



Overview of IDEA

DeGroote Research Half Day, June 25, 2025

Emile Tompa

Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) is supported by generous funding from the Government of Canada's New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) Transformation Stream.

vraie-idea.ca

Funding Acknowledgement

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Le Vision Radicale Pour L'Accès Inclusif à l'Emploi (VRAIE) est financé par le fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche du gouvernement du Canada.



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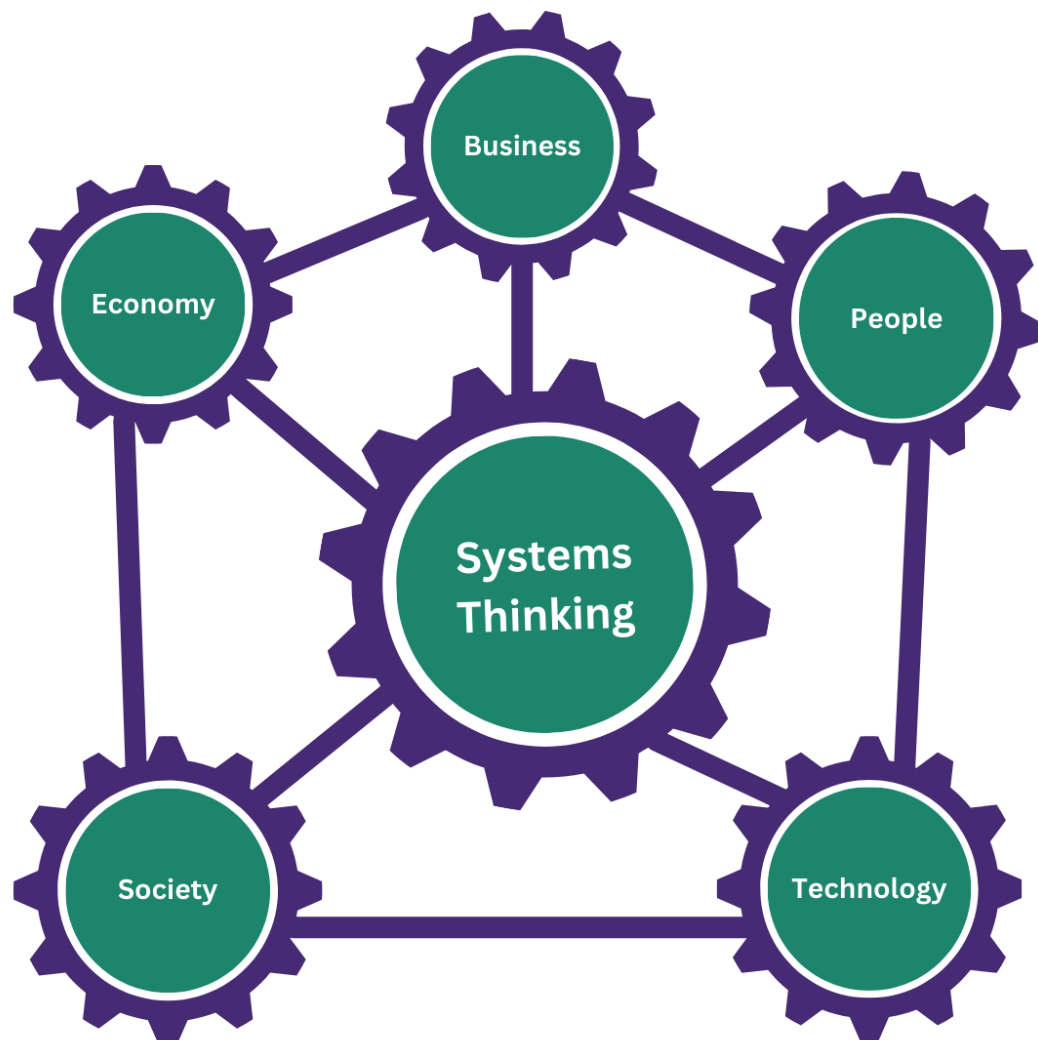




How We Work

Overview of IDEA

Demand-side capacity + Systems level approach = Transformational change



Our mission is to help create stronger and more diverse labour markets that include persons with disabilities by developing, evaluating and sharing evidence-informed knowledge-to-practice solutions.

