

wsis+20

CANADIAN STAKEHOLDER REPORT

Prepared by: TakingITGlobal



WSIS+20



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Introduction

Submitted by: TakingITGlobal
Entity Type: Civil Society Organization
Country: Canada
Reporting Period: 2005-2025
Focus Areas: Action Lines C1, C4, and C7

About This Report

This 20-Year Stakeholder Report has been compiled by TakingITGlobal (TIG) as part of the WSIS+20 Review process leading up to the UN General Assembly's twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society outcomes. TakingITGlobal, is a leading NGO and Canadian civil society organization with two decades of experience in digital learning and mobilizing participation of youth. The organization convened a national multi-stakeholder dialogue on September 10, 2025, to assess Canada's progress on WSIS Action Lines C1 (Role of Governments and Stakeholders), C4 (Capacity Building), and C7 (E-Learning).

In 2025, TakingITGlobal was involved as a Contributing Partner of the WSIS+20 High-Level Event in Geneva (July 7-11), where discussions focused on the importance of country-level reports as well as reporting from other key stakeholders. Connected North, a program of TakingITGlobal, was selected as a 2025 WSIS Champion in the E-Learning category and the only Canadian project selected for recognition out of over 900 applications across all WSIS Action line items.

The insights presented in this report were gathered through consultation with diverse stakeholders, including Indigenous leaders, government representatives, education professionals, nonprofit organizations, youth-serving agencies, and media organizations. This collaborative approach reflects Canada's commitment to inclusive, multi-stakeholder engagement in shaping digital policy and implementation.

As both a convener and implementer of digital inclusion initiatives, TakingITGlobal brings a unique perspective to this assessment, having operated programs like Connected North that exemplify the integration of cultural preservation with digital innovation. This report represents the collective input of Canadian stakeholders on achievements, challenges, and future priorities in advancing WSIS goals within the Canadian context.

Each section includes a list of works cited at the end, providing sources for the data and examples highlighted throughout the report.

Acknowledgements

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

Thank you to the following organizations that took part in this national multi-stakeholder dialogue and contributed their insights to the WSIS+20 review.

Participating Organizations

Organization	Website
TakingITGlobal / Connected North	https://takingitglobal.org/ / https://connectednorth.org
Global Affairs Canada — International Cyber and Critical Technology Policy	https://international.gc.ca
Imagine Canada	https://imaginecanada.ca
Supports for Student Learning Program (Employment and Social Development Canada)	https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/supports-student-learning.html
C21 Canada	https://www.c21canada.org
National Alliance for Children and Youth (NACY)	https://nacy.ca
The Walrus	https://thewalrus.ca
TVO (Ontario's Distance Education Provider)	https://tvolearn.com / https://ilc.org
Students Commission of Canada	https://studentscommission.ca
The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund	https://downiewenjack.ca
EdCan Network	https://www.edcan.ca
Toronto District School Board (TDSB)	https://www.tdsb.on.ca
People for Education	https://peopleforeducation.ca
Pathways to Education Canada	https://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca
Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC)	https://www.canadiansciencecentres.ca

WSIS Action Lines

This report highlights Canada's contributions and experiences over the past 20 years in advancing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines, with a focus on C1: The role of governments and stakeholders, C4: Capacity building, and C7: E-Learning.

These three areas represent the foundation of a people-centered, inclusive Information Society and directly connect to Canada's national priorities around reconciliation, digital equity, and lifelong learning.

Action Line C1:

The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for Development

"The effective participation of governments and all stakeholders is vital in developing the Information Society requiring cooperation and partnerships among all of them."

Action Line C4: Capacity building

"Everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society.

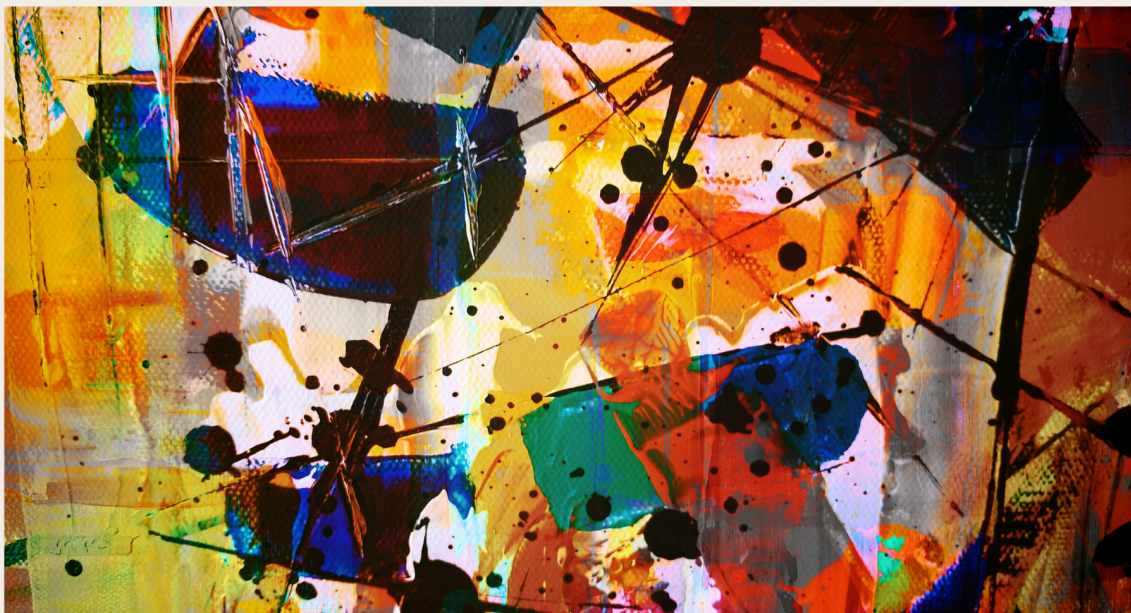
Therefore capacity building and ICT literacy are essential. ICTs can contribute to achieving universal education worldwide, through delivery of education and training of teachers, and offering improved conditions for lifelong learning, encompassing people that are outside the formal education process, and improving professional skills."

