

REPORT

# Needs Assessment for Gender-Based Impact Analysis of the Canadian Feature Film Policy

Prepared for the Department of Canadian Heritage and  
Telefilm Canada



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March 8, 2010

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## Executive Summary

### Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of this study were threefold:

- To ascertain the extent to which findings of the Department's 2005 Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) still hold, and identify new issues that have since emerged relating to the participation of women in Canada's feature film industry.
- To ascertain what data are available to support the analysis of issues and hypotheses relating to the participation by women in the Canadian feature film industry as compared to 2005.
- To recommend areas for further research and suggest next steps to meet data collection needs.

The study is based on a review of Canadian and international literature published since 2005, on the topic of women's participation in the feature film industry as producers, directors and writers. Our aim was to identify key issues discussed in the literature and areas that could be of interest for further research. We also analysed the availability of data to support this research, with a view to suggesting next steps to address information gaps.

Following our review of Canadian literature, we conducted a focused review of international sources. This part of the study was intended to identify key issues that are being raised internationally, as well as to report on innovative or relevant frameworks or approaches to Gender-Based Analysis. We also sought examples of data gathering that could be of interest in the Canadian context.

### Findings

#### *Key issues with respect to women's rate of participation in the feature film industry*

The Gender-Based Analysis conducted by the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2005 found that the Canadian Feature Film Policy (CFFP) appeared to have had no discernable effect, either positive or negative, on women's rate of participation in the feature film industry. Higher rates of participation by women in training programs (where they represented over half of students) were found to have no direct correlation, and it was too early to say whether or not they could result in changes in professional participation rates. The GBA hypothesized that women's reported lower participation rate might be the result of greater involvement in lower budget films. To the extent that this was true, the study suggested that the Policy might have had the unintended effect of disfavoured women.

Since 2005, the studies examined for this analysis suggest that the findings of the 2005 GBA still hold. In addition, they put forward a number of issues and hypotheses that seek to address these findings.

The studies report that women participate in the Canadian feature film industry at a lower rate than men and at a lower rate than their participation in the economy overall. They also report that women participate at a greater rate in training programs and industry associations than in productions in some regions and language markets.

Canadian women reportedly tend to work in lower-budget films, which may be non-union. They participate least often in higher budget feature film projects requiring the attachment of other market elements (producers, distributors, broadcasters).

The studies examined have found that women exercise less demand and have lesser access to public funds in support of feature film than men. They access more funds proportionally through programs with “cultural” as opposed to “commercial” objectives.

A number of environmental factors are identified as contributing to different rates of participation and career trajectories for men and women. Women professionals report they are disadvantaged with respect to access to professional networks<sup>1</sup>, opportunities for on-the-job experience, and visibility at Canadian film festivals, factors which are considered crucial to successful career development. According to a study of film professionals in British Columbia, the lack of a family-friendly working environment impacts more negatively on women’s careers.

Gender-based discrimination on and off the screen is reportedly a factor in women’s professional lives. In BC, two-thirds of women working in above- and below-the-line occupations reported in a survey that they faced gender-based discrimination professionally, while one-third said they experienced it in their training.

Similar findings have been reported in a number of international studies.

### *Lessons learned from abroad*

Studies in the United States (US), Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) found lower rates of participation for women in the feature film industry, lesser access to public resources by women, as well as little impact through their participation in “gate keeping” roles as members of selection committees for grants and prizes.

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<sup>1</sup> The study, *Women’s Labour Issues in the Film and Television Industry in British Columbia*, prepared for BCIFP by Ference Weicker & Company, January 2005, discusses both formal and informal professional relationships, informal networks, and support networks that provide support and mentoring to counterbalance the industry “old boys club” (p. 41).

Several studies looked at the career trajectories of women, and found “glass ceilings and glass walls”<sup>2</sup> limiting their potential to advance to senior line positions in large European companies, lack of access to professional networks, fewer women in career facilitating roles of teacher or mentor, and negative career impacts for women as a result of parenthood.

In analysing attitudes to women in key creative roles, a number of international studies attempt to debunk prevalent gender stereotypes. The gender of film directors in the US was shown to have no discernable impact on top box office outcomes, while women writers of UK films were shown to attract higher box office on average than their male counterparts. However, the mistaken perception that women don’t do well at the box office, coupled with lesser professional networks, continue to be significant barriers to access for women writers in the UK.<sup>3</sup>

One study in the US showed that women in key creative positions can have a positive influence on the portrayal of women in American films, as they are associated with a higher proportion of women characters onscreen, while their absence is linked to a lower visibility of women in speaking parts. A European study found that women entrepreneurs in the feature film industry have a greater tendency than their male counterparts to hire other women.

### *Analysis of Available Data*

We examined the availability of data that could support further research. Federal agencies are limited in their ability to collect gender-based data due to laws protecting the privacy of Canadians. Existing data to support gender-based analysis may be complemented by other information sources such as the following. (A detailed analysis of sources of data is provided in Annex 1.)

Workforce surveys gather information about employment trends in the audio-visual sector as a whole, graduation rates from relevant training programs and participation rates at Canadian film festivals. In some jurisdictions, such as Australia and the UK, these are conducted every few years. Canadian workforce studies have to date been conducted at less frequent intervals and have been found to have insufficient granularity with respect to the feature film industry.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Culture Biz*, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts), in partnership with FinnEKVIT (Helsinki), MEDIACULT (Vienna), OAC (Lisbon), ZFKf (Bonn) ARcult Media Bonn, Summer 2005, page 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Writing British Films – who writes British films and how they are recruited*. Commissioned by the UK Film Council, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Status Report on Women’s Participation in Canadian Feature Film Industry and Feature Film Productions*, prepared by Humewood Communications Corporation for Women in Film and Television-Toronto (WIFT-T) with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage, August 2005.

Employment equity statistics, university enrolment statistics as tracked by Statistics Canada or by professional film training institutions, and film festival catalogues, can provide further insight into employment trends and the career trajectories of key creative personnel in the feature film industry.

***Issues of Interest for Further Research and Recommended Next Steps for Data Collection***

The Government may wish to seek information on trends with respect to participation rates by women working in the feature film industry, including analysis of trends with respect to budget size and include comparisons with levels of participation in professional associations and guilds. Graduation levels and professional participation rates for both women and men could benefit from comparisons to other markets or industries, as well as to the overall availability of positions in the feature film industry.

Future research could consider a number of environmental factors identified as key issues in women's rate of participation in the industry in the studies under review, beginning with understanding how writers and directors get hired and identifying barriers to access. What factors contribute to the lower demand for public financing from female producers? How do men and women develop their professional networks? What are the factors that lead women or men to adjust or change their careers as a result of family obligations? What relationship, if any, do men and women perceive between gender portrayal in the industry and their ability to progress in their careers? In Canadian films, is there a relationship between gender portrayal and who is behind the camera? Studies that seek the perspectives of film professionals can help to better understand the environmental factors affecting the participation rates and career trajectories of men and women.

Project-based analysis provides reliable data on the significant volume of publicly funded projects. An examination of publicly funded projects found in the CAVCO database could help ascertain if in fact it is true that women work primarily in lower-budget projects. A review of projects supported over the life of the CFFF could also establish women's rate of access to the Fund, as well as their rate of participation in higher budget projects requiring the attachment of producers and other market elements. Such analyses could be based on analysis of these funder databases, coupled with comparisons to publicly available information on a project basis.

## I. Introduction

“It’s especially disconcerting that, after a decade of aggressive efforts to create opportunities for women, inequity remains entrenched. Companies must acknowledge their failure on this front, learn why they haven’t succeeded, and come up with better programs to help talented women advance.”<sup>5</sup>

According to an article published in the March issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, women in management have not made the gains that many of us believed possible, given their increasing numbers in the workforce and superior enrolment in advanced university programs. It appears that, even after adjusting for years of work experience, industry, and region, men start their careers at higher levels of management than women, with benefits that last throughout their careers. “After starting out behind, women don’t catch up,” say the authors. “Men move further up the career ladder – and they move faster.”

