



National Film Board of Whose Canada?

RACIAL EQUITY AUDIT OF NFB PRODUCTIONS FROM 2012–2021





RACIAL EQUITY SCREEN OFFICE

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RESO is grateful to live and work on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selílwitlh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We thank the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities that have cared for Turtle Island since time immemorial. With this acknowledgment, we remind ourselves of discriminatory, racist and colonial practices that have and continue to create barriers for Indigenous peoples and communities across this land.

With support from the Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society (VAFF).

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October 2022



As one of National Film Board's 2004 Reel Diversity for emerging filmmakers of colour awardees, I was grateful for the opportunity to make a film. What I didn't know at the time was that my "diverse" budget was less than half of what White filmmakers received. There must be fundamental shifts at the NFB to ensure that "diversity" funding and opportunities actually lead to sustained careers for Black, Indigenous and racialized content creatives in the screen industry, and not allow institutions to merely provide entry level initiatives to pad their annual reports."

BARBARA LEE

Founder of RESO and Vancouver Asian Film Festival

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INTRODUCTION

In the past two and a half years, Canada is beginning to acknowledge the harms inflicted on Indigenous, Black and racialized communities by largely white settler colonial capitalist systems that continue to exist. These systems ensure that whiteness has access to capital (land, labour, and resources) through the dispossession of Indigenous land and the devaluation of Indigenous, Black, and racialized labour. This is ingrained in many Canadian institutions. To understand this historic and contemporary structural discrimination, all Canadian institutions must be closely looked at. This includes the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

What does the National Film Board (NFB) do and why was it created?

“The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is a federal cultural agency within the portfolio of the Canadian Heritage Department. Initially known as the National Film Commission, it was created by an act of Parliament in 1939. Its mandate, as set forth in the National Film Act, 1950, is “to produce and distribute and to promote the production and distribution of films designed to interpret Canada to Canadians and to other nations.”

<https://help.nfb.ca/knowledge-base/what-is-the-national-film-board-of-canada-nfb/>

NFB forecasted spending for 2021-2022 at \$71.05 million which included \$5 million in Emergency Funding. The NFB forecasts a budget of \$67.38 million for 2022-2023 and is advocating for a budget increase of \$5 million.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2022/onf-nfb/NF1-4-2022-eng.pdf Pg. 26-27

Why is the NFB important to a filmmaker's career?

For many underrepresented creatives from Black and racialized communities, documentaries have been the most accessible entry points for filmmaking and the National Film Board of Canada has been one of the world's most successful documentary producing institutions with over 5,000 film industry awards over its 83 year history.

An NFB produced film on a filmmaker's resume gives credibility to their filmmaking abilities, demonstrating a level of creativity, expertise and skill that comes with working with an award winning institution.

Additionally, the NFB is a proving ground for key creatives (DOPs, Editors, Sound Designers, Location Sound Recordists, etc.) to develop their skills and build their careers. NFB productions offer various positions in the filmmaking process that not only provides key creatives, technicians etc. on-going employment, but also provides them with significant marketable skills to work in the Canadian independent screen industries, most significant of which is the documentary industry. Production experience in any capacity with the NFB would also likely be seen favourably on one's future government grant applications.

Although it is heartening that NFB has made a commitment to hiring and has hired more diverse staff internally, this does not address the fact that the NFB has not made racial equity a priority for funding Black and racialized content creatives. Hiring more racialized staff and executives and funding more black and racialized content creatives are two separate and distinct issues that should not be conflated to confuse the Canadian taxpayers. Hiring more diverse staff does not necessarily result in racial equity for greenlighting NFB productions. Without the specific racial equity targets, racially diverse staff are not provided with the levers to ensure Black and racialized content creatives will have their projects produced by the NFB.

Visible Minority

According to Stats Canada *"Visible minority refers to whether a person is a visible minority or not, as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese."*

For this report, "visible minority" will be replaced with the term "Black and racialized". We recognize that conversations about terms are ongoing and fluid and that how these communities refer to themselves may evolve; what is acceptable or best practices today may not be in the future. Also, for this report, directors of Asian heritage (South Asian, East Asian and Southeast Asian) have been parsed out from the "racialized" grouping.

Why is it important to collect race-based data for the screen industry?

Historically, Canada has not collected race-based data in the film and television industry, but this will change dramatically with the introduction of Canada Media Fund (CMF)'s PERSONA-ID system which is a self-identification system that allows individuals to disclose their demographic information directly and securely to the CMF.

Race-based data is critical to understanding how and where funding and decision making disparities exist, and the mechanisms that exclude Indigenous, Black and racialized creatives. Without this information, any changes to programs and funding levels, recruiting processes and systems would not likely address the root cause of the systemic racist barriers. Race based data provides a baseline, a starting point to measure the effectiveness of diversity initiatives and programs.

Why this report and why now?

The NFB has recognized that decades-long systemic racism and injustice has been experienced by Indigenous, Black and racialized filmmakers in the Canadian screen industry. The NFB acknowledges its own complicity in perpetuating a system of settler colonialism, and now wants to help eliminate these structural barriers which have significantly impacted the careers of many Black and racialized filmmakers.

In 2016, the NFB made a formal commitment to ensure half of its productions would be directed by women. The NFB determined that half of its production spending by 2019 would be allocated to projects directed by women, which was extended to 2020. This plan for gender parity was developed in addition to NFB's Indigenous Action Plan which helps to redefine the NFB's relationship with Indigenous filmmakers:

"In 2022, six years after making its initial commitment, the NFB continues to meet its gender-parity goals, both for the number of productions directed by women and for production budgets allocated to women. It has also met or exceeded its goals in most creative positions (screenwriting, editing and music composition), with a significant improvement in cinematography."