Action Line C7: E-learning

"The use of ICTs to enhance educational delivery and lifelong learning opportunities."

I. Executive Summary

Provide a brief overview of the entity's achievements, challenges, and future priorities related to the implementation of WSIS outcomes over the last 20 years.



*By bridging digital divides and
embedding equity in innovation,
Canada envisions a future
where every learner can fully
participate in the digital society.*

Executive Summary Introduction

This stakeholder-led report, submitted by TakingITGlobal for the WSIS+20 review, synthesizes 2005–2025 progress and lessons observed by Canadian organizations engaged in WSIS Action Lines C1 (multi-stakeholder governance and inclusion), C4 (capacity building), and C7 (e-learning). It draws on a national dialogue that brought together Indigenous leaders, federal and provincial representatives, educators, nonprofits, youth-serving agencies, and media organizations.

The perspectives shared in this report represent a small but diverse cross-section of Canada's broader digital ecosystem. While not exhaustive of all national initiatives, these contributions reflect clear areas of progress, highlight persistent challenges, and identify priorities for advancing digital inclusion and equity in alignment with WSIS objectives.

Key Achievements

- Achieved near-universal connectivity, with 95.4% of Canadians having broadband at the 50/10 Mbps unlimited standard and 99.5% LTE mobile coverage nationwide. ^[1-4]
- Social innovations emerged fostering digital inclusion through programs like Connected North, which expanded from one school to 200+ schools across Northern, remote, Indigenous communities demonstrating how technology can strengthen culturally relevant student engagement while building teacher capacity. ^[12]
- Built comprehensive capacity across nonprofit and education sectors, with programming funded by the Government of Canada's, ESDC's Supports for Student Learning Program (SSLP) reaching 85,000 students through virtual learning activities ^[13-14] the Toronto District School Board's Digital Lead Learners program ^[13] training educators in culturally responsive digital pedagogy and TVO's Independent Learning Centre, serving 30,000 students annually.
- Advanced proactive information integrity strategies through media literacy and fact-checking initiatives, including The Walrus fact-checking fellowship and the Canadian Association of Science Centres' (CASC) ScienceUpFirst campaign.

- Established multi-stakeholder governance practices, including Global Affairs Canada's engagement processes that bring different voices across sectors to contribute to digital policy development.

Key Challenges

- Rural connectivity quality remains uneven: about 78% of rural households have access to broadband meeting the CRTC's 50/10 Mbps standard, yet only around 62% actually experience or subscribe to these speeds. This gap between coverage and delivered service highlights the need for continued investment in rural connectivity.^[1-2]
- Significant connectivity disparities persist for Indigenous communities. In 2021, only 42.9% of First Nations reserve households had access to 50/10 Mbps internet speeds; as of 2023, this increased to 61%. Though the federal government aims to address these gaps through targeted funding and partnerships as part of its Connectivity Strategy aiming for full inclusion by 2031. ^[4-6,9-10]
- According to the representative on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada, digital equity disparities persist, with 39% of low-income students relying on shared devices or public Wi-Fi for homework compared to 18% in higher-income families.
- Nonprofit sector capacity limitations, with fewer than 1% of staff in technology roles, and significant integration gaps across organizations serving millions of Canadians.
- Rising misinformation and disinformation threats disproportionately impact youth and undermine democratic participation. ^[13-14]
- Education leaders from C21 Canada noted the limited preparedness for emerging technologies like AI, with most educational institutions lacking governance frameworks, and uncertainty around whether new federal leadership on AI will translate into investments to support nonprofit sector capacity and education/upskilling needs. ^[22]

Future Priorities

- Strengthen supports for technology-enabled, enrichment learning opportunities that enable students in K-12 education to reach their full potential.
- Invest further in digital inclusion programs that demonstrate results, with focus on culturally relevant content for Northern, remote, Indigenous communities.
- Enhance digital resilience through targeted investment in nonprofit capacity building, upskilling, cybersecurity awareness, and sustainable funding models.
- Expand responsible AI adoption frameworks that prioritize equity, sovereignty, cultural responsiveness, and youth co-design approaches.
- Strengthen media literacy and critical thinking education to build resilience against misinformation while fostering democratic engagement.
- Deepen collaboration among government, education, and civil society stakeholders to develop ethical governance frameworks for emerging technologies.

Together, these insights demonstrate how multi-stakeholder collaboration within Canada is contributing to WSIS outcomes. By addressing remaining access and capacity gaps, and by centering equity, culture, and youth leadership, stakeholders can extend their impact and contribute to models that advance digital inclusion both nationally and internationally.

II. Progress on WSIS Action Lines

Please provide a summary of progress on the WSIS Action Lines over the last 20 years, detailing initiatives, contributions, and the integration of digital policies. For each of the following action lines, kindly indicate the key achievements, challenges, and future priorities. Please elaborate with success stories for each Action Line.