These findings may be a surprise, given the many efforts by employers to ward against gender bias in the workplace. Since the late 1970’s, the government of Canada has taken steps to assure greater equity between the sexes and eliminate discrimination, implementing, policies, legislation and national actions plans on gender equality. One such policy requires all government departments to conduct Gender-Based Analyses of the potential differential impacts when establishing policies and legislation on Canadian women and men.<sup>6</sup>

The Department of Canadian Heritage is currently reviewing the Canadian Feature Film Policy (“the Policy”), originally launched in 2000. Telefilm Canada is currently preparing for a new multi-year Corporate Plan in 2011. The report that follows is intended to support the efforts of the Department of Canadian Heritage and Telefilm Canada, with regard to the following objectives:

## II. Objectives, Approach and Methodology

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<sup>5</sup> Carter, Nancy M. and Christine Silva, “Women in Management: Delusions of Progress,” *Harvard Business Review*, March, 2010, pp.19-21.

<sup>6</sup> A *Guide to Preparing Treasury Board Submissions - Part 4 of 17*, [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs\\_pol/opepubs/tbm\\_162/gptbs-gppct03-eng.asp#Toc171392121](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/opepubs/tbm_162/gptbs-gppct03-eng.asp#Toc171392121). In part, this guide states that, “Federal organizations are ultimately responsible for developing policies and programs that are compliant with overall government policies, including GBA. They are expected to include these considerations while performing their initial analysis, likely early in the process, at the MC stage for example. This should ensure that GBA concerns, along with other horizontal policy considerations, are integrated into the initial design of a program or initiative. However, when preparing Treasury Board submissions to seek approval of elements of programs, federal organizations should proceed with a last check to ensure their proposal is GBA compliant, and report their findings in the TB Submission.”

## 1. Objectives

The objectives of this study were threefold:

- To ascertain the extent to which findings of the Department's 2005 Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) still hold, and identify any new issues that have since emerged relating to the participation of women in Canada's feature film industry.
- To ascertain what data are available to support the analysis of issues and hypotheses relating to the participation by women in the Canadian feature film industry as compared to 2005.
- To recommend areas for further research and suggest next steps to meet data collection needs.

## 2. Approach and Methodology

Our approach to this study was guided by the Government's definition of Gender-Based Analysis, in order to ensure that our findings can support the review of the CFFP.<sup>7</sup>

The Treasury Board of Canada describes Gender-Based Analysis as consisting of "systematically integrating social and economic differences between the sexes into policy, planning and decision-making processes so that intended results are equitable for both sexes. This type of policy lens identifies how public policies differentially affect men and women." According to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, one of the few Departments to have implemented systematic GBA of some of its policies, Gender Based Analysis should consider the different life situations of men and women in determining policy impacts, as "the realities of women's and men's lives are different and...equal opportunity does not necessarily mean equal results."<sup>8</sup>

### National and International Literature Review

In conducting our research, we undertook a literature review of Canadian and international sources. Our review of Canadian literature considered the issues that are being raised with respect to the participation of women in the Canadian feature film industry that may be of interest for a Gender-Based Analysis of the Policy.<sup>9</sup> We examined what various stakeholders, such as provincial agencies and industry associations, are saying with respect to:

- the current participation of women in the industry
- the availability of data necessary to assessing women's participation

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<sup>7</sup> *A Guide to Preparing Treasury Board Submission*, Op. Cit

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/gba/plc-eng.asp>; 2009 Spring Report of the Auditor General of Canada, [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_oag\\_200905\\_01\\_e\\_32514.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_200905_01_e_32514.html).

<sup>9</sup> Canadian literature refers to studies, which may be national or provincial in scope.



- issues or hypotheses relating to current levels of participation that are being put forward and that may be of interest for a gender-based impact analysis
- recommended areas for further study

We paid particular attention to theoretical approaches, methodologies and sources of data used in the documents under review.

We also examined what data is currently available to conduct a gender-based impact analysis of the Policy, by looking at which organisations are tracking what information of relevance, with what level of frequency, and the availability of information to the public or to the government. We also considered current policies and legislation that either promote or constrain the collection of relevant data by federal bodies (for example, the *Employment Equity Act* and the *Privacy Act*).

Following our review of Canadian literature we conducted a focused review of international sources. This part of the study was intended to identify key issues with respect to women's participation in the film industry that are being raised internationally, as well as to report on innovative or relevant frameworks or approaches to Gender-Based Analysis.

#### Scope of the Study

This study was limited to a review of recent literature (since 2005), both Canadian and international, on the topic of women's participation in the feature film industry as producers, directors and writers. As relevant for comparison purposes, earlier gender-based studies of national significance were included in the discussion of findings.

International literature was included for review to the extent that it was supportive of the development of theoretical and/or methodological frameworks through which to consider the participation of women in the Canadian context, or provided examples of data gathering solutions that may be of interest in the Canadian context.

### III. Findings of the Canadian Literature Review

This section summarizes the results of our review of Canadian literature. We begin with an overview of issues identified in the literature published since 2005 that would benefit from further analysis. The second portion of this section is given over to an analysis of sources of data and follows with recommended next steps for data collection.

#### *1. Overview of studies included in Canadian literature review*

Our Canadian literature review included a study supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage in 2005, which provided the department with a Gender-Based Analysis of the Canadian Feature Film Policy (hereafter referred to as the 2005 GBA).<sup>10</sup> The findings of this study provided the basis for comparison with later studies, which we identified as three major reports published in British Columbia and Quebec, and a number of smaller reports and public interventions published by Canadian industry associations, also based in British Columbia and Quebec.

The 2005 GBA was based on far-reaching national sources of data, notably the project database of the Canadian Audio Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) and workforce surveys developed by Women in Film and Television – Toronto (WIFT-T).<sup>11</sup> While these profiles were published before 2005, we considered them in our assessment to the extent that they are reflected in the 2005 GBA.

In addition to the 2005 GBA, the three Canadian studies on the participation of women in the Canadian feature film industry included in our review were: a study conducted by the BC Institute of Film Professionals (BCIFP) in 2005, *Women's Labour Issues in the Film and Television Industry in British Columbia*, (hereafter referred to as the BCIFP study); *La place des réalisatrices dans le financement public du cinéma et de la télévision au Québec 2002-2007* prepared for Réalisatrices Équitables (RE) and hereafter referred to as the RE study; and a study prepared for the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC), entitled *La place des femmes dans l'octroi de l'aide financière des programmes d'aide en cinéma et en production télévisuelle* (hereafter referred to as the SODEC study).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Status Report on Women's Participation in Canadian Feature Film Industry and Feature Film Productions*, Op. Cit.

<sup>11</sup> *Frame Work: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media — A National Profile*, prepared by Ekos Research Associates and Paul Audley & Associates, for WIFT-T, June, 2004; and *A Statistical Profile of Women in the Canadian Film and Television Industry*, prepared by KPMG for WIFT-T, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> *Women's Labour Issues in the Film and Television Industry in British Columbia*, prepared for BCIFP by Ference Weicker & Company, January 2005; *La place des réalisatrices dans le financement public du cinéma et de la télévision au Québec 2002-2007/The Status of women directors with respect to public funding for film and television in Quebec 2002-2007*, prepared by l'Institut de recherches et d'études féministes (IREF) de l'UQAM for Réalisatrices Équitables, February 2008; *La place des femmes dans l'octroi de l'aide financière des programmes d'aide en cinéma et en production télévisuelle*, prepared internally by the SODEC, February 2008.

A number of smaller, secondary reports and public interventions have also been included for review that put forward data regarding aspects of women's participation in the industry, and reasons for women's lack of access. These include reports, speeches and letters published by the BCIFP, the Please Adjust Your Set Initiative, Société des Auteurs de Radio, Télévision et Cinéma (SARTEC) and Réalisatrices Équitables.<sup>13</sup>

Taken together, these studies and reports examine women's participation in the Canadian feature film industry, in British Columbia, Quebec and Canada, hypothesize on the issues affecting that participation, and suggest areas for further research or action.

The studies provide different approaches to analysing the rate of participation of women in the feature film sector. Based on different sources of data such as project information obtained from public funders, membership lists of unions and guilds, Statistics Canada and other labour force surveys, and literature reviews, the studies examine women's rate of participation in the feature film industry by looking at their participation in industry guilds and associations, in training programs, in publicly supported film projects, including their participation in higher and lower budget projects and genres.

