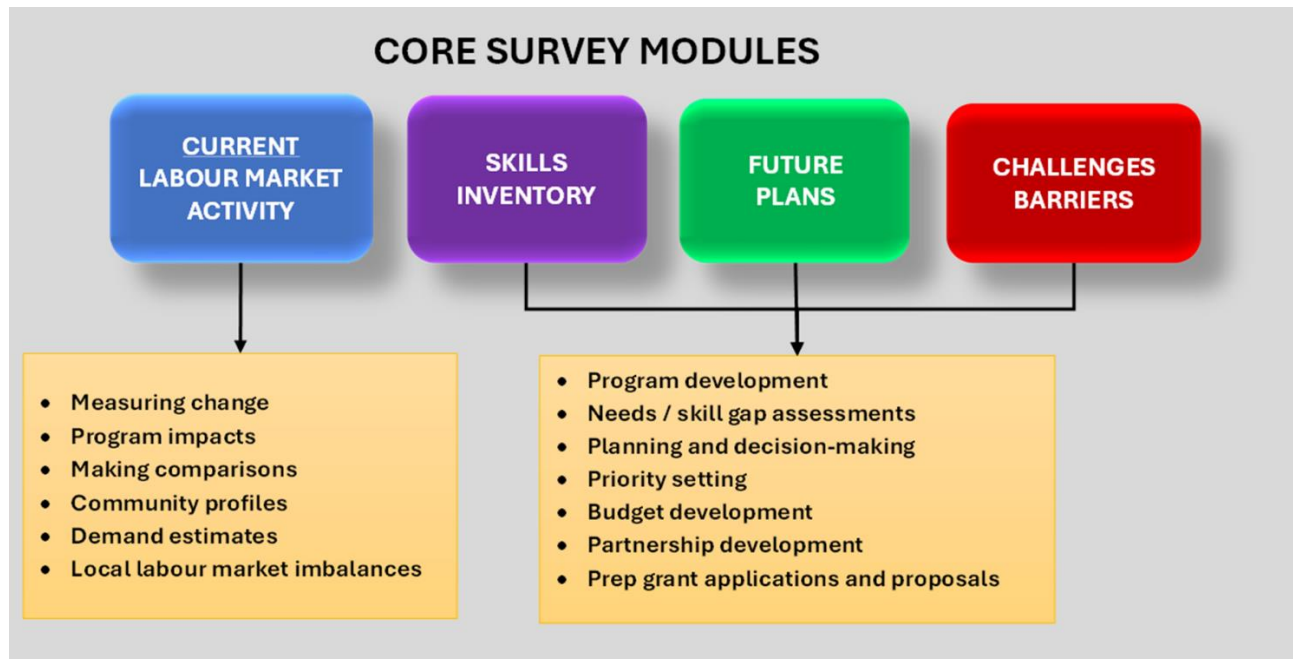
Each module is designed to systematically collect useful data from community members to address various LMI-based questions that community leaders, directors and program managers might have to inform their decision-making, setting priorities, targeting programs, and designing interventions. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, as communities progress in data collection, the types of questions they are answering with their LMI data can include individual-, cohort-, or community-level queries. The ILMI system results in timely data, in that as soon as an individual's questionnaire is entered and validated in the system, their data are included in the built-in queries and on-demand reporting.

Figure 4.1: ILMI Core Survey Modules and Examples of LMI-based Questions

CURRENT LABOUR MARKET ACTIVITY

- Do we have a challenge with youth unemployment?
- Is our employment program having any impact on the level/quality of job that participants are obtaining?
- Has the unemployment rate changed among older workers over the past two years?
- How does the employment profile of our community compare with others?

SKILLS INVENTORY

- How many people under 30 in our community have training or work experience in web-programming?
- Employer X is opening a new facility – how many community members currently match the skills/NOC profiles for these new opportunities?
- Who in the community could be approached to help establish a summer camp program for youth to harvest and process medicinal plants?

FUTURE PLANS

- How many women have indicated an interest in training in construction? Do we have enough to develop a program?
- How much demand is there likely to be for additional training requests within the next 12 months?
- To help identify priorities, how many youth have expressed interest in green tech or environmental issues in future career plans?