WSIS ACTION LINE ITEMS

- **Action Line C1:** The role of governments and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for Development
- **Action Line C4:** Capacity building
- **Action Line C7:** E-Learning

Action Line C1: The Role of Governments and Stakeholders in Promoting ICTs for Development

Key Achievements:

Canada has established exemplary multi-stakeholder governance frameworks that meaningfully integrate diverse voices into digital policy development. Global Affairs Canada's commitment to inclusive stakeholder engagement ensures contributions from civil society, academia, technical communities, the private sector, and youth are actively considered in policy processes. Federal initiatives, including the Universal Broadband Fund (\$2.75 billion investment) and Canada's Digital Ambition 2023–24, demonstrate government leadership in systematic ICT promotion.

The integration of Indigenous leadership represents a distinctive achievement in ICT for development. Connected North's expansion over the past decade to involve a network of 500 content providers with 50% Indigenous-led sessions, demonstrates an approach that supports student achievement in education through culturally relevant digital opportunities. Programs like the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund show how

reconciliation principles can be embedded in digital development strategies through initiatives like their Legacy Schools Program. ²⁷

Provincial leadership through initiatives like TVO's Independent Learning Centre, serving 30,000 students annually, and comprehensive civil society capacity building through organizations like Imagine Canada's Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience demonstrate multi-level stakeholder coordination in ICT promotion.

Key Challenges:

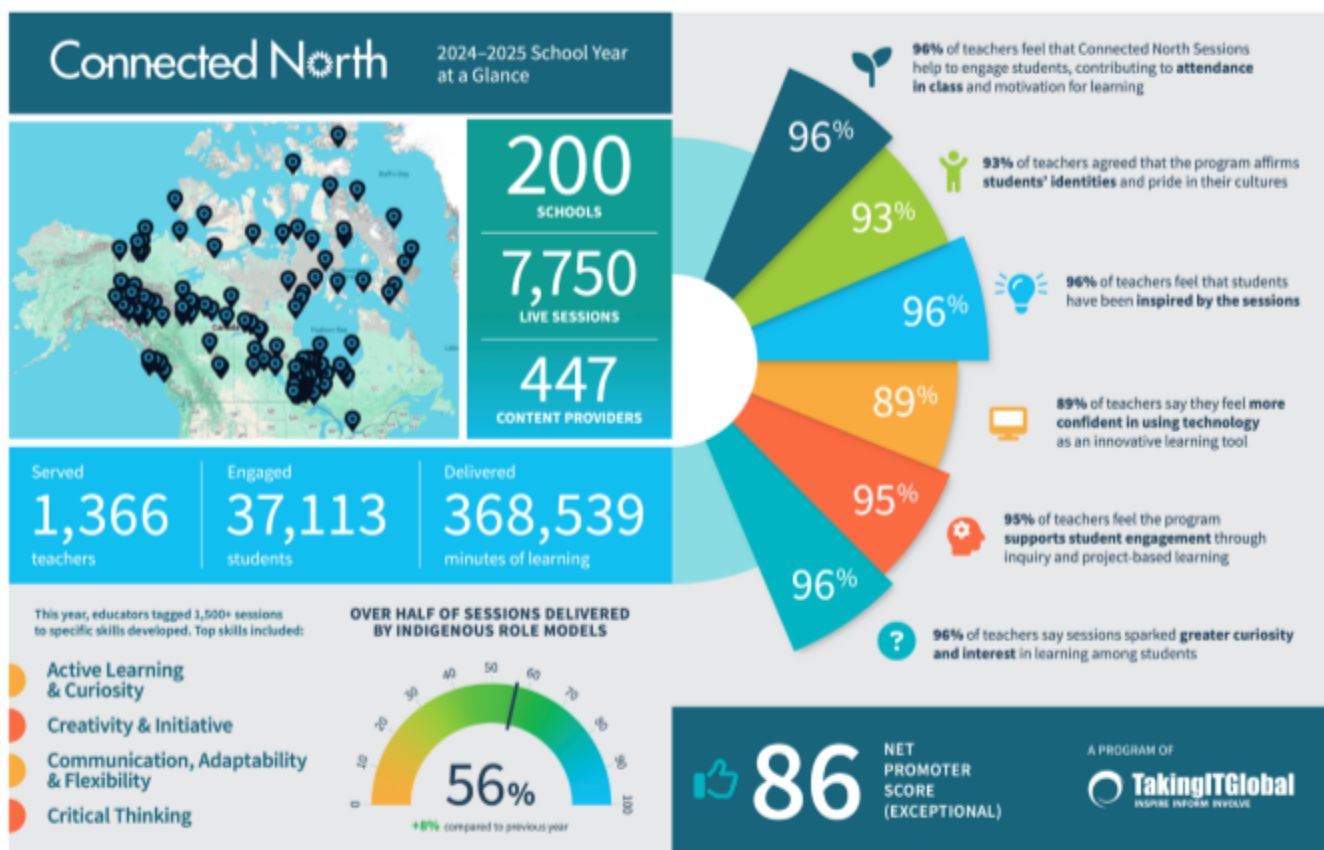
Rural and remote communities continue to face connectivity quality limitations, with only 62% of rural households accessing 50/10 Mbps unlimited service despite universal coverage achievements. Indigenous communities in the North experience ongoing connection stability issues that limit full participation in digital society. ^[1-6]

The nonprofit sector faces significant capacity constraints, with fewer than 1% of staff holding technology roles and organizations reporting substantial gaps in digital integration, cybersecurity preparedness, and data management capabilities. This affects service delivery to millions of Canadians across diverse communities. ^[13-14]

Coordination challenges persist, with stakeholders noting that important conversations often happen in isolation, limiting the development of sustainable, collaborative approaches to digital inclusion and innovation.

