



**Evidence for
Democracy**

IMPACT REPORT

EVIDENCE FOR DEMOCRACY

2021–2022



Strong science, strong democracy

Because we all benefit when governments make decisions informed by the best available evidence.

Evidence for Democracy (E4D) is the leading voice advocating for evidence-informed decision-making in governments across Canada. We engage and empower the science community, while cultivating public and political demand for science and evidence, through original research, skills training, and issues-based campaigns.

The seed for E4D was planted in 2012 when thousands of Canadians, concerned about the diminishing role of science and evidence in the federal government, came together in the nationwide Death of Evidence rally. Scientists and their supporters marched up to Parliament Hill to stand up for what was missing: evidence-informed policy, transparency, and scientific integrity.



Death of Evidence, July 2012

The co-organizers of the Death of Evidence went on to form E4D to sustain a voice for science and evidence in public policy.

E4D has since worked to advocate for evidence-informed decision-making for the prosperity of all Canadians. Our [original research](#) program addresses knowledge gaps at the science-policy interface to produce critical analyses and training materials that help support government, industry, nonprofits and the public to strengthen the best practices of evidence-informed decision-making. We empower the Canadian science community, through our [training program](#), with necessary policy skills by designing and delivering hands-on workshops, and facilitating expert panels, lectures, and other events. From our research, we then build [campaigns](#) to tackle issues affecting evidence-informed public policy. These campaigns allow scientists and supporters across Canada to leverage our advocacy tools and help us make a greater impact.

Together, we can raise our voices to make evidence-informed decision-making a reality, and place evidence at the heart of Canada's democracy.

Message from the Executive Director



What a year it has been for Evidence for Democracy! As a team and community, we braved many new achievements together, from our first ever appearance at the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Research, to the launch of our new cohort-based training program, the Science to Policy Accelerator.

Throughout, we were reminded of the ever-growing need to place evidence at the heart of public policy. We worked hard to bring this message to our community through our work on the transparency of evidence in public policy, revisiting the progress on the Fundamental Science Review five years after its launch, and returning to the Vote Science campaign in Canada's 44th election.

This last year was full of reflection too, as we geared up to commemorate the ten year anniversary of the Death of Evidence. It was this iconic event that spurred the formation of Evidence for Democracy, our community of supporters, and the impact that has followed.

A decade and a pandemic later, Canada's overall progress on its science portfolio still looks like scattered pieces. Canada is plagued by unrelenting challenges when it

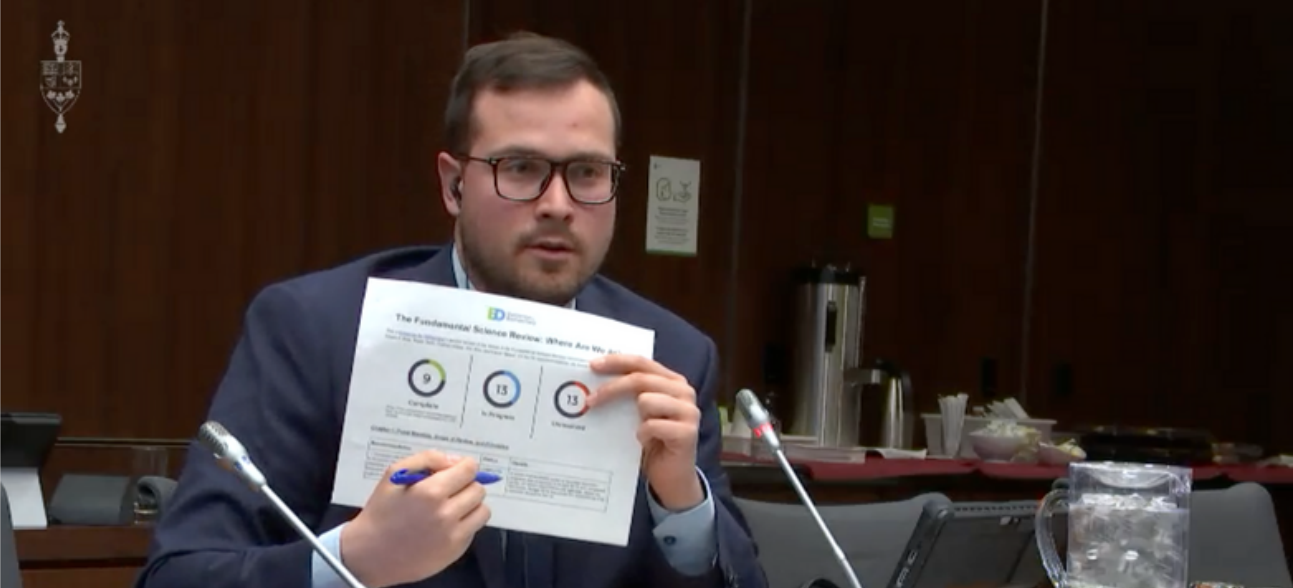
comes to robustly supporting science, ranking consistently in the bottom tier of its peer nations by practically any measure of investment. The Government of Canada's rollout of scientific integrity policies has not been all sunny ways, with reports of science being ignored surfacing as recently as this year. And despite the federal government's stated commitments to science and evidence-based decision-making, the level of transparency needed to assess what steps are being taken to ensure this remains deeply inadequate.