CHALLENGES BARRIERS

- What type of employment supports will likely be needed by young men under 30?
- How many people would benefit from mental health supports while in training programs?
- Which local employers might be willing to partner with the community and local high schools to provide work integrated learning experiences for our youth?

Another important addition to the Pilot that has contributed to improved timeliness and detail of labour market information for First Nations communities is the development and implementation of community-level job banks. The ILMI system developed for the Pilot now provides each of the 114 participating communities access to their own tailored job bank. Partnering with Canada Job Bank, the ILMI system can be used to identify employment opportunities within a tailored radius of a community (e.g., 50 km) that are currently posted on Canada Job Bank (updated daily). As well, the system has the capacity for communities to enter their own employment opportunities in their job banks, automate notifications to job seekers that link job posting NOC with individuals' areas of interest (coded for NOC), set parameters for searches, and invite local employers to post jobs on their job bank. As this ILMI system function is further developed and communities become more aware and engaged with this resource, we anticipate it will be a useful tool and key contributor to LMI that is timely and detailed to inform community members or potential employment opportunities.

As the Pilot progresses, there are ongoing adjustments being made to the survey instrument to improve questions, reduce response burden, and better target the most relevant LMI for First Nations communities. These revisions and adjustments are being co-developed with participating communities and ISET Program Agreement Holders. The AES Team collects ongoing feedback on Pilot issues and challenges via the working relationships that have been developed with community survey teams and ISET Program Agreement Holder representatives as a result of the support and training that is provided on a continuous basis. During the period covered by this report, there was a significant revision to the survey questionnaire undertaken to focus on only the essential information needed for the *Labour Market Activity* module and to add to the *Skills Inventory* and *Challenges/Barriers* modules. Given the unique conditions related to the COVID pandemic, another temporary module was also added to the survey to collect data on COVID impacts on communities' labour markets.

Given the modular design of the survey instrument, it is relatively easy to add modules that some communities might need or find useful. These modules can be turned on or off for a specific community depending on the amount/duration of data collection required. For example, during this period, a housing module is being developed given the identified challenges to employment and training that community members are identifying that are related to housing conditions. Other modules that have been identified for potential further development include childcare, language/culture, green technology/future skills. Another gap that has been identified by some communities is the need to gather LMI from employers to better understand the demand side of the labour market.

4.1.3   Increased expertise in using LMI to identify priorities and make decisions

The AES Team was able to observe several examples over the period covered by this report (2021-2023) that are contributing to some of the anticipated outcome for the ILMI in the areas of data usage to improve planning, service delivery and economic development. Some of these examples include:

- **Planning training programs** – Multiple First Nation communities have identified that the *Training Interest Report* in the ILMI System lets them know the type of training programs their members are interested in. This information is very useful in making decisions on the types of training program to offer ISET Program clients.

- ***Working with partners on labour supply*** - Multiple First Nation communities have been querying the ILMI skills inventory database for members with specific job skills and training to fill jobs with their Industry partners. Some First Nations have reported using the LMI skills inventory and training interest data to plan training for community members to be able to take full advantage of employment opportunities that will result from economic development projects with partners (e.g., green energy, fisheries).

- ***Improved employment and training service delivery for community members*** - The LMI survey goes more in-depth than most ISET Program intake forms, so there is the benefit of having more detailed client information available for program officers. This results in less work for employment counsellors in terms of collecting information on clients availing of ISET Program services and following up with these clients to record results of the services provided. Additionally, the ILMI Resume Builder feature can be used to generate a resume for clients based on their survey data to help with job search.

- ***Improving data sovereignty among First Nation communities*** – All communities own the data they collect through the ILMI Pilot and enter data sharing agreements with AES to provide only summarized (aggregate) data with ESDC. The AES Team has developed a "data gateway" within the ILMI System that enables any participating community to access and download its own data at any time, and in essence physically "possess" its own data and to download anonymous individual-level data that can be used for analysis purposes. These types of changes and approaches move the ILMI initiative towards greater data sovereignty for Indigenous communities and allow more opportunities and choices for data management and storage.

- ***Prepare proposals and grant submissions*** – Various First Nations have used the LMI data they have collected and analysed to prepare proposals and grant applications for projects related to apprenticeship training, youth employment, social services, and housing support.

