

2002-2003 ANNUAL REPORT



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

**SUBMITTED TO
THE MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE**

November 19, 2003

INTRODUCTION

During the past fiscal year, Telefilm Canada again affirmed its commitment to the principles of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and their application. The diverse ethnic communities that make up the fabric of Canadian society are making an increasingly significant contribution to our country's cultural wealth. As such, Telefilm Canada ensures that Canadian citizens of all cultural backgrounds have access to Telefilm support and can receive the help they need to realize their projects. It should be noted, however, that Telefilm Canada's primary role is not to produce programming but to provide financial support for the development, production and distribution of Canadian works produced by private-sector companies involved in the television, feature film, new media and music sectors.

This report highlights Telefilm's achievements during the 2002-2003 fiscal year in the following areas of activity:

- Studies
- Action Plan
- Building Industry Capacity
- Production
- Co-production
- Festivals
- Employment Equity

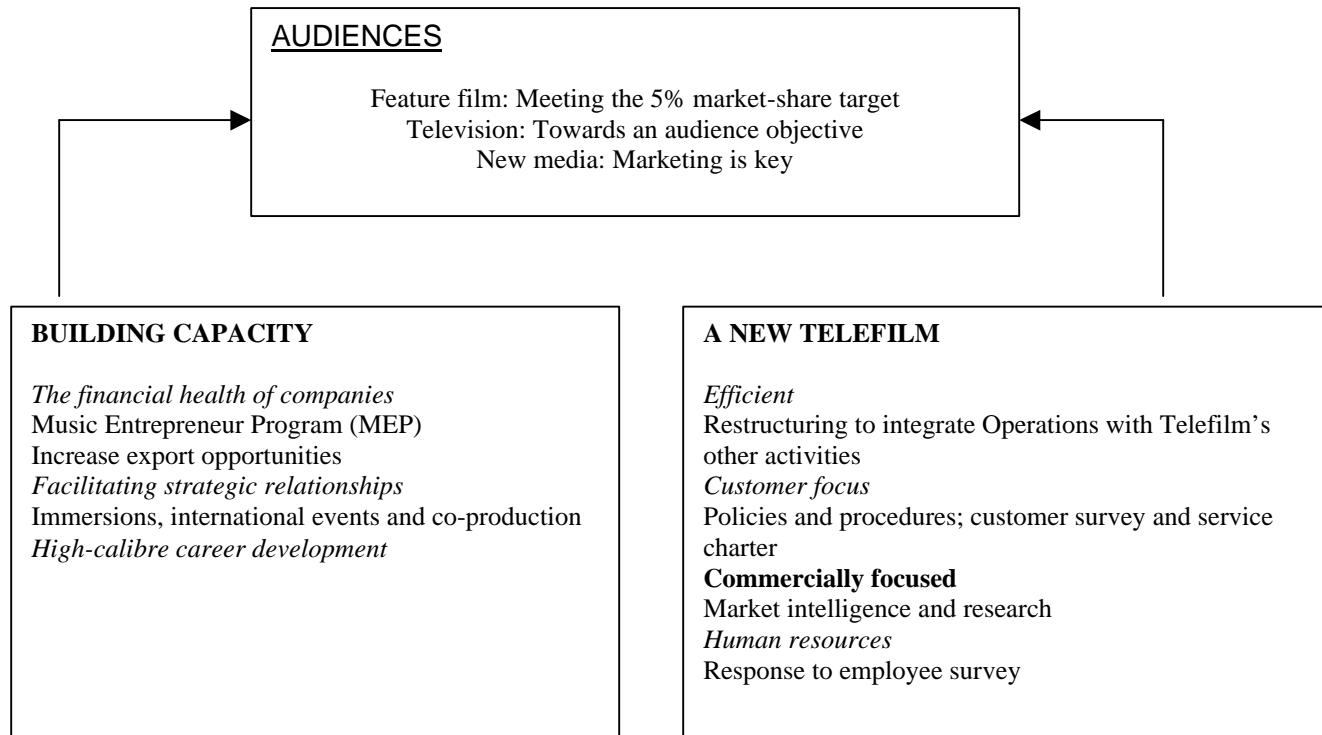
MANDATE OF TELEFILM CANADA

Telefilm Canada is a federal cultural agency with a mandate to invest in the creation and distribution of television, feature-film and new-media products. Telefilm also invests in companies active in the music sector.

The 2002-2003 fiscal year was one of significant change at Telefilm Canada. The Corporation launched several initiatives, among them the establishment of a new management structure, the re-engineering of processes and policies, and the introduction of a new customer charter. The roll-out of these initiatives should continue into the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

In addition, Telefilm's new corporate business plan, covering the period from 2003-2004 to 2005-2006, outlined the strategic directions we developed to help us achieve our objectives of attracting and retaining audiences, developing the success potential of our industry partners, and creating a new, more efficient Telefilm better focused on its customers and more attuned to commercial considerations.

