



Lillooet Learning Communities Society  
Sát'mec Ull'usmíntwal' Szwátet.scal

# Lillooet Learns Zwatetcáls i Sát'meca!

## 2024 Annual Report

**Prepared by Megan Rempel**

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# Letter from the Board Chairperson Toby Mueller



2024 was a big year for Lillooet Learns. We saw tremendous growth and development, alongside significant challenges. Core staff and volunteers faced personal crises and burnout, and we learned the importance of caring for one another. At year's end, the Board undertook a thorough evaluation, connecting with staff, partners, and volunteers. We committed to stabilizing our position, supporting our people, and sustaining gains made into 2025.

A running joke helped us through tough moments: when someone made a mistake, we'd all say, "Lifelong Learning!". Restorative processes are the art of having difficult conversations and making mistakes into learning moments. I'm humbled and proud of all we've achieved and of our ongoing commitment to a restorative approach to meeting needs, challenges and opportunities ahead.

## Highlights to Acknowledge

### Capital Acquisition

In late 2023, we received BC Gaming Capital Fund support to purchase 633 Main Street. Our Director, Megan Rempel worked closely with the owners to negotiate a mortgage and with our partners Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society (LAFS) and Seed to Culture to create tenancy agreements.

### Governance Policy Development

With funding from the BC Interior Community Foundation, the Board adopted new governance policies. We reaffirmed that policy is a living process and committed to creating clear, plain-language documents that reflect our mission and support staff in their work.

### Strategic Development

Megan and I worked with Purppl (a social enterprise consultant) to create a Theory of Change. In November 2024, we hosted a full-group session to review a draft. Together, we agreed on the overarching vision: *"a good life for everyone in St'át'imc Territory."* This document, alongside our strategic plans, defines the outcomes and actions needed to realize this goal.

### Staffing

In 2024 Lillooet Learns became 'fully' staffed and team members expanded their skills. Amber Muranko completed a bookkeeping certificate. Megan Rempel completed a graduate certificate in Corporate Social Innovation. Olivia Brown joined as an Indigenous Court Navigator, bringing extensive experience. Chrissy Mahaits, the Elder Connect Coordinator, worked closely with funders and staff to build systems for a new program. Nik and Monica continued improving the storefront and hosted fantastic events.

*There's more I could share, but I'll end with heartfelt thanks to our incredible staff, the volunteers who make so much possible, to all of our funders, and my fellow Board members, with whom I've shared 13 meaningful years. I'm stepping back from my role as chair, but I'm not going far. I look forward to what's ahead.*

*- Toby Mueller*



# Strategy Statement



## Mission

Our mission is to foster active learning that contributes to socially just and economically thriving communities.

### WE DO THIS BY....

1. Providing diverse education and creative opportunities that enhance well-being;
2. Facilitating local partnerships and collaboration with communities and among organizations;
3. Making community participation central in local events and initiatives;
4. Strengthening relationships between St'át'imc and local community members; and
5. Supporting and delivering community-led programs with a social and restorative justice lens.

## Beliefs

- Encouraging a culture of learning and creativity enhances community wellness.
- True St'át'imc partnership is active and participatory (goes beyond allyship).
- Collaboration of diverse partners increases capacity for healthy community development.
- Individual participation in active citizenship leads to equitable and inclusive communities.
- By working together, St'át'imc and Lillooet people can solve community challenges.
- Restorative practices increase individual and public safety.
- Decolonized justice and education initiatives and opportunities lead to a better life for all community members.
- The arts support resilient, creative, and empowered communities.

Scúzas es7áma smáwal' lta St'át'imcúlmeewa  
We envision a good life for all in St'át'imc territory.

## Vision







# What Sets Lillooet Learns Apart



Lillooet Learns has worked hard in 2024 to build organizational capacity, be ready to meet community needs, empower communities to bridge differences, and grow economic opportunities.

Since 2002, Lillooet Learns has been delivering culturally informed programming and projects, with a focus on collaboration and true partnership. The founding mandate of Lillooet Learns as a society requires a board of 50% St'át'imc members. Our governance board and operational teams are diverse, representative, and connected to local communities.

Through an organizational model focused on life-long learning, we have brought together and built a team of local experts who understand community challenges and are equipped with tools and resources to deliver community-driven solutions.