- ***Updated community member contact information*** – Multiple First Nation communities have identified the usefulness of the ILMI Pilot in helping maintain an accurate mailing list of community members that is updated annually. The communities can generate a data file that can be exported to Avery labels. This can be used to help First Nation Communities stay in touch with their members. This has been used to notify community members of job fairs, recruitment opportunities, and training related correspondence.

5. Selected Analyses from ILMI Pilot

The AES Team in conjunction with ESDC and the participating communities have been conducting ongoing analyses of the ILMI Pilot data for both monitoring and information generation purposes. A few examples of these analyses are presented in this section to demonstrate the utility of the data, and to identify various areas of interest moving forward as additional data are collected.

5.1   Respondent Profile

The profile below is based on a data extract that includes surveys completed between January 2019 and August 2023. In total, there were 29,182 unique individuals who completed surveys during this period.

Gender

Overall, there are more women (57%) than men (43%) who complete surveys with less than one percent of respondent indicating that they are non-binary (<1%). This indicates that men are likely underrepresented in the survey sample collected to date. This is a common challenge in community and general population surveying with usually higher response rates obtained from women.

Figure 5.1: Gender Profile of ILMI Respondents
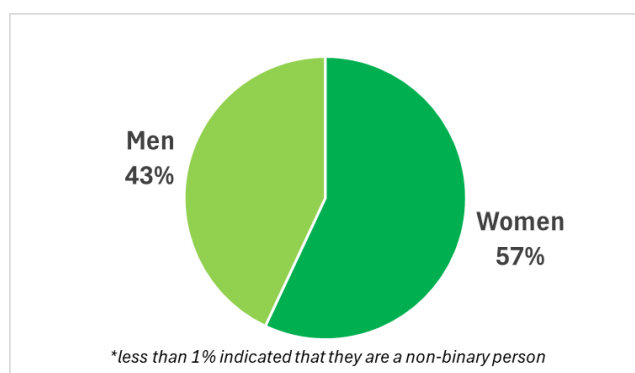
Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182)

Age

The ILMI Pilot includes all participating community members aged 15 or older. Communities have found it important to include those at or beyond regular retirement age of 65 to ensure that their community skill inventories capture the skills of those with more experience and often times more of the traditional skills for their community. As illustrated in Table 5.1, there is good representation from all age groups that overall is similar in profile to the most recent Census data available. The ILMI Pilot sample profile is a relatively close match to the Census 2021 First Nations On-Reserve Profile. Given the Pilot has been recently expanded to include community members living off-reserve, the overall ILMI sample is likely to move towards greater similarity to the Census 2021 First Nations Overall Profile over the upcoming years.

Table 5.1: Age Profiles of ILMI Respondents and Census 2021 First Nations

Age Group	ILMI Survey Respondents	First Nations On-Reserve *(Census 2021)*	First Nations Overall *(Census 2021)*
15 to 24	22%	23%	20%
25 to 34	22%	19%	18%
35 to 44	18%	16%	15%
45 to 54	16%	15%	14%
55 to 64	13%	15%	16%
65 plus	8%	11%	20%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182) and Census 2021

5.2   Labour Force Status

Expanding the Definition of Employment

The on-going co-development of the Current Labour Market Activity module on the survey instrument has resulted in additional survey items being included and considered in understanding labour market activity within First Nations communities. While the survey can measure the labour force status of community members in a more classic definition (e.g., employed, unemployed looking for work, etc.), through the addition of extra questions, the survey can also measure labour force status in an often more meaningful way for communities by including labour associated with practicing traditional skills and/or participating in occasional or informal paid jobs. By expanding the definition of "employed" to include these extra categories, the ILMI Pilot provides communities with a more accurate picture of who is looking for regular employment, a more detailed skill inventory, and a better understanding of their local labour market.

As illustrated in Figure 5.2, the overall labour forces status using the ***classic definition*** results in an employment rate of approximately 45% and an unemployment rate of 11%. When a more accurate, ***expanded definition*** is used for labour status that includes actively practicing traditional skills and participating in occasional/informal paid jobs (characteristic of some community labour markets), the employment rate rises to 53% and the unemployment rate drops to approximately 9%. Other status includes activities such as studying, retired, or caring for family members.