The following chart provides an overview of the strategic directions we have defined to help us achieve these objectives.



Actions which will have a particular impact on minority ethnic communities will be undertaken within the framework of strategies aimed at building industry capacity. Of course, we will launch these initiatives without losing sight of the Corporation's primary objective: to build and retain audiences. What is clear is that the new, more efficient Telefilm we are creating – one better aligned with industry needs and the realities of producers – will help minority communities flourish.

STUDIES

Telefilm recently conducted an internal study¹ aimed at gauging the level of diversity in television, cinema and new-media projects supported by the Corporation. Five elements were considered: production content, writer, director, producer and actor. Of these elements, producers were found to be the most under-represented. Comments received from representatives of various cultural organizations during the Consultation with Native Communities, the Forum on Diversity and Culture at Banff, and through studies conducted by the Pearson Shoyama Institute and FAVEM (Filmmakers' Association of Visible and Ethnic Minorities), highlighted the following issues of importance to culturally diverse communities:

- Training and immersion programs conducted by more experienced producers and broadcasters would be highly useful;
- Producers were identified as the group receiving the least amount of direct support in the area of career development and participation in production funding requests;
- These producers need to attract mainstream media interest and raise higher production budget. They require training assistance and initiatives that facilitate building relationships with the larger marketplace;
- Dramas and documentaries – or both – were cited as the two categories which would benefit most from any potential training program. Given that the NFB is actively involved in the area of documentaries, and that resources are limited, Telefilm has chosen to focus on dramas in French and English.

ACTION PLAN

An Action Plan for Cultural Diversity 2003-2005, focusing on the Corporation's three new objectives, was presented to, and whole-heartedly endorsed by, senior management. The key aims of the plan are to:

- Develop more effective communications with minority communities;
- Draft policies which take into account the inherent limits of audience-measurement tools;
- Increase representation of minority communities in evaluation and decision-making procedures;
- Develop training and immersion programs;
- Evaluate barriers to entry.

¹ The following criteria were used to identify productions deemed multi-ethnic: presence of participants with ethnic origins; performers representing ethnic minorities; and the work's multi-ethnic content.

BUILDING INDUSTRY CAPACITY

Thanks to the participation of the Department of Canadian Heritage, a new *Spark Initiative* was launched last June. This three-year program is specifically targeted at producers from diverse cultural milieus who are in mid-career or whose career is well established. Spark's goal is to build capacity within this group – which is under-represented in television production – and to help targeted producers and their products reach a mass audience.

Program objectives

The Spark Initiative aims to:

- Build capacity of talented producers from culturally diverse communities in the field of dramatic television production by providing them with access to an Immersion program, so they can ultimately attract a mass audience for their products;
- Help producers from culturally diverse communities to establish relationships with key industry decision-makers;
- Increase the number of projects in development from under-represented groups;
- Assemble a database of producers from culturally diverse communities using information from a self-identification form.

PRODUCTION

The principal funds administered by Telefilm Canada are the following:

- Canadian Television Fund – Equity Investment Program
- Canada Feature Film Fund
 - Development, Production and Marketing Program
 - Complementary Activities Program
 - Screenwriting Assistance Program
 - Low Budget Independent Feature Film Assistance Program
- Canada New Media Fund
- Official Co-productions (mini-treaties)
- Versioning Assistance Fund (television)
- International Marketing Assistance Fund
- Canada Showcase – A program of grants for Canadian festivals
- Industrial and Professional Development
- National Training Program in the Film and Video Sector
- Assistance program for participation in international markets and festivals

In 2002-2003, Telefilm Canada invested more than \$98 million in television production. The Corporation also granted approximately \$65 million in funding to more than 60 feature films. In addition, Telefilm supported the development, production and marketing of more than 75 new-media works through an envelope of \$6.1 million.

Over the last three decades, the Corporation has contributed to the production of some 920 feature films and approximately 2,800 television programs and series. Telefilm also ensures that these works obtain the screen time they deserve and that Canada's audiovisual industry sustains its position as one of the country's leading exporters of Canadian products.

The wide range of productions which received Telefilm support in 2002-2003 reflect the diversified character of Canadian society.

Information about these productions is contained in the enclosed catalogues, covering feature film, television and new media production. As these catalogues illustrate, artists and artisans from a wide variety of backgrounds contributed to the creation of these productions over the last year.

