

# 2025

## IN REVIEW

2025 can be defined by growing risks and uncertainty. From tariff shocks, affordability pressures, and shifting geopolitical and economic alliances, Canadians experienced a radically new world. These challenges have exposed long-standing weaknesses in Canada's innovation, economic, and policy systems, while at the same time underscoring the need for new and more collaborative ways of working.

## A REFLECTION OF OUR YEAR:

Over the past year, ICI has prioritized three areas that were essential to navigate this shifting landscape:

### 1. Empowering Citizens & Communities

We have expanded our engagement activities and public forums to involve Canadians in discussions on our most pressing issues, ensuring our research delivers real public value.

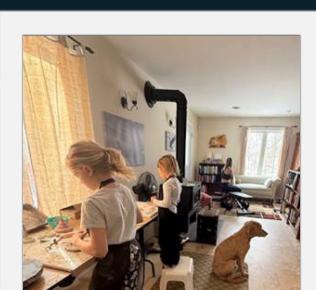
### 2. Platforming Youth Voices

Recognizing that youth represent 12% of the population, we have worked to move them from mere stakeholders to active contributors and leaders in policy development.

### 3. Supporting Our Partners

Through new academic and civic partnerships, we have supported teams and organizations in applying systems thinking to strengthen Canada's future and better collaborate on critical national issues.

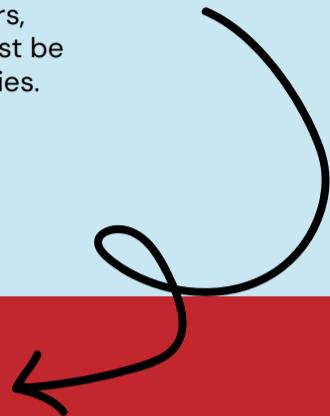
This year in review highlights some of our contributions and the foundation we built for greater impact going forward.



## NATIONAL YOUTH WEBINAR

In partnership with Research Money and the Canadian Science Policy Centre (CSPC), this initiative brought together young Canadians, policy experts, and innovation leaders to discuss youth perspectives on Canada's seven federal missions, their implications for youth, and the role they play in advancing them.

This event helped demonstrate that youth are not only stakeholders, who represent 12% of the country's population, but are contributors, creators, and leaders whose insights must be accounted for in shaping national priorities.

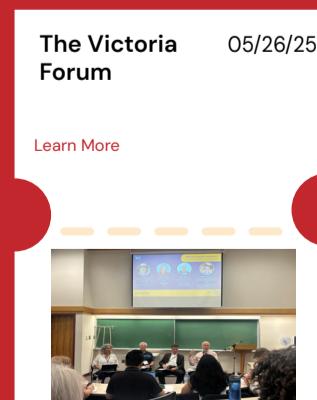
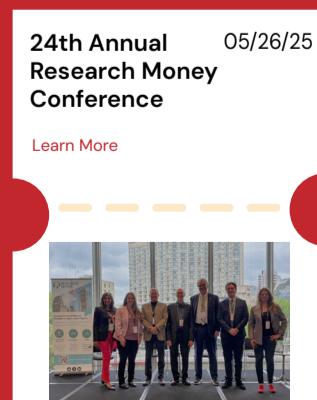


## A YEAR OF CONFERENCES & EVENTS



ICI team members contributed to major events throughout the year, including the **24th Annual Research Money Conference**, **The Victoria Forum 2025**, **CSPC Conference 2025**, **the Scale-up Bioeconomy Conference**, **The Halifax Forum**, and many others where we provided a citizen-centred perspective.

Additionally, ICI members in collaboration with **Global Advantage Consulting Group**, analyzed the 2025 Canadian budget and presented its implications for the academic, research and innovation, and social sectors through in-person events at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and the CSPC 2025 Conference, and a webinar to social sector organizations with the Tamarack Institute and Social Innovation Canada.



# ACADEMIC & CIVIC PARTNERSHIPS



Carleton University's  
BMPD Capstone Students



ICI continued its partnerships with colleges and universities. We completed two capstone projects with students from Carleton University (**A Documentary on the Polycrisis**) and Algonquin College. We've currently initiated a new project with a second team of Bachelor of Media Production and Design (BMPD) Capstone students.



Algonquin College Bachelor of  
Technology Capstone Students



In collaboration with faculty at Conestoga College we undertook a data analytics project to inform Canada's affordable housing strategy and are jointly seeking resources to build on this work.

We are always looking and open to new opportunities with academic-related projects.