Annual benefits of inclusion for Canada

- Total benefits: \$338 Billion (17.6% of GDP in 2017)
- Labour-market benefits: \$62.2 Billion (3.2% of GDP in 2017)

Our Work

- IDEA is a knowledge-to-practice social innovation laboratory funded by the New Frontiers in Research Transformation Stream
- We focus on advancing the skills and capacities of workplace parties in the area of inclusive employment
- Our unique approach is to develop evidence-informed products that support inclusive workplaces
- We base most of our work on initiatives that are already successful in the workplace

Social Model of Disability

- Explores how disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.
- Strengthens the idea that disability exists within the relationship between impairment and the surrounding social world
- Helps shift the emphasis from how limited the individual with a disability is, to what happened (discrimination?) or what should happen (accommodation, inclusion?) in interaction with the disability (Davis & Sanchez, 2021)
- Explores the the complex web of disadvantages persons living with a disability experience and how negative social attitudes, cultural assumptions and environmental barriers, including policies, services, laws, and structures may result in marginalization (Davis & Sanchez, 2021)

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

Persons with disabilities fully and directly participate in all IDEA activities as:



- Co-design Partners
- Project Advisors
- Key Informants
- Researchers and Trainees
- Staff Members
- Champions

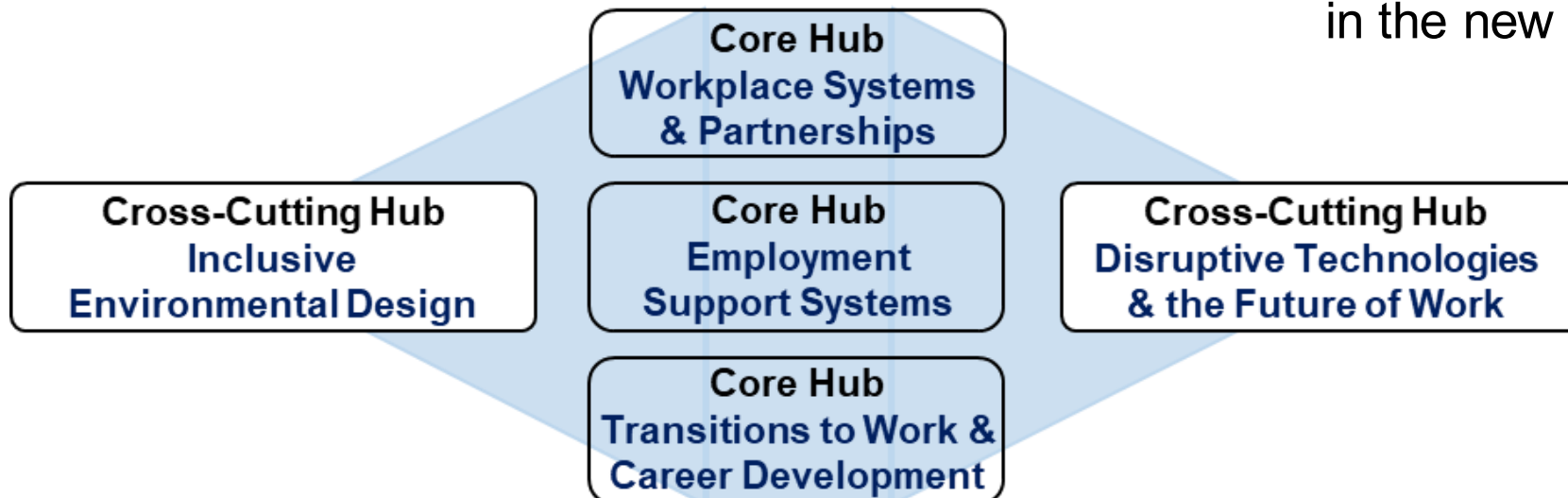
Selected Knowledge Co-Design Activities

Years 1-3

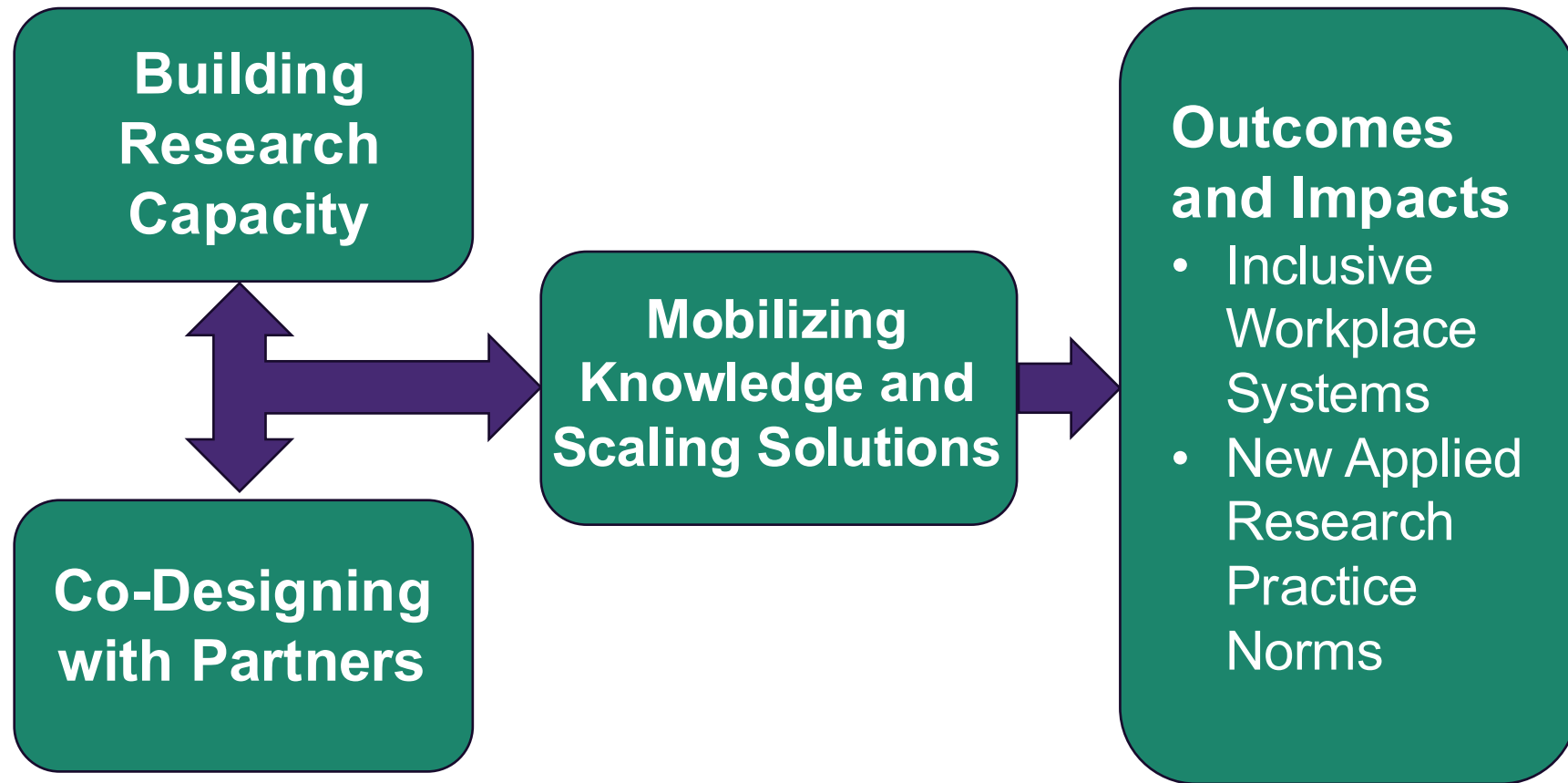
1. Systems approach to accessibility planning and reporting
2. Race and employment services
3. Leadership in various standards development initiatives

Years 4-6

1. Inclusive procurement and the supply chain
2. Employment Standard implementation guidance
3. Overcoming disincentives in income support services
4. Mentorship and career development in the new world of work