The following productions illustrate how diversity is contributing to Canada's cultural richness:

- *Media Under Fire—Talk Mogadishu* (documentary) profiles three Canadian creators of Somali origin who founded Somalia's first independent radio station, HornAfrik;
- *I Want a Woman* (documentary), directed by Julia Ivanova, chronicles the romantic adventures of four young Russian women looking for their soul mates in Canada;
- *Lord Have Mercy* (drama series) features a lead character, Pastor Gooding, who has just been assigned to minister to Toronto's Caribbean community;
- *Musique du monde, d'ici* (variety series) showcases several Canadian artists from a variety of multicultural backgrounds;
- *Mambo Italiano* (feature film) is a comedy about the romantic tribulations of two childhood friends who grew up in Montréal's Italian community;
- *Republic of Love* (feature film) is the sixth feature by India-born director Deepa Mehta, who directed the 2002 hit film *Bollywood/Hollywood*;
- *First Contact: A Renaissance Man Meets "The Romans of the New World"* (Web site) offers users, among other features, a glimpse into the culture shock experienced by Canada's first European settlers.

CO-PRODUCTION

Co-production agreements are becoming increasingly popular as instruments for promoting international sharing and cooperation. To date, Canada has signed 49 treaties covering 53 countries.

Co-production projects offer producers – Canadian-born and new-Canadian alike – easier access to the creative resources of other cultures, as well as to various financial and technical resources. Canadian audiences, in turn, enjoy a privileged view of the world and, by extension, of the diverse cultural communities within Canada itself. As an agent of the federal government, Telefilm Canada administers all international treaties governing official co-productions.

In 2002, these treaties fostered the production of more than 76 television programs and 22 feature films. Overall co-production budgets totalled more than \$734 million.

FESTIVALS

Canadian festivals subsidized by Telefilm Canada also highlight the diversity of the Canadian community while providing Canadian creators with a valuable showcase for their works. Furthermore, Canadian festivals attract works from a large number of foreign countries, affording Canadians of all cultural backgrounds the opportunity to discover the best that the world has to offer.

Cultural interactions of this kind are fostered by major international events such as the Montreal World Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival, as well as by an increasingly growing number of smaller, regional festivals.

Included among these regional festivals:

- Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival: this event screens films by and about Asians from around the world;
- Gimli Film Festival, Gimli, Manitoba: this event celebrates the cinema of Iceland, other northern countries, and Canada;
- Reel World Film Festival, Toronto: an international film festival that showcases films produced by members of visible minority communities from Canada and around the world;
- Reel Black Film Night, Halifax: a festival held during evening hours which showcases films written and produced by members of visible minority communities;
- Global Vision International Documentary Festival, Edmonton: this festival screens a large number of works which explore social issues related to cultural and linguistic diversity; and
- Three festivals for children which present films with a thematic interest in cultural and linguistic diversity: Flicks Children's Festival, Saskatoon; Freeze Frame Children's Festival, Winnipeg; and Reel to Real Children's Festival, Vancouver.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, the following initiatives were undertaken thanks to financial support from the Professional and Industrial Development Fund, administered by Telefilm:

Access to Telefilm Canada programs

- VUES D'AFRIQUE

G8 – Cultural perspectives – audiovisual: An initiative of African intellectuals, this conference was organized to take full advantage of a visit to Canada by leading African filmmakers, television-industry representatives and journalists on the occasion of the G8 Summit, held in June 2002. Their Canadian counterparts, as well as representatives from NGOs, also participated in the gathering.

North-South Co-production: Organized through the Vues d'Afrique, this gathering was held to provide information on co-production to Quebec-based African filmmakers.

Directory: Telefilm provided support for the publication of a directory, compiled by Vues d'Afrique, of audiovisual-industry professionals from Quebec's cultural minority groups.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Ensuring that Canada's cultural diversity is reflected in its institutions is a matter of importance to all. To this end, Telefilm's Human Resources department this year completed the second part of its action plan on diversity by creating a new job-posting framework for staff members with hiring responsibility. The key purpose of the new framework is to enable Telefilm to forge and develop strong links with people working with designated groups as defined by the *Employment Equity Act*.

CONCLUSION

As outlined in this document, the projects that Telefilm has funded and the initiatives it has undertaken reflect the diversity of Canada's ethnic communities. These works promote understanding among peoples of different backgrounds while respecting national commitments pertaining to our country's two official languages.

Telefilm Canada plays an important role in Canadian society by reinforcing the notion of identity, one of the fundamental goals of Canada's policy on multiculturalism. Through television, cinema, new media and music, the cultural diversity of Canadians is reflected back to Canadians and others, thereby enabling Canadians from all ethnic backgrounds to express and see themselves in Canadian cultural products. Through their representation in these major media, all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic origin, share a sense of profound belonging and attachment to Canada.

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