To continue to build trust in science and improve evidence-informed decision-making, we need to radically strengthen the three-way relationship between science, society, and policy. The strength of our community of supporters, our Board members, and dedicated staff inspire us every day to stay focused on this journey.

I hope that learning about our impact in 2021-2022 will inspire you to join us on the path to a strong democracy informed by strong science.

Rachael Maxwell

A handwritten signature of Rachael Maxwell in blue ink. The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.



Member of Parliament, Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, discusses E4D's report on the Fundamental Science Review during a meeting at the Standing Committee on Science and Research

KEEPING SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC EYE

A new Standing Committee for Canada

In one of the biggest science milestones of the year, the new Standing Committee on Science and Research (SRSR) convened for the first time at the House of Commons on December 14, 2021, providing a new channel of dialogue between the science community and elected decision-makers. We provided the science community with [meeting summaries](#) on what we overheard at the Standing Committee on Science and Research in the early days, and throughout the Committee's first study.

E4D's testimony to the Standing Committee on Science and Research

In February 2022, the Standing Committee began their first study on the successes, challenges and opportunities for science in Canada, with the intent to develop

recommendations on how to improve the state of science and research nationally.

The committee called on witnesses from Canada's science and research community, including our Executive Director, Rachael Maxwell, and Director of Research and Policy, Farah Kaiser.

In our [testimony](#), we emphasized the importance of securing a voice for science in the federal government, such as formalizing the role of the Chief Science Advisor, and revisiting investments in federal government science. We pointed out that COVID-19 has illuminated the three-way relationship between science, society and policy, highlighting the need for avenues that allow scientists and policy-makers to deliberately work together to better serve society. MPs brought forward questions about our recent work on transparency and our analysis of the progress of the Fundamental Science Review.

Budget 2022

In August, we participated in the [2022 pre-budget consultation](#) and provided recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. We focused on Canada's lack of an overarching strategy to guide efforts to connect research to long-term innovation objectives and major policy challenges. **We recommended that the government commit funds to develop a National Science Strategy.** A national science strategy that defines the problems we are trying to solve can connect science to where it is needed most. If Canada is to unlock the full potential of its ever-growing knowledge assets and talent capacity, then Canadian science needs to move towards clear goals.