Figure 5.2: Labour Force Status of ILMI Respondents (classic vs. expanded definitions)
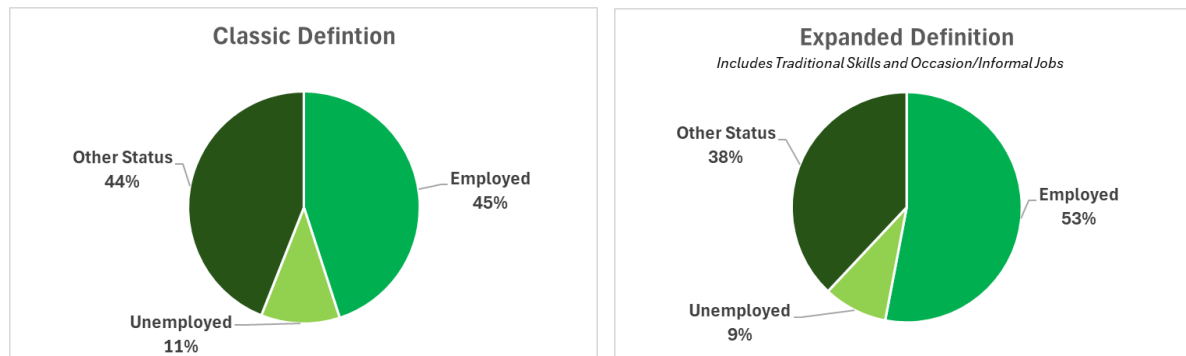
Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182)

Longitudinal Understanding of Employment Status

Given that the ILMI Pilot has now been implemented by a few communities for multiple years, there is a **limited amount of longitudinal data** now available within which the same individual has completed the survey multiple times (repeated measures). This stage has only been obtained for a few communities, so results should be interpreted with caution with limited inferences, but it does demonstrate the potential power of this type of data as more communities start to follow-up with their community members. As an example, Table 5.2 presents the results for 900 participants who each completed the survey at three points in time: 1) 2019-2020; 2) 2020-2021; and 3) 2022-2023. Following these 900 individuals longitudinally indicates that specifically for this group, there has not been a lot of fluctuations in labour status (even with the advent of the pandemic). To further understand this specific group's results, additional analyses would need to be conducted to understand how they may differ according to mobility, age, occupations, experience, and education. As this longitudinal cohort grows in size, AES will undertake to develop additional analyses in these areas.

Table 5.2: Labour Force Status by Time Period for ILMI Respondents with Multiple Surveys

Labour Force Status (including traditional skills and occasional/informal jobs)	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23
Employed	48.4%	48.2%	51.2%
Unemployed	10.4%	9.3%	10.3%
Other Status	41.2%	42.5%	38.4%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: ILMI Pilot (n=900)

Relationship between Education Levels and Employment Status

In understanding employment rates, there are various types of data collected on the ILMI survey instrument that can assist a community in making links or finding relationships between employment rates and areas that they can support through ISET Programs or other community-based initiatives. For example, the ILMI clearly demonstrates an overall relationship between highest level of education completed and being employed. As illustrated in Figure 5.3, the employment rate among those who

have completed post-secondary education (e.g., apprenticeship, college, university) is 71% compared to a 45% employment rate among those who have not completed any post-secondary education.

The data from the ILMI could be further analysed at a community level to understand some additional co-variants such as age. For example, older community members are more likely to have no post-secondary education, but also more likely to be retired and not employed. Similarly, at the other end of the age continuum, younger community members under 25 are also more likely to have not yet completed post-secondary education, but also are more likely to still be students and not employed. As well, the ILMI survey collects additional data on job type, quality, and match with education/experience. These types of additional community-level, tailored analyses can provide more interpretive power to decision-makers in developing priorities, budgets and plans.

