

Understanding Inclusive Business Practices Amongst Canadian Producers

August 2021

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I.M.P.A.C.T
Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent
A.P.T.C.M.I
L'Association des producteurs indépendants de talents cinématographiques
des médias indépendants

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Executive Summary

In the pursuit of creating a fair, just, equitable and representative Canadian entertainment industry, the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent believes that producers hold a unique and powerful role. As the key decision-makers, owners and leaders of media projects, producers are in the position to establish business standards, direct hiring practices and are paramount to setting a workplace's culture of inclusivity, safety and belonging. Producers are therefore essential to activating change throughout the industry.

Rationale

There are three main elements that risk undermining change efforts: (1) uncertainty about the most impactful actions to take, (2) inconsistencies in the way 'diversity' and 'inclusion' are understood, and (3) unconscious biases related to the degree of change required risk undermining change efforts and limiting their effectiveness.

To move beyond 'awareness' of the needs toward sustainable change, a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers to creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce from the producer's perspective is needed. These efforts will provide insight into how best to operationalize the commitments to workplace diversity and will also surface counternarratives held by producers who might not feel accountable for creating change, or who might not believe that change is needed. Overall, such an examination would provide a clear picture of where and why change efforts are working, how best to accelerate them, and where and why those efforts are falling short.

Project Aims

This pan-Canadian research project on the inclusive business practices of producers aims to:

- Surface common attitudes, perspectives, and behaviours of Canadian producers towards inclusion and diversity practices.
- Uncover the paths to diversity undertaken by producers, establish preliminary benchmarks (starting points), areas of resistance, and encountered barriers.
- Understand the challenges producers face in adopting inclusive business practices, and the perspectives of producers who do not wish to adopt inclusive business practices
- Identify what motivates producers to change their business practices and workplace cultures to become more inclusive.

This research may be further mobilized to:

- Inform the development of sector-wide benchmarks for inclusion.
- Establish best practices towards adopting inclusive business practices.

Research Approach

The research began with a review of the current sector landscape, including existing sector research. This landscape scan was followed by two simultaneous, and complementary phases that are on-going: (1) Industry Survey, and (2) Sector Interviews and Focus Groups.

Study participants

This study invited participation from Producers working in Canada’s screen sector. A total of 237 participants responded to the online survey, and 51 of those were engaged in a follow up interview or focus group.

The terminology used in this report and in the collection of demographic and other information in the online survey is based on the Canada Media Fund’s recently released Terminology Guide for Data Collection on Racialized and Indigenous Communities developed in 2020 by the Equity and Inclusion Data Collection (EIDC) round table.

Research Context & Limitations

Legacy of distrust

Although the Canadian Film and TV Production sector has recently started to collect identity information, this practice has not been in place long enough to establish an accurate baseline, nor to build trust regarding how these data are used. Many equity-seeking participants are reluctant to self-identify due to long histories of oppression and discrimination, and concerns about the protection of identity and privacy. Without a benchmark, it is difficult to ascertain the representativeness of the study’s sample population beyond Canada’s Census (which uses different categories to describe sector and employment than are used by the sector at large).

Additionally, the oppressive experiences that have made it unsafe for equity-seeking professionals to self-identify are equally likely to discourage participation in these early research efforts (due to historic lack of trust). **Indeed, several producers and organizations declined participation citing the (especially recent) history of failed promises and unfulfilled commitments to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector.**

Inconsistent language, measures, and limited accountabilities

Mixed methods research on the sector’s workforce diversity remains new, especially research that focuses on producers, contributing to a lack of consistent definitions and measures of diversity and workforce composition. Currently, there is no benchmark against which to compare changes year-over-year to assess the (in)effectiveness of various diversity initiatives. Moreover, without standardized measures, it is difficult to define clear ‘goals’ for improvement.

Participant representation

Individuals who identify as cis, hetero, and white comprise most participants in this study. While this distribution does not reflect Canada’s census data, the discrepancy between Canada’s demographic composition and representation in the