

**2001-2002 ANNUAL REPORT**



**ON THE APPLICATION OF THE  
CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT**

**SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Telefilm Canada has worked to ensure that we maintain and enhance, as needed, our capacity to support the production of high-quality, culturally relevant works that reflect Canadian diversity.

Once again, Telefilm Canada is committed the principles of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. The various ethnic groups compose the fabric of Canadian society represent a growing contribution to the country's cultural wealth. Telefilm Canada strives to ensure that Canadians of all origins have access to the Corporation's support and receive the assistance needed to carry out their projects. Telefilm Canada's role is to provide financial support for the development, production and distribution of Canadian works by television, feature film, new media and music companies that draw on Canadian talent.

The creation of Telefilm Canada's Committee on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in 1998-99 arose from the Corporation's determination to ensure that its activities remain relevant to Canada's evolving cultural reality. The Committee includes members of Telefilm Canada's Board and management.

This report summarizes Telefilm Canada's accomplishments in fiscal 2001-02 in the following areas:

- Production
- Coproduction
- Festivals
- Funding application assessment criteria
- Employment Equity Policy
- Industrial and Professional Development

## **TELEFILM CANADA'S MISSION**

Telefilm Canada is a federal cultural agency primarily dedicated to developing and promoting the Canadian film, television, new media and music industries.

Its mission is to respond to the cultural needs of Canadians by investing in high-quality productions with substantial Canadian content. Its support for the Canadian film, television, new media and music industries enables widely diverse voices to be heard and to reach audiences at home and abroad.

## PRODUCTION

The main funds administered by Telefilm Canada are as follows:

- Canadian Television Fund – Equity Investment Program
- Canada Feature Film Fund
  - Development, Production and Marketing Assistance Program
  - Screenwriting Assistance Program
  - Low Budget Independent Feature Film Assistance Program
- Canada New Media Fund
- Official Coproductions (mini-treaties)
- Versioning Fund (television)
- International Marketing Fund
- Canada Showcase - Canadian Festival Assistance Program
- Industrial and Professional Development Fund
- National Training Program in the Film and Video Sector
- Participation in Foreign Markets and Festivals Program

In 2001-02, Telefilm Canada invested more than \$103 million in television production and provided approximately \$48 million for the financing of some 60 feature films. The Corporation also allocated a \$5.2-million envelope to support the production and marketing of more than 107 multimedia works.

Over the past three decades, the Corporation has contributed to the production of some 860 feature films and approximately 2,600 television programs and series. Telefilm further ensures that these productions enjoy screen time and that Canada's audiovisual industry continues to rank among the country's highest-performing export sectors.

The broad range of productions supported in 2001-02 reflects the diverse nature of Canadian society. We estimate that more than 60 television and multimedia productions – over 20% of the total – include a significant multicultural component. Similarly, 14 feature films (24% of the total) speak to the diverse make-up of Canadian society, through either the participation of people of varied ethnic descent, the representation of ethnic minority characters or the subject matter.<sup>1</sup>

Statistics for the Canada New Media Fund are not available at this time, since the Fund renewal process has delayed production of the catalogue from which this type of data is obtained. However, copies of the 2002 feature film and television program catalogues are enclosed for information purposes. They reflect the multiethnic origins of the talent behind the past year's wide range of productions.

The following examples illustrate the contribution of this talent to Canada's rich cultural diversity:

- *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*, the third feature by writer-director Mina Shum, tells the story of young Mindy Ho, age 12, who believes she can resolve her mother's financial problems with Taoist magic.

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<sup>1</sup> The following criteria are used to identify multiethnic productions: participation of persons of ethnic heritage, ethnic minority characters and multiethnic subject matter.

- *Le marais* is by director Kim Nguyen, a recent Vietnamese immigrant to Canada. In this reflection on the outcasts of society, a retarded and a tramp in 19th-century Eastern Europe find refuge near a marsh.
- *Khaled*, a feature by Iranian-born Asghar Massombagi, deals with the life of a young boy living in Toronto, the son of a white mother and a long-gone North African father.
- *Jinnah on Crime*. The star of this popular TV series produced in Vancouver is Hakeem Jinnah, ace crime reporter.
- *Watatatow XI*, a drama series, follows the lives of teens in a large Canadian city. The stories focus on four families from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.
- *Variations on a New Generation II* is a variety show that introduces talented young circus students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- *Royal Bonbon*, a Canada-France coproduction, tells the tale of a man convinced he is King Christophe, a former slave and liberator of Haiti in 1804.
- *The Art of Woo* is a first feature by Helen Lee, who was born in Korea and came to Canada at the age of four. Her film recounts the love story between a young Asian woman and an Aboriginal painter.

