ICTC ❖ CTIC

OUR WORK:

ICTC Ambassador Program for Gender Equity in Canada's Tech Ecosystem

Case Study & Impacts: Ambassador Program

Context: Funded by the Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), ICTC's Ambassador Program focuses on fostering gender equity in Canada's digital economy. This initiative addresses the underrepresentation of women in the tech sector by supporting businesses with the resources to hire women. Development, Data Analysis, Data Science, Business Analysis, Digital Marketing/Sales, and UX/UI Design.

Challenges

Women make up less than 30% of tech roles despite representing nearly half of the workforce. ICTC's report, Gender Equity in Canada's Tech Ecosystem, explores this gender gap, reveals systemic barriers, such as biased hiring practices and lack of inclusive workplace cultures, and offers practical solutions.

Solution

ICTC's Ambassador Program aims to advance women's representation in the Canadian digital economy by providing tools to help businesses create gender-inclusive organizations. Comprehensive research-informed strategic interventions include regional consultation and awareness events, guidance from ambassadors, and the creation of practical tools to support, attract, and retain gender-diverse employees.

Results & Impacts

- **73 ambassadors recruited for actively championing gender diversity**

- **Online Assessment Tool introduced for evaluating and enhancing gender equity policies**

- **Ambassador Program Hub established for community collaboration**

- **613 registered businesses, helped to increase the program's visibility, positively impacting innovation and decision-making**

- **253 businesses attended 4 in-person regional events and 4 workshops**

Canada

Our Approach

Our strategic approach to program development leverages comprehensive research. The cornerstone of our research is the Gender Equity in Canada's Tech Ecosystem report, providing critical insights into gender diversity in the tech industry.

Marginalized genders represent 47% of the national workforce but less than 30% of the tech sector. Our report, built on 80+ expert in-depth conversations and a survey involving 240 Canadian digital economy employers, sheds light on the critical challenges and opportunities for fostering gender diversity. The findings point to systemic barriers, including biased hiring processes and workplace policies favouring a male culture, and underscore the need for targeted interventions to dismantle these barriers.

This research informed the design of a training program that engaged women leaders across the Canadian tech landscape to support hundreds of tech employers in their efforts to improve gender equity. This report was referenced by various publications and shared widely by organizations, including the Government of BC, Government of Alberta, Digital Technology Supercluster, DigiBC, Women in Animation, and ISED.

To address the underrepresentation of women in Canada's tech sector, ICTC launched the Ambassador Program.

The Ambassador Program - Bridging the Gender Gap in Tech

The Ambassador Program was designed to drive impactful change and foster gender equity. A Gender Equity Assessment Tool was developed by the program to help assist organizations in evaluating and improving their gender equity policies. The Gender Equity Assessment Tool provides tailored solutions and resources to address the key challenges companies of various sizes face in different regions.

Our systems-level approach and gender equity toolkit tackle challenges across the tech ecosystem, addressing organizations, managers, and individuals. This free tool provides information to support the development of inclusive policies for recruiting, retaining, and advancing women in tech.

Employers participating in the program were also provided with an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) assessment to promote workplace inclusivity.
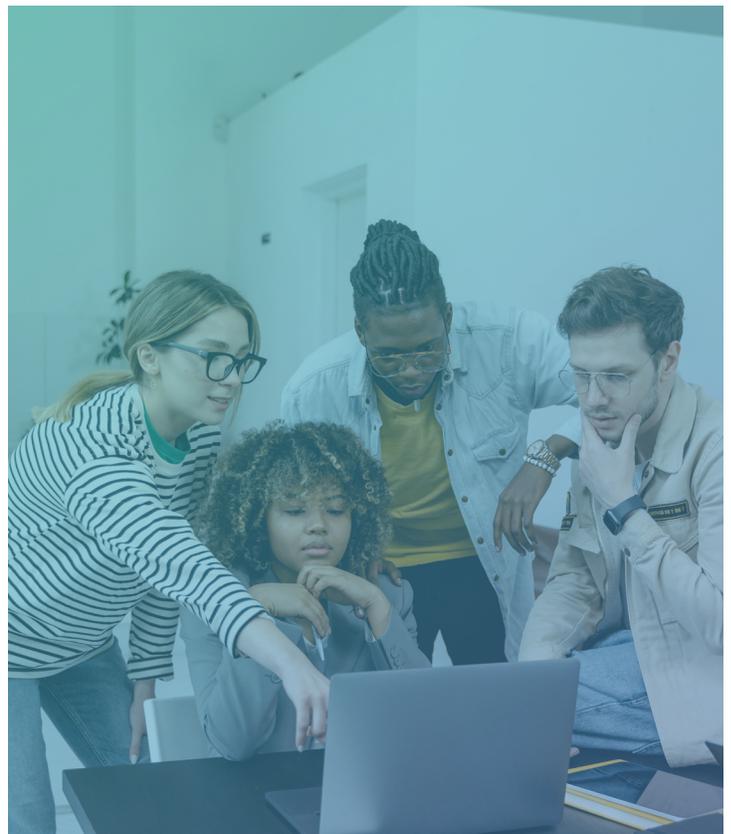
In Canada's rapidly evolving employment landscape, technology workers have become a critical force, comprising more than 9% of the total workforce. Despite this growth, gender diversity in the tech sector remains a challenge.

Creating Impactful Connections

We worked with 73 ambassadors who are recognized as industry champions. Their sharing of real-life expertise and engagement in regional events and their ongoing guidance, and support showcase the practical importance of gender diversity.

We launched the Ambassador Program Hub as a centralized knowledge-sharing platform to foster connections between ambassadors and organizations. This hub serves as a collaborative and informed community to amplify the impact of the program. Strategic promotion and participation in industry events significantly boosted the program's visibility, resulting in an overwhelming 613 businesses registrations.

> "Being at the beginning of starting a company, it makes me excited to be able to implement these strategies from the company's inception"
>
> *- Jon Ellis, Principal at Starling Architects*

Successful Regional Workshops

We conducted four regional workshops to assist business leaders in developing an EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) business plan across Canada. We received a 92% satisfaction rate from program participants—all of whom indicated they would join the next event.

The Ambassador Program's core impact is evident in its contribution to a more diverse and innovative tech industry.

To explore these impactful strategies, please read our report, <u>Gender Equity in Canada's Tech Ecosystem</u>.

> "The most interesting part was being able to engage in a question-and-answer mode and to expand our awareness/ open-mindedness through the discovery of concrete examples."
>
> *- Imen Naïli, Partnerships Manager, FDM Group*

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