The variety of approaches and sources of data and information used to assess the participation of women speaks to their differing levels of accessibility to the government and to the public. These different approaches, methodologies and access to data are addressed in the discussion of issues below.

This documentation forms the basis of the present section, which provides a summary analysis of the key findings of these studies, and identifies issues that would benefit from further analysis.

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<sup>13</sup> “De moins en moins d’auteurs à la SARTEC”, *Info SARTEC*, July 2008, p. 13; Marke Andrews, “Film industry: There’s a reel gender gap: Dearth of women in key positions in the B.C. industry,” *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday, February 1, 2007; Press Release, Creative Women Workshops and the Motion Picture Production Industry Association of British Columbia, “BC Motion Picture Industry Backs Women Directors: MPPIA WIDC Feature Film Award Announced,” September 25, 2007; *Après la SODEC, Téléfilm*, Réalisatrices Équitables, [www.realisatrices-equitables.org](http://www.realisatrices-equitables.org); *Mémoire au Fonds canadien de télévision*, Réalisatrices Équitables, September, 2009; The following resources published at <http://www.pleaseadjustyourset.com/research.html>: Speech by Sharon McGowan, Chair of the *Please Adjust Your Set Initiative* and member of the WIFT Vancouver Advocacy Committee, which she delivered at the 2009 Vancouver Women in Film Festival, *Gender Breakdown on the Recent Telefilm Canada Decisions for script development funding, Telefilm Feature Film Fund Production Decisions April 2008, Gender Breakdown for English Language Projects - Canada Feature Film Fund, Announced by Telefilm Canada April 2008, Statistics on Female Directors at 2008 Canadian Film Festivals*; and *Picturing Women in Film and Television*, advocacy document prepared by the Please Adjust Your Set initiative, <http://www.pleaseadjustyourset.com/news.html>.

## *2. Issues and questions that could be of interest for further research*

### **2.1 Issues - Rates of participation in the feature film sector**

***The GBA of the CFFP conducted by the Government in 2005 found that the Policy had had no discernable impact on the participation rates of women in the feature film industry, that no correlation existed with women's higher rate of participation in training, while women's possible greater involvement in lower-budget films may have had the unintended effect of disavouring them through the Policy.***

The 2005 GBA found that women's participation rates five years after the launch of the CFFP were consistent with trends observed in the five-year period prior to the introduction of the policy, based on a ten-year trend analysis of projects that make up the CAVCO database. The study posits that the Policy has had no discernable impact, either negative or positive, on the participation rates of women in the feature film industry.

The 2005 GBA observed that women represented more than half of all students enrolled in film studies programs nationally, without any apparent correlation with their participation in the industry. The study commented that it was too early to tell if these rates of participation in training would result in changes to women's rate of participation in the industry.

The 2005 GBA hypothesized that lower participation levels reported for women may have been the result of greater involvement in lower budget and non-union films. To the extent that this could be true, the study suggested that women might have been disfavoured by the CFFP, with its emphasis on higher-budget films.

***Studies published since 2005 support the findings of the 2005 GBA:***

***Women participate in the feature film industry at a lower rate than men and at a lower rate than their participation in the economy overall.***

The studies show that women's participation in the feature film sector as producers, directors and writers is lower than their participation overall in the Canadian economy.

Based on an analysis of the project database of the Canadian Audio Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) for the years 2001-2002 to 2004-2005, the 2005 GBA found that women participated as producers at the rate of 27.5% in certified Canadian productions, as directors at the rate of 19%, and as writers at the rate of 25%. These rates were lower than women's participation in the overall workforce (estimated at 47% by Statistics Canada).<sup>14</sup>

This finding was consistent with a similar finding for the British Columbia workforce. Based on information provided by British Columbia's unions, guilds and provincial

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that this finding was based on analysis of projects that sought a tax credit and that a portion of film projects may not have opted to do so.

producer association in the film and television sector, as well as a small survey of companies active in the sector, the BCIFP study concludes that in 2004 women made up significantly less of the unionized film and television workforce (32%) than their representation in the overall provincial workforce and national workforce, (47% each).

***Women's participation levels in training programs are not always reflected in their level of participation in the industry***

The studies reviewed found that participation rates by women writers and directors in feature films is lower than their level of enrolment in training programs would suggest.

In British Columbia, researchers found that the participation of women writers is comparable to their representation amongst writing students in British Columbia. However, the participation of women directors is significantly less than their numbers in director training programs. Women achieve near parity with men at the lower levels of directing, but are less well represented in assistant director and director positions. The RE study in Quebec similarly found that women make up a larger proportion of film students than they do the ranks of professional directors.

These studies do not provide other data as a basis for comparison, such as analysing similar ratios for men, comparisons with benchmarks in other industries or markets, nor consistent comparisons to graduation levels. It is therefore difficult to draw any definitive conclusions from the present studies, though they do point to certain trends.

***Women's participation levels in industry associations are not reflected in their level of participation in projects submitted for public funding***

Two studies conducted in Quebec in 2008 by Réalisatrices Équitables and SODEC respectively, suggest that women's participation in French-language projects submitted for public funding is lower than their representation in Quebec industry associations, where women make up about one third of members at SARTEQ and the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ).

The SODEC study found that the rate of participation by women either as writers or directors in projects submitted for financing was lower than their proportional representation in industry associations. It is not known if the same is true for men, nor to what extent these findings hold true for the rest of the country. The study suggests that industry factors that may be contributing to the lesser participation by women than men, though it does not speculate on what these might be.

***Women participate at a greater rate in lower-budget films***

The 2005 GBA study put forward the hypothesis that the participation of women in the feature film industry may be more prevalent in lower-budget, non-union films. This conclusion was arrived at based on the irreconcilable differences in levels of women's

participation reported in a film and television workforce survey published in 2004 by WIFT-T workforce survey (hereafter referred to as the WIFT 2004 workforce survey)<sup>15</sup> and their participation as reported in the CAVCO project database of certified Canadian productions, which includes Canada Feature Film Fund supported films and other, non-supported films.

Since the CFFF was only 5 years old at the time of the study, and the lag time between the start of projects and their appearance in the CAVCO database has been estimated at 3 years,<sup>16</sup> it is necessary to revisit a project-based analysis in order to obtain a more complete picture of the potential impact of the CFFP than was possible in 2005.

The more recent SODEC study, which looked at project submitted to the agency between 2004-2005 and 2006-2007, provides additional support for the view that women may be working more often in low-budget films, as it shows that on average, budgets for films in which women participated as producer, director or writer were generally lower and that women participated least in “commercial” feature films – those films with the highest budgets. However, the study provides no conclusive evidence to suggest that women work outside the union model.

The RE study also provides some evidence to suggest that the greater the Fund and the higher the budgets, the lower the participation rates by women directors.<sup>17</sup> The study suggests that women have greater proportional access to lower budget “cultural” programs of the National Film Board (NFB), the Canada Council for the Arts and the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund (CIFVF)<sup>18</sup> and lower budget programs of the SODEC, Telefilm and the Canadian Television Fund (CTF).

A report by the SARTEC found that between 1998 and 2008, the proportion of its members who were women fell slightly (4%), while the proportion of women amongst the highest earners had fallen significantly, making up only 30% of members in 2008, compared to 48% of members in 1998.<sup>19</sup> These data suggest that the rate of participation by women in higher budget films has not kept pace with respect to 1998 levels.

***Women participate at a lower rate on (higher budget) projects requiring the attachment of other market elements (producers, distributors, broadcasters)***

The SODEC study found that in higher-budget commercial feature film productions requiring the attachment of market elements, women producers, who represented only 20%

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<sup>15</sup> *Frame Work: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media — A National Profile*, Op. Cit.

<sup>16</sup> *09 Profile, An Economic Report on the Canadian Film and Television Production Industry*, prepared for the Canadian Film and Television Producers Association (CFTPA) by Nordicity, 2009

<sup>17</sup> As the report notes, it was not possible to obtain consistent data between institutions. Data shared with the researchers was already aggregated and varied in type, making comparisons challenging.

<sup>18</sup> Funding for the CIFVF ended in March 2009.

<sup>19</sup> “De moins en moins d’auteurs à la SARTEC,” Op. Cit.

of producers, attached fewer women writers and directors proportionally to their projects than do men.

