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# Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029

# Message from the Executive Director & President

In 2021, we set out on an ambitious path: to explore new opportunities, strengthen our brand, expand our programs, and deepen our evidence-based approach. As we conclude that strategic cycle, we are proud to reflect that we have achieved most of the goals we established — and, in several areas, exceeded them.

Between 2021 and 2025, WITS Programs Foundation evolved from a primarily single-program organization into one offering a full continuum of programming from Kindergarten to Grade 12. We updated and strengthened the WITS Program, successfully piloted and then expanded the Pink Shirt Project, and then introduced the Focus Modules, addressing critical inclusion topics. Pink Shirt Day Canada grew into a nationally recognized broadcast engaging thousands of children and youth from coast to coast.

At the same time, we laid the groundwork for our most ambitious initiative yet: Inclusion Strategies, currently being developed in partnership with Royal Roads University. This project reflects our deepened commitment to proactively reducing discrimination and strengthening inclusive school cultures.

These accomplishments were realized during a period marked by the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising operational costs, which affected schools, communities, and the nonprofit sector broadly. Despite these pressures, our organization

strengthened financially and operationally, supported by multi-year funding agreements and growing national partnerships.

As we introduce our new strategic plan, we do so with gratitude and confidence. Our reach has expanded, our partnerships have deepened, and our mission remains clear: to empower children and youth with tools for kindness, inclusion, and resilience. The next chapter begins from a position of strength and optimism.

**R. David Valentine**, President  
**Andy Telfer**, Executive Director



Some of the staff and directors at the 2025 strategic planning session (L-R): **Jamie Oldroyd** – Shipping, **Pat Oldroyd** – Books, **Amrita Shetty** – Inclusion & Program Coordinator, **Caitlin Ellemo** – Director, **Fei Gao** – Director, **David Valentine** – President, **Andy Telfer** – Executive Director, **Shawn McQuaid** – E-Commerce Manager.

# Our Beliefs

At WITS Programs Foundation, we believe every child and youth deserves to feel safe, valued, and included. We are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work — from program design and partnerships to staffing and governance. Our resources are created to affirm differences in race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and lived experience, and to proactively reduce discrimination through education.

We recognize and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and are committed to supporting reconciliation through meaningful partnerships, Indigenous-led content, and free access to programming for Indigenous schools and communities. We believe education must honour diverse histories, voices, and knowledge systems.

We are equally committed to ethical and responsible operations. This includes striving to pay a living wage, fostering healthy and respectful workplaces, and making environmentally responsible choices in our materials, shipping, and events.

Above all, we believe kindness, inclusion, and evidence-informed education build stronger schools — and a stronger Canada.



A big thank you to WITS from Glooscap Elementary School in Canning, Nova Scotia. WITS maintains a positive, robust presence across Canada.

# Methodology

In the Spring of 2025, the WITS Programs Foundation Board members, staff and contractors participated in a strategic planning process that consisted of three stages:

1. Individual input regarding successes, strengths, improvement areas and goals for the Foundation. The results were prioritized by a volunteer neutral third party familiar with these types of processes.
2. An in-person strategic planning session to prioritize / rank the results of the first stage. This full day session was facilitated by a volunteer neutral third party familiar with strategic planning sessions.
3. Foundation management then summarized the results of the in-person meeting by merging common themes while maintaining rankings.

In next steps, Foundation management is developing action plans to accomplish the strategic priorities.



In their Pink Shirt Project, students in Oromocto, New Brunswick chose to connect with seniors in an 'Inter-generational Café.' The Pink Shirt Project program was designed for teens, fulfilling the 2021 Strategic Plan goal of providing programming from K-12.