## The Value of Partnering with Lillooet Learns

- **Services are equitable and inclusive:** we work to remove historic barriers and empower communities
- We **mandate and act on 50% Indigenous representation** goals, facilitate meaningful participation, and collaborate through differences in governance and operations
- Our organization model is driven by **human-centered design that places communities at the center** of planning, implementation, and evaluation of outcomes
- We have **successfully established and operate a social enterprise, a community-oriented commercial property,** and can help other community groups do the same
- The team consists of **experienced, trained, and capable professionals** who can manage contracts and are connected in our communities
- We are a trusted organization that is **guided by principals of equity and social justice**





# Executive Summary

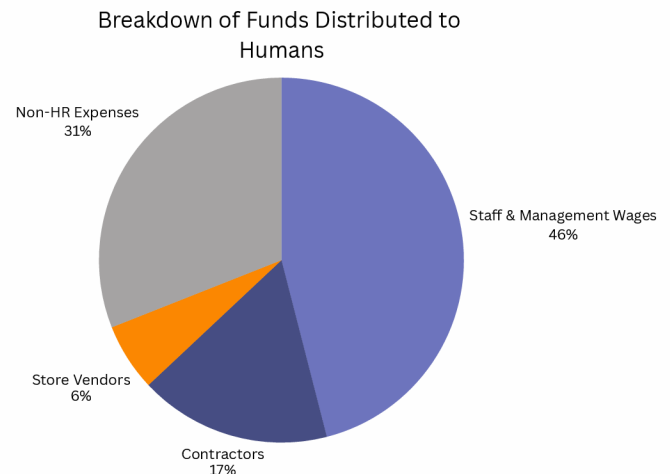
## Megan Rempel



In 2024, Lillooet Learning Communities Society experienced a transformative year, marked by strategic re-alignment, renewed focus, and deepened relationships with our community and funding partners. Organizational stability and long-term sustainability were prioritized while responding to community needs and internal capacity challenges.

Large investments were made to improve our financial and operational systems setting the foundation for the next phase of growth. To support this shift, skilled professionals were hired to strengthen capital asset management, program coordination, finances, and communications. Lillooet Learns also significantly contributed to the local economy through employment, job-readiness initiatives, contract work and commission sales of local products.

Approximately 46% of our annual budget supported staff and management salaries, while 17% was spent on contractors, and \$26,212.08 was paid out to HUB store vendors, which is 6% of the total operating budget. An additional \$25,000 was dedicated to training for internal capacity strengthening and service delivery improvement. These investments moved Lillooet Learns closer to the goal of becoming fully staffed and more self-sustaining over time.



Partnerships continued to evolve, including a collaboration with the Lillooet Indigenous Court Steering Committee to deliver culturally rooted justice programming. A facilitated strategy session and marketing campaign helped re-engage local partners and clarify the organization's social impact goals. The board of directors grew with the addition of three Indigenous board members and a fourth with Indigenous community planning experience, which aligns with Lillooet Learns' commitment to inclusive and diverse participation in all levels of the organization.







# Executive Summary



2024 was a momentous year for Lillooet Learning Communities Society. The year was not without its own challenges. Staffing transitions, overlapping roles, and limited operating funding stretched the organization. Complex negotiations with partners around shared space and tenancy agreements required careful consideration and decision-making. Additionally, several existing programs were paused to allow the organization to focus inward. In response to these challenges, the Board conducted a comprehensive operational review and developed solutions for staffing and training plans. Two new staff members were hired to support ongoing operations, and a project management software was implemented to improve coordination and communication between team members and across projects.

Thanks to the ongoing support from our funders and partners, as well as amazing contributions from the staff team, volunteers, and the community, this organization has emerged with a stronger foundation. Moving forward, Lillooet Learns is committed to expanding equity in community services, advancing economic security, and increasing solidarity amongst regional partners and sectors.