The RE study suggests that attitudes towards women may also make them less competitive in the eyes of industry investors, as fewer women directors are attached to projects requiring the attachment of other market elements. A letter written to Telefilm Canada and published on the *Réalisatrices Équitables* advocacy website states that decisions taken by Telefilm, which appear to support more men directors than women, may be sending a message to producers that projects with women attached as directors are less competitive for public funding.<sup>20</sup>

***Women exercise less demand and have lesser access to public funds aimed at supporting the feature film sector***

Several studies in Quebec and BC demonstrate that overall, women's access to public funds in support of feature film is lesser than men's, as a proportion of total available funding. However, evidence suggests that access is proportional to demand.

Both the RE and SODEC studies in Quebec reported that women accessed a lesser share of public funds in the audiovisual sector than men and had less access to funds for higher-budget films and television productions. However, the SODEC study found that women's access to resources was consistent with their level of demand and that applications for funding involving women in key creative positions were not discriminated against in the decision making process. The study also found that fewer projects were submitted for financing with women attached as directors and writers. While women producers were found to attach more women as writers or directors than their male counterparts in lower-budget films, the reverse was true in higher-budget commercial feature film productions.

The evidence outlined in the SODEC study shows that women do tend to work on lower budget films in Quebec, exercising less demand and accessing fewer resources. No similar analyses have been conducted for the English-language market.

A study commissioned by the BC Institute of Film regarding Telefilm decisions on British Columbia productions between 2002 and 2006 found that of the projects retained for financing, women participated less often as writers and directors, though in nearly equal proportion (49%) as producers. Of the 27 films supported, 3 (11%) were directed by women and 2 (7%) were written by women.<sup>21</sup> Data regarding decisions taken by Telefilm Canada as reported in the RE study suggests that access to resources by women directors was consistent with demand for the one year for which data was provided. It is not possible to draw general conclusions about access to the CFFF based on these analyses.

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<sup>20</sup> *Après la SODEC, Téléfilm, Réalisatrices Équitables, Op. Cit.*

<sup>21</sup> "Film Industry: There's a reel gender gap: Dearth of women in key positions in the B.C. Industry," *Op. Cit.* The study itself was not publicly available at the time of the current review.

## **2.2 Issues - Environmental factors contributing to rates of participation by women in the feature film sector**

In order to understand the dynamics behind women's rates of participation in the feature film sector, it is necessary to understand the environment in which they work. The BCIFP study looked in depth at the environment in which women work in BC and identifies a number of factors affecting women's access to work. The SODEC study hypothesizes that women face systemic barriers to access that may be the result of industry factors, while the RE report and subsequent documents published to their website assume that women directors may be affected by attitudes in society at large, that may be reinforced in the funding decisions taken by Telefilm Canada.

### ***Women are less visible at Canadian film festivals***

Statistics, speeches and news releases published on the advocacy website of the *Please Adjust Your Set Initiative* report that women's films lack access to exposure at major Canadian film festivals (Toronto, Whistler, Vancouver, Montreal, Atlantic and Hot Docs). Of three national women's film festivals, only one is reported to receive significant funding from Telefilm Canada.<sup>22</sup>

There is insufficient evidence to assess whether these assertions are true for other festivals or from year to year, nor to what extent women's rate of participation in festivals does or does not correlate to demand. We are unaware of any studies that measure the proportion of women who submit films to film festivals that are accepted, nor the extent to which women receive support to present their films in Canada or abroad.

### ***Women face gender-based discrimination professionally and in their training***

The BCIFP study reported that almost two-thirds of women film professionals surveyed (above- and below-the-line) had experienced some form of gender discrimination in the film and television industry, from not being taken seriously and having their abilities underestimated, to being assigned gender-specific tasks and being subjected to sexual harassment. Women students reported difficulty in competing in certain non-traditional areas such as Camera, and being perceived as less technically minded.

### ***Women's career development in the feature film sector is constrained by family obligations.***

The BCIFP study found that women identified a number of constraints to career development, including family obligations, which sometimes contribute to women leaving

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<sup>22</sup> Sharon McGowan, Chair of the *Please Adjust Your Set Initiative* and member of the WIFT Vancouver Advocacy Committee, reported in a speech to the Vancouver Women in Film Festival that of three Canadian film festivals dedicated to showcasing films by women – Women in Film Festival Vancouver, Female Eye Festival in Toronto and St. John's International Women's Film Festival – only the latter receives significant public funding.



the sector. The BCIFP study indicated that most women working in the BC film and television industry do not have family obligations. 63% of women surveyed said they did not have children, while only 29% said they were married. The WIFT-T 2004 workforce survey also identified “poor work-family balance” as a significant reason cited by film and television production and distribution companies for the lack of skilled labour.

### ***Women lack access to professional networks and on-the-job experience***

Women surveyed for the BCIFP study reported feeling the need to acquire additional training, in spite of being generally well trained, particularly to acquire on-the-job experience and develop their professional networks. These findings were corroborated in two studies published in 2008 by the Canadian Human Resources Council, which identified on-the-job training as the most common method identified by directors and producers of acquiring the skills they need.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Women lack credibility in the feature film sector due to their inequitable cultural representation***

A number of reports published by women’s advocacy groups in the Canadian feature film sector make the link between negative representations of women and women’s less than equitable participation in the industry.<sup>24</sup> The irony is that the lack of cultural representation drives other forms of discrimination, and that with more equitable access to the means of cultural representation, some feel that women could positively influence attitudes towards them in the workplace.

## **Questions for further research**

### **Participation rates in the feature film industry**

For future analysis, the Government may wish to seek information on trends with respect to participation rates by women working in the feature film industry in key creative positions. No public or private organization currently measures or reports in a regular fashion on women’s rate of participation in the feature film industry across the country. Past efforts to profile the audio-visual industry nationally have not provided sufficient granularity to isolate gender-based data for the feature film sector.

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<sup>23</sup> *Film and Television Directors: Training Gaps Analysis*, prepared by Kisquared, for the Cultural Human Resources Council, 2008. *Training Gaps Analysis: Film and Television Producers*, prepared by Angela Birdsell, MM., MBA, with Micheline Lesage, & Associates. 2008

<sup>24</sup> *Mémoire au Fonds canadien de télévision, Op. Cit. Rapport du comité des femmes artistes (Résumé du rapport 2006) ‘Effectifs et revenus des femmes membres de l’UDA’, <http://www.uniondesartistes.com/pages/uda/public/affairespubliques/comite-des-femmes-artistes-interpretes.html>* and UDA intervention on public consultations on the Social contract on gender equality in Quebec, *Vers un nouveau contrat social pour l’Égalité entre les femmes et les homes*, Commission des affaires sociales, Québec, December 2004;

It may be of interest in future studies to assess whether the low rates observed, and the reasons put forward for them, hold for the country as a whole, and for the above-the-line positions of producer, director and writer.

Project-based analysis provides reliable data on publicly funded projects. It is possible that examining more recent data could yield different results, given the lag times before projects appear in the CAVCO project database as explained above.<sup>25</sup>

Profiling the feature film work force can provide information about participation rates in non-union productions. This may shed also help to explain reported discrepancies between rates of participation in professional associations and projects submitted for funding.

The issue of graduation levels and professional participation rates for both women and men could benefit from comparisons to other markets or industries, as well as to the overall availability of positions in the feature film industry.

#### Level of access to public funding

An examination of publicly funded projects found in the CAVCO database could help ascertain if in fact it is true that women work primarily in lower-budget projects. A review of projects supported over the life of the CFFF could also establish women's rate of access to the Fund, as well as their rate of participation in higher budget projects requiring the attachment of producers and other market elements.

In considering access to the CFFF on a gender basis, it will be important to compare findings to levels of participation in national professional associations by gender.

#### Environmental factors contributing to women's career trajectories

The following issues could be examined in future studies of women's participation in the feature film sector. Future research could benefit from both quantitative and qualitative intelligence gathering on the career trajectories of men and women, and the reasons for their apparent divergence.

#### Impact of family obligations

What percentage of above-the-line professionals have family obligations? What percentage of these are women? What do women and men have to say about the impact family obligations have on their careers in the feature film industry?

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<sup>25</sup> 09 Profile, Op. Cit.

### Visibility at film festivals

As access to film festivals is key to career development in film, it may be of interest to examine women's access to festivals in Canada and abroad, as well as their access to resources to support festival participation, where such analyses are possible.