When the 2022 federal budget was tabled in April 2022, we [examined the federal government's commitments to science and evidence](#), and compared them to the three pillars of a pan-Canadian knowledge strategy that we presented in our pre-budget consultation:

- **Investment:** clear targets for science and research funding
- **Infrastructure:** science advice and capacity in government
- **Information:** evidence-informed policy for equity and prosperity

We found wide-ranging investments aimed at accelerating innovation and

building intellectual property. There were smaller funding portfolios for science, including research in specific areas (such as long COVID and plastics waste), targeted scholarships for Black student researchers, recruiting up to 25 Canada Excellence Research Chairs, and extending support to the Experimental Lakes and the Canadian High Arctic Research station. However, we noted that the 2022 budget didn't include significant increases to the federal granting agencies, or specific investments in the humanities or the social sciences.



2022 FEDERAL BUDGET

Budget 2022: Investments in innovation outpace support for science

Thursday, April 7, 2022 - 19:47

Today, the Government of Canada tabled its 2022 budget. With Canada reaching its highest inflation rate (and climbing) in three decades, this budget focuses on affordability and fiscal balance. There are flagship investments in building affordable homes and transitioning to a green economy, as well as boosts to defence spending and a budding new dental plan.

So, what does this budget table for science and research-related investments?

To recap: it's been four years since the [2018 budget](#) that made historic investments in fundamental research, and three years since the [2019 commitments](#) to expand support for research trainees. While no federal budget was tabled in 2020, there were ongoing investments in Canadian science throughout the pandemic. In the 2021 federal budget, [science underpinned targeted investments](#), including artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and bioinnovation.

When it comes to science and research, budget 2022 offers wide-ranging and select investments to accelerate innovation and build intellectual property.

There are also niche investments across various disciplines, including funding to support research into long COVID and plastics waste. This includes earmarked funds to create targeted scholarships for Black student researchers, establish national research security, recruit up to 25 Canada Excellence Research Chairs, and extend support to the Experimental Lakes and the Canadian High Arctic Research Station.

We note that this budget does not include significant increases to the federal granting agencies, or targeted investments in the humanities or the social sciences.

Below, we highlight key science and research-related investments in Budget 2022.

Investment: clear targets for science and research funding

- \$1 billion over five years to create an operationally independent federal innovation and investment agency;
- \$1 billion over six years, starting in 2024-25, to **Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada** for the Strategic Innovation Fund to provide targeted support towards critical minerals projects, with prioritization given to manufacturing, processing, and recycling applications.



Rachael Maxwell
Executive Director
[@RachaelMaxwell](#)
rachael@evidencefordemocracy.ca
Rachael Maxwell joins Evidence for Democracy with a deep knowledge of the science landscape in Canada and a strong track record of success working at national not-for-profit research organizations. From 2018-21 she held

Media

As a leading voice on evidence-informed decision-making, E4D continually comments on issues related to science, evidence, and policy in the media.



This year, E4D was featured in
**18 ARTICLES, PODCASTS,
& RADIO INTERVIEWS**
in major media outlets.

How to make bureaucrats think like scientists



The Logic
David Reevley

Apr 21, 2022 • April 21, 2022 • 10 minute read • [Join the conversation](#)



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NATURE INDEX | 17 November 2021 | Correction [19 November 2021](#)

Canada's researchers call for a return to stated science ambitions

The buzz created by a 2017 national science review has faded, prompting calls for a renewed focus on innovation.

[Brian Owens](#)



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Manitoba

'We should be concerned': some voters say election funding should be top issue



They say it's been missing from platforms; ability to solve issues depends on it

[Peggy Lam](#) · CBC News · Posted: Sep 17, 2021 5:00 AM CT | Last Updated: Sep 17, 2021 5:00 AM CT



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Quirks & Quarks

Canadian science suffered from COVID. After the election, how do we bring it back better?