# Strategic Priorities for WITS Foundation for 2026-2029

**1** Diversify revenue sources and increase income in order to expand offerings

**2** Improve upon and widely scale programming in order to reach more children and youth

**3** Upgrade technology in order to improve internal and external systems



**Since 1998, nearly 1 million kids have learned the WITS strategies**

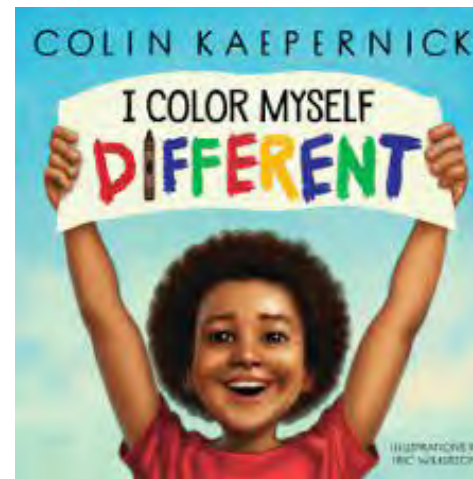
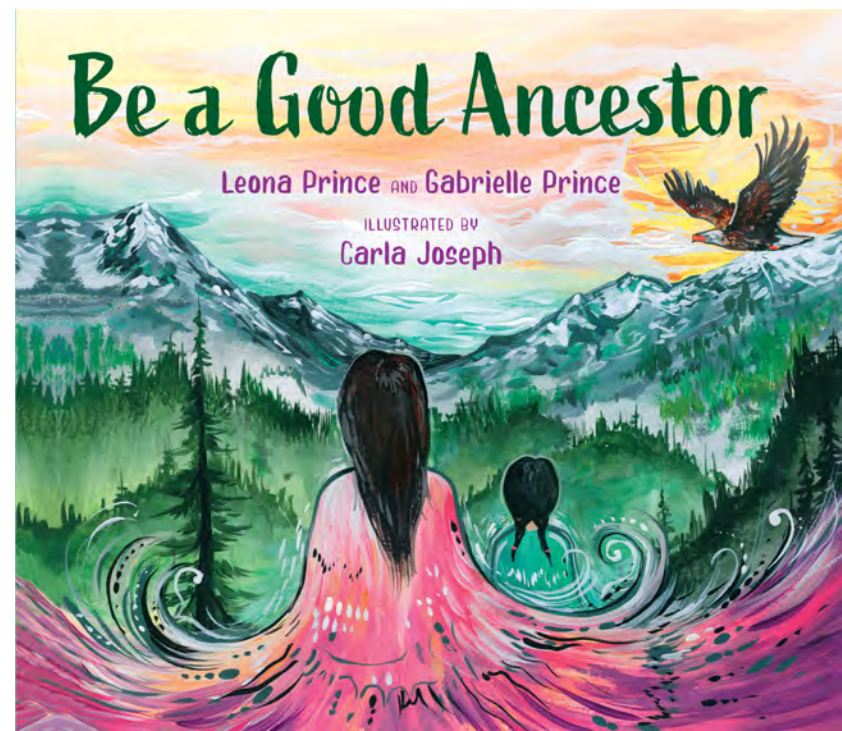
These three teens became an unplanned part of our video “WITS Program in Ottawa” when they identified that they had learned to ‘use their WITS’ in school.

# Diversify revenue sources and increase income in order to expand offerings

## Top organizational priority

Focus on increasing revenue and community reach by elevating program sales and partnerships, including developing reliable, long-term revenue streams through sales and new collaborations.

- 1.1 Increase program and event sales
- 1.2 Build on existing and acquire additional partners and sponsors for cash and in-kind support
- 1.3 Seek and add new revenue sources
- 1.4 Increase support for Pink Shirt Day efforts
- 1.5 Continue building new programming, in particular the Inclusion Strategies project



Some of the books now included as educational resources in the WITS Program and the Focus Modules, emphasizing diversity, equity, inclusion and reconciliation.

# Improve upon and widely scale programming in order to reach more children and youth

## 2nd organizational priority

Builds program relevance, aligning with WITS' mission to educate on healthy relationships via multiple avenues. Emphasis on equity in program access, and geographic and demographic inclusivity.