### On-the-job training and access to professional networks

Women in at least one province reported that access to professional networks and on-the-job experience are crucial to their career development, and that they are disadvantaged in both respects. To what extent does this hold true nationally for screenwriters? To what extent do training programs available to women address these needs?

### Gender portrayal

There exists significant academic research on the cultural representation of women and its impact on the self-esteem, societal esteem and career outcomes of girls and women.<sup>26</sup> Further research could be sought on how gender portrayal impacts on the attitudes of men and women working in the feature film sector.

### *3. Analysis of available data and recommended next steps for data collection*

This section provides an assessment of relevant data that is currently available to conduct a gender-based impact analysis of the Canadian Feature Film Program Policy, based on the recommended areas for investigation identified in the previous section.

#### **Availability of data for assessing rates of participation in the feature film industry**

In our view, assessing the participation rate of women in the feature film industry requires consideration of industrial opportunities in the broadest sense. It is necessary to consider the importance of the CFFF in the overall environment, and to consider how and where in this environment women are participating as writers, directors and producers. The full universe of Canadian productions includes all certified Canadian (content) productions, many of which are not financed by the CFFF, as well as productions shot in Canada that may not be Canadian content for the purposes of certification, or for which no applications to CAVCO have been submitted.

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<sup>26</sup> Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, <http://www.thegeenadavisinstitute.org>; *Screening Gender Means Good Business: Fair Gender Portrayal As An Added Value and Competitive Advantage for European Public Broadcasting*, Minna Aslama, Implementation Expert, Screening Gender Project Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) University of Helsinki, Department of Communication; *Rapport du comité des femmes artistes (Résumé du rapport 2006) 'Effectifs et revenus des femmes membres de l'UDA'*, <http://www.uniondesartistes.com/pages/uda/public/affairespubliques/comite-des-femmes-artistes-interpretes.html> and UDA intervention on public consultations on the Social contract on gender equality in Quebec, *Vers un nouveau contrat social pour l'Égalité entre les femmes et les homes*, Commission des affaires sociales, Québec, December 2004;

The feature film sector is closely linked to other screen-based industries, particularly television, and to a growing extent, interactive media. Producers, directors and writers often work in more than one industry. In considering gender-based employment trends, it is important to consider how careers unfold across the screen-based industries, as has been done in past workforce surveys. Therefore, television employment trends have been considered in past workforce surveys. For example the WIFT-T workforce surveys examine all screen-based industries together, and also factor in public sector opportunities for employment in key creative positions through the NFB and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio Canada (CBC/SRC).

A number of sources of data provide reliable information on a project basis that can be used to assess women's rate of participation in the industry and in publicly funded projects. Industry surveys (including those conducted by public bodies), employment equity statistics, university enrolment statistics as tracked by Statistics Canada or by professional film training institutions, and film festival catalogues, can provide further insight into the career trajectories of key creative personnel in the feature film industry.

Data is currently available from a number of different sources, including CAVCO, Telefilm Canada, Statistics Canada, *09 Profile*,<sup>27</sup> the National Film Board, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), the Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC), industry associations and guilds and training institutions. A detailed analysis by source of data is provided in Annex 1. The following considerations are based on this analysis.

### **Summary of information gaps**

A project-based analysis of women's participation in the feature film sector is possible using multiple sources of data, including project information from CAVCO, Telefilm Canada, and the NFB. However, CAVCO and Telefilm data must be analysed to estimate gender-based participation, and further research is needed to identify film writers on NFB projects. As mentioned above, an estimation of women's participation in CAVCO projects was arrived at for inclusion in the 2005 GBA. Other resources, such as a list of women directors and their films, available on the website of Réalisatrices Équitables, may also be useful for the purpose of comparison and validation. These data sources can be used as well to consider if women's participation is in fact concentrated in lower-budget productions and genres.

The *09 Profile* published by the Canadian Film and Television Producers Association (CFTPA), and Statistics Canada surveys on the film and video sector can be used for the purpose of comparison and to provide additional contextual information. Employment and industry survey data from Statistics Canada, CHRC and WIFT-T, as well as employment data for women producers, directors and writers at the NFB and CBC/SRC, can be used as points of comparison in assessing rates of participation in the feature film industry overall.

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<sup>27</sup> Op. Cit.

Workforce surveys conducted in Canada by and large provide insufficient information about key creative labour issues in the feature film sector, seen in isolation from other sectors. This is true of surveys conducted by Statistics Canada, the Cultural Human Resources Council and the WIFT Workforce Survey, though the latter provides the most detailed information with respect to the three screen-based industries: feature film, television and interactive media and is very useful in understanding workforce trends that affect the feature film sector. However, this study is conducted too infrequently (once in 1990 and again in 2004) to properly monitor trends in a fast changing environment.

The WIFT 2004 workforce survey effectively gathered information on rates of participation in training through a survey of training institutions across the country.<sup>28</sup> Outside of this survey, insufficient data exists for comparisons of women's rate of participation in feature films and participation rates in training programs. Enrolment statistics for universities are reported by Statistics Canada in aggregate fashion only, by large disciplinary categories. Private training institutions may provide enrolment or graduation statistics on an ad hoc basis. Analysis of training trends based on graduation rates is preferable, and would be strengthened by comparisons with similar statistics in similar markets or industries.

It is possible to compare women's rate of participation in industry associations. Writers and directors guilds and associations provide names of their members online. Two sources exist for identifying producers in Quebec. The Association des producteurs de film et television du Québec (APFTQ) website lists member film production companies, though not the names of senior management in these companies. The *Guide Annuel* published by *Qui Fait Quoi* provides a listing of production companies, including members of senior management. The CFPTA publishes the *CFTPA Guide*, which includes an exhaustive list of audio-visual producers, though these are not identified by discipline.

No comprehensive analyses or data sets exist with respect to women's access to film festivals. In order to assess this issue, interested researchers would need to compile information on films from relevant film festival catalogues. Analysis may also be possible of data collected by Telefilm Canada through its client surveys with respect to its programs that fund festival participation.

No source of national data currently exists to provide an understanding of how the organization of work and family obligations may be impacting on participation rates for women in the feature film sector. This is also the case with respect to understanding the scope and impact of gender-based discrimination in the selection of personnel for publicly funded projects, in the work place on projects, and in women's ability to access professional networks. The Cultural Human Resources Council regularly conducts research on training needs and its studies confirm the importance of on-the-job experience for directors. The CHRC has not conducted similar studies for screenwriters.

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<sup>28</sup> Of 173 training institutions surveyed in the 2004 WIFT workforce survey, 23 provided information on graduates and faculty.

Qualitative information on training programs is also needed to assess the availability of training opportunities that help professionals build their personal networks and acquire on-the-job experience.

### **Next steps for data collection**

As is explained in Annex 1, federal agencies such as CAVCO and Telefilm Canada are limited in their ability to collect gender-based data due to laws protecting the privacy of Canadians. Existing data to support gender-based analysis may be complemented by other information sources such as the following.

Workforce surveys provide opportunities to gather information about employment trends in the audio-visual sector as a whole, graduation rates from relevant training programs and participation rates at Canadian film festivals. In some jurisdictions, such as Australia and the UK, these are conducted every few years. Canadian workforce studies have to date been conducted at less frequent intervals.<sup>29</sup>

Project-based analysis provides reliable data on the significant volume of publicly funded projects. Analyses of participation rates may look at trends with respect to budget size and include comparisons with levels of participation in professional associations and guilds. Project-based analysis can also shed light on trends in gender portrayal.

Studies that seek the perspectives of film professionals can help to better understand the environmental factors affecting the participation rates and career trajectories of men and women. As we have seen, a number of issues have been identified that might be of interest for further study, beginning with understanding how writers and directors get hired and identifying barriers to access. What factors contribute to the lower demand for public financing from female producers? How do men and women develop their professional networks? What are the factors that lead women or men to adjust or change their careers as a result of family obligations? What relationship, if any, do men and women perceive between gender portrayal in the industry and their ability to progress in their careers? In Canadian films, is there a relationship between gender portrayal and who is behind the camera?

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<sup>29</sup> The Conference Board of Canada recently launched a cultural workforce survey at the request of the Canadian Human Resources Council. This follows on the last screen-based industries workforce survey conducted in 2004 by Women in Film and Television – Toronto.

