

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: [Kate Baggott](mailto:kate.baggott@foslab.org) | Communications Officer | [comms@foslab.org](mailto:comms@foslab.org) | 416-978-6077**Forward Society (FOS) Lab Launches:  
Shining a Light on Marginalized Voices Worldwide Through Data, Research, and Partnerships**

**Toronto, Nov. 7, 2023:** Evidence-based policies can improve lives. That's the unifying belief behind the newly formed [Forward Society \(FOS\) Lab](#). With great enthusiasm, we present the Forward Society (FOS) Lab—a global lab that shines a light on the realities of marginalized communities through research-practice partnerships (RPPs) and data-driven research that generate meaningful policy change. Led by researchers in the Department of Economics at the University of Toronto, FOS helps to form, reinforce, and evolve long-term RPPs between academic researchers and governments at all levels, civil society groups, nonprofits, and anyone working to improve the lives of marginalized communities.

[FOS research affiliates](#) conduct collaborative, on-the-ground research, rigorously documenting:

- How digital skills training improve lives for vulnerable Canadian workers.
- The cost-effectiveness of maternal and child health and nutrition programs in Pakistan.
- How computer-assisted learning can boost students' math scores in Puerto Rico, among many other projects around the world.

[Partnerships](#) that see scholars embedded in the process of program creation and delivery to evaluate results is a model that is mutually respectful and successful. "Blueprint is informing decisions about how and where job training programs are made available to vulnerable people nationwide," said FOS affiliate Kory Kroft of one of his partner organizations based in Canada. "All the people involved in our partnership understand that at-risk individuals must overcome poverty, systemic barriers, and lower educational attainment to obtain work. Blueprint is involved with programs that address this complex situation, and studying their impact has been a remarkable research opportunity."

Successful partnerships are not limited to North America, the most developed countries, or the richest societies. FOS affiliates actively participate in partnerships around the world. "MineduLAB and the pedagogical team of the Ministry of Education of Peru are dedicated to understanding and improving the lives of Peruvian students," said FOS Affiliate Román Andrés Zárate. "As a researcher, I could combine my knowledge of research methods and practices with their extensive network of pedagogical professionals and schools. The partnership provided an excellent basis for exploring paths to support students' academic and social development."

The official launch event of the Forward Society Lab is on November 30, 2023, at 1:30 PM in Seely Hall, University of Toronto. Guests include representatives from Statistics Canada, J-PAL North America, the Puerto Rico Department of Education, William T. Grant Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, authorities, faculty, and community from the University of Toronto, and more. Please visit the following link to view the [detailed program schedule](#). To attend the 1:30-5:30 PM event, contact [comms@foslab.org](mailto:comms@foslab.org).

About FOS: The Forward Society Lab (FOS) is a global lab that leverages data and state-of-the-art research methods to shine a light on the voices and experiences of marginalized people. The FOS model is rooted in research-practice partnerships, working with partners to deeply understand their communities' unique challenges. FOS uses data-driven research to co-develop workable solutions, rigorously test them in programs and policies, and iterate as necessary. This iterative approach ensures that solutions are responsive to the evolving needs of communities facing pressing inequity concerns across six major themes: Education | Work | Health | Women and Girls | Governance | Environment.

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