<https://www.canada.ca/en/national-film-board/corporate/about/mandate-values/gender-parity.html>

While we applaud the NFB on these moves towards gender equity and towards improving relationships and ways of working with Indigenous filmmakers and communities, **we question why no similar commitments have been made for Black and racialized filmmakers and producers.** With the success of their commitment to targeted gender parity, the NFB has a model that shows established targets lead to achieving equity, why this has not been adopted for racial equity is an outstanding question.

NFB's Calls To Action — Less Talk, More Targeted Actions

The NFB's highlights for 2020-2021 (<https://www.canada.ca/en/national-film-board/news/2021/07/nfb-releases-highlights-for-20202021-results-from-the-past-year-in-creation-diversity-and-inclusion-gender-parity-indigenous-works-and-distribution.html>) state that the NFB has a commitment to “affirming diverse voices and perspectives and building an equitable and inclusive environment for all at the NFB”. They state that 35% of NFB works completed in 2020-2021—29 films in total—“explored topics related to Indigenous lives and experiences, and diverse perspectives related to race, ethnicity, religion, culture, disability, gender and sexuality” and that 14% of production spending went to works by Indigenous creators, with 8% of completed works directed by Indigenous filmmakers, for a total of 7 works. In the above, 35% collapses all equity within a single number. It also collapses Indigenous creatives as an equity seeking group, rather than a sovereignty seeking group. Further, films that explore “topics related to Indigenous lives and experiences, and diverse perspectives related to race, ethnicity, religion, culture, disability, gender and sexuality” are not necessarily films that are created by Indigenous, Black, and racialized filmmakers.

In regards to NFB's Strategic Plan (<https://www.canada.ca/en/national-film-board/corporate/publications/plans-reports/strategic-plan.html>) Priority 2 calls for “establishing firm, ambitious targets for diversity, equity and inclusion.” As we have noted in this report, gender equity targets have worked. We need targets for racial equity. The Strategic Plan does not go far enough, again collapsing racial equity within a broader mandate for diversity, equity and inclusion. This pattern of absenting Black and racialized creatives is again apparent in Strategic Plan Priority 5, which calls for the NFB to “be an agent of change in matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion”, “putting an end to system racism”. This priority is accompanied by five actions for implementation, none of which refer to racial equity at the NFB. If the NFB wants to meet its commitment to “reflect(ing) the Canadian population, notably by ensuring programming equitably includes the voices of artists from underrepresented and racialized groups”, they need to set racial equity targets.

Here are some important data points from Stats Canada's latest population projections:

IN 2041, ABOUT 2 IN 5 CANADIANS WILL BE PART OF A RACIALIZED GROUP



The concept of “racialized” population is derived directly from the “visible minority group” and therefore refers to the persons belonging to a visible minority group (for more information, see the Note to readers). This information has been collected by Statistics Canada since the 1996 Census of Population to implement the Employment Equity Act, which aims to address discrimination in the hiring of certain groups (women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of a racialized group).

PROGENY BORN IN CANADA TO PERSONS BELONGING TO A RACIALIZED GROUP IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE GROWTH OF THE PROJECTED RACIALIZED POPULATION



The projected increase of the proportion of the population belonging to a racialized group is largely related to the increase in the immigrant population, as well as that of their Canadian-born children. This projected increase is significant not only among those born in Canada to at least one immigrant parent (the second-generation population), but also among the population born in Canada to parents who themselves were born in Canada (third generation or more).

These projection results highlight an important aspect of Canada's demographic dynamic—the Canadian-born descendants of racialized people are a major factor in the growth of the racialized population. **The ethnocultural diversity of the Canadian population is therefore expected to increase in the coming years, regardless of future immigration levels.**

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220908/dq220908a-eng.htm>

Black and racialized stories have been historically underrepresented with minimal improvements in recent years. The NFB has not accurately reflected what a Canadian story is historically or presently and will unlikely meet Canada’s dramatically changing demographics in the next 20 years or more, unless some specifically targeted measures are implemented immediately.

**What a “Canadian story” is
will evolve drastically over the next 20 years.
How can the NFB meet this change when it has not
kept up with the changes in the last 10 years?**

This report builds on the **Diversity on Screen Audit Report of Canadian Broadcasters 2022** (Vancouver Asian Film Festival, RESO and EliminateHate)¹ which looked at the diversity of main cast actors on screen and references other equity reports from Black, racialized and Indigenous community organizations.²

For this report, on racial equity at the NFB, film data was collected from the NFB.ca website as well as from the annual reports available on the federal government’s website and a racial equity audit of the directors credited for each NFB productions over the past 10 years (2012-2021) was completed.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/national-film-board/corporate/publications/annual-reports.html>

As the **Diversity on Screen** report highlighted the many important reasons for Black and racialized communities to see themselves on screen, the only way to ensure this happens is for Black and racialized creatives to have access, funding and control of the stories being told. This report hopes to provide greater insight to how the NFB has supported or not supported Black and racialized filmmakers in the past 10 years and how to move forward to ensure racial equity for these filmmakers.

We are aware of the sensitivity of potential miscategorization, as well as the nuanced and careful conversations happening within the Indigenous screen-based community. And although we have included directors identified as Indigenous in our data, we have limited our discussions mainly to Black and racialized creatives in this audit to respect the sovereignty of Indigenous creatives and the Indigenous Screen Office (ISO).

1 http://vaff.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VAFFDiversityReport2022_Web.pdf

2 <https://imaginative.org/publications>, <https://www.beingseen.ca/>,
<https://www.re-mc.org/research>, <https://womeninview.ca/>, <https://www.impact-aptcmi.org>

“A note on using population demographics as a benchmark—Canada’s population looks the way it does because of its history of genocide, colonialism and racist immigration policies. If the goal is to make up for historical underrepresentation then simply meeting current demographic percentages is not good enough. Added to this is the fact that Canada’s racialized population continues to grow, with the biggest urban centre already having a population that is over 50% BIPOC.”

— Racial Equity Media Collective’s Evaluating Racial Equity in Canada’s Screen Sector Report

Why this report and what now?