## IV. Findings of the International Literature Review

### *1. International issues and research frameworks regarding the participation of women in the feature film industry*

Of interest for future studies are the key issues identified in our sample of international literature, which resemble Canadian issues in many respects. Studies in the US, Europe and the UK found lower rates of participation for women in key creative roles in feature film, lesser access to public resources by women, as well as little impact through their participation in “gate keeping” roles as members of selection committees for grants and prizes.

Several studies looked at the career trajectories of women, and found glass ceilings and glass walls limiting their potential to advance to senior line positions in large European companies, lack of access to professional networks, fewer women in career-facilitating roles of teacher or mentor, and negative career impacts for women as a result of parenthood. A number of UK studies looked specifically at barriers to entry for writers and found that women are limited by their lack of professional networks and a mistaken perception that they don’t do well at the box office.

#### *US Studies – Participation by women in the American feature film industry*

Similarly to Canada, studies conducted by Dr. Martha Lauzen, at the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University have found low rates of participation by women in key creative positions, as well as a tendency for women to work on lower budget films (including a large share of documentaries). One study also found no correlation between the gender of the director and box office earnings.<sup>30</sup>

Lauzen’s study of film critics in 100 top day US newspapers found that women make up only a minority of film critics, writing fewer articles on average, and often on romantic films or films featuring women characters. It is not known if the films reviewed by women favour women in key creative positions. The study does not seek to understand if the lesser participation of women as film critics has an impact on the visibility of women’s films in the media. However, the study found that overall, reviews by men and women do not differ significantly and do not demonstrate any gender bias in their attitudes.

A recent study led by led by Dr. Stacy L. Smith of the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism links women’s lower rates of participation in key creative

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<sup>30</sup> *The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 250 Films of 2008*, Dr. Martha Lauzen, Director, Center for the Study of Women In Television and Film, San Diego State University, 2009. *Independent Women: Behind-the-Scenes Representation on Festival Films*, Dr. Martha Lauzen, Director, Center for the Study of Women In Television and Film, San Diego State University, 2009. *Thumbs Down - Representation of Women Film Critics in the Top 100 U.S. Daily Newspapers*, Dr. Martha Lauzen, Director, Center for the Study of Women In Television and Film, San Diego State University, 2008

roles to the persistence of inequitable gender portrayal in some of the country's most popular films. Based on analysis of the 100 top-grossing films of 2007, the study found that women made up only 30% of all speaking characters, while 83 percent of all directors, writers and producers were male.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the study corroborated earlier findings by Dr. Smith that the number of female actors grows when women have influential roles in productions as writers, directors and producers.<sup>32</sup>

*European Studies – Career trajectories of women in the European feature film industry*

A number of studies conducted in the UK and Europe shed light on the career trajectories of women that could be of interest in comparing the situation in Canada. A 2005 study by the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts) examined the potential for women to achieve decision-making positions in large, medium and small-sized film production sectors companies.<sup>33</sup>

The study's objectives were to understand how structural changes to the industry might be affecting the positions occupied by women, the career paths of men and women in the sector, how these professionals defined success, and the location of glass ceilings preventing women from holding top positions. Gendered labour market data derived from national statistical sources was crosschecked against data obtained from examining the membership lists of professional associations (directors, producers, writers, editors and directors of photography). Enrolment statistics were considered with a view to projecting the composition of the labour market five years out. Interviews with film professionals provided additional contextual information to further understand employment trends.

This study found that, as in Canada, rates of participation by women in the selected occupations were lower than their overall share in the labour market. Interestingly, rates of participation were not compared to enrolment levels in film programs as the number of film students was seen to far surpass the number of available positions in the industry, with the result that many graduates were expected to be working outside their field of study. The study does not seek to compare ratios of training to employment between men and women.

Women with business and marketing backgrounds tended to advance more from lower to middle management positions, but rarely to the positions of President, CEO or Chairman, which were found to be controlled by "boys networks."<sup>34</sup> A key obstacle was said to be the

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<sup>31</sup> <http://annenberg.usc.edu/News%20and%20Events/News/100223FilmGender.aspx>

<sup>32</sup> *Asymmetrical Academy Awards? Gender Imbalance in Best Picture Nominated Films from 1977 to 2006*, Stacy L. Smith, PhD Annenberg School for Communication USC & Marc Choueiti, Amy Granados, Sarah Erickson, <http://www.thegeenadavisinstitute.org/research.php>

<sup>33</sup> *Culture Biz*, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts), in partnership with FinnEKVIT (Helsinki), MEDIACULT (Vienna), OAC (Lisbon), ZFKf (Bonn) ARcult Media Bonn, Summer 2005.

<sup>34</sup> *Culture Biz*, Op. Cit. p. 5



perpetuation of the image of artist or top executive as male, which, the study noted, “continues to be an impenetrable barrier for many women.”

Career facilitators, such as professors, mentors or other role models were still predominantly men, as were students graduating with contacts in companies, networks and funding institutions. The study found few examples of mentoring programmes aimed at women in early or mid career.

Women had lesser access to public funds than men, and tended on average to be awarded less than men. As in Canada, more men had access to funders with largest budgets, and women had the most success accessing funders with the least amount of resources. Digital technologies enabled many women to produce lower budget – mainly documentary – films.

Women wishing to pursue their own ideas and projects, seeking more flexible work schedules and greater work-life balance were finding greater opportunities by creating their own companies. They were also setting up their own professional networks in increasing numbers.

Greater participation by women in industry selection committees was not necessarily resulting in more grants or prizes for women. Among circles of critics for the leading film press, women continued to be largely excluded.

*UK Studies – Going deeper into understanding the factors affecting women’s rates of participation and career trajectories*

Two studies commissioned by the UK Film Council examined the participation and barriers to entry for women screenwriters.<sup>35</sup> Examining the relationship between the participation of women screenwriters (as evidenced in screen credits) and box office results of UK films, and conducting interviews with industry professionals, these studies found that misconceptions about the lack of box office potential of women’s scripts, and a lack of necessary industry contacts, were the two most important barriers to entry for women screenwriters.

Based on interviews and focus group discussions, a 2008 UK Skillset report<sup>36</sup> found that the most important factors influencing the participation of film professionals with children or planning to have children, particularly women, were:

- patterns of employment, including long hours, late nights and weekends and frequent travel away from home
- the uncertainty of freelance work and corresponding lack of stability

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<sup>35</sup> *Scoping Study into the Lack of Women Screenwriters in the UK*. Commissioned by the UK Film Council, 2006. *Writing British Films – who writes British films and how they are recruited*. Commissioned by the UK Film Council, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> *Balancing Children and Work in the Audio Visual Industries*, Skillset, February 2008

- income and ability to pay for childcare, which was complicated by the long hours
- attitudes of colleagues towards responsibilities outside work and the required level of commitment, which was higher than for other industries

A more recent study commissioned by Skillset was interested to know what conditions led to success in the careers of women employed in non-traditional sectors of the film and television industry. Beginning with the premise that participation rates by women in the audio visual industries was low, and that barriers to participation exist, the report, entitled *Why Her?*, interviewed women who have been successful in Camera, Sound, Writing and Directing to find out more about the conditions that led to their success.<sup>37</sup>

The study found that women's formative experiences contributed greatly to their ability to persevere and succeed in non-traditional occupations. Among the most important factors identified were the supportive atmospheres created by strong maternal figures and other female role models and mentors, and female-centred environments such as families where females were in the majority, and all girls' schools. These early experiences helped these women build confidence in their abilities, which they used to attain a high degree of education as well as significant industrial training and professional development. Finally, women interviewed in the study believed that personal networking and the strength to manage rejection or disappointment was also important to their success.

## 2. *International approaches to data collection*

Our review revealed three countries whose governments track the participation of women in the feature film workforce: Australia, France and the UK. The UK provides the most extensive reporting on its creative sector workforce, and as we saw above, conducts additional qualitative research to understand the factors that contribute to shaping it. Both Australia and France provide high-level data about the overall participation of women in their feature film sectors. In the US, we found evidence of research being conducted primarily through universities, based on publicly available project information – festival and awards listings, production credits, commercial box office ratings, newspaper publications (in the case of film critics) to assess gender-based rates of participation.