***“I think one of the greatest gifts of being human is that we can learn just about anything. It is the natural state of the human brain to gather information. And if we can learn it, then we can believe we can do it, and with a bit of time and effort, things get done.”-***

**Norm Leech** - Executive Director of Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House,  
Founder Society of Our Grandmother Earth, President of DTES  
Community Land Trust, President of Aboriginal Front Door Society, and  
Lillooet Learns Treasurer



Graphic Depiction of  
Norm's Decolonization  
Workshop

Artist: Ren Roberts



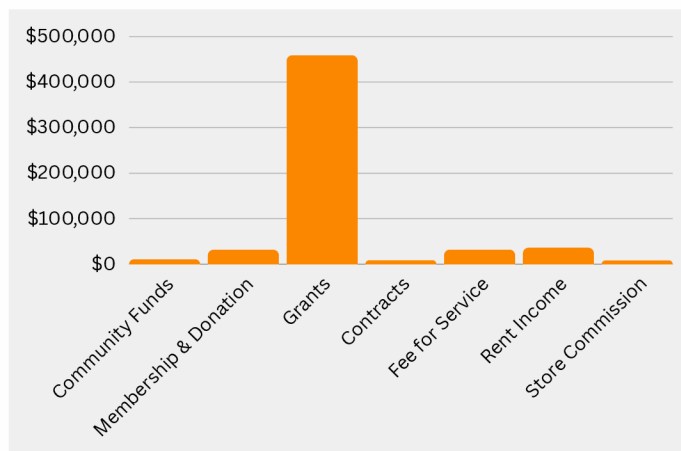
# Financial Snapshot



## Revenues

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Community Funds                | \$10,759.12         |
| Membership & Donation          | \$31,768.76         |
| Grants                         | \$458,704.43        |
| Contracts                      | \$8,788.06          |
| Fee for Service                | \$31,973.06         |
| Rent Income                    | \$36,230.00         |
| Store Sales                    | \$34,579.92         |
| <i>Vendor Payout</i>           | <i>-\$26,212.08</i> |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>\$586,591.27</b> |
| <i>Volunteer Contributions</i> | <i>\$58,000.00</i>  |

Lillooet Learns is largely funded by grants but has successfully diversified revenue streams.



## Expenses

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Community Fund Payout  | \$10,400.00         |
| Professional Fees      | \$18,699.20         |
| Wages and Subcontracts | \$368,432.43        |
| Insurance & Fees       | \$8,464.95          |
| Occupancy              | \$31,532.60         |
| Project and Program    | \$109,618.08        |
| Training               | \$25,339.81         |
| Office                 | \$31,576.27         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>\$578,723.53</b> |

Profit \$7,867.74

Mortgage Principal - \$6,317.46

**Year-End Cash Flow \$1,550.28**

*Volunteers contributed  
**1,880 hours** to Lillooet  
Learns governance,  
programs, projects, and  
initiatives with a total value  
of **\$58,000!***

## Capital Assets

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Building - 633 Main Street, Lillooet   | \$385,503 |
| Leasehold Improvements - HVAC & Maint. | \$50,390  |





# Lillooet Community Connect Innovation HUB



The Lillooet Community Connect Innovation HUB (the HUB) project facilitates collaboration amongst organizations in various regional sectors, to share resources, work on projects together, and breakdown silos to create change. It is a growing enterprise model that invests generated income to improve socio-economic community outcomes.

The HUB offers resources for local people to start projects, a platform to sell their locally produced products, access tools and resources, participatory and educational workshops, and expert support in taking action. This social enterprise is unique to our region: it takes direction from community voices, representing our people and culture.

Drawing support from various sectors, the HUB has created great connections with community groups, non-profit organizations, local governments, and small businesses thus earning the status of a trusted organization that is guided by the principles of equity, equality and social justice.

## Outcomes

- 26 events / workshops hosted
- 365 workshop participants reached
- 56 individual members
- 15 partnerships on initiatives

- \$82,419.76 enterprising revenue earned

*Enterprising revenues through the HUB are growing more slowly than anticipated in the 2021 Business Plan, but building capacity, organizational systems, and relations is the first step in successfully growing the business.*



**The Lillooet HUB also won the  
'Best Customer Service' award  
for the year 2024 at the Lillooet  
Chamber of Commerce Gala &  
Annual Business Awards!**







# Lillooet Community Connect Innovation HUB



## Contracts

Through the HUB, a new service contract was executed to complete community outreach and education on behalf of the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.

Two diversion ambassadors attended 13 community events, helped host workshops, spoke to over 100 community members, and learned more about recycling while building their skills.



## Purchasing the HUB Building

Lillooet Learns received funding from the BC Community Gaming Branch, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and a private donation from Bob Deadman to purchase 633 Main Street from ARC Community Cooperative, after renting for several years.