Our pre-election science policy panel discusses what we learned from the pandemic

CBC Radio · Posted: Sep 17, 2021 4:15 PM ET | Last Updated: September 17, 2021



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Taking stock of the Naylor report, 5 years on

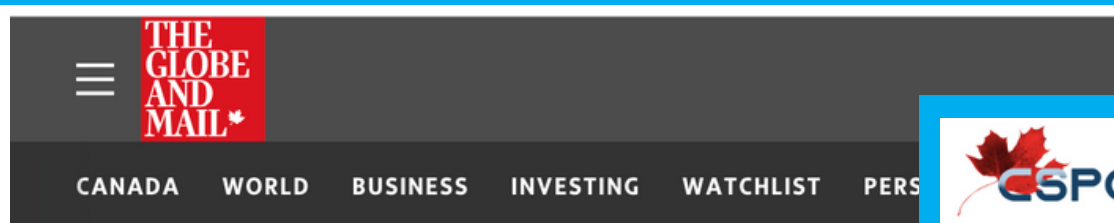
Some say there's been too little progress toward supporting Canadian research in fundamental science.

BY BRIAN OWENS
MAR 02 2022



We also published
21 BLOG POSTS
on E4D's website...

...and
3 OP-EDS featured
in outlets, including
The Globe and Mail



OPINION

Canada, we have a transparency problem when it comes to policy-making

FARAH QAISER AND RACHAEL MAXWELL

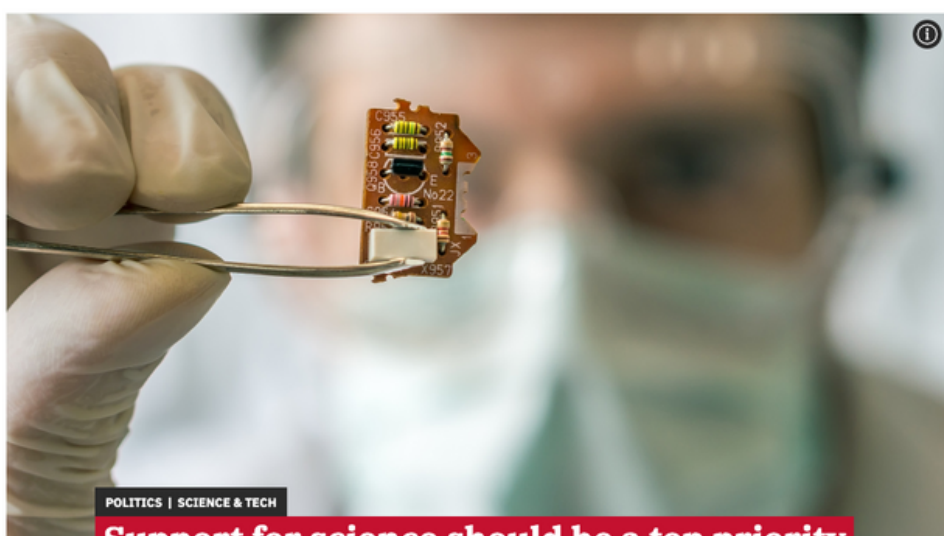
CONTRIBUTED TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 21, 2022



POLICY OPTIONS POLITIQUES

PUBLIC SERVICE ENVIRONMENT HEALTH SERIES SEC



POLITICS | SCIENCE & TECH

Support for science should be a top priority for the re-elected Trudeau government

COVID has shown the vital difference science can make in addressing our defining challenges. Let's build on this awareness with support for science.



THE YEAR IN RESEARCH:

Shedding light on the science-policy gap

Our original research program addresses knowledge gaps at the interface of policy and evidence. Our reports identify what works, and opportunities for improvement, helping ensure that the public and politicians alike find the information they need to make informed decisions.

This year's research themes focused on science in the federal government by examining the transparency of evidence in government decisions, and revisiting the recommendations made in the 2017 Fundamental Science Review.

Revisiting the Fundamental Science Review

Canada has a persistent challenge when it comes to supporting science – especially fundamental, discovery-oriented research, which is the very foundation of the science and innovation ecosystem. In fact, Canada is the only G7 country to demonstrate a continuous decline in research and development (R&D) investments over the last two decades.