Future Priorities:

- Embed reconciliation and Indigenous leadership principles systematically across all digital strategies, ensuring Indigenous voices, languages, and cultural knowledge are meaningfully represented in policy development and program implementation.
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder governance frameworks for emerging technologies, particularly AI, by developing collaborative policy approaches that maintain Canada's inclusive model while addressing rapid technological change.
- Scale successful community-driven digital inclusion models like Connected North to other Indigenous communities, while developing sustainable funding mechanisms that support long-term sustainability and expansion of ecosystem partnerships.



Action Line C1: Success Story:

TakingITGlobal's Connected North program exemplifies transformative impact through cultural integration. In the Northwest Territories, Connected North has transformed education by bringing cultural knowledge, inspiring role models, and digital opportunities directly into classrooms. Presenting on the program, Elder Eileen Beaver shared how students now eagerly attend school on days when Connected North programming is scheduled, with attendance improvements directly linked to the program's ability to connect youth with inspiring role models while honoring traditional teachings.

What began with a single school has now expanded to 200 schools across northern Territories, ensuring that even the smallest and most remote communities can connect with content providers, educators, and mentors across Canada. The program's expansion demonstrates scalable success, inspiring youth to envision beyond their immediate surroundings, "dream of becoming a doctor or scientist or creators" while grounding them in their cultural identity, stories, and connection to their heritage.

Elder Eileen Beaver shared how this program fulfills the teaching from her treaty to “walk in two worlds,” balancing Indigenous traditions with the modern digital world. This success demonstrates how Indigenous leadership, supported by technology and cross-sector partnerships, can foster inclusive participation and help shape Canada’s information society in line with WSIS commitments.

Action Line C4: Capacity Building

Key Achievements:

Canadian stakeholders are working to develop comprehensive capacity building infrastructure across education and civil society sectors. The Toronto District School Board's Digital Lead Learners program represents systematic educator professional development, training teachers over three years to integrate technology with culturally responsive pedagogy while reaching 16,000 full-time and 9,000 part-time teachers through annual conferences and peer-to-peer learning networks.

Imagine Canada's establishment of the Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience addresses critical sector-wide needs, building capacity in cybersecurity, data management, and digital readiness across organizations serving millions of Canadians. Provincial platforms like TVO's Independent Learning Centre demonstrate large-scale capacity success, operating Canada's largest online high school with 350 courses serving 30,000 students annually in barrier-free, personalized learning environments.

National networks, including EdCan connecting K-12 professionals nationally and NACY, coordinating 35+ youth-serving organizations, showcase collaborative capacity building approaches that leverage shared expertise while maintaining local responsiveness.

Key Challenges:

Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience / The Dais, Canada's Nonprofit Tech Workforce (2024) reports that significant workforce development gaps persist in the nonprofit sector, with fewer than 1% of staff holding technology roles and technology workers earning 33% less than comparable positions in other sectors. This underinvestment limits organizational effectiveness in cybersecurity, data literacy, and digital service delivery for vulnerable populations.

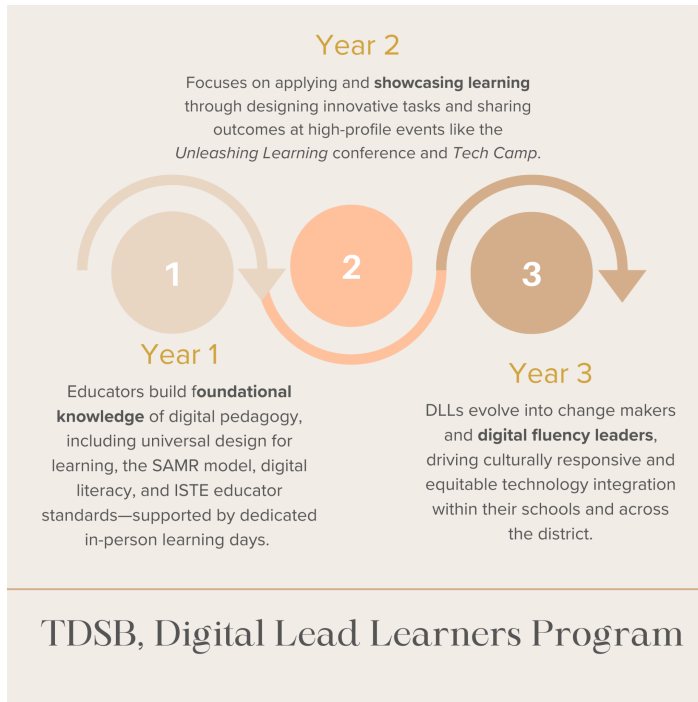
According to Education leaders from C21 Canada, most educational institutions lack comprehensive AI and digital governance policies, leaving educators unprepared to address emerging technology risks and opportunities. The rapid pace of technological change consistently outpaces professional development capacity, creating ongoing adaptation challenges.

Funding sustainability remains a persistent challenge for capacity-building programs, with many innovative initiatives facing difficulty scaling impact due to limited, inconsistent funding models that don't match the long-term nature of professional development work.

Future Priorities:

- Develop large-scale investment strategies for nonprofit sector digital transformation, including targeted professional development programs, competitive salary frameworks for technology roles, and comprehensive digital literacy training for frontline workers serving marginalized communities.
- Create comprehensive AI literacy and ethical framework programs that prepare educators, youth workers, and community leaders for responsible emerging technology adoption while maintaining focus on equity and cultural responsiveness.
- Establish sustainable funding models for ongoing capacity building that recognize the long-term nature of professional development across education, nonprofit, and community sectors, providing consistent support for system-wide transformation initiatives.

