



**Strategic  
Plan  
2022-2025**

**Working together for literacy**

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**Decoda**  
Literacy Solutions

# Introduction



**In 2022, the Decoda Literacy board and staff team worked together to examine the strengths, challenges, opportunities and many achievements of Decoda Literacy Solutions as a guide to planning for the future.**

## About Us

Decoda Literacy Solutions is British Columbia's provincial literacy organization. Decoda supports children and families, youth, adults, Indigenous and immigrant communities by providing resources, training and funds, to community-based literacy programs and initiatives in 400 BC communities.



## Our Vision

A British Columbia where everyone has the literacy skills to thrive in their communities.

## Our Mission

To enhance the literacy and learning skills of children, youth, adults and families to improve their quality of life at home, at work and in the community.



## Our Values

### Inclusion

- ◆ Addressing racism and settler colonialism in our programs and approaches to our work
- ◆ Understanding our path to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
- ◆ Promoting an “everyone is welcome” approach in our workplace

### Resiliency

- ◆ Raising the profile of the importance of literacy in challenging circumstances
- ◆ Developing innovative solutions and approaches
- ◆ Taking action and risks to address complex situations

### Integrity

- ◆ Demonstrating accountability and outcomes based on key measures
- ◆ Demonstrating responsibilities to ourselves, our clients and our stakeholders

### Optimism

- ◆ Believing in the potential of people to succeed in their lives
- ◆ Taking a strengths-based approach to our relationships and work
- ◆ Focusing on learning and achieving and providing relevant workable solutions

### Collaboration

- ◆ Recognizing the diversity of our clients, stakeholders and audiences
- ◆ Demonstrating responsiveness to our clients and their unique needs and circumstances
- ◆ Engaging in the process of creating solutions together



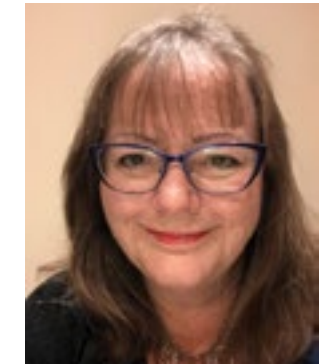
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**Fanny Romeyn**  
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**Jade Chan**  
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**Trish Weatherall**  
Communications Specialist



**Christie Case**  
Database Administrator



**Natasha Loh**  
Office Administrator



**Avni Kapoor**  
Office Administrator

## Our Key Organizational Accomplishments

### *Consistent delivery of quality programming*

Through a dedicated staff team and board, Decoda has implemented, sustained and refined programs and services with continued response to COVID-19 challenges and transition to renewed in-person programs.

### *Strengthened fundraising capacity*

Decoda has successfully engaged in a province-wide annual Literacy Month fundraising and awareness campaigns. Sponsorship and donations are steadily increasing and provide the means for Decoda to support programs such as Fostering Literacy.

### *Strengthened reputation as champions and leaders in the field*

Decoda provides ongoing professional development training and distribution of resources to support literacy practitioners across BC including the very popular bi-annual Decoda Literacy Conference.

### *Stakeholder input*

A survey for program partners, practitioners and steward organizations was conducted for strategic planning. Data from recent survey information from Decoda's community partners was also used to inform the plan.



## Organizational Strengths

### *We offer a direct link to communities.*

Decoda serves as the central link to literacy providers in communities across BC. This strong connection to the Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) network enables Decoda to distribute information, resources and support widely and readily, as well as to stay informed of challenges and opportunities across the province.

### *We are a strong, reliable and flexible partner that produces high quality work.*

Decoda is known for taking the time to build trust and develop strong working relationships with community partners, government agencies and other key stakeholders.

### *We have the ability to respond and adapt to community needs.*

Decoda's ability to be nimble, flexible and responsive is one of its greatest strengths. This includes the ability to create new programs and services as opportunities arise.

### *We have sound financial management and transparency.*

Through the careful prioritization of resource allocation, Decoda has strengthened the organization's fiscal stability.

### *We have a dedicated and professional staff and board.*

One of Decoda's greatest assets is its staff and board, who are known for their expertise and knowledge of the field. The staff values the cohesive team environment that helps them to feel supported in their work.