In 2017, the Government of Canada commissioned a review of Canada's fundamental science and research ecosystem to look for recommendations to strengthen the foundations of Canadian extramural research (i.e. science being led by researchers working in universities, hospitals and other research institutes). The resulting Fundamental Science Review (FSR) outlined a comprehensive action plan, with 35 such recommendations. In the years since, the FSR has become a rallying

cry for the Canadian science community.

This year, as we approached the five year anniversary of the FSR, we carried out a second analysis of the recommendations to find out if any progress has been made since our last look in 2019. Of the 35 FSR recommendations, we found that nine are now complete, 13 are in progress, and 13 remain unresolved. We published our findings as a report, and reflected on the findings in an op-ed in *Policy Options*.



This work was made possible with the help of 4 volunteers!

REPORT: **EYES ON EVIDENCE II**

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSPARENCY OF EVIDENCE USAGE IN THE
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Eyes on Evidence II

In recent years, the Government of Canada has repeatedly committed to using the best available science and evidence in its decision-making. In order to assess what progress has been made towards these commitments, members of the public must be given the opportunity to scrutinize the relationship between evidence and policy decisions. This starts by being transparent about the evidence used to arrive at policy decisions. Only then can members of the public consider whether they agree with how evidence is being used to formulate and justify public policy. Transparency is the first step to keeping governments accountable and fostering public trust, and is a prerequisite to enabling evidence-informed decision-making.

In January 2022, we released our latest transparency report, [Eyes On Evidence II](#): An assessment of the transparency of evidence usage in the Government of Canada. This study applied the transparency framework that we developed in [our first Eyes on Evidence report](#) (2021) to assess the

transparency of evidence behind 100 policies across 10 federal departments and agencies in the Government of Canada. Overall, we found that policies scored low on the transparency of evidence usage, meaning that it's very difficult for members of the public to find the evidence behind government policy.

But in Canada, policy-making is not the sole responsibility of the federal government. Next, we are turning our eyes next to the provincial level, and have already started applying the transparency framework to assess provincial policies. In the coming year, we look forward to releasing the next phase of our Eyes on Evidence series.

This year, we also offered all of our transparency reports and assessments in French. We plan to continue making research and training materials more accessible to our French-speaking community in Canada.



The first cohort during the last session of the inaugural Science to Policy Accelerator program (S2PA)

THE YEAR IN TRAINING:

Equipping Scientists with Skills and Resources

The Science to Policy Accelerator (S2PA)

One of the core pillars of E4D's work involves putting knowledge and skills into the hands of Canada's science community. More than ever, scientists need to be able to understand and participate in the many different processes that contribute to public policy, making access to hands-on training that helps them develop the skills to enhance their policy impact essential.

In February 2022, we launched our inaugural Science to Policy Accelerator (S2PA) program. We welcomed 25 early-career researchers from across Canada to join our pilot cohort and gain foundational knowledge in a range of topics from science policy to testifying at Parliamentary Committees directly from some of Canada's leading experts. As key knowledge brokers,

early-career researchers have the potential to be emerging leaders at the science-policy interface.

Participants left the program with a deeper understanding of the foundations of government, science policy principles, and how they can directly participate in public policy in Canada. We look forward to developing S2PA as E4D's flagship training program for scientists and researchers in Canada.

“It was exciting to connect with so many amazing early-career researchers and dive into the exciting world of science policy! [...] I would highly recommend [S2PA] to anyone who is interested in learning more about how to use their background in science to help make a change!”

—Puja Bagri, S2PA participant

CSPC
CAREER CAMPUS
WORKING FOR A NOT-FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Dr. Shawn McGuirk
Science & Policy Exchange

Dr. Bonnie Schmidt
Let's Talk Science

Rachael Maxwell
Evidence for Democracy

Dr. Naveed Aziz
CGen

JOIN THEM AUGUST 12 AT 12:00 EST

ED Webinar

Your New Toolkit for Preparing Plain Language Summaries



ED Webinar

EYES ON EVIDENCE

We assessed 100 policies from the Government of Canada. What did we learn about the transparency of evidence usage in Canada?