Action Line C4: Success Story:



The **Toronto District School Board's Digital Lead Learners (DLL)** program demonstrates impactful capacity building that drives system-wide innovation in education. The program engages over 800 volunteer teacher-leaders annually from elementary and secondary levels, including curriculum leaders across specialties like STEM, Special Education, and Libraries. Participants undergo a rigorous, embedded three-year professional learning journey aligned with TDSB's multi-year strategic plan and Ontario Ministry of Education priorities.

The program's inclusive recruitment ensures diverse representation, supporting culturally responsive teaching practices. Using digital platforms such as Brightspace (D2L), ongoing collaboration and professional development extend beyond face-to-face workshops, fostering sustainable growth in teacher capacity.

DLLs serve as peer mentors and advocates, inspiring colleagues to adopt technology as a powerful pedagogical tool, not merely a supplementary one. This sustained leadership network contributes to increased educator confidence and innovation, enabling TDSB schools to pivot effectively to blended and digital learning environments. Community engagement at DLL-organized events further strengthens a culture of shared learning and professional growth.

The success of the DLL program highlights how strategic investment in comprehensive, sustained professional learning can catalyze durable educational transformation. It provides a replicable model for scaling teacher capacity and innovation systemically, a model increasingly emulated by school boards across Canada and beyond.

Action Line C7: E-Learning

Key Achievements:

Canadian stakeholders are working to establish comprehensive e-learning ecosystems serving diverse populations through innovative, equity-focused approaches.

- Employment and Social Development Canada's *Supports for Student Learning Program* reaches over 1,000 communities with virtual programming, tutoring, mentoring, and wraparound supports for marginalized youth, demonstrating a strong federal interest in supporting inclusive e-learning.
- Pathways to Education is a national, charitable organization breaking the cycle of poverty through education. Its award-winning program creates positive social change by supporting 9,000 students and youth living in low-income communities to overcome barriers to education, graduate from high school, and build the foundation for a successful future. Their comprehensive services combine academic support, technology access, and innovative maker spaces that transform youth from technology consumers to creators and innovators.²⁸
- The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund contributes to reconciliation in education by creating and convening digital resources that share Indigenous knowledge, stories, and ways of doing with classrooms and groups, helping educators and students engage with the true history of Canada, including the history of the residential school system and other colonial policies, and how we can all move reconciliation forward through meaningful actions.
- TakingITGlobal's Connected North program demonstrates distinctive innovation through live, interactive virtual sessions that connect classrooms directly with Indigenous cultural leaders, artists, and Elders. Its expansion across all five Northwest Territories regions highlights how e-learning can actively strengthen cultural identity while building digital literacy, positioning it as a scalable, community-responsive model within Canada's e-learning ecosystem.
- Information integrity initiatives, including The Walrus' fact-checking fellowship and the Canadian Association of Science Centres' (CASC) ScienceUpFirst, demonstrate

proactive approaches to building critical thinking and media literacy. The Walrus fellowship provides hands-on journalism training, equipping youth and educators with skills to verify sources and produce evidence-based content. ScienceUpFirst unites scientists, communicators, and community partners to counter health misinformation through credible digital content and culturally relevant programming. Together, these initiatives build critical thinking capacity and foster resilience against misinformation, supporting trust and integrity across Canada's e-learning ecosystems.

Key Challenges:

Access inequalities persist, with the presenter from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) highlighting that 39% of students in families earning under \$60,000 rely on shared devices or public Wi-Fi for homework compared to 18% in higher-income households. This digital divide directly impacts educational outcomes and limits full participation in e-learning opportunities.

Rising mental health concerns linked to digital overload and social isolation were noted by the National Alliance for Children and Youth (NACY), who emphasized the importance of embedding social-emotional learning alongside digital literacy to better support youth well-being and learning effectiveness.

The growing threat of misinformation and disinformation disproportionately affects young people and undermines trust in educational content and democratic institutions. Current media literacy initiatives require significant scaling to address this challenge effectively.

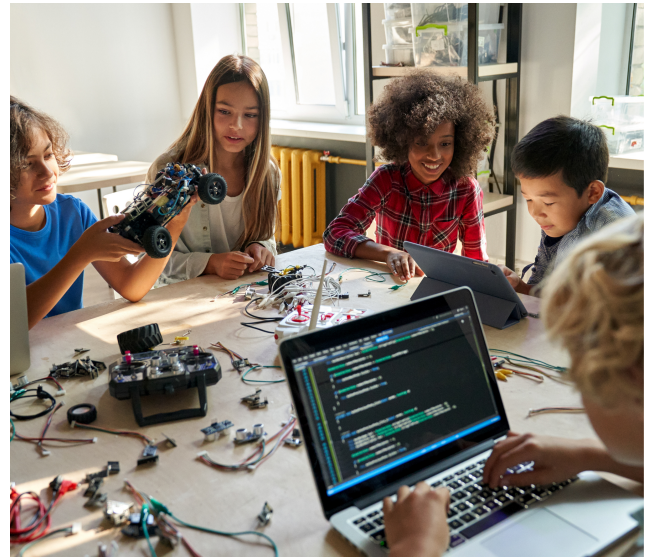
Several organizations identified the limited integration of culturally relevant content into structured e-learning and educational programming as a major gap. While diverse cultural content exists online, stakeholders emphasized that effective e-learning requires content that is not only available but also accessible, embedded within learning systems, and aligned with the lived experiences and cultural knowledge of Indigenous, newcomer, and other marginalized populations to be impactful.