The aims of this report are to:

- Conduct a racial equity audit of the directors the NFB chose to work with over the last 10 years (2012 to 2021) as a means to assess the current NFB Commissioner’s track record for achieving racial equity without specific targeted mandates levels.
- Provide the incoming NFB Commissioner and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Pablo Rodriguez, with a baseline record of racial equity at the NFB over the last ten years and by doing so the ability to advocate, mandate and implement racial equity at the NFB over the next 10 years by **implementing mandated reparative racial equity targets** for Black, Asian and racialized filmmakers’ projects.
- Provide race-based data evidence that supports the urgent need for the immediate implementation of specific racial equity targets. **The time is now.**

Methodology

For this racial equity audit, RESO engaged five researchers to collect information from the NFB's online film database over the last 10 years of released productions, 2012 to 2021.

<https://www.nfb.ca/explore-all-films/>

The following film data was collected from the NFB film database:

- Film title
- Release year
- Running time
- Genre - all films were categorized as either Animation or Documentary (Interactive, apps, website and classroom programs were excluded)
- Executive Producer
- Producer
- Director

Given that race is a social construct and determined by factors that include physical attributes, the five data collectors independently scanned a director's image visually and identified them as—White, Indigenous, Black, Asian or Additional Racialized directors. Films listed in NFB's annual report for these 10 years were included in the audit. Release year was based on the NFB's Explore Films website's release year. Films that were listed in NFB's online database as being released during this 10 year audit period, but not listed in the annual reports were also included if it gave producer credit to one of NFB's Producers at the time. It should be noted that researchers also identified filmmakers as Indigenous through the directors' bios and if the director was part of NFB's Indigenous program.

For films with more than one director, film credits and total runtime were divided equally amongst each director. For example, for a 6 minute film with 3 directors, we credited each director for a third of the film and 2 minutes each of run time. This is why the data number of films are at times have decimals or a portion of a film.

As "racialized" encompasses many different racialized communities, directors of Asian heritage (South Asian, East Asian and Southeast Asian) were parsed out from the "racialized" category for this audit to provide deeper insight.

Race as Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022 explains, *"is a 'social construct.' This means that society forms ideas of race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, as well as physical traits."* Race, as a system of social classification, takes on meaning and subjects groups of people to different and unequal treatment.

<https://hillnotes.ca/2022/01/31/race-and-ethnicity-evolving-terminology/>

Total Number of Films vs. Total Running Time of Films

Total number of films and total running time of films were gathered to deepen our analysis. It is important to differentiate a 1 minute film from a mid-length or feature and not give the same weight for both. Longer films usually mean bigger budgets, representing a more fulsome filmmaking process and experience with the NFB.

In general, animated films had shorter run times than documentaries, so information was collected and also reviewed separately for animated films and documentaries.

NOTE: Interactive, social media, virtual classroom, web, apps, installations, NFB Pause, “Partner” films and Filmmaker Assistance Program (FAP) and Aide au Cinéma Indépendant du Canada (ACIC) films were not included in this audit. For films with shorter versions, or multiple language options, these films were only included once and only the longest version was included.

Limitations

Due to limited funding and the urgency of this report, there were a number of necessary limitations, including:

Selection bias

- Disaggregated data, whereby only Asian directors (East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian) were separately identified from other racialized directors.
- The racial breakdown of other key creatives including writers was not analyzed.
- Films from 2022 were not included as a full year of film production had not yet been completed at the time this report was completed.
- French and English films were not separated in the analysis.
- Production budgets were not available for review.
- Films were not separated by regional NFB production offices.

Observer bias

- Data collection relied on a set of researchers whose various perspectives may have introduced bias into the study, as they were visually identifying director’s images online.³

Director bias

- While directors were the focus of this report, it is important to note that a fulsome racial equity audit of all those who work on NFB productions would provide a far clearer picture of how and whom the agency works with and thus whose careers are built.

3 <https://mediaspace.nfb.ca/epks/>

We are aware that this is potentially a fraught research method but given funding and time constraints, and the lack of historical race based data, we were unable to develop and implement another method for the audit. For example, the audit may have, among other things, inadvertently categorized some people as “white” or Indigenous, Black, Asian or racialized when they may, in fact, not self-identify this way.

We are also aware of the sensitivity of potential miscategorization, and the nuanced and careful conversations happening within the Indigenous screen-based community about Indigenous identification, and relied on the NFB’s website to identify Indigenous filmmakers and/or directors.

To address these limitations, we have recommended next steps for further movement toward a diverse, equitable and inclusive screen industry in Canada.

Further areas of research and analysis:

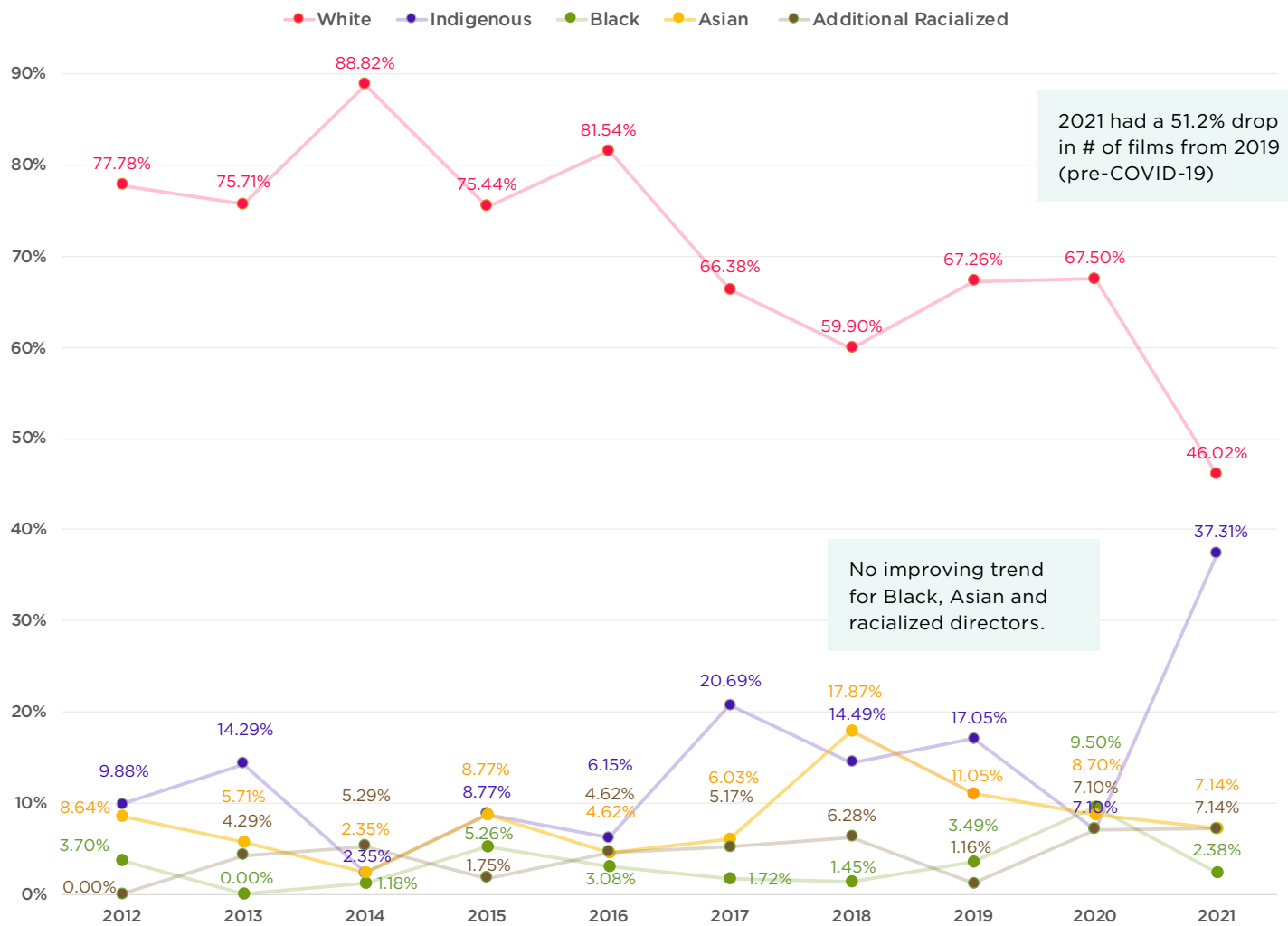
- Research and develop best practices for NFB, funders and screen based broadcast and non-broadcast media industry to implement inclusive production and equitable funding practices.⁴
- Research and develop best practices for NFB, funders and screen-based broadcast and non-broadcast media industry to implement inclusive acquisition practices. Examine the intersections of media funding and producing disparities with other underrepresented groups, including but not limited to Arab, Latin American, Muslim groups, people with non-normative gender identities and expressions, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and individuals with varying abilities.
- Conduct further analysis on the differences between French and English language production funding for Black and racialized filmmakers.

Expand upon existing equity reports produced by screen and media organizations, including:

- Diversity on Screen Audit Report of Canadian Broadcasters 2022⁵
- imagineNATIVE’s On-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide⁶
- Black Screen Office’s Being Seen Report⁷
- Racial Equity Media Collective’s Racialized Funding Data in the Canadian Film and Television Industry⁸
- Women In View On Screen Report⁹
- Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent’s (IMPACT) Understanding Inclusive Business Practices Amongst Canadian Producers Report¹⁰

4 Non-broadcast media industry include streaming services and or platforms
5 http://vaff.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VAFFDiversityReport2022_Web.pdf
6 <https://imaginative.org/publications>
7 <https://www.beingseen.ca/>
8 <https://www.re-mc.org/research>
9 <https://womeninview.ca/>
10 <https://www.impact-aptcmi.org>

Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films - # of Films in 2012-2021