## Key Challenges

### *Limited capacity for program growth; labour market challenges in communities*

Many of Decoda's staff positions are either part-time or split between two or more different programs and services, making it difficult to ensure programs and services continue to operate at the high standard for which Decoda is known. It is very clear that staff are working at maximum capacity. LOC communities cannot sustain practitioner and tutor numbers due to labour market challenges.

### *Literacy strategies are spread among a variety of Ministries in BC*

The literacy mandate is spread across many different government ministries in BC and can be complex to navigate. At present, BC does not have a coordinated provincial literacy strategy to provide clear priorities to guide literacy program and services.

### *Greater need to demonstrate outcomes and evaluate Decoda's programs and services*

More support and work are needed to demonstrate a direct link between the services Decoda provides and improved outcomes for the people and communities served. A digital divide continues and there is a need to improve access to tools and technology for literacy development.

### *Funding uncertainty*

Considering the uncertainty of consistent multi-year funding sources at the provincial level, Decoda must continue to find ways of securing support to maintain and grow programs and services. Capacity is further challenged because funding is not indexed to the changing economic climate.

## Key Opportunities

### *Continue to align data collection with government priorities*

Over the years, Decoda has taken strides to improve data collection. The organization needs to continue to align its data collection with government priorities. Using data to tell powerful stories will demonstrate the importance of Decoda's work.

### *Increased use of the LOC Network*

As a core element of Decoda's work, there is an opportunity to enhance the LOC network and further harness its power.

### *Help shape Provincial priorities*

Decoda can reach out to key government representatives to identify priorities for literacy in BC and assist with the development of a cross-ministry literacy strategy.

### *Continue to raise awareness*

By continuing to employ a robust communications and media strategy, Decoda can share its powerful impact stories more broadly. By using stories to demonstrate the significance and value of literacy programs, we will raise awareness about low literacy and its social and economic impacts.

### *Explore partnerships and collaboration opportunities*

There is an opportunity to foster and grow strategic partnerships and alliances in additional sectors. Exploring partnerships with universities, research institutions and corporations could allow the organization to strengthen its ability to demonstrate literacy outcomes.

### *Continue to strengthen fund development capacity*

Decoda has moved from not having a fund development strategy to our current solid and growing fund development capacity. With funding uncertainty, it is vital that Decoda continues to strengthen the ability to secure funding for important programs and services.

### *Develop a clear strategy for prioritizing programs and services and staff time*

By leveraging the success of its programs and services, Decoda can advocate for increased funding to enable program expansion. Careful evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of program and service expansion and a corresponding plan to increase staff and organizational capacity will be needed to ensure the organization is able to support any plans for growth. Clarity on Decoda's role in literacy development could focus programming.

# Strategic Goals



To guide Decoda in responding to the opportunities and challenges described above, the board and staff team identified three broad strategic goals that will drive the organization over the next four years.

- ◆ Ensure Decoda is known as the hub for literacy support in BC
- ◆ Ensure Decoda's financial and organizational sustainability
- ◆ Demonstrate excellence in leading and advancing the literacy field in BC

Each of these strategic goals is elaborated below, including a brief description of the conditions driving the need for change and the broad conditions that will need to be considered to achieve these goals. In addition to these specific goals, an overarching theme of this plan is to ensure Decoda's integrity and sustainability. Key decisions going forward must reflect the need to align Decoda's resources, systems and services to support a high level of organizational sustainability.



## STRATEGIC GOAL #1

*Ensure Decoda is known as the hub for literacy in BC.*

### Rationale

There is an opportunity to increase Decoda's public profile and reputation by celebrating impacts and clearly articulating the role that Decoda programs and services play in supporting practitioners across the province. By leveraging the success of Decoda's programs and services, the Decoda brand will become known as one that everyone can trust. Decoda is a living repository for best practices, key resources, training and support for all of BC's literacy practitioners and a powerful vehicle for demonstrating the importance of literacy and the value of literacy programming across BC. This will include showcasing Decoda's ability to connect practitioners' capacity to collaborate on provincial literacy priorities.