Future Priorities:

- Scale culturally relevant e-learning programs that meaningfully integrate Indigenous knowledge, languages, and traditional teachings with digital innovation, creating models that other Indigenous communities globally can adapt.
- Expand equity-driven digital inclusion initiatives with comprehensive wraparound supports that address both technological access and social-emotional learning needs for marginalized youth.
- Develop comprehensive media literacy and critical thinking curricula that prepare learners to navigate information environments responsibly while fostering democratic engagement and civic participation.
- Implement safe and responsible AI integration in e-learning through youth co-design approaches that ensure emerging technologies enhance rather than replace human connection and cultural learning.

Action Line C7: Success Story:

Pathways to Education is a national nonprofit that annually supports approximately 9,000 youth in low-income communities across Canada, providing comprehensive wrap-around supports that combine academic, financial, social, and one-on-one supports that have been proven to remove barriers to graduation and promote positive youth development during critical high school years.²⁸



The **MakerSpace at the Pathways to Education**

Saint John launched in 2018-19 exemplifies a transformative approach to e-learning and youth empowerment. In partnership with Brilliant Labs, this dedicated space was supported by a Tech Mentor, and housed a full suite of technology, tools, equipment (e.g., access to a 3-D printer) for creating anything a student could possibly think up. Since then, the space has continued to expand its programming to adapt to the needs and interests of the youth. The space can be used for spontaneous ideas, leveraging technology to assist with school projects, or sharpening existing skills. It also serves as a safe space for youth who have spent most of their time-consuming technology, to move in a supported manner toward producing their own unique products.

Funding in 2024 has supported a full renovation of the space, adding a music recording and production set up and also supporting supply costs to expand programming offered in the space. The room is more than a tech space; it is used for art workshops, carpentry and construction projects, and more.

By creating access to innovative learning environments designed to expose youth to emerging technology, Pathways to Education is equipping students with the skills required for success beyond high school. Aligning with WSIS goals of digital inclusion, equitable e-learning access, and youth capacity building, the Pathways Saint John MakerSpace illustrates how community-rooted initiatives can meaningfully empower marginalized youth and foster sustainable digital transformation.

III. Strategies and Policy Contributions

Please provide details on strategies, policies, and frameworks implemented by the entity to support WSIS goals over the last 20 years, including:

Collaborative Approaches

Frameworks of Public Sector Initiatives Supporting WSIS Goals:

- Canada's Digital Ambition, a forward-looking, government-wide strategy is the Chief Information Officer of Canada's three-year strategic plan to digitize government services while expanding connectivity to ensure equitable access. The plan commits to expanding digital access and achieving 80% availability of key federal services online. Complementing this, the Universal Broadband Fund has directed multi-billion-dollar investments toward extending high-speed internet to 95% of Canadians, with continued efforts underway to reach rural and remote communities. [8,10]
- CanCode is a Government of Canada initiative administered by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). It is a federally funded program designed to support digital skills development for Canadian youth and educators. CanCode funds not-for-profit organizations to provide free training in coding, digital literacy, and artificial intelligence (AI), with a focus on reaching underrepresented groups, including residents of rural, remote, and Northern communities. ISED also oversees the Connecting Families program, a federal affordability initiative that provides low-cost internet to eligible low-income families and seniors through participating internet service providers. Along with Canada's National Cyber Security Strategy's \$507M investment, these efforts position Canada as a leader in resilience-building, with particular strength in supporting education, nonprofit, and community sectors. Programs like CanCode and Connecting Families show how targeted investments can address specific equity challenges while building broader capacity.

- Ontario's comprehensive online learning strategy through TVO demonstrates how provincial leadership can create scalable solutions. Serving 30,000 students annually with barrier-free, personalized learning approaches, TVO provides a model that other provinces and international jurisdictions can adapt and enhance.

Civil Society Excellence and Expansion Potential

Civil society in Canada is not only adapting to digital change but actively leading it, with initiatives that hold potential for scaling nationally and internationally.

- **Sector Leadership:** Imagine Canada, through the Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience, is equipping charities and nonprofits with stronger digital foundations by addressing cybersecurity, data management, and AI readiness while ensuring solutions remain community-driven and culturally responsive. The National Alliance for Children and Youth (NACY) coordinates a coalition of more than 35 organizations advancing youth digital literacy and civic engagement, demonstrating the strength of collaborative approaches that unite diverse expertise behind a shared vision.
- **Research and Innovation Networks:** C21 Canada, a network of education leaders, has convened national summits and task forces to develop 30 practical AI use cases for schools, supporting educators in preparing for emerging technologies. The Students Commission of Canada has created Sharing the Stories, a database capturing more than 22,500 youth voices that provides a model for scaling youth-informed policy and program design across Canada and internationally.
- **Information Integrity Leadership:** The Canadian Association of Science Centres (CASC) leads ScienceUpFirst, a national campaign uniting scientists, communicators, and community partners to counter misinformation through credible content and outreach. Complementing this, The Walrus runs a fact-checking fellowship that trains youth and educators in critical media literacy and evidence-based journalism. Together, these initiatives strengthen Canada's leadership in information integrity and media literacy.

Reconciliation and Equity as Innovation Drivers

Canada's civil society demonstrates how reconciliation and equity can serve as powerful drivers of digital innovation and inclusion.