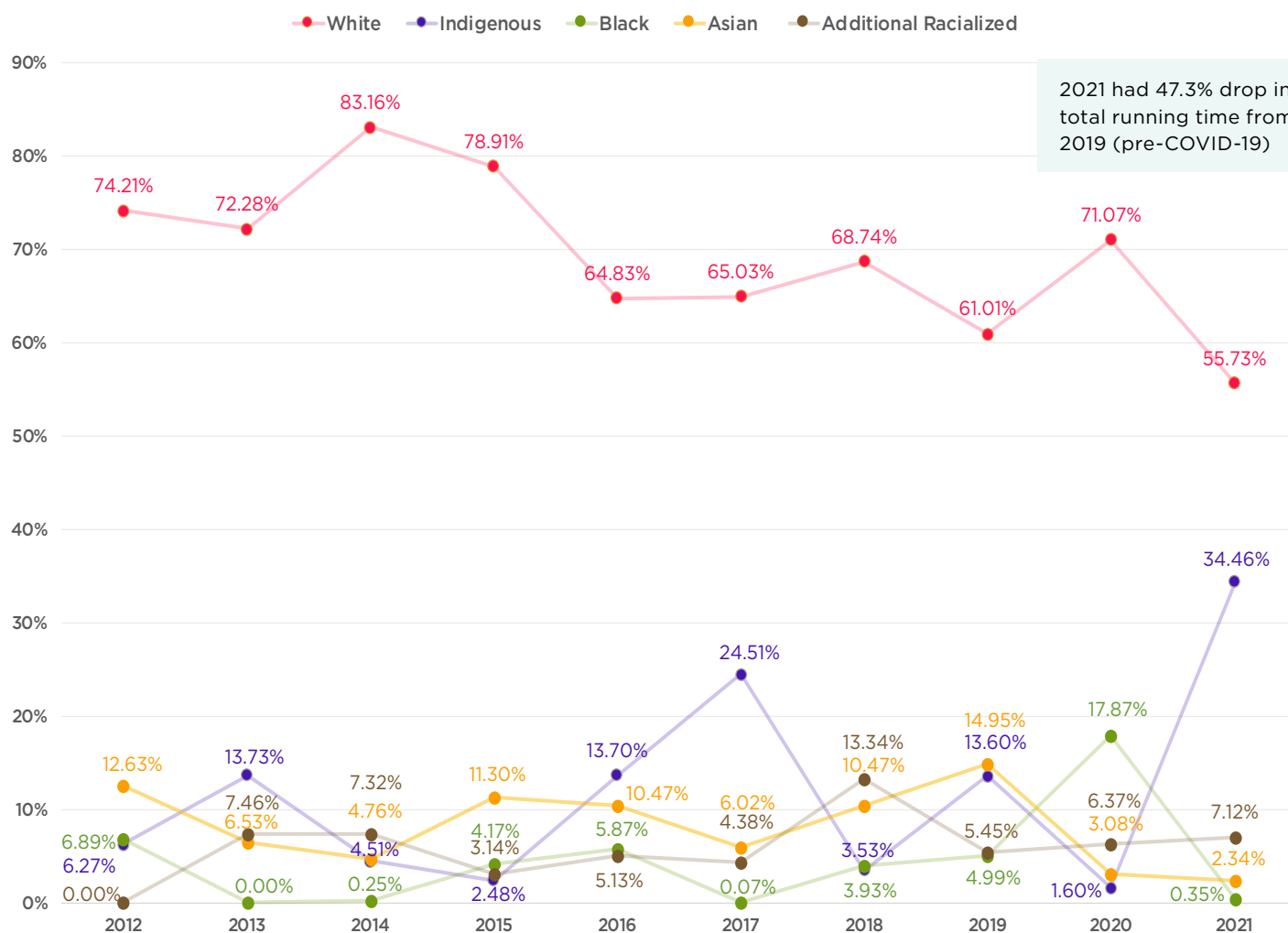
Graph 1 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films in 2012-2021 (%)

Table 1 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films in 2012-2021 (# of films)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
■ White	63.00	53.00	75.50	43.00	53.00	38.50	41.33	57.84	40.50	19.33	485.00
■ Indigenous	8.00	10.00	2.00	5.00	4.00	12.00	10.00	14.66	4.50	15.67	85.83
■ Black	3.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	8.00	1.00	23.00
■ Asian	7.00	4.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	3.50	12.33	9.50	5.50	3.00	54.83
■ Additional Racialized	0.00	3.00	4.50	1.00	3.00	3.00	4.33	1.00	4.50	3.00	27.33
	81.00	70.00	85.00	57.00	65.00	58.00	68.99	86.00	63.00	42.00	676.00

For 5 out of 10 years, Black directors had only 1 or no film produced by the NFB.

Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films - Running Time in 2012-2021



Graph 2 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films - Running Time in 2012-2021 (%)

Table 2 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary and Animation Films - Running Time in 2012-2021 (minutes)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
White	1,669.00	1,095.00	1,676.50	1,306.00	1,226.00	891.50	1,400.83	1,332.50	1,177.00	642.00	12,416.33
Indigenous	141.00	208.00	91.00	41.00	259.00	336.00	72.00	297.00	26.50	397.00	1,868.50
Black	155.00	0.00	5.00	69.00	111.00	1.00	80.00	109.00	296.00	4.00	830.00
Asian	284.00	99.00	96.00	187.00	198.00	82.50	213.33	326.50	51.00	27.00	1,564.33
Additional Racialized	0.00	113.00	147.50	52.00	97.00	60.00	271.83	119.00	105.50	82.00	1,047.83
	2,249.00	1,515.00	2,016.00	1,655.00	1,891.00	1,371.00	2,037.99	2,184.00	1,656.00	1,152.00	17,727.00

Over the 10 year period, directors of Asian heritage produced 8.8% of the total running time of productions produced by the NFB.

Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Documentary Films in 2012-2021

Table 3 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced
Documentary Films in 2012-2021 (# of films)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
■ White	45.00	39.00	54.50	35.00	39.50	16.50	33.33	38.34	35.00	12.00	348.17
■ Indigenous	7.00	10.00	2.00	5.00	3.50	8.00	10.00	11.66	4.00	14.00	75.16
■ Black	2.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	7.00	1.00	20.00
■ Asian	4.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	2.00	2.50	10.33	8.00	3.00	2.00	37.83
■ Additional Racialized	0.00	2.00	2.50	1.00	3.00	2.00	4.33	1.00	4.00	2.00	21.83
	58.00	52.00	61.00	48.00	50.00	29.00	59.00	62.00	53.00	31.00	503.00

Table 4 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced
Documentary Films in 2012-2021 (minutes)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
■ White	1,536.00	1,030.00	1,504.50	1,243.00	1,169.50	796.50	1,339.83	1,234.00	1,148.00	588.00	11,589.33
■ Indigenous	139.00	208.00	91.00	41.00	258.50	319.00	72.00	294.00	24.00	373.00	1,819.50
■ Black	145.00	0.00	5.00	69.00	111.00	0.00	80.00	109.00	293.00	4.00	816.00
■ Asian	265.00	85.00	86.00	181.00	109.00	76.50	197.33	313.00	40.00	12.00	1,364.83
■ Additional Racialized	0.00	100.00	143.50	52.00	97.00	56.00	271.83	119.00	103.00	68.00	1,045.00
	2,085.00	1,423.00	1,830.00	1,586.00	1,745.00	1,248.00	1,961.00	2,069.00	1,608.00	1,045.00	16,600.00

Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Animated Films in 2012-2021

Table 5 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced
Animated Films in 2012-2021 (# of films)