Register now for the Eyes On Evidence webinar!
February 15, 2022 | 12:30 pm EST

100 DEBATES on the ENVIRONMENT

Ottawa Centre

Zoom | Sept 8, 2021 | 6 pm ET
Register now on Eventbrite!

Brought to you by GreenPAC

ED Webinar

#VoteScience

Advocating for science in the federal election

August 31, 2021
4pm ET
Register for the webinar!

EMPOWER WITH EVIDENCE

AAAS
ANNUAL MEETING

SCIPOL101 EVENT

MEET THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER: RACHAEL MAXWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EVIDENCE FOR DEMOCRACY

**THURSDAY, MAY 12TH
11:15 AM**

WWW.OTTAWASCIENCEPOLICYNETWORK.CA

Webinars and Events

This year, E4D presented in **34** webinars, talks, panels, and trainings.

Our webinars and events reached over

1,900 attendees

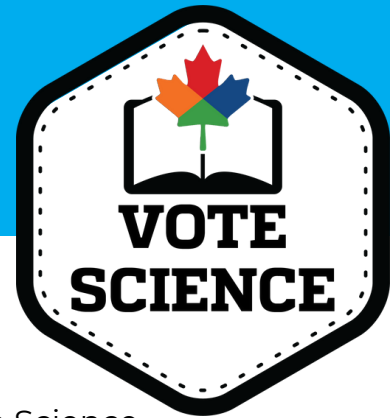
Panel: Closing the Transparency Gap

Building Forward Better
CSPC2021
Bâtir un avenir meilleur

During the 2021 Canadian Science Policy Conference, we invited panelists from academia, government and civil society for a lively discussion examining Canada's 'transparency gap'. Our panelists (from left to right) were Ted Hsu, Senator Stan Kutcher, Tracey Brown, Farah Qaiser, and Frédéric Bouchard.



THE YEAR IN CAMPAIGNS:



2021 Vote Science — National

Leading up to the 2021 federal election, we brought back the Vote Science campaign, first launched in 2019, to empower Canadians with tools to advocate for science and evidence-informed policy. Hundreds of people across the country used our ready-to-send email tool to contact federal candidates in their riding and send the message that Canadians care about science. For voters who wanted to go one step further, we hosted a #VoteScience webinar on how to engage with federal candidates, and different ways to advocate for science in the federal election.

Platform Analysis:

In partnership with the Institute on Governance, we prepared a non-partisan analysis of [the science and innovation-related commitments](#) in the five main party platforms, through a lens of policy for science and science for policy, to help voters make informed decisions in Canada's 44th federal election.

Candidates debate:

On September 8, 2021, just a few weeks before the election, we organized an election debate with the candidates running in Ottawa Centre. This event was part of GreenPAC's 100 Debates on the Environment, a non-partisan initiative that took place in ridings across the country, in an effort to start conversations about major environmental policy issues.

We invited David Moscrop, a political commentator and contributing columnist for the Washington Post, and Terri Lynn Morrison, the Director of Communications and Strategic

Partnerships at Indigenous Clean Energy, and Terri Lynn Morrison to moderate the Ottawa Centre debate, with the following candidates in attendance: Angela Keller-Herzog (Green Party), Angella MacEwan (New Democratic Party), Yasir Naqvi (Liberal Party), and Alex McDonald (Communist Party). Carol Clemenhausen (Conservative Party) was invited but was unable to attend.