Transformational Change Equation





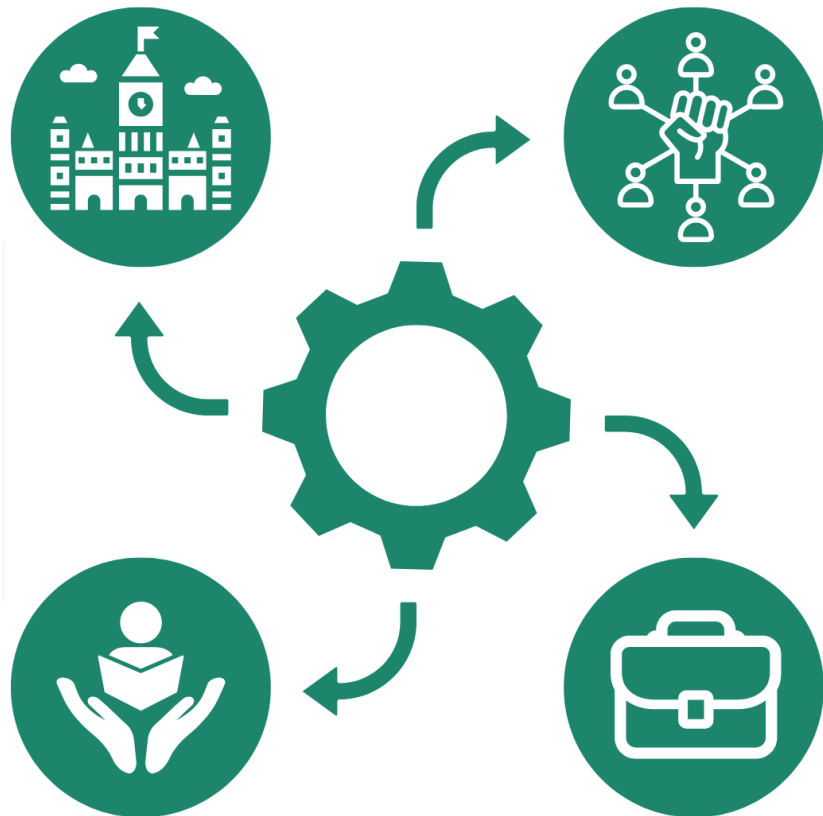
**INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR
EMPLOYMENT ACCESS**

**VISION RADICALE POUR
L'ACCÈS INCLUSIF À L'EMPLOI**

Progress Toward Transformational Change

Outcomes and Impacts

Significant evidence that IDEA's work is being leveraged and applied in the disability employment policy arena and at the workplace level



In the policy arena

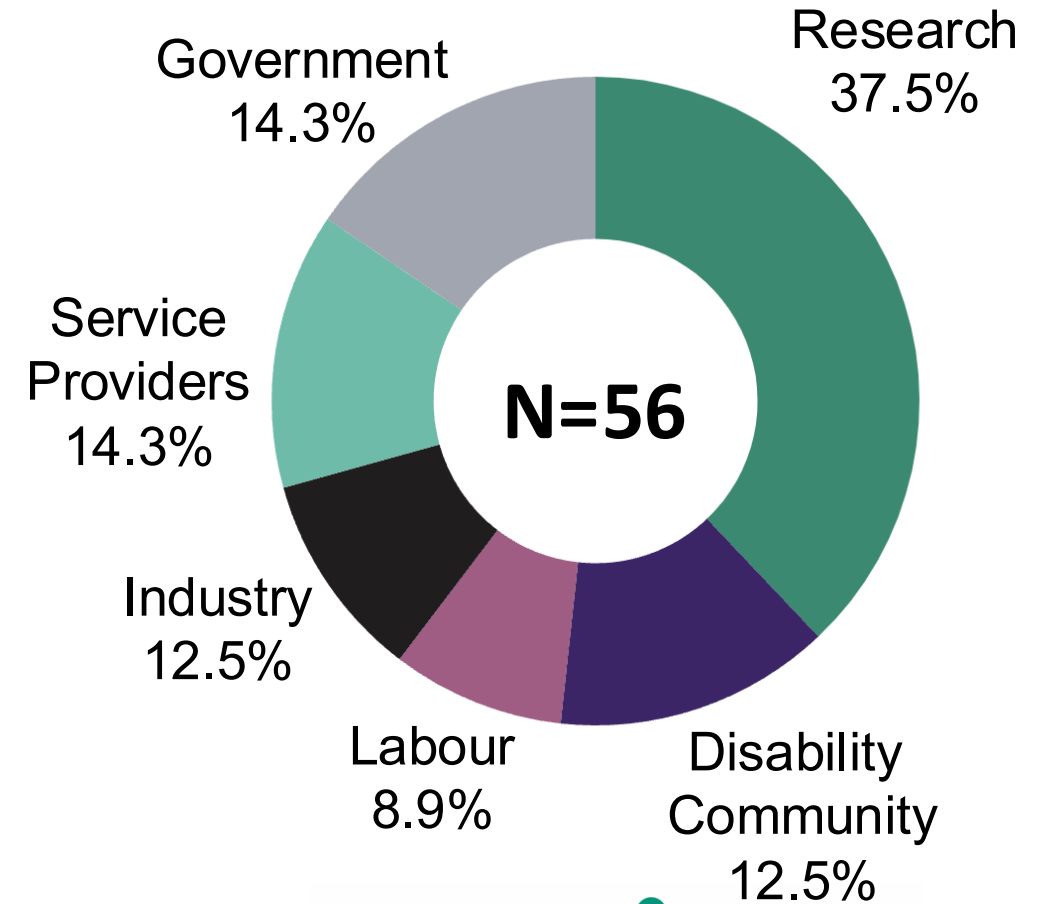
- Raised the profile of demand-side capacity building
- Led the development of four major ASC and CSA Standards
- 3 Disability and Work in Canada Conferences and 4 Policy Roundtables
- IDEA profiled at G7 and G20
- Policy committee and advisory board membership