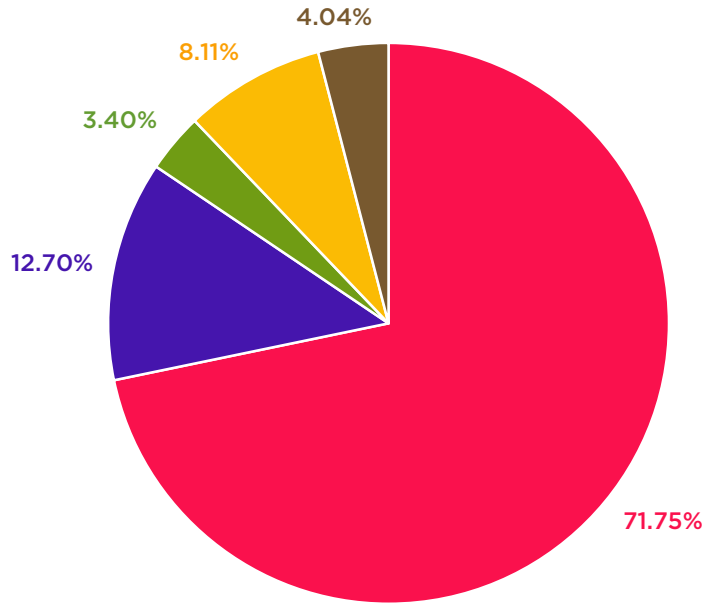
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
■ White	18.00	14.00	21.00	8.00	13.50	22.00	8.00	19.50	5.50	7.33	136.83
■ Indigenous	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	4.00	0.00	3.00	0.50	1.67	10.67
■ Black	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	3.00
■ Asian	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.50	2.50	1.00	17.00
■ Additional Racialized	0.00	1.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	1.00	5.50
	23.00	18.00	24.00	9.00	15.00	29.00	10.00	24.00	10.00	11.00	173.00

Table 6 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced
Animated Films in 2012-2021 (minutes)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
■ White	133.00	65.00	172.00	63.00	56.50	95.00	61.00	98.50	29.00	54.00	827.00
■ Indigenous	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	17.00	0.00	3.00	2.50	24.00	49.00
■ Black	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	14.00
■ Asian	19.00	14.00	10.00	6.00	89.00*	6.00	16.00	0.00	11.00	15.00	186.00
■ Additional Racialized	0.00	13.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	13.50	2.50	14.00	51.00
	164.00	92.00	186.00	69.00	146.00	123.00	77.00	115.00	48.00	107.00	1,127.00

* This unusually high running minutes was due to one animation feature length.

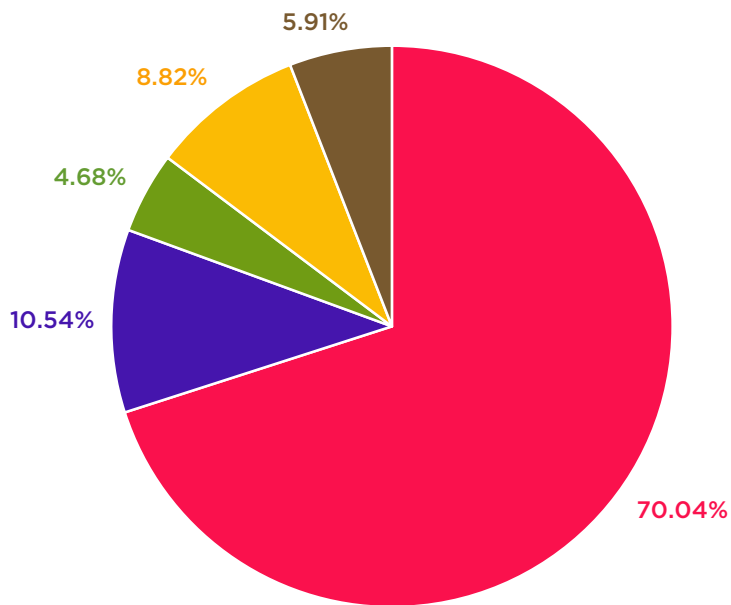
Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Films from 2012 to 2021



Graph 3 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Films from 2012-2021: **Total # of films (%)**

Table 7 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Films from 2012-2021:
Total # of films

	Total # of films
White	485.00
Indigenous	85.83
Black	23.00
Asian	54.83
Additional Racialized	27.33
Total	676.00



Graph 4 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Films from 2012-2021: **Total minutes (%)**

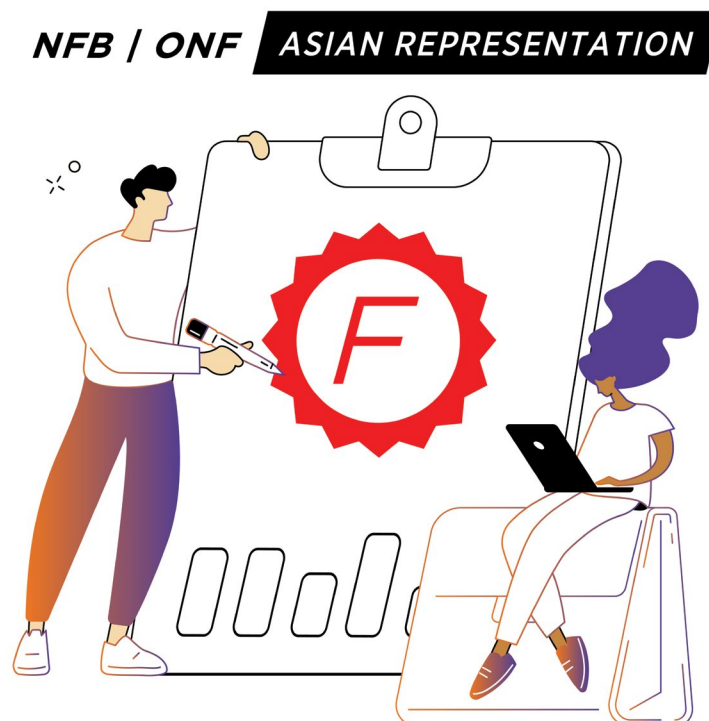
Table 8 - Racial Breakdown of Directors of NFB Produced Films from 2012-2021:
Total minutes

