Social Empowerment

Our Impact

Social Empowerment

A strong coastal community is one where opportunities are available to many. Where a good job is within reach of home. Where leadership reflects the people it serves. When we open the doors to participation in our region's economy for everyone, including those who have too often been left outside, the whole coast is stronger for it. Wellbeing is not something delivered to communities; it is something built by them, when people have meaningful work, real opportunity, and a voice in shaping what comes next.

Through our project investments, the Trust partners with First Nations, local governments, development corporations, community organizations, and social enterprises to create opportunities for people to work, lead, contribute and thrive in communities they call home. That includes creating good jobs close to home, mobilizing volunteers and community contributions, empowering Indigenous peoples and equity-deserving communities, and opening pathways for people who have historically faced barriers to economic opportunity.

Using our Wellbeing Impact Framework, we track and publicly report on 20 distinct Social Empowerment Outcomes across four key indicators, giving our communities a clear picture of how investment is broadening opportunity, deepening leadership, and strengthening the social fabric of the coast over time.

Infographic and text for each indicator available here as tabbed interface, gallery, or separate webpages? The content that will go here is from the following pages for the 4 Indicators.

Learn about our Social Empowerment project investments:

Project Pic Here	*Project Pic Here*	*Project Pic Here*

Project Title/Link	Project Title/Link	Project Title/Link

Note for Boleyn: These project profiles are auto populated at random on each page load, pulling in project profiles that have been checked/tagged for Social Empowerment.

Our Investment Approach: Leveraging the Strengths of Our Coastal Communities

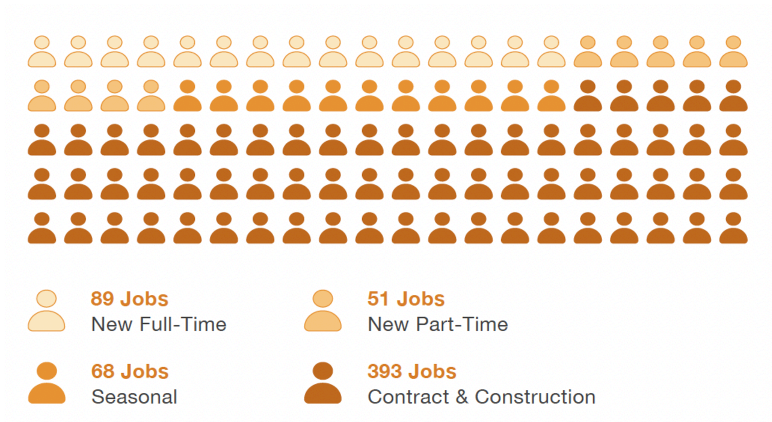
The communities of Vancouver Island and the surrounding coast have long known what it takes to look after one another. Indigenous peoples have governed and cared for these lands since time immemorial — sustaining cultures, leadership systems, and economies that placed the wellbeing of people, place, and future generations at the centre. Coastal and island communities have, in their own ways, also been shaped by mutual support: by neighbours showing up for neighbours, by working families building stability through hard-earned skill, and by volunteers carrying much of what makes small-town life work.

The Trust's investments in projects that result in Social Empowerment outcomes are designed to honour these traditions and build on the strength they have created. We support the leaders and workers shaping the future of our region, partner with First Nations advancing their economic priorities, and back projects that ensure no community — and no person within it — is left behind as our coastal economy evolves. We believe that a strong economy and strong communities are inseparable: each makes the other possible.

Creating Good Jobs

A good job changes everything. For someone living in a rural or island community, employment close to home means more than income, it means the ability to stay. To build a life, raise a family, and invest in the community that shaped you. When local employment disappears, so does the foundation that holds communities together. When it grows, so does everything else.

Since 2024, the Trust's project investments have created **601 new jobs** across Vancouver Island and the surrounding coast — spanning permanent full-time, part-time, and seasonal roles, representing **130 full-time equivalents**.



One of the most direct ways the Trust strengthens coastal communities is by investing in projects that create that kind of work. Our project investments drive job creation across a range of sectors through the construction of capital infrastructure and the permanent positions that new facilities and enterprises make possible. By prioritizing local job creation, we invest in communities navigating difficult economic transitions, creating opportunities for residents to find productive work that supports stability, dignity, and connection to the place they call home.

Based on completed and ongoing projects since April 1, 2024, the launch of the Wellbeing Impact Framework, as of March 31, 2026. Funded organizations work closely with Island Coastal Economic Trust to provide this information through our project application and reporting process. For a detailed overview of how we collect and measure impact data, visit ***Our Impact Measurement Approach****.*

Projects Investments that are Creating Good Jobs:

Project Pic Here	*Project Pic Here*	*Project Pic Here*
Project Title/Link	Project Title/Link	Project Title/Link

Note for Boleyn: These project profiles are auto populated at random on each page load, pulling in project profiles that have been checked/tagged for this outcome.

Activating Community Members

Strong communities are built through participation. When people contribute their time, of belonging that help knowledge, and energy to local projects, they strengthen the relationships, trust, and sense communities thrive.

In the past two years, the Trust partnered with local organizations to create **731 opportunities for local volunteers** to contribute to community-building across Vancouver Island and the surrounding coast.