## **COPRODUCTION**

Coproduction agreements are increasingly popular as a means of sharing and working together. To date, Canada has signed treaties with 61 countries.

Despite the financial nature of the agreements, coproduction projects facilitate access to creative resources from other cultures for Canadian-born and neo-Canadian producers. For the Canadian public, this opens windows on the world and, in turn, on Canada's diverse cultural communities. Telefilm Canada is responsible for administering the various treaties and certifying the productions.

In 2001, these agreements helped to produce more than 82 television programs and 24 feature films. Total coproduction budgets were in excess of \$790 million.

## **FESTIVALS**

Festivals receiving grants from Telefilm Canada also underline the varied nature of Canadian society and provide a distribution showcase for national productions. Moreover, they present works from many different countries, enabling Canadians of all origins to enjoy the pick of the international crop.

These opportunities are offered not only during major international festivals such as Montréal's World Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival but also, and increasingly, at smaller festivals.

Notable among these are:

- Reel Asian Film Festival, Toronto
- Chinese Film Festival, Vancouver
- Gimli Film Festival, featuring Icelandic and Canadian cinema, Gimli, Manitoba
- Get Reel Black Film Festival, highlighting films from Black filmmakers in Toronto

- Reel World Film Festival. This Toronto festival presents the work of filmmakers from visible minority communities in Canada and around the world.
- Reel Black Film Night, Halifax. An after-dark festival showing film written and made by members of visible minority communities.
- Reel Black Awards Gala, which honours excellence in films, television programs and music produced by members of visible minority communities.

In addition, Telefilm Canada provided travel assistance to enable Chilean-born Canadian producer Orlando Arriagada to show his film *Guantanamera* at the Third Documentary Exhibit in Bogota, Colombia, in November 2001.

## **FUNDING APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA**

For certain funds and programs, Telefilm Canada uses an evaluation grid to analyze funding applications, establish priorities and determine the level of funding to be granted.

In the Canada Feature Film Fund evaluation grid, the criterion “Reflection of Canadian society and diversity” was added.

In the Canada New Media Fund evaluation grid, the criterion “Cultural diversity of subject matter and content” was added.

In addition, the guidelines of the National Training Program in the Film and Video Sector now require applicant organizations to submit a report on their previous compliance with the various criteria of the assessment grid.

One of these criteria measures the extent to which their graduates reflect the diversity of Canadian society, specifically:

- i) the proportion of specific initiatives supporting communities in linguistic minority situations and the various cultural communities
- ii) the proportion of visible minority students

The first round of application was in 2001-2002. We will be able to assess the impact of implementing these criteria in the following fiscals.

## **INDUSTRIAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

During fiscal 2001-02, the following initiatives were undertaken through the Industrial and Professional Development Fund administered by Telefilm Canada:

### Access to Telefilm Canada programs

- Our new Chair, Charles Bélanger, Board member Elvira Sánchez de Malicki and several Telefilm employees participated in a national round table that brought together Canadian industry participants to examine the difficulties faced by producers of ethnic origin and to define initiatives to be taken. This three-day event, held in February 2002 in Montréal, was organized by the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations (CRARR), which received funding from Telefilm in 2000-01.
- **INNOVERSITY SUMMIT**  
Board member Elvira Sánchez de Malicki and several Telefilm employees took part in this summit meeting, which was held in Toronto in May 2002. More than 600 participants gathered for three days to discuss possible solutions for achieving greater representivity of Canadian cultural diversity in the media. Telefilm Canada provided financial support for this event.
- **Vues d'Afrique**  
At the request of Telefilm Canada, Vues d'Afrique held a one-day conference on October 16, 2001, to identify avenues for increasing the representivity of visible minority communities in Canadian audiovisual productions.

### Consultation with partners

- Discussions with various stakeholders (CRTC, CAB, etc.)  
We are pursuing discussions with the CRTC (Martine Vallée, Director, Discretionary Services and Social Policy). We have offered our cooperation for the study on the status of cultural diversity in the Canadian media to be conducted by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters as part of its action plan submitted to the CRTC.

The recommendations ensuing from these meetings will serve as a framework for developing the 2002-03 action plan for Telefilm Canada's Committee on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.

## **CONCLUSION**

As discussed in this document, the projects financed and the actions undertaken reflect the diversity of Canada's ethnic communities. Such works promote understanding among people of different origins, while respecting Canada's commitment to the two official languages.

Telefilm Canada's role in Canadian society relates, in particular, to one fundamental goal of the Multiculturalism Policy: Identity. Television programs, movies, the new media and music reflect Canada's cultural diversity and enable Canadians of varied descent to express and recognize themselves. This representation in the major media reinforces a common sense of belonging and attachment to Canada, regardless of ethnic origin.

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