Contact us at: [ideas@icicanada.org](mailto:ideas@icicanada.org)

## YEAR-END MESSAGES FROM OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP



**DAVID WATTERS**  
PRESIDENT/FOUNDER

2025 was the most eventful for ICI Canada because we were able to expand our network of staff who contribute to our activities, including our new Interim Executive Director, Dr. Rahim Rezaie who helped manage our team through much of the year. We also expanded our partnership base to work closely with the Canadian Science Policy Centre, Research Money and their Executive staff, Global Advantage and their team of professionals, the Council of Canadian Academies, Social Purpose Organizations such as the Tamarack Institute, Social Innovation Canada, La Collaborative and the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre, and academic institutions like the Munk Centre at the University of Toronto, Algonquin College, Conestoga College, Concordia University in Montreal, and Carleton University in Ottawa.

This expanded staff and these expanded collaborative partnerships, then permitted us to deepen our research program in global risks and their impact on citizen/community-centred quality of life, and the mobilization and presentation of our insights and evidence at national conferences and national publications. The positive audience response to date fuels our collective drive to contribute more in 2026. Stay tuned!



**DR. RAHIM REZIAIE**  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we closed out 2025, I am proud to reflect on a year of growth and evolution at ICI. Over the past year, we expanded our team, deepened and diversified our partnerships, and broadened our areas of inquiry. These developments have strengthened our foundation and positioned ICI for greater impact in the years ahead.

Canada finds itself at an important transition point—economically, geopolitically, and socially. In this moment of uncertainty and opportunity, ICI is sharpening its focus on a core belief: that citizen needs must sit at the heart of decision-making.

We recognize the growing importance of monitoring global risks—from climate and technological disruption to misinformation and geopolitical instability and examining their implications for Canada. In response, we are actively building analytical and advisory capacities to help decision-makers anticipate, understand, and respond to these risks.

We believe that Canadian youth must have a meaningful voice in shaping public policy. Young people are not only future leaders; they are present-day stakeholders. In 2025, we began designing programs that create space for youth perspectives.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with greater clarity and optimism. We invite partners across sectors to join us in these shared endeavours. It is through collaboration, innovation, and partnership that we will help ensure Canada's long-term health, prosperity, and productivity.

## ICI SPOTLIGHT: MAX PEACOCK UN GRADUATE PROGRAM

Max Peacock, ICI Digital Strategist, was recently selected as one of 60 participants from over 1250 applicants representing 53 countries for the United Nations Graduate study Program, the longest-running educational initiative at the UN. The program took place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland in July 2025, focusing on the practical implementation of the Pact for the Future. Max's research group examined misinformation and disinformation and its impact on UN peacekeeping operations and global governance, concluding that the UN must shift from reactive to proactive storytelling through radical transparency.

Find the full report [here](#).





## WHAT 2025 TAUGHT US

- **Canada's STI ecosystem** remains highly fragmented with limited coordination across sectors and levels of government. Yet, this is the sector essential for delivering on the outcomes outlined by Budget 2025.
- **Systemic risks** – Global risks are evolving and compounding faster than existing institutions can respond to.
- **Collaboration** is no longer a nice-to-have, it's a must-have. A national requirement for resilience.
- **Youth** represent 12% of the Canadian population and are facing unprecedented challenges. They are a highly untapped strategic asset in policy development and innovation leadership.
- **Strengthening knowledge flows** is essential for turning research investment into real public value.



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026:



### EMPOWERING CITIZENS & COMMUNITIES

We are developing new community health diagnostic frameworks and digital asset-mapping tools to better measure wellbeing and connect residents to local services. We will explore how the dynamics of **creative destruction** affect communities and how communities can respond, adapt, and build resilience in the face of shifting economic and technological landscapes.



### PLATFORMING YOUTH VOICES

ICI is launching a National Youth Working Group to co-author the Canadian 2026 Risk Outlook. This initiative will deliver a published analysis targeted at policy and industry audiences. [Learn more](#) to express interest and share this opportunity with your youth colleagues.



### SUPPORTING OUR PARTNERS

We will continue to facilitate critical knowledge flows through new op-eds and advisory work, bringing expert analysis on global risks and the Canadian STI ecosystem. We are open to new collaborations and supporting your work where we can be supportive. Reach out to discuss how we may together advance your strategic goals ([ideas@icicanada.org](mailto:ideas@icicanada.org)).

## CLOSING REFLECTIONS

2025 demonstrated that Canada's challenges are increasingly interconnected—and that siloed responses are no longer sufficient. Throughout the year, ICI worked to bridge gaps, convene diverse actors, and bring forward analytical frameworks that support stronger, more coordinated national action.

As we move into 2026, our commitment remains the same: to help Canada build an innovation ecosystem capable of meeting the needs of citizens in their communities, strengthening their resilience, and preparing for a rapidly changing world.

### CONNECT WITH US!