This section provides a summary of government efforts to collect information by gender with respect to participation rates in the feature film sector.

### Australia

*Get the Picture* is a comprehensive collection of statistics on Australia's film, video, television and interactive digital media industries.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Why Her? Factors that Have Influenced the Careers of Successful Women in Film and Television*

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/oegender.html>

Published every five years since 1971, this Screen Australia survey tracks employment trends by gender for the following industries: film and video production and post-production services, film and video distribution and film exhibition, television broadcasting and other selected audiovisual industries. The information is compiled from data obtained through the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Censuses of Population and Housing and is updated regularly as new information becomes available.

According to *Get the Picture*, there was a 470% increase in the number of women working in the film, video and post-production services sectors between 1971 and 2006. However, the overall percentage of women in this labour force sector remained relatively stable, at 38% of the production workforce in 2006, compared to 36% of the combined production and post-production workforce in 1971.<sup>39</sup>

## France

The Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication in France collects cultural statistics to aid in the development of cultural policy and funding programs. *Chiffres Clés* is an annual yearbook encompassing cultural statistics on heritage, live performing arts, audiovisual, training and others, as well as statistics relating to intellectual property and international exchange. Its many publications include *Professions culturelles et emploi*, an annual report on cultural employment statistics.<sup>40</sup> The report includes overall employment statistics by gender for film and video. These are reported as annual averages since 2005. As reported in 2009, women averaged 37% of the overall workforce in the film and video sector.

## UK

The UK Film Council conducts extensive research on the creative industries in Britain, and publishes an annual Statistical Yearbook containing in-depth statistical information about the UK film industry. It's training arm, Skillset, undertakes a creative industries employment census every few years and publishes Labour Market Intelligence Digests each year on different sectors of the creative industries.<sup>41</sup> These studies are intended to identify skills gaps and shortages.<sup>42</sup>

The *Skillset Employment Census* measures the size, shape and make up of the workforce and tracks emerging trends. The *2009 Census* revealed a decline in the representation of women in every sector.<sup>43</sup> As in 2005, the *Census* also showed that women were more likely to earn less than men in the same age and occupational groups. As there were a lower

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/gtp/oegender.html>

<sup>40</sup> "Professions culturelles et emploi," *Chiffres clés 2009*, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, Secrétariat général, Délégation au développement et aux affaires internationales, Département des études, de la prospective et des statistiques, 2009. <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/nav/index-stat.html>

<sup>41</sup> Skillset has published 7 *Employment Census* reports, the most recent ones being in 2009, 2006 and 2002. Another census is slated for 2011.

<sup>42</sup> [www.skillset.org/research](http://www.skillset.org/research).

<sup>43</sup> *The results of the seventh Census of the Creative Media Industries*, Skillset, December 2009

proportion of older women in the feature film workforce, and as older workers typically earn more, the lesser representation by women in this group compounded their income inequality.<sup>44</sup> Skillset research shows that inequality between men and women extends to other creative industry sectors. The *2009 Employment Census* led to the surprising finding that there were roughly 5000 fewer women in the UK television industry in 2009 over 2006 compared to only 300 fewer men.<sup>45</sup> The reasons for the disparity are currently under analysis.

As reported in the *09 Statistical Yearbook*, the UK Film Council has been studying the under-representation of women among screenwriters of UK films since 2005. Using a project-based analysis, the *Yearbook* measures the proportion of writers and directors associated with UK films released in a given year who are women. Of the 168 identified writers of UK films in 2008, 29 were women (17% of all writers associated with these films) an increase over 2006 and 2007, when only 23 (15%) and 20 (12%) of writers were women. While low, the proportion of women directors also saw a slight increase, from 9% in 2006 and 6% in 2007 to 12% in 2008 (13 directors out of a total of 113).

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<sup>44</sup> Skillset/UK Film Council Feature Film Production Workforce Survey 2008, <http://publications.skillset.org/index.php?id=9&page=13&print=1>; *Film industry still a man's world, reveals a major new report*, [http://www.skillset.org/skillset/press/2005/article\\_3774\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/skillset/press/2005/article_3774_1.asp)

<sup>45</sup> Maggie Brown, "Women hardest hit by TV industry cutbacks, study suggests," *Gaurdian.co.uk*, Wednesday, December 9, 2009

## V. Conclusion

As we have seen, the 2005 GBA found that the Canadian Feature Film Policy had had no discernable impact, either negative or positive, on the participation rates of women in the feature film industry. It also found that no direct correlation between these rates and women's relatively higher rate of participation in training programs. To the extent that women might participate more often in lower-budget or non-union films, the study proposed that the Policy, with its emphasis on higher-budget films, could have had the unintended effect of disfavoured women.

The studies published since 2005 examined for this report suggest that the findings of the 2005 GBA still hold. The international studies that we reviewed also arrived at similar findings.

Canadian studies report that women's rates of participation in the Canadian feature film industry are lower than their participation in the economy overall. A number of hypotheses have been put forward, such as that women participate more often in lower budget or non-union films and place less demand on public funders; that they more easily gain access to "culturally" oriented funders; that they are less often considered by industry gatekeepers (including other women) for higher-budget, commercially-oriented productions; that their numbers in training programs and professional associations outstrip their representation in actual productions, and in projects seeking public financing support.

We have also seen that women may be negatively impacted in their career development by a lack of access to professional networks, fewer opportunities for on-the-job training, lesser visibility at film festivals, that family obligations may play a greater role in the unfolding of women's careers than men's, and that social attitudes towards women supported by cultural representations work against them in the workplace, undermining their credibility and making it difficult to attain roles of leadership.

Internationally, the situation appears similar. In the US, women participate in films at a lower rate than men, and more often in lower budget productions. While the industry internationally has a tendency to rely more on men in senior and key creative positions, such reliance appears to be more a result of professional or "old boys" networks, and is not supported by box office outcomes. Project-based analysis in the US reveals that the gender of the director has no correlation to box office earnings of top earning films.

Project-based analysis in the UK reveals that women writers are actually slightly more successful than men at the box office. However, participation rates for women in writing and directing roles in the UK are low. Qualitative research indicates that women writers' potential box office draw is not generally known by commissioning editors and that personal networks are key to being hired, both factors keeping British women writers in the minority. UK research also shows that family obligations do impact more negatively on women than men, with the result that the industry is losing a certain number of highly skilled professionals, at great cost to the industry.

Across Europe, women seeking greater work-life balance are leaving larger companies to establish their own outfits. Although women entrepreneurs in Europe tend to hire a greater proportion of women, gatekeepers and career facilitators are still predominantly men, with corresponding gender impacts. Similarly, though women participate in greater proportion in grant and prize juries, outcomes have not correspondingly improved for women's films, suggesting greater, systemic gender discrimination.

The findings and approaches taken in the international literature under review support the recommendations for further study made in this document.

Project-based analysis as recommended in the 2005 GBA is supported by the public nature of information on producers, directors and writers, which forms the basis of analysis in a number of studies we have examined. This approach provides a reliable source of information that can both point to trends for further investigation and be used as a basis of comparison for workforce surveys. Project-based analysis of box office outcomes by gender is interesting in that it may be instrumental in dispelling myths and negative attitudes towards women that keep them out of key creative positions.

Employment surveys provide contextual industry information, such as employment and training trends across all screen-based media. Canadian workforce surveys for the most part do not provide sufficient information on the Canadian feature film sector. However, surveys targeted at the audio-visual labour force have been infrequent.

Qualitative approaches have been used to great effect to better understand the dynamics behind women's lower rates of participation in the feature film sector. Research of this kind may assist with understanding gender-based industry dynamics affecting Canadian women working in key creative positions.

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## Annex 1: Detailed Analysis of Available Sources of Data

### Canadian Audio Visual Certification Office (CAVCO)

Two organizations provide certification of Canadian productions: the Canadian Audio Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) and the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and collect data the productions they certify.

Approximately 15% of Canadian television productions apply solely to the CRTC for Canadian content certification.<sup>46</sup> These productions may be of too little value, or have missed the deadline for applying to the CPTC, but in need of certification within the regulations on the broadcasting of Canadian content on television. The annual industry *Profile*, produced each year by the CFTPA, APFTQ and the Department of Canadian Heritage, accounts for this discrepancy in its analysis of the film and television industry. It is therefore not necessary to include CRTC certification data in an analysis of women's rate of participation in the feature film industry.