Figure 5.3: Employment Rate by Education Level for ILMI Respondents
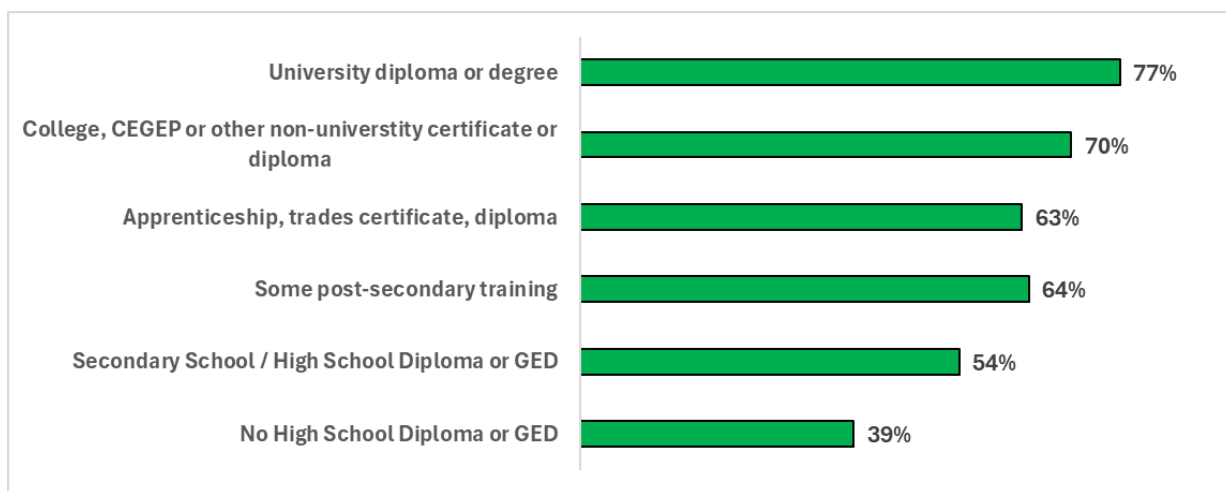
Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182)

5.3   ILMI Analysis Example: Understanding Youth Employment and Training Needs

As communities continue to collect more LMI data, they have begun working with the AES Team and with their own analysts to better understand their communities' needs and local labour markets. One cohort that has been of interest for many communities has been their youth (generally defined as under 30 years of age, but this varies by community). Below are some examples of different types of analyses that have been conducted for communities (but using the entire sample in this case). This type of analyses could be conducted for any specific group or cohort assuming sufficient sample size (e.g., education levels, gender, other age groups, geographic variables, etc.).

Relationship between Unemployment Rates and Age

Having a better understanding of the group that is unemployed and looking for work is important for communities in tailoring or adjusting their training and employment programming or targeting partnerships with potential employers. As illustrated in Figure 5.4, the age group that is most likely unemployed and looking for a job are youth aged 20-29 (12%). This analysis removes the youth aged 15-19 who are more likely to be full-time students. The lowest rate of unemployment is among those aged

65 years or older (2%) which is not surprising given retirement rates in this group (although still important to know that this group with often considerable work experience and skills has some people looking for paid employment).

Figure 5.4: Unemployment Rate by Age Group for ILMI Respondents
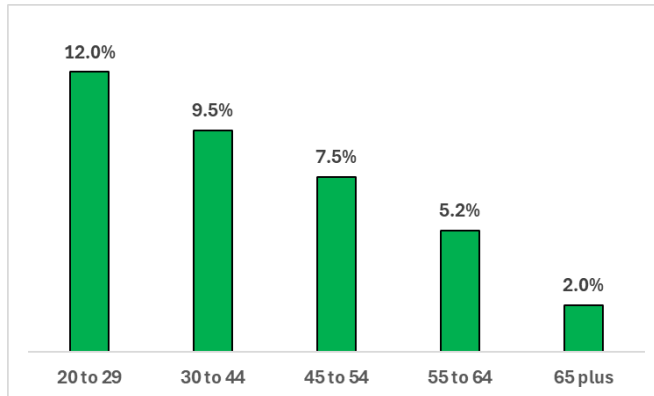
Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182)

Understanding Youth's Challenges and Barriers

The key to understanding what services and supports youth need with respect to training and employment is to identify the challenges and barriers they are currently facing as they attempt to navigate various systems. Often targeted, tailored services and supports are the most effective. The ILMI Survey collects extensive information on challenges and barriers to better understand and target initiatives. As illustrated in Table 5.3, a one-size-fits-all solution is unlikely to get the desired outcomes for a community's youth.

Employment Challenges and Barriers - For example, youth report much higher levels of **gaps in experience, education/training, and skills** as medium or large barriers to them finding employment compared with older cohorts.

Training / Education Challenges and Barriers - Similarly, youth are more likely to report having medium or large **challenges related to having education pre-requisites and challenges finding appropriate training.** These are within the scope of most ISET Program's supports and services but may need to be further tailored for youth clients.