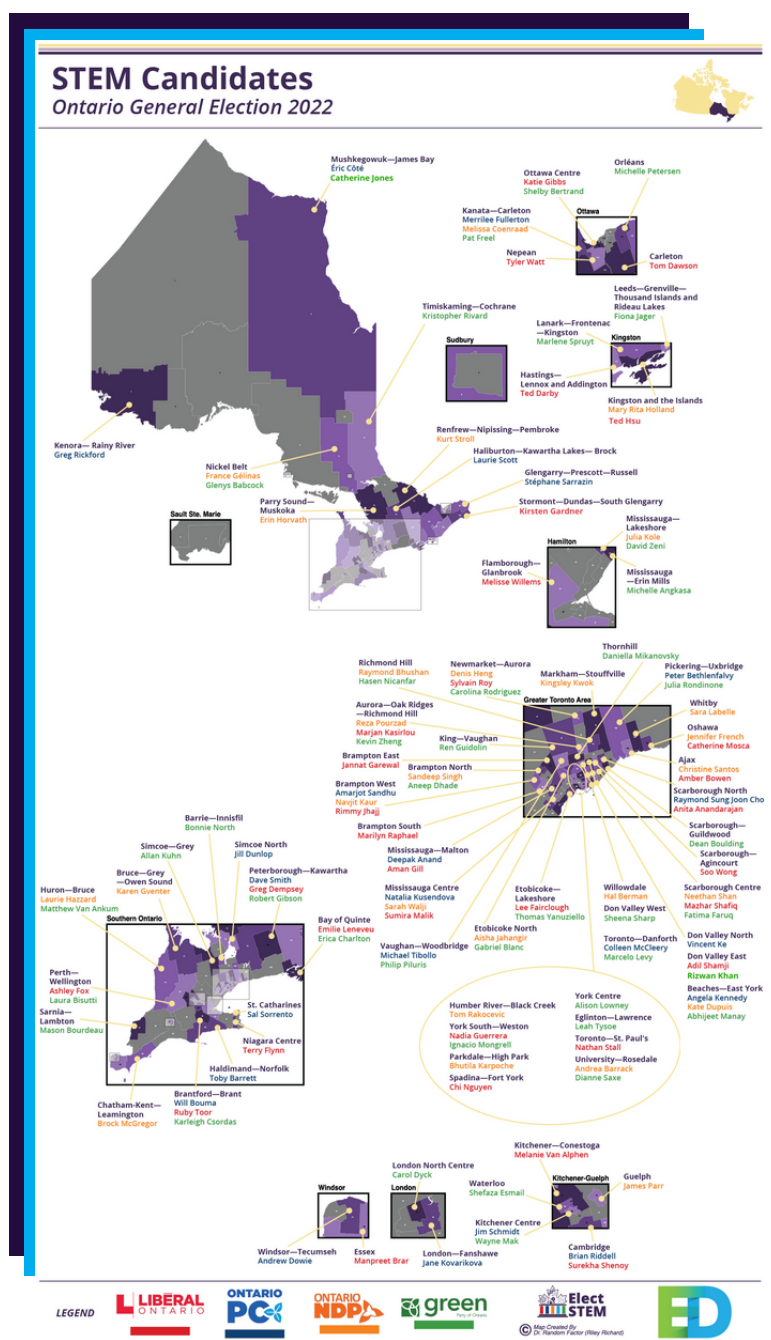
Nearly **400** Canadians participated in Vote Science campaigns in 2021-2022 by emailing candidates, sharing selfies, and using the hashtag #VoteScience

2022 Vote Science — Ontario

In May 2022, we re-launched Vote Science once again, this time as a provincial campaign ahead of the provincial election in Ontario. For the first time, Ontarians used our ready-to-send email tool to contact Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) candidates in their ridings to prioritize science and evidence-informed decision-making in Ontario.

To keep Ontarians informed, we partnered with ElectSTEM and 9 E4D volunteers to scope out the candidates running in the 2022 Ontario provincial election, and discover who had a background in science, technology, engineering, mathematics or medicine (STEMM). Elected officials from diverse fields bring valuable perspectives to our democracy. Experts in STEMM are no exception. Having representatives of science in government can help ensure that science and evidence are prioritized in public policy.