Our investments do more than generate good jobs with family-supporting incomes—they inspire community members to come together through volunteerism. When people contribute their time and energy to local projects, they develop a deep sense of ownership and commitment to their communities. We seek out projects that foster volunteer engagement, build trust, strengthen connections, and cultivate a shared sense of purpose.

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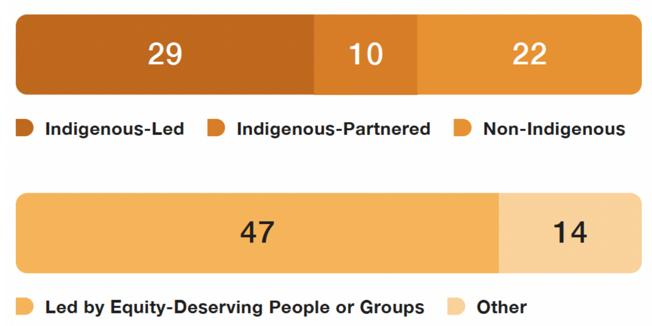
Empowering Diverse Leaders

Communities thrive when leadership reflects the people it serves. When First Nations take a meaningful role in shaping the economies that unfold across their territories. When the people most affected by a decision have a seat at the table where it gets made. The strongest coastal economies are not built from the top down — they are built by leaders who know their communities from the inside, and who carry with them the wisdom, lived experience, and accountability that comes from belonging to a place.

Since 2024, **64% of the Trust's project investments have been Indigenous-led or Indigenous-partnered, and 77% have been led by equity-deserving people and organizations.**[2]



The Trust seeks out projects led by, and built in partnership with, the diverse leaders shaping the future of this coast. We prioritize investment that advances Indigenous economic participation and self-determination, supports equity-deserving[1] leaders and organizations, and broadens who holds the pen on what comes next. When leadership reflects the full diversity of our region, the decisions made are better — more grounded, more inclusive, and more durable — and everyone is able to see themselves as part of shaping a shared future.

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Projects Investments that are Empowering Diverse Leaders:

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Footnotes

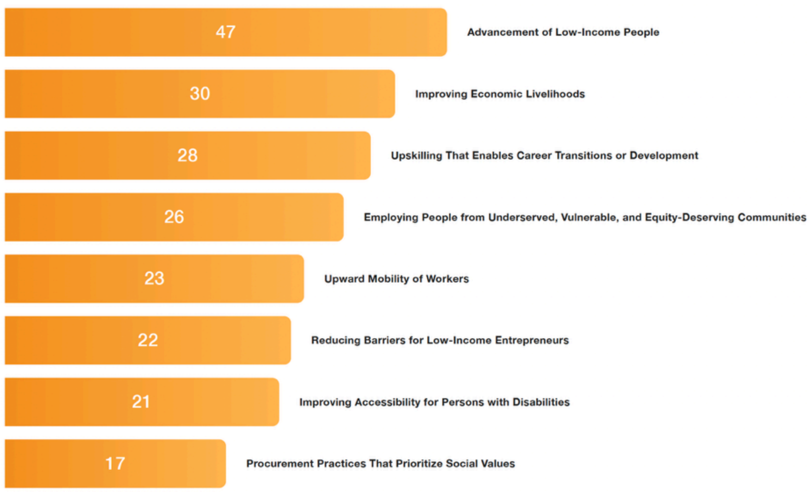
[1] "Equity-deserving" refers to communities that experience significant collective barriers to participating in society — including economic, social, and cultural barriers — as a result of historic or ongoing disadvantage and discrimination. The term is used by the Government of Canada and encompasses Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, persons with disabilities, women, 2SLGBTQI+ people, and others. *Source: Government of Canada.*

[2] These measures overlap. Indigenous-led and Indigenous-partnered projects are also included within the count of projects led by equity-deserving people and organizations.

Fostering Inclusive Opportunities

A coastal economy is only as strong as its reach. The Trust believes that the test of a healthy regional economy is whether the next worker entering the workforce, the next entrepreneur starting a business, and the next person rebuilding a livelihood after a difficult chapter can all find a real foothold here. Inclusive opportunity is not a side benefit of a strong economy. It is the substance of one.

Since 2024, the Trust has invested in **62 projects delivering 201 inclusive opportunity outcomes**[3] — building inclusive economic opportunities for people across Vancouver Island and the surrounding coast.



The Trust seeks out projects that broaden who gets to participate in our coastal economy — and how. We invest in work that advances low-income people and lifts the economic livelihoods of those who have been historically underserved, that opens doors for low-income entrepreneurs and supports the upskilling, training, and career transitions that move workers forward. We partner on projects that employ people from underserved, vulnerable, and equity-deserving communities, improve accessibility for persons with disabilities, and embed social value into how local procurement decisions are made. The goal is straightforward: more people, in more places, with a real path to build and benefit from the economy across our coast.

Projects Investments that are Fostering Inclusive Opportunities:

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Footnote

[3] Under the Trust's Wellbeing Impact Framework, we track 8 distinct Outcomes for the Fostering Inclusive Opportunities Indicator, as depicted in the Outcome infographic above. Each project the Trust invests in may deliver one or more of these outcomes, often across multiple indicators. The figure of 201 reflects the total count of outcomes delivered to date across the Trust's portfolio of 62 projects — a measure of how many times, and in how many ways, our investments are creating inclusive opportunity across the coast.