Shaping the future

Strategic Priorities for **2025 and Beyond**

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Introduction

Visions of Science is dedicated to creating opportunities for Black and racialized youth from low-income communities to thrive in STEM education and careers. Currently, we engage over **5,000 youth, 600 caregivers and educators,** and countless community members across **30 communities** in the Greater Toronto Area through STEM workshops, long-term programs, and advocacy initiatives. Over the next three years, we aim to **scale our engagement by 40%**, expand nationally, and amplify our advocacy efforts to become a trusted voice influencing equitable STEM education and workforce development. This strategic plan prioritizes innovative solutions to empower youth, engage communities, and leverage STEM as a catalyst for opportunity, economic inclusion, and transformative change.

Our Strategic Priorities

1. Building STEM Educational and Career Pathways

Why Now? The evolving job market increasingly requires future-ready skills, with over **70% of top jobs** in Canada projected to need STEM-based expertise by 2025 and **1.2 million skilled trades positions** anticipated to open by 2031. Many youth face limited access to the resources needed to pursue these opportunities. By bridging these gaps through focused upgrades to our curriculum and strategic partnerships, we prepare youth for thriving careers in high-demand industries.

Key Actions:

- Develop and implement career-focused STEM modules for grades 6-12 by 2026, designed for classroom delivery and community-based programming.
- Forge partnerships with industry leaders and post-secondary institutions to align programming with real-world opportunities.
- Pilot and refine scalable models for career readiness that emphasize hands-on learning and mentorship.

Goals by 2027:

- Develop and implement robust curriculum and training modules to ensure programming aligns with emerging STEM careers, equipping youth with the skills and confidence to succeed.
- Forge **15 strategic partnerships** with industry leaders and post-secondary institutions to align programming with workforce needs and expand opportunities for youth engagement.

2. Expanding Visions of Science's Brand and Impact in the Greater Toronto Area

Why Now? Trust and visibility are essential for meaningful engagement and impact. In Toronto, over **40% of Black and racialized youth** live in low-income communities, with limited access to enriched STEM programming both in and out of school. This gap contributes to persistent disparities in education and career readiness. By strengthening our presence and relationships, we aim to connect youth and communities to impactful opportunities.

Key Actions:

- Scale community initiatives such as STEM workshops, family events, and educator training.
- Build strategic alliances with school boards, housing organizations, and community groups to deepen our local impact.
- Create branded initiatives to enhance recognition and accessibility across the GTA.

Goals by 2027:

- Scale our efforts to engage **7,000 youth** and their communities annually through core programs and events.
- Amplify our reach by providing professional development to **200 educators**, positively impacting an additional **6,000 students** in classrooms.

3. Transforming Core Communities Through Sustained STEM Engagement

Why Now? Long-term engagement is essential to building sustained impact. As youth face complex challenges in education and access to opportunities, a consistent presence can provide stability and meaningful pathways for success. By embedding ourselves in priority communities, we can create ecosystems of support that drive measurable outcomes for youth and their families.

Key Actions:

- Implement and expand a long-term engagement model that provides consistent programming and support for youth from **10 priority communities**, at critical stages of their educational journey.
- Launch a unique scholarship program providing **10 youth** annually with full four-year post-secondary scholarships and wrap-around support to ensure their success.
- Provide tailored programming for caregivers and educators to build their capacity and enhance their support for participants.

Goals by 2027:

- Engage **200 youth** from **10 priority communities,** with **75% achieving** key outcomes in STEM interest and career readiness.
- Launch and scale the scholarship initiative, supporting **30 active scholars.**

4. Driving Advocacy for Equity in STEM

Why Now? STEM skills are critical to the jobs and industries shaping Canada's future. Yet, persistent disparities in STEM pathways continue to exclude many youth from underrepresented communities. Addressing these inequities now is essential to unlocking their potential, driving innovation, and building a more inclusive and prosperous future.

Key Actions:

- Build relationships with key officials and stakeholders at all levels of government.
- Convene coalitions of stakeholders, driving collaboration and actionable solutions.
- Participate in policy forums and media engagements to establish ourselves as a trusted leader and expert in advancing equitable STEM education and workforce development.

Goals by 2027:

- Establish relationships with at least **25 key policymakers**, influencers and stakeholders.
- Convene **200 stakeholders** through summits and coalitions.
- Publish a white paper with actionable recommendations to address disparities and shape policy for STEM education and workforce inclusion.
- Position Visions of Science as a leading voice in equitable STEM education and workforce development.

5. Building a Blueprint for National STEM Engagement

Why Now? Expanding our reach is critical to addressing gaps in STEM access. While we have built a strong foundation in the GTA, communities across Canada face similar barriers. With a strong foundation in the GTA, we aim to develop adaptable frameworks that connect underrepresented youth nationwide while maintaining a focus on local needs.

Key Actions:

- Design and pilot scalable models, including train-the-trainer programs and regional convenings.
- Pilot a professional development initiative for staff at science centres across Canada, equipping them with strategies to engage youth from underrepresented communities in STEM.
- Develop partnerships with local organizations in target communities across Canada to ensure localized impact.

Goals by 2027:

- Develop and launch a comprehensive national STEM engagement plan, including clarified opportunities and piloted programs, to be ready for full-scale launch.
- Train **200 staff** from science centres across Canada, equipping them to support equitable STEM education.

Conclusion: Shaping the Future Together

This plan charts a bold course for Visions of Science to deepen its impact and expand its reach. By advancing equity, innovation and economic empowerment through STEM, we aim to dismantle barriers and create transformative pathways for success.

Through this plan, we will:

- **Inspire Educational Momentum:** Empower youth to excel academically, engage deeply with STEM pathways, and redefine leadership in STEM fields.
- **Ensure Support at Critical Stages:** Support youth at critical stages of their educational and career journeys, ensuring they have the tools to pursue their goals.
- **Shape the Future of Innovation:** Equip youth with the skills and confidence to drive transformative change, reflecting their aspirations and experiences.

By 2027, we envision thriving communities where youth lead boldly in STEM education and careers, driving lasting impact and innovation across Canada.

To learn more or explore partnership opportunities, contact us at **connect@vosnl.org** or visit **www.vosnl.org**