### 2.1 Increase evaluative capacity

- Increase capacity for program evaluations and evidence-based effectiveness
- Increase user feedback

### 2.2 Improve program user experiences

### 2.3 Expand national reach by ensuring access by more schools, communities, and underserved areas

### 2.4 Build on existing and acquire additional partnerships for program collaboration

### 2.5 Implement a unified data and feedback system to measure program impact and inform continuous improvement



A volunteer promotes WITS and Pink Shirt Day at RibFest in Esquimalt, British Columbia. The Indigenous youth-designed shirts symbolize the recently expanded partnership between Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council and WITS Foundation.

# Upgrade technology in order to improve internal and external systems

## 3rd organizational priority

Key priorities involve technology integration for efficiency and team optimization, supporting daily operations and program delivery.

- 3.1 Strengthen internal operations by better utilizing technology and improving collaborative workflows
- 3.2 Leverage technology to improve experiences for students and educators
- 3.3 Consolidate web properties under the WITS Foundation brand with unified analytics and user experience
- 3.4 Develop an AI-assisted resource generation system for educators, with safeguards for quality, privacy, and alignment to WITS strategies

## WITS Quest



The WITS Quest is a new game for big screens in classrooms and on individual tablets. It provides four different peer confrontation scenarios and gives children multiple options to choose to react, with feedback provided for each choice they make.

# Additional Results

At the May 2025 Strategic Planning Session, in addition to prioritizing future goals, participants addressed three additional topics:

- What should our continuum of programming (from K-12) look like
  - What is the most appropriate informal name for the society
  - How should the Foundation approach Artificial Intelligence
- Here are the results:

## Program Continuum

We wish to maintain a robust range of programming from Kindergarten (ages 4-5) to Grade 12 (ages 17-18). For younger years, we will emphasize WITS as a whole-school approach, while maintaining but placing less emphasis on the LEADS components. For older years, we will take advantage of the notoriety of Pink Shirt Day and offer two versions of the Pink Shirt Project program: one for ages 10-14 and one for ages 14-18, making the modifications necessary for each version. Elements of the currently shelved Canadian Kindness Leaders program will be moved to the PSP for ages 10-14.

## Our Identity

We recognize that having the name of our main offering (WITS Program) being almost identical to the commonly used name of our society (WITS Programs

Foundation) may lead some people to believe that the WITS Program is our only offering, which is not the case. In order to reduce this potential confusion, we will now use the organizational name “WITS Foundation” and create the peripheral materials (web site, brand, etc.) needed in order to accomplish this. This shift makes use of the widely known WITS brand and does not require a legal name change.

## Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence We recognize AI as a significant opportunity to extend the reach and consistency of our programs. Our approach is to build an AI-assisted system, trained on official WITS and LEADS materials, that can help educators generate classroom-ready lesson plans and resources aligned to our strategies. Development is underway on our own infrastructure, prioritizing data privacy and Canadian data residency. Before offering this tool to subscribers, we will establish a published AI governance policy covering: quality validation of all generated content, copyright and anti-regurgitation safeguards for book materials, alignment verification against WITS strategy language, data privacy protections (no student information required or stored), and a human review requirement for any content promoted as official WITS resources.

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## MISSION

To empower children and youth to build healthy relationships through inclusive, community-based educational initiatives that promote empathy, respect, and reconciliation.

## VISION

All children and youth live, learn, and play in caring communities built on accountability and kindness.

# UN Sustainable Development Goals

The WITS Foundation advances several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through its education-based programs for children and youth. Our work promotes Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3) by supporting mental health, resilience, and positive peer relationships. We contribute to Quality Education (SDG 4) by equipping schools with evidence-informed tools that foster safe, inclusive learning environments. By addressing bullying, discrimination, and exclusion, our programs support Gender Equality (SDG 5) and advance Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), empowering young people to build more just, respectful, and inclusive communities.



Contents of the Focus Module on Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity for ages 8-12. All nine Focus Modules were introduced in 2024 and represent our first steps towards inclusion-focused education.





In-person guests and crew in studio for the Pink Shirt Day Live show in 2025.

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## Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029

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The WITS Programs Foundation Society is a provincial nonprofit society and a federally registered Canadian charity, established in 1998 as the Rock Solid Foundation.

**Charity number:** 89138 2228 RT0001