CAVCO collects comprehensive data on projects submitted to it for Canadian content certification and payment of tax credits eligible under the CPTC and PSTC, including the names and nationalities of key creative personnel, and total production budgets (Canadian and overall). CAVCO's ability to share its data is limited by its obligation to protect sensitive commercial information, as per the *Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)*<sup>47</sup>. These laws require federal government departments and agencies to respect privacy rights by limiting the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, including information relating to commercial activity. Aggregated data can be consulted where categories have sufficient numbers of projects to protect sensitive information.

CAVCO does not collect information with respect to the gender of key personnel on projects. A breakdown of key creative personnel by gender was provided for the Department's 2005 GBA of the CFFP. This information was estimated based on the information that is available to CAVCO.<sup>48</sup> All Telefilm productions are eligible for funding through the CPTC and are therefore accounted for in the CAVCO database. However, the CAVCO database does not capture all NFB productions.

All NFB productions are considered Canadian productions for the purposes of Canadian content certification. NFB co-productions with Canadian production companies are also eligible for the CPTC and apply to CAVCO.<sup>49</sup> Some NFB productions (where the NFB is sole producer, or in some productions involving a foreign partner) are not eligible for federal tax credits and are therefore not submitted to CAVCO and do not figure in the latter's project database.

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<sup>46</sup> *09 Profile*, Op. Cit., p. 89

<sup>47</sup> <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/P-21/index.html>; <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/P-8.6/>

<sup>48</sup> Conversation with CAVCO policy analyst.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.pch.gc.ca/bcpac/pgm/cipc-cptc/cipc-cptc-eng.cfm>

### Telefilm Canada

Telefilm Canada is also restricted from collecting or disclosing personal information from applicants not directly related to program objectives by the *Privacy Act* and *PIPEDA*, and does not ask clients to identify their gender nor the gender of key creative personnel when applying for financing. Telefilm Canada does publish decisions with respect to development and production financing assistance, including the titles of films and names of producers, directors and writers. Press releases on decisions are complete on Telefilm Canada's website from the year 2001.

Through its Complementary Activities Program, Telefilm Canada provides support to filmmakers or film companies to participate in Canadian or foreign film festivals (Perspective Canada, International Marketing Program - International Festival Participation Pilot Initiative, other initiatives), as well to Canadian film festivals. A number of these initiatives provide clients with opportunities to network or to benefit from professional mentoring.

Telefilm Canada conducts Satisfaction and Impact surveys with beneficiaries of these programs on an annual and pluri-annual basis through its International Markets and Festivals Surveys and Satisfaction and Impact Surveys in the Training Sector. In addition, it surveys all clients through its pluri-annual Client Satisfaction and Needs Identification Survey. Telefilm Canada has recently modified its client surveys to capture the gender of respondents. Telefilm's 2009 Client Satisfaction and Needs Assessment survey is the first to have been conducted with this question included. Other surveys going forward will also include this

It is also possible to measure the allocation of funds for professional training, participation in Canadian and foreign film festivals, and support to Canadian film festivals.

### National Film Board (NFB)

The NFB produces Canadian shorts, animated films and documentaries, either in-house or in partnership with Canadian and international partners. A complete list of NFB productions is included in its Annual Report, and includes information on producers and directors. Writers are not included in the annual report listing, but this information is available from the NFB's website on a project-by-project basis.

### Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Detailed reports from individual employers such as the NFB and CBC/SRC are available to the Department for the purposes of measuring the overall participation of women in the film industry. Under the terms of the Employment Equity Act,<sup>50</sup> employers are required to maintain employment equity records, develop and implement an employment equity plan,

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<sup>50</sup> *Employment Equity Act (1995)*, <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca>

and report to the government on the degree of representation equity designated groups (which includes women) amongst its employees, the industrial sector in which its employees are employed, the occupational groups to which they belong, their salary ranges and trends with respect to promotions. Data on the federal public sector are collected on a fiscal-year basis by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) and available through Human Resources Development Canada.

#### Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada tracks national employment statistics with respect to the Information and Cultural Industries sector, The Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey provides information on employment participation rates by sex and age for the economy as a whole, as well as participation rates in employment by industry and gender. Two industry categories are relevant: motion picture and sound recording industries; and motion picture and video industries.

Statistics Canada also tracks statistics on the size and economic importance of the film and video production, services and distribution industries. Statistics Canada film and video industry surveys provide information on the size of the film and video production, production services and distribution industries, and measure industry growth.

Both of these sources of information can be used for comparative purposes and benchmarking.

Statistics Canada also tracks enrolment in Canadian universities by gender and by field of study through the Enhanced Student Information System (ESIS) and the University Student Information System (USIS). Tables are available on enrolment by fields of study and sex. The relevant category for field of study is “Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies.” Statistics Canada does not track corresponding graduation levels.

This report does not provide sufficient detail to analyse women’s rate of participation in feature film training. However, it does provide a useful benchmark against which to measure enrolment levels.

#### Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC)

The 2004 study, *Canada's Cultural Sector Labour Force*, provided a profile of the arts, culture and heritage labour force, through geographical, socio-economic and employment characteristics, and earnings and trends, both nationally and on a provincial/territorial basis.

Based largely on data from the 2001 census, this study focused on the arts, culture and heritage labour force in Canada. A gender analysis was conducted, which can provide context to interpreting data collected for a GBA of the Canadian Feature Film Policy. However, the CHRC study does not provide sufficient granularity with respect to the

feature film sector. (Performing Arts and Audio Visual are grouped together as a single labour category.)

The CHRC has also published a series of analyses of industry training needs and gaps.

#### Women in Film and Television – Toronto (WIFT-T)

The WIFT 2004 workforce survey, *Frame Work: Employment in Canadian Screen-Based Media — A National Profile*, provides benchmarks in assessing rates of participation in the combined screen-based industries (film, television and interactive media). The study surveyed owners of Canadian film production and distribution companies, as well as training institutions across the country. WIFT-T's 1990 workforce survey<sup>51</sup> was based on government sources of data. Both studies provide detailed analysis of women's participation rate in the film and television sector.

#### Annual Industry Profile published by the CFTPA

The annual publication of the industry, *Profile*, analyses the full range of Canadian production each year, providing contextual information and opportunities for comparisons.<sup>52</sup> Compiled using a number of data sources including the CAVCO database and Statistics Canada, the *Profile* contains information on the volume of Canadian theatrical production by language, the number of theatrical films by language, the number of Canadian feature films that received support from the CFFF, average budgets of CFFF supported fiction films, volume of theatrical production by province, the top ten Canadian box office earners by language, and similar statistics relating to foreign location and service production of theatrical feature films.

#### Membership lists from industry associations and guilds

Professional associations and guilds provide a good indication of the availability of women and men qualified for key creative positions in the feature film industry through their membership lists. These are a useful benchmark against which to measure the participation of men and women in actual projects.

The Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), ARRQ and SARTEC publish the names of their members online. The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) makes names of its members available online to registered producers it has approved. Members must agree to be represented online to be included. APFTQ publishes names of its member companies on its website, though not the names of senior management. The *Guide Annuel* published by *Qui Fait Quoi* in Quebec, provides a listing of production companies that includes names of company leadership. The *CFTPA Guide* provides a list of member and non-member

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<sup>51</sup> *A Statistical Profile of Women in the Canadian Film and Television Industry*, Op. Cit.

<sup>52</sup> *09 Profile*, Op. Cit.

Canadian production companies. However, the guide does not provide systematic information on which companies work in feature film.

### Canadian film festivals

Film festivals produce catalogues of films presented each year. Many of these festivals are also published online. Festivals are normally submitted as part of final reports to funders, including Telefilm Canada.

### Training Institutions

Training institutions do not generally publish their graduation rates. Some training institutions have made enrolment data available to researchers in the past. As mentioned elsewhere, of 173 training institutions surveyed for the 2004 WIFT workforce survey, 23 responded with numbers of teachers and graduates.

The AUCC (Association of Universities and Colleges) provides an online searchable database through which it is possible to compile an inventory of relevant film production training programs. National industry training institutions publish titles of current course offerings on their websites.