Our partner, the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society, wrote a successful grant that allowed for the purchase and installation of a new heating and cooling system in the building. This was key in developing infrastructure for the opening of a local food store in the HUB building.



## HUB Partnerships

Collaboration and collective decision making were key when negotiating tenancy agreements with HUB building partners, planning for shared spaces, and clarifying partner roles in programs.

The HUB shared resources with and supported the Lillooet Grown Market project and the initiation phases of the new Arts Lillooet Society.

*Janna Pike and her son are photographed above during the grand opening of the Lillooet Grown Market - a social enterprise operated by the Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society.*





# Elder Connect



Throughout the year, the Elder Connect Program grew immensely with new services that supported seniors to age with dignity, health, and independence in their own homes while remaining connected with their communities in familiar social settings. A coordinator was hired to establish services, which included light house-cleaning and light yardwork, friendly visiting, gatherings, and referrals to other service providers. An existing grocery delivery service grew, and partnerships were strengthened with the Lillooet Seniors Center Society, Lillooet Friendship Center Society, Interior Health, First Nations Health Authority, Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society, Xwísten, and more.

18 events were executed, which included workshops, food and music events, out-of-town seniors trips, and the bi-annual Seniors EXPO. In addition to events, significant efforts were put into marketing and promotion, in a bid to grow clients' awareness of services.

The program supported seniors' participation in a food coupon program and helped sponsor the community bus from Xwísten to take a longer route that brought seniors to the HUB and the farmer's market.

A local resource guide was updated with information on more seniors' services, and over 400 copies were distributed in the community this year.



## Program Outcomes

- 224 individual clients were served
- 166 grocery shopping runs
- 416 cleaning/yard work appointments
- 514 friendly calls and visits
- 408 information referrals
- 337 participants in gatherings
- 16 volunteers delivered services
- 6 staff supported program execution
- 11 contractors were hired
- 18 events

**Elder Connect Advisory Committee** - Kim North, Lynda Sampson, and Joan Giannone founded the program and made significant volunteer contributions this year while growing the program.





# Lillooet Indigenous Court



The Lillooet Indigenous Court Steering Committee approached Lillooet Learns to create a new partnership in 2024 that would deliver alternative justice programming for Indigenous people in St'át'imc and Nlaka'pamux communities.

A Court Navigator and Elder's Coordinator was hired, and a large opening ceremony for the court took place in March 2024 at the Lillooet REC center. Elders were oriented through several training sessions, and materials were created and distributed to promote the court program in communities and to find clients who needed support in the court system.

The Navigator / Coordinator and the steering committee ensured all Elders were trained in their roles and provided with resources throughout the year. There was a focus on increasing understanding the symptoms, types and role of experienced trauma that affect both the elders and the clients involved in the program. At the end of 2024, 9 Elders completed all competence training criteria and sat in official court sessions.

To ensure the success of the program, Lillooet Learns focused on developing program policies, procedures, and expectations for this new partnership so all people involved could learn together and a paid employee could be supported and mentored.



## Program Outcomes

- 9 Indigenous Elders trained and sitting in court
- 5 clients referred to the court
- 2 elders orientation and training sessions
- 1 fetal alcohol syndrome disorder workshop with 8 participants
- 6 court sessions
- 6 pre-court meetings



**Indigenous Court Champion** - Matilda Fenton (pictured above) is recognized for her drive and commitment to starting the Indigenous Court Program in Lillooet. She also serves as a volunteer on the Lillooet Learns Board of Directors.



# Lillooet Entrepreneur Accelerator Program

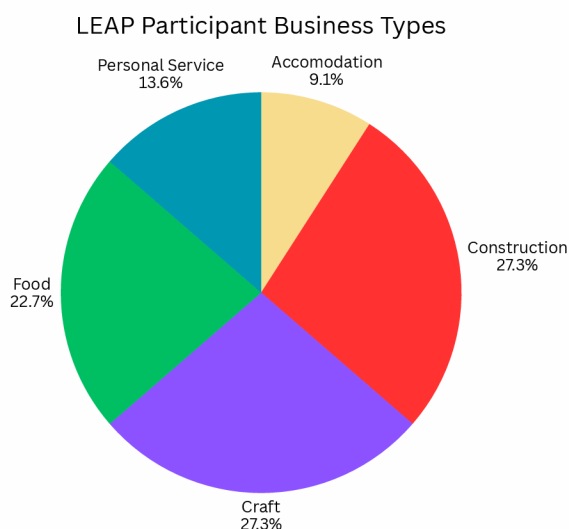


## Lillooet Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (LEAP)

As part of our commitment to learning and economic development, Lillooet Learns and the HUB team partnered with the Lillooet Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Sun Country to deliver an educational pilot program for entrepreneurs. Based on community feedback, the program focused on providing 1:1 mentorship support to participants.