	Total minutes
White	12,416.33
Indigenous	1,868.50
Black	830.00
Asian	1,564.33
Additional Racialized	1,047.83
Total	17,727.00

Findings

After examining the annual reports available on the federal government's website (<https://www.canada.ca/en/national-film-board/corporate/publications/annual-reports.html>), and completing a racial equity audit of the directors for each NFB production released over the past 10 years (2012-2021), these are the findings from this research:

- The current NFB commissioner set gender diversity targets and has met them.
- The current NFB commissioner set Indigenous targets and has made progress, but more needs to be done.
- The current NFB commissioner has set no targets for Black and racialized creatives, which could explain why for five of the last 10 years, NFB produced one or zero films by Black directors.
- The current NFB commissioner has set no targets for Black and racialized creatives, which may have been a major factor as to why the percentage of NFB films produced with an Asian Canadian director over the 10 years was under 9% during his tenure, substantially below the flawed benchmark of the Canadian census.
- Between 2012 to 2021, there appears to be no trend showing improvements for Black and racialized directors to work with the NFB.



Conclusions

The findings above lead to the following conclusions:

- Racial inequity has been the constant at the NFB over the last 10 years when it comes to directors chosen to work with the NFB.
- George Floyd's murder in 2020 drew the attention of Canadians to systemic racism and racial bias, of which the NFB has made a commitment to eliminate in their organization and their productions. However, the NFB still has made no specific targets to ensure that Black and racialized directors are hired even though these are taxpayer-funded productions.
- The NFB has failed to provide fair and equitable representation in our public institutions despite their statements to elevate racial equity.
- The NFB is failing to set baseline targets for Black and racialized creatives that reflect current demographic makeup of Canada and does not meet its own commitment to “contribute to eliminating decades of injustice that have arisen not only in Canadian society as a whole, but also within the institution.”¹¹
- Specific mandated targets have been shown to work: the NFB's gender parity goals of 50% have been met. If the NFB is truly committed to racial equity, then specific racial equity targets must be mandated over the next 10 years, similar to the gender parity target of 50% set out in 2016.
- Setting racial equity targets should not be achieved by shifting back and forth from Black, and racialized groups as done in past years. This pitting of Black and racialized communities against one another for scarce resources has historically been harmful to all these communities of colour. Specific mandates would ensure this does not continue to happen.
- Additional Federal funding to meet racial equity commitments set by the Government of Canada and or Canadian Heritage should not be given to federal agencies such as NFB/ONF, CME, Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm, etc. These organizations have not shown the ability to adequately meet the funding needs of the Black and racialized content creatives. Instead, funding to meet racial equity goals must be provided directly to organizations that work in these communities. Organizations that have a track record of providing funding directly to Black and racialized creatives.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

“The National Film Board has been instrumental in building the careers of many White Directors, DOPS, Editors, Sound Designers, Sound Recordists, Documentary Writers, Music Composers and of course Animators during its long history, often by providing less funding and access to Black and racialized creatives that could and should have been equitably considered for these roles and others. Therefore, reparative mandated targets are necessary to accelerate the careers of Black and racialized creatives. This would empower and build the careers of both Black and racialized creatives working with and within the NFB and in the greater Canadian documentary ecosystem which is led by the NFB.”

— Nilesh Patel, ED RESO, Independent Producer and Filmmaker

- The NFB must mandate and implement specific reparative racial equity targets for Black and racialized creatives to accelerate the careers of these directors and producers from these underrepresented Black and racialized communities.
- The NFB and other institutions must stop pitting Indigenous, Black and racialized creatives against each other for the limited “diverse” funding and access opportunities.
- The NFB must set specific mandated racial equity targets that will drive the reparative acceleration of careers of Black and racialized creatives.
- Increased targets should be redistributed from White directors and creatives who have already enjoyed decades of greater funding and access to opportunities.

Sectoral Recommendations

To address the systemic and structural racism that exists within the NFB, other Canadian creative institutions, funders and broadcasters require deliberate, targeted and reparative actions such as the following:

1. MANDATED RACIAL EQUITY TARGETS FOR BLACK AND RACIALIZED FILMMAKERS

The NFB along with CMF, Telefilm, Canada Council for the Arts and other government funders and broadcasters must include mandated equity targets for Black and racialized creatives and their production companies.

These mandated targets need to be set at 50% for productions and production budgets to address the historical harms to Black and racialized creatives in order to accelerate careers negatively impacted by over 80 years of systemic barriers. Specific gender parity targets of 50% have shown to be a success and nothing less should be afforded to the Black and racialized creatives.

Racial equity targets for productions and acquisitions should be mandated as part of the CRTC's broadcast license requirements.

2. PROVIDE CORE FUNDING FOR BLACK, ASIAN, AND RACIALIZED COMMUNITY ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Screen industry institutions and funders have benefited from the labour of community based organizations and received additional funding because of the advocacy work of creatives from Black and racialized communities. Much of this additional funding is not reaching these organizations to meet their core activity needs. Core or operational funding allows an organization to cover expenses that are required to keep it functioning, independent of any projects being implemented.

Instead, the majority of Black and racialized media arts organizations are only receiving project grants which cannot sustain the organizations' operations to be able to deliver these projects. Additional funds should be provided immediately and directly to the organizations, as operational funding. When organizations only receive project funding, they often must use free labour for its operations in order to meet the project funding requirements. The Canadian government has benefited from this funding model which perpetuates the use of cheap "volunteer" labour which is prevalent for Black and racialized community organizations.

