# AccessibleCanada, Accessible World

## Plain Language Executive Summary

The Accessible Canada, Accessible World (ACAW) 2024 project was led by the Inclusive Design Research Centre at OCAD University. It was funded by Accessibility Standards Canada to help improve accessibility standards in Canada.

## What Was the Goal?

The goal was to bring together people with disabilities, experts, and community members to talk about accessibility problems and co-design ways to solve them. The project aimed to:

* Build a national network of accessibility experts.
* Involve people with disabilities in all parts of the research.
* Share knowledge, tools, and ideas to remove barriers.

This work directly supported the priorities of the funding program by helping to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers in areas under federal responsibility.

## What Did We Do?

We organized a large event in May 2024 in Montreal. It was called **Accessible Canada, Accessible World**. It was a hybrid event—people could join in person or online. The event was fully accessible and offered services in English, French, ASL, and LSQ.

## What Made the Conference Special?

* **Flipped Model**: Instead of watching presentations during the event, people watched them ahead of time. This gave more time for discussion and problem-solving during the conference.
* **Inclusive Design**: The event was designed to be accessible to everyone. It included sign language, captions, quiet rooms, and support for service animals.
* **Wide Participation**: Over 400 people joined from across Canada and other countries.

## A Research Event Led by the Community

This was not just a conference—it was a **co-research event**. People with disabilities were not just participants; they were researchers. They helped shape the agenda, led discussions, and co-designed solutions to real-world challenges. Each session focused on a specific problem, and participants worked together to come up with ideas and action plans.

The research was grounded in lived experience and technical knowledge. It produced practical outputs like session notebooks, action items, and new research proposals.

## What Were the Results?

* The event helped build a strong network of people working on accessibility.
* It led to new research projects and proposals, including work on AI, emergency planning, and inclusive communication.
* It showed how to run a large, accessible, and inclusive hybrid event.
* It gave people with disabilities a real voice in shaping future standards.

## Continuing the Conversation

To keep the momentum going, an online discussion platform was created. Anyone interested in accessibility and standards can join the conversation at:

<https://groups.io/g/ACAW-CAMA>

You can also explore the full collection of presentations and materials from the conference here:

<https://acaw-cama.idrc.ocadu.ca/en/>

## Why Does This Matter?

This project helped Canada move closer to its goal of being a barrier-free country. It showed how inclusive, community-led research can lead to better policies and standards. It also created tools and ideas that others can use to make their work more inclusive.