- **Indigenous Excellence:** Connected North advances digital inclusion by bringing Indigenous role models into classrooms. The program delivers live, interactive virtual learning that connects students with Indigenous Elders, artists, and cultural leaders, the program strengthens identity, builds digital literacy, and ensures culturally grounded content reaches classrooms across the North. In 2024–25, Connected North is serving 200 schools, engaging over 37,000 students and 1,366 teachers through more than 7,700 live sessions. Over half of the sessions are led by Indigenous role models, reinforcing cultural relevance while building future-ready skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability. With a Net Promoter Score of 86 (exceptional) and 96% of teachers reporting their students feel inspired by the sessions, the program is emerging as a scalable, community-responsive model for Indigenous communities in Canada and globally.
- **Reconciliation Education:** Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund complements these efforts by focusing on awareness, education, and connection to move reconciliation forward in classrooms and communities. The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) equips educators and students with digital resources that share Indigenous knowledge, stories, and perspectives while addressing historical inequities. Through a balanced approach that combines digital and physical resource delivery, the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund provides more than 10,000 educators throughout Canada with toolkits that support understanding, healing, and equity in over 7,200 classrooms and groups. To complement the digital and physical resources, DWF offers educators and students access to virtual and in-person visits with Indigenous artists, a growing library of digital lesson plans, and monthly programming specific to cultural and commemorative dates of significance that expand access to Indigenous-led learning content. Together, these initiatives strengthen cultural understanding, foster meaningful connections, and ensure that reconciliation education remains accessible both in-person and online.

- **Youth Empowerment Approaches:** Several organizations are embedding youth-led program design and co-creation into their work. By placing young people at the center as leaders and innovators, these approaches ensure that programs are relevant, impactful, and sustainable. This also builds future leadership capacity while reinforcing Canada's commitment to meaningful youth engagement.

IV. Key Indicators of Progress

Provide key data or indicators that demonstrate the entity's progress toward achieving WSIS goals (e.g. percentage of the population with internet access, mobile penetration, percentage of government services available online, number of broadband connections, cybersecurity initiatives, digital skills training, policies and digital governance frameworks, etc.)

The key indicators in this report illustrate progress on WSIS Action Lines C1 (multi-stakeholder governance and inclusion), C4 (capacity building), and C7 (e-learning), as observed through stakeholder dialogue and supported by publicly available national data. These indicators reflect the insights and experiences of a diverse group of stakeholders who participated in the national gathering, each bringing perspectives shaped by their regional and sectoral contexts.

Contributions from government, education, civil society, and nonprofit representatives are reinforced by data from the Government of Canada, the CRTC, Statistics Canada, and international bodies such as the OECD. This blended approach grounds the analysis in lived experience and official statistics, offering a balanced snapshot of progress while recognizing that it represents only part of Canada's broader digital ecosystem.

Key Indicators of Progress

Canada’s stakeholder progress across connectivity, education, equity, and innovation is establishing strong equity and inclusion foundations, creating a base for sustained participation and leadership in the global digital society.

Infrastructure Improvements

Connectivity Improvements

95% household broadband access demonstrates near-universal coverage achievement

99.5% mobile wireless coverage positions Canada among global leaders

Rural areas achieving **62% optimal speed coverage** with clear pathways for improvement

80% of federal services to be digitized showcases transformation success

\$507M cyber security investment demonstrates commitment to resilience and protection.

Universal Broadband Fund targeting remaining gaps shows **strategic approach to complete coverage and inclusion**

Education and Skills Development

30K

Students Served

Annual reach through Ontario's online high school demonstrates scalable success

9K

Wraparound Support

Students supported by comprehensive wraparound programming annually

85K+

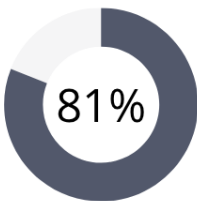
Students Reached

Through coordinated virtual programming

22.5K

Youth Voices

Captured in national engagement platform



Capacity Building

- 81% of nonprofit worker recognition of digital skills importance indicates sector readiness for expansion.
- Identification of workforce development opportunities creates clear investment pathways
- Strong existing program infrastructure provides foundation for scaling successful approaches

Equity and Inclusion Foundations

Opportunity Identification

\$111B digital economy GDP contribution shows strong foundation for continued growth

10% workforce in nonprofit sector demonstrates significant capacity for digital transformation

Above-OECD educational performance with identified equity gaps creates clear improvement pathways

Multiple AI pilot programs demonstrate proactive adoption approach

Growing investment in media literacy creates resilience against misinformation

Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration provides foundation for ethical technology governance and position Canada for responsible innovation leadership

Canada's Digital Progress - Access, Capacity, and Innovation

Canada's digital transformation reflects strong progress across key WSIS indicators, positioning the country as a leader in advancing inclusive digital development. According to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in its 2025 Broadband Fund report, 95% of households now have broadband access and 99.5% have mobile wireless coverage, with significant investments from the Universal Broadband Fund extending connectivity to many remote and Indigenous regions. The Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) reports that Canada's digital economy contributed \$94 billion to GDP in 2023, with growth projected to reach \$111 billion by 2025.

According to the Government of Canada's *Digital Ambition 2024–25* report, government digitization efforts have made significant progress, with approximately 77% of Canadians now accessing federal services online, moving toward the broader goal of making 80% of federal services digitally accessible. [8] These initiatives are reinforced by a \$507 million investment in the *National Cyber Security Strategy*, ensuring secure and resilient service delivery. [5-7] In education and capacity building, Ontario's online learning platform, operated by TVO's Independent Learning Centre, serves 30,000 students annually (TVO, 2025). Wraparound programming supported by the Supports for Student Learning Program has reached over 85,000 students, while national engagement platforms such as the Students Commission of Canada's *Sharing the Stories* database have captured 22,500 youth voices. In the nonprofit sector, Imagine Canada notes that 81% of workers recognize digital skills as essential, underscoring growing readiness for expanded capacity-building initiatives.