### Key Objectives & Actions

- ◆ Maintain a robust communication, social media and marketing strategy and ensure staff and board can support Decoda's communications and marketing.
- ◆ Ensure all programs and services enhance and advance the vision of Decoda.
- ◆ Leverage Decoda's provincial reach through the LOC network to connect communities and the province.
- ◆ Leverage positive reputation and the LOC network to attract new supporters and partners from outside government.
- ◆ Begin building a cross-sector provincial literacy task force.
- ◆ Develop a government relations strategy to ensure that existing and potential government partners of all orders are well informed about the excellent return on investment that Decoda's work produces. Literacy programs create good-news stories by helping people in all types of communities.

### Desired Outcomes

- ◆ Increased presence on social media.
- ◆ Increased public profile and brand awareness.
- ◆ Increased informational requests.
- ◆ Requests for guest speakers and presentations from Decoda staff.
- ◆ Increased government support to grow Decoda programs.
- ◆ Increased involvement from board members in promoting Decoda.
- ◆ Increased partnerships and collaborative marketing campaigns.

Evidence-based outcomes strengthen partnerships with project participants and/or build further opportunities for projects together.

## 2

## STRATEGIC GOAL #2

### Ensure Decoda's financial and organizational sustainability

#### Rationale

A clear plan is needed to ensure Decoda's ongoing success, both financially and organizationally. This plan will outline important considerations such as how to strengthen internal capacity across the organization, set clear priorities to guide future growth and establish a sustainable funding base.

#### Key Objectives & Actions

- Align resources, systems and partnerships to support organizational sustainability.
  - Maintain sustainable funding for existing programs and services
  - Build and strengthen partnerships to increase organizational capacity.
  - Ensure strong leaders at every level of the organization
  - Maintain a comprehensive human resources plan
  - Ensure institutional memory and knowledge is documented and preserved
- Assess and respond to infrastructure needs. Engage government partners in discussion about indexed financing to address inflation.
- Assess opportunities for program expansion and develop a coherent plan for growth.
- Formalize the donor development and stewardship plan.
- Communicate Decoda impact within funding constraints.

#### Desired Outcomes

- All existing programming will be supported by secured funding sources.
- Decoda's key programs, services and functions will be supported by engaged and competent staff.
- Up-to-date policies and processes will be in place across the organization.
- Decoda will be viewed as a highly sought-after partner.
- Staff will have access to up-to-date technology.
- Staff will report a high level of engagement: with access to professional development opportunities and performance management processes.

## 3

## STRATEGIC GOAL #3

### Demonstrate excellence in leading and advancing the literacy field in BC.

#### Rationale

Decoda shows what it means to be champion for literacy. We are nimble and responsive, yet there is a need to strengthen the organization's ability to align with the mandates of its government partners, to further demonstrate Decoda's value. By strengthening the ability to collect data and report on key impacts, trends and challenges across the province, Decoda can leverage support for its work, as well as for the literacy field in general. Decoda can take the lead in shaping provincial priorities towards developing a holistic and coordinated approach to literacy in BC. Supporting communities with current labour market demands will be a key driver. Continued engagement and stakeholder-led collaborative strategies will support LOCs and literacy practitioners in the field.

Working with this strong literacy network, Decoda will amplify community initiatives and demonstrate meaningful progress towards a British Columbia where everyone has the literacy skills to thrive in their communities.

#### Key Objectives & Actions

- Integrate a commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action in Decoda's programming, communications and professional development.
- Integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into all work and communications.
- Amplify Decoda's position as the leader of literacy programs and services in BC.
- Continue to deliver Decoda's biennial flagship conference.
- Increase the reporting of impact and the power of the LOC network.

#### Desired Outcomes

- Increased funding for Decoda programs
- Increased partnerships and active supporters
- Plan more and plan new professional development offerings; report increased participation
- Increased awareness of the LOC network
- Work to increase funding for the LOC network
- Developed new partnerships through the LOC network
- Increased collaboration within the literacy field
- Increased ability to report on promising practices and lessons learned



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