Our work resulted in a [digital map of Ontario's STEMM candidates](#). Of 482 candidates, we found that 25% (124) have a degree or background in STEMM. Following the election, we [revisited the data](#) to find out which of these STEMM candidates were elected to office. We found that 17.7% of MPPs in the 43rd Legislative Assembly of Ontario have a degree or credential related to STEMM, which is an increase of almost 7% from Ontario's previous parliament.



THE YEAR AHEAD:

10 years of Evidence for Democracy

July 2022 marks the 10 year anniversary of the Death of Evidence, the iconic 2012 rally where thousands of Canadian scientists and their supporters marched to Parliament Hill to stand up for science in Canada's democracy. Together, they stood up for transparent evidence-informed decision-making, transparency and scientific integrity, helping to pave the way for a new movement.

Focusing the public's eyes on evidence

Last year, E4D took on the challenge to investigate whether the public can find the evidence behind the public policy decisions that impact the lives of everyone in Canada. Using the transparency framework that we established in *Eyes On Evidence I* (2020), we evaluated the transparency of evidence in Canada's federal government. For the third phase of this work, we're taking a look at the transparency of evidence in policy-making in the provinces. We look forward to sharing our findings this fall in *Eyes On Evidence III*.

The Eyes On Evidence work has initiated a wider discussion about transparency in Canada. We have been speaking with the public service and political actors about how we can place evidence at the heart of public policy. This year, we look forward to extending our discussions to provincial governments to understand what challenges to transparency exist at the provincial level.

We're going one step further to cultivate public demand for evidence by empowering people, outside of the government and scientific communities, on how to ask for evidence when it's missing, and the tools to understand and evaluate evidence. To improve the relationship between science, society, and policy in Canada, the public must be able to scrutinize evidence, and evaluate the policy decisions that impact their lives.

A new look for a new decade

As we embark on E4D's next chapter, we're building a new platform to meet the growing needs of scientists, policy-makers, and the public to help them better engage with evidence, science advocacy, and each other. Our new and improved website is set to launch in the fall of 2022, and will be highly interactive, allowing different groups to access a library of training, and the networks and resources they need most.

Raising E4D's platform on the global stage

This summer, we launched our first-ever case study exploring the events from 2006 to the present to understand how Canada's grassroots movement restored evidence-informed decision-making in government. We walked through what worked and highlighted what other organizations and activists may be able to learn and apply to their own efforts to put evidence at the heart of public policy. Alongside this case study, we're building a guide on the best practices

for evidence-informed decision-making, and plan to share this work with other jurisdictions over the next year to inspire the next generation of science policy leaders and activists.

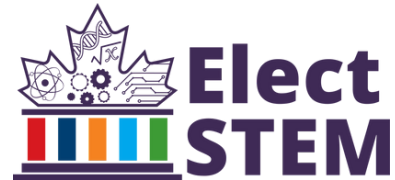
We built a community of supporters from the ground up, and together, we've become a leading voice for evidence-informed policy in Canada. As we gear up for our tenth year of standing up for science, we're using this moment to reflect on the past decade and plan for the future. In 2023, we'll be releasing E4D's new strategic plan to chart our way through the decade.



Staff members at the E4D office in Ottawa, including Farah Qaiser, Nada Salem, and Rachael Maxwell (Left to Right). The rest of the team includes Sri Alageswaran and Caitlin Fowler.

PARTNERSHIPS

Changemaking is a collaborative effort. We are lucky to work with many great initiatives and organizations to boost each other's impact and strengthen our democracy. Below are a few of our incredible partners and collaborators from the past year:



FUNDING AND CONTRIBUTIONS

E4D's work is made possible thanks to generous the support of

552 DONORS

E4D is also grateful for the ongoing partnerships and support of the following foundations and government partners:

The Trottier Family Foundation

The Wilburforce Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Department of Canadian Heritage

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)

THANK YOU!



Visit www.evidencefordemocracy.ca



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