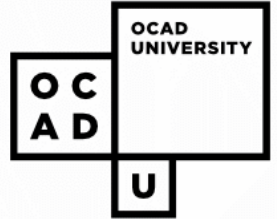
At the workplace level

- Government of Canada collaboration
- Suite of tools and resources for disability inclusion
- \$4.5M YESS funding for construction and manufacturing
- Scaling up UFCW initiative with major supermarket chains

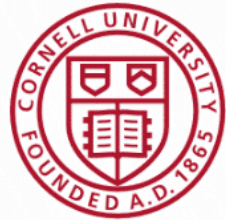
Working with Key Partners for Transformational Change

- IDEA strategy: link partners with researchers in co-design
- Unprecedented partner collaborations
- Leading employer and labour organizations as partners
 - Canadian Chamber of Commerce (over 200,000 businesses)
 - Canadian Labour Congress (over 50 affiliated unions, over 3.3 million members)
 - Government of Canada (over 330,000 employees)
 - Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association (over 100,000 employees, \$35B in production)
 - Ontario Bar Association (a national leader in inclusive employment with over 16,000 members)





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Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology
The University of Tokyo



Stakeholder Partner Organizations

Disability Communities

- Autism Alliance of Canada
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Inclusion Canada
- National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)
- Realize
- Rick Hanson Foundation (RHF)
- Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups (ONIWG)

Service Providers

- L'Arrimage
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)
- March of Dimes Canada (MODC)
- Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association (OOHNA)
- Ready, Willing and Able (RWA)
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- ROSEPH
- Youth Employment Services

Industry

- Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA)
- Canadian Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC)
- Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- Jazz Aviation
- Ontario Bar Association (OBA)
- Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)

Labour

- Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL)
- Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)
- UNIFOR
- Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario
- United Food and Commercial Workers Canada (UFCW)

Research and Government Partner Organizations

Research

- McMaster University
- Carleton University, READ Initiative
- Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP)
- Cornell University, Institute on Employment and Disability
- Institute for Work and Health (IWH)
- Lakehead University
- OCAD University, Inclusive Design Research Centre
Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Centre for Implementation Research
- Queen's University
- Toronto Metropolitan University
- Saint Mary's University
- State University of New York in Buffalo
- University of Melbourne, Melbourne Disability Institute
- Université de Montréal
- Université du Québec à Montréal
- Université de Sherbrooke

- University of Sydney, Centre for Disability Research and Policy
- University of Tokyo, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology
- University of Toronto, Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources
- University of Western Ontario
- University of Winnipeg
- York University

Government

- Accessibility Standards Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Labour Market Information Council
- Office of Public Service Accessibility, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
- Shared Services Canada
- Canada School of Public Services
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Office for Disability Issues, ESDC