The 2024 LEAP program has established a much-needed business incubator in Lillooet, filling a critical gap in local economic development. By supporting newcomers and young entrepreneurs, LEAP helped build a foundation for long-term community resilience and self-sufficiency.

Individually, participants gained valuable business knowledge and personal confidence, regardless of whether they completed all learning modules. These skills benefited not only future entrepreneurs but also strengthened participants' overall capacity and potential in other areas of life.



## Program Outcomes

- 24 program participants, 5 with Indigenous ancestry
- 9 participants graduated from all learning modules
- 2 community launch events
- 4 business workshops
- 49 sessions with participants
- 24 weekly drop-in sessions







# Mentorship & Job Training



Lillooet Learns integrates mentorship and job training in all aspects of the organization. We aim to facilitate and promote a network of lifelong learners in St'át'imc and Lillooet Communities.

## Mentorship

This year, we partnered for the third consecutive year with the Lillooet Tribal Council to provide work and job training opportunities through the Indigenous Skills, Employment, and Training Program's wage subsidies. Two summer students and two coordinators were hired to learn new skills with the operations team. They built skills in:

- Retail operations
- Art gallery management
- Farming and gardening
- Social media and marketing
- Event education and planning
- Cleaning for seniors
- Mural painting and design
- Food bank assistance
- Commercial kitchen food processing
- Business administration
- Communication and project/event planning
- Computer applications
- Tracking services for grants



In September and October, we welcomed Autumn, a Secwépemc youth and artist, to help design and paint a Lillooet tourism mural at the back of the HUB. He worked with a local volunteer and artist to make the design represent the community and come to life!



Muralist  
Autumn Christopher's piece  
painted in 2024 with volunteer  
Tracey McCrae





# Community Initiatives



## 100 People Who Care

This community microgrant run by a volunteer committee through Lillooet Learns, awarded \$10,400 in funds to the following groups:

- Lillooet Soccer Association
- Lillooet Quilters Guild
- Skate Lillooet
- Arts Lillooet



## Community Conversations & Dialogue Sessions

5 cross-cultural community sessions were hosted this year in collaboration with partners. Lillooet Learns and the HUB team, also assisted during a Community to Community Forum that brought together regional government leadership.



|   |          |                                |
|---|----------|--------------------------------|
| <b>St'át'imc Language Workshop Series</b>                           | Feb 2024 | Kwimtsxn John                  |
| <b>Traditional Drum Making Workshop &amp; Presentation</b>          | Mar 2024 | Norman Retasket and Norm Leech |
| <b>Film Screening &amp; Discussion - Where the Olive Trees Weep</b> | Jul 2024 | Tara Brock                     |
| <b>Wenacw Sqwalutkalh - We Speak the Truth</b>                      | Sep 2024 | Chief's Message and Norm Leech |
| <b>Community to Community Forum</b>                                 | Sep 2024 | Government                     |
| <b>P'ant i St'a'kmenn Lhkalha</b>                                   | Nov 2024 | Norm Leech                     |



## Restorative Justice

Lillooet Restorative Justice was a program run by Lillooet Learns for over 10 years and was paused due to a lack of staffing in 2020. This year, planning began to reinvigorate the program alongside the Lillooet Indigenous Court. This included hosting a Community Justice Forum Facilitator Training for community members, which had 6 attendees.





## Thank You



A huge thank you to all our funders, partners and volunteers in 2024

- Squamish-Lillooet Regional District - Area B
- United Way BC
- Law Foundation of BC
- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- Government of Canada
- Lillooet Tribal Council
- Bob Deadman
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation
- Indigenous R.O.O.T.S
- BC Community Response Network
- Nicola Valley Community Justice Services
- Province of BC
- Lillooet Agriculture and Food Society
- Seed to Culture

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