At the same time, the OECD Economic Surveys: [26] Canada 2025 highlights persistent equity gaps, particularly affecting Indigenous and low-income populations, despite overall above-average education outcomes. This aligns with stakeholder dialogue emphasizing the need for culturally relevant e-learning and targeted digital inclusion strategies.

Taken together, these indicators demonstrate Canada's strong foundation for sustained digital leadership, while also underscoring clear pathways for investment and culturally responsive programming to address equity challenges.

V. Challenges and Gaps

Please identify key barriers or challenges the entity has faced in implementing WSIS mandates and achieving desired outcomes.

Opportunity to strengthen Inclusion

Canada's implementation of WSIS mandates highlights both progress and ongoing challenges that need to be addressed to strengthen digital inclusion and transformation efforts.

Access and Infrastructure Gaps

- **Infrastructure and Connectivity Challenges:** Despite achieving nearly universal household broadband coverage, connectivity quality remains inconsistent in rural and remote regions, with approximately 78.2% of rural areas meeting the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) 50/10 Mbps unlimited speed standard. Indigenous communities in Northern Canada encounter ongoing connectivity challenges, a reality exemplified by Elder Eileen Beaver during stakeholder dialogues, who detailed frequent disconnections impacting virtual learning experiences.

Despite Canada's near-universal broadband coverage, significant gaps remain for Indigenous communities. The 2021 CRTC Communications Monitoring Report indicated that only 42.9% of First Nations reserve households had access to minimum high-speed internet (50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload). By 2023, this improved to 61% coverage due to federal and territorial investments, including targeted funding through the Universal Broadband Fund and Indigenous partnership initiatives to accelerate infrastructure deployment and adoption. These efforts are critical components of Canada's Connectivity Strategy goals of full digital inclusion by 2031, addressing infrastructure challenges, underinvestment, and the geographic complexities of remote communities.

- **Digital Equity and Access Barriers:** Meaningful access to technology continues to be uneven. Research presented by the representative of Employment and Social Development Canada highlights that 39% of students in households earning below \$60,000 depend on shared devices or public Wi-Fi for homework completion, compared to 18% of students in higher-income families. This digital divide adversely affects educational outcomes and limits equitable participation in the digital economy.

Capacity and Readiness Limitations

- **Organizational Capacity Limitations:** The nonprofit sector faces critical digital maturity challenges. Data shared by Imagine Canada and the Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience reveals fewer than 1% of nonprofit employees occupy dedicated technology roles, with wages in these positions approximately 33% lower than in comparable sectors. Although nonprofits constitute roughly 10% of Canada's workforce, only a small fraction report full digital integration, hampering their ability to deliver efficient, innovative services.
- **Emerging Technology Preparedness Gaps:** Educational institutions largely lack comprehensive frameworks governing AI use and emerging digital technologies. This preparedness gap, emphasized by education leaders from C21 Canada, constrains educators and administrators in managing opportunities and risks associated with rapid technological advancements.
- **Information Integrity Threats:** The proliferation of misinformation remains a formidable obstacle to democratic health and educational effectiveness. Stakeholders such as The Walrus and the Canadian Association of Science Centres stressed the urgent need to amplify media literacy and critical thinking education to safeguard youth against online disinformation.

Systemic and Sustainability Challenges

- **Mental Health and Digital Wellness Concerns:** Youth-serving organizations report escalating mental health issues linked to digital overload and social isolation, further compounded by the insufficient integration of social-emotional learning and digital wellness programming, which are crucial for fostering healthy relationships with technology.
- **Funding and Sustainability Constraints:** Consistent across stakeholder discussions was the challenge posed by the short-term and inconsistent nature of funding models, which constrains the scalability and durability of innovative digital inclusion initiatives critical to long-term impact.
- **Cultural Integration and Identity Preservation:** Indigenous community representatives underscored the persistent risk of cultural erosion unless traditional knowledge, languages, and practices are substantively embedded in digital education strategies and technology development frameworks.
- **Coordination and Collaboration Gaps:** While strong multi-sector partnership foundations exist, stakeholders lamented the prevalence of fragmented and isolated discussions, which inhibit systemic, coordinated approaches necessary for sustainable digital inclusion and innovation.

Conclusion

The WSIS+20 multi-stakeholder dialogue in Canada highlights significant progress in advancing an inclusive and culturally responsive information society, while also identifying critical areas where continued investment and collaboration are needed. Stakeholders emphasized Canada's strengths in reconciliation-centered digital development, education and capacity building, and innovative approaches to emerging technologies.

Near-universal connectivity, strong educational infrastructure, and active civil society engagement were recognized as key foundations supporting Canada's progress. At the same time, stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen rural and Indigenous connectivity, address nonprofit sector digital transformation, and close persistent equity gaps.

Contributions from diverse organizations demonstrate how Indigenous knowledge, youth empowerment, and multi-sector collaboration are driving innovation and resilience. These initiatives underscore the importance of culturally relevant e-learning, responsible innovation, and collective action in shaping equitable digital futures.

The insights shared through this process reaffirm that technology best serves people and communities when it prioritizes equity, preserves cultural identity, and empowers meaningful participation. By building on current progress and addressing remaining challenges, Canada's multi-stakeholder community can continue to provide valuable models for inclusive digital development within the WSIS framework.

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