Strategic Partnership with the Government of Canada



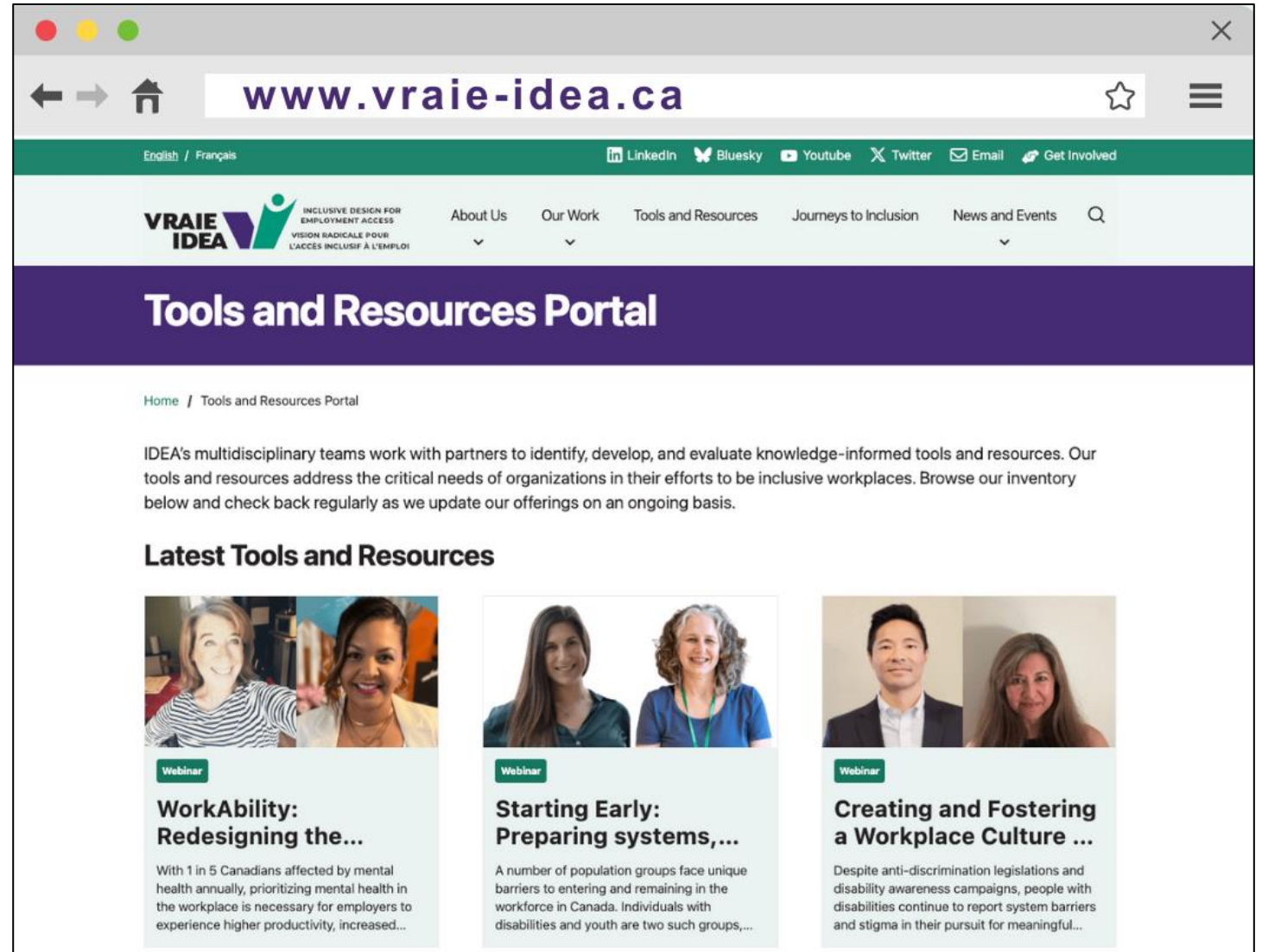
Going from 5% to 7% employees with disabilities

Supporting Canada's largest employer (over 330,000 employees) **to hire 5,000 new persons with disabilities** and to become a world leader in disability inclusion.

- Project 1 – Access to adaptive equipment and services
- Project 2 – HR specialists with accessibility expertise
- Project 3 – Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility training
- Project 4 – Employment benefits packages

Knowledge Mobilization Activities

- 300+ stakeholder dialogues
- 200+ knowledge products
- 10K+ visits to the IDEA website
- 800+ followers on IDEA social media
- 12 monthly IDEA webinar series
- 49 Peer-reviewed articles
- 6 IDEA quarterly e-newsletters
- 5 podcasts about IDEA
- 4 DWC Roundtables
- 3 DWC Conferences
- 5 seed grants
- Tools and resources portal
- Journeys to Inclusion portal
- Champions initiative
- Course content and curriculum





Early career researchers



Trainees



Community partners and collaborators



National and international cross fertilization



IDEA research team

Building Research Capacity

- Funding stipends to 53 students in year 3
- 60% of hub funding earmarked for students
- Hubs co-led by community partners
- Partnerships with leading international researchers from North America, Europe and Australasia



www.vraie-idea.ca



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