The Department of Canadian Heritage should be taking the proactive step to either re-allocate, or match, any increases in funding to the NFB, CMF, and Telefilm towards the core funding of Black and racialized community groups and organizations.



The Vancouver Asian Film Festival is the oldest Asian film festival in Canada and the largest racialized film festival in western Canada. For over 26 years, VAFF has incubated, trained, mentored and showcased at least 2 generations of Asian Canadian filmmakers. We have never received Arts Across Canada or operations funding from the Canada Council for the Arts or the Ministry of Canadian Heritage. Even in this moment of ‘racial reckoning’ the systemic barriers are so entrenched that Federal funding bodies cannot recognize the value community organizations like VAFF provide to support racialized creatives and continue to underfund or not even fund them. The existing structures continue to fail community organizations that serve Black and racialized creatives resulting in these creatives having to work for little to no pay to build cultural infrastructure and we continue to be cheap cultural labourers for this country.” – Barbara Lee

3. TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE RECRUITING PRACTICES THAT INVEST IN SAFE SPACES AND INCLUSIVE WORKSPACES FOR CREATIVES TO OPERATE UNDER HOPE, NOT FEAR

The most powerful creative institutions are entrenched in bureaucracy and led by White executives and gatekeepers. Rarely have these spaces been welcoming to Black and racialized creatives. Transparent and accountable recruitment practices need to be implemented.

It is a well-known industry practice for government institutions, funders and broadcasters to hire, promote or recruit upper management candidates from the same pool of White executives, creating a revolving door of the same culture transplanted across all these institutions. This leaves many “diverse” hires being hamstrung from making effective and sustainable changes within the organization and eventually having to either conform to the existing colonial structures or be ostracized and inevitably having to leave.

4. A 360 APPROACH TO HOLD FUNDING INSTITUTIONS & BROADCASTERS ACCOUNTABLE

We must hold all institutions funded with taxpayers dollars accountable for the under-representation of stories that spotlight marginalized communities. RESO recommends scheduled equity audits that follow a standardized industry process. Ongoing monitoring and check-ins with Black, and racialized communities and organizations is vital to ensuring that equity targets are implemented and achieved.

5. REMOVE THE FEAR OF FAILING

Black and racialized creators must be given the space to fail, afforded an equal opportunity to fail and not be discouraged when institutionalized success does not occur immediately. The privilege to learn from one's mistakes has not been afforded to Black and racialized creators, and the infrastructure must be in place so their work can be recognized and valued.

6. PROVIDE DIRECT FUNDING TO A SEPARATE FUND FOR BLACK AND RACIALIZED CREATORS ADMINISTERED BY THE CANADIAN INDEPENDENT SCREEN FUND (CISF)

In the context of funds that flow into the Canadian screen sector from directives to the CRTC and other industry bodies that the Department of Canadian Heritage will likely make once Bill C-11 is passed, the Canadian Independent Screen Fund (CISF), which has an explicit mandate to focus on supporting Black and racialized creators, provides the Federal Government with a golden opportunity to execute on promises they have made around “Empowering Racialized Artists”¹² and act on directives in the Heritage Minister’s mandate letter¹³.

It is important to note that CISF is led and operated by members of Black and racialized communities, who came together to revive the sorely missed Canadian Film and Video Fund, which was beloved by independent filmmakers and was often the first-in funder for projects shut out of the system due to the broadcast licensing requirements that were in place.

“We have deep roots in working to maximize access and full participation in established funding infrastructure by underserved groups. Our communities have been working in solidarity and investing considerable time and sectoral expertise with the goal of addressing systemic gaps in support for Black and racialized creators in the Canadian funding landscape.”

— Sally Lee, CISF Executive Director

CISF has since partnered with the Black Screen Office and the Rogers Group of Funds to administer the Rogers-BSO Development Fund, which has been highly touted as a game-changer by program participants.

Significantly, the CRTC also recently approved CISF as a Certified Independent Production Fund (CIPF)¹⁴ following a stringent approval process, making it the only BPOC-led and -focused fund among a select and established group of funds that have for years been the designated entities able to receive CRTC-mandated contributions from broadcasters.

12 <https://liberal.ca/our-platform/empowering-racialized-artists-and-journalists/>

13 <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-canadian-heritage-mandate-letter>

14 <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/general/cipfund.htm>

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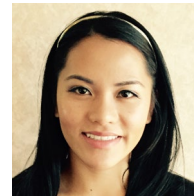
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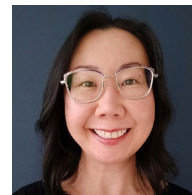
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RACIAL EQUITY SCREEN OFFICE

With support from the Vancouver Asian Film Festival Society (VAFF).



ORGANIZATIONAL MANDATES



Racial Equity Screen Office (RESO) Mandate

RESO is a Vancouver-based national office that focuses on the distinct nature of the immigrant diaspora and the opportunities, realities, and stories that live within our communities and our lived experiences. RESO is founded on the core principle of collaboration to address the culture of scarcity within governmental funding bodies. Its mandate is to elevate diverse stories told through our diasporic migrant lens, advocate for equitable funding for racialized Canadian content creators, and develop greater business opportunities and markets for content from racialized communities in and outside of Canada through export.

www.reso-ca.org



Vancouver Asian Film Festival (VAFF) Mandate

VAFF is a showcase for the best of Asian Canadian cinema and content and has a long history of offering capacity building, mentorship and professional development programs to its Asian Canadian community and other communities of colour. VAFF was founded on the core mandate to increase Asian Canadian representation on mainstream film, television and media.

www.vaff.org



Racial Equity Screen Office

ELEVATE. EQUITY. EXPORT.

RESO Big Wings design by Erin Seo.

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF WHOSE CANADA?

RACIAL EQUITY AUDIT OF NFB PRODUCTIONS FROM 2012-2021

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