Health Challenges and Barriers - Of particular interest is the high proportion of youth that are reporting **challenges with their emotional and mental health**. This finding is similar to other general population surveys in which youth are reporting consistently higher levels of emotional distress manifesting in increased rates of anxiety and depression.[8] For communities attempting to support their youth as they transition into employment, this challenge impacting every one in four youth in their communities (26%) may require investments in adaptations to workplaces and supports and services that bridge across health and social services along with employment and training involvement.

---

[8] Canadian Institute of Health Information (2022) – *Mental Health of Children and Youth in Canada;* Conference Board of Canada (2022) - *The Health and Economic Imperative of Investing in Children's Healthcare.*

Table 5.3: Challenges and Barriers by Age

CHALLENGE / BARRIER	% Youth Under 30 (medium-large challenge)	% 30+ Years (medium-large challenge)	Difference (% points)
Employment Challenges & Barriers			
Not having enough work experience to get a job	**42%**	**25%**	**+17**
Not having the skills that employers are looking for	**37%**	**25%**	**+12**
Challenge finding and getting a job	**46%**	**34%**	**+11**
Not having enough or right type of education/training to get a job	**40%**	**30%**	**+10**
Living in a community that is far away from jobs	35%	31%	+4
Challenge keeping a job	18%	16%	+2
Challenges finding money needed to apply for jobs and go to interviews	30%	28%	+2
Challenge finding money to pay for things related to job (e.g., uniforms, boots, safety equipment)	26%	25%	+1
Training / Educational Challenges & Barriers			
Not having education requirements for training or education programs	**37%**	**29%**	**+8**
Challenges finding appropriate training	**34%**	**28%**	**+5**
Living in a community that is far away from training opportunities	32%	29%	+3
Challenges finding money needed for training program	37%	36%	+1
Challenges staying in training	17%	16%	+1
Health Challenges & Barriers			
Challenges with emotional or mental health	**26%**	**19%**	**+7**
Challenges with substance use or addictions	9%	10%	-1
Health and safety concerns related to COVID-19	11%	15%	-3
Challenges with physical health	**15%**	**21%**	**-6**

Source: ILMI Pilot (n=29,182)

5.4   ILMI Analysis Example: Understanding COVID-19 Impacts

Implementing the ILMI Pilot has engaged communities with data collection tools and using data for decision-making. This was particularly evident during the pandemic when a COVID-19 impacts module was co-developed with input from communities, ESDC and AES to quickly collect community-level data. Communities were able to assess the extent to which the data collected on pandemic impacts on their local labour markets were matching their observations. In addition to the community-level analyses, the AES Team developed some infographics to provide overall data on pandemic impacts (see Figure 5.5). *Having access to rapid data collection infrastructure (system, skilled field teams) for unanticipated issues, situations, or contexts that communities can suddenly encounter can assist First Nation communities with not only employment and training issues, but also community well-being and decision-making during risk-management situations.*

Figure 5.5: Unemployment Rate by Age Group for ILMI Respondents

First Nations LMI Pilot Project - COVID-19 Impacts

Summary of survey data - October 2020 to January 2022

COVID-19 Impact Questions were added to the ILMI Survey in October 2020 to record the impact of COVID-19 on community labour markets and community members

4,488 individuals completed the COVID-19 Impact Questions in the survey

12% of the On-Reserve 15+ population among participating communities

Based on the current number of respondents, the accuracy of the data is within + or - 1 percentage point

$ 47% reported major/moderate impacts of the pandemic on meeting their **financial obligations or essential needs**

74% reported major/moderate impacts of the pandemic on their ability to participate in **gatherings and community events**

32% reported impacts of the pandemic on their **training/education** activities or plans

"I delayed starting my training / education"

"Training / education courses shifted to online or distance learning"

Impacts on employment

47% had a job or were looking for work during the pandemic (from March 2020 to the time of the survey)

Of these, **56%** felt that the pandemic impacted their **job situation or job search**

It became harder to find a job

My employer decreased the number of employees / salaries / hours/ shifts

I temporarily lost my job or source of income

My employer temporarily closed their business

There were fewer job opportunities

Impacts on working from home or online learning

Nearly 3 in 4 reported challenges

High-speed internet is not available — 24%

Computer availability is limited — 20%

Access to suitable workspace — 19%

High cost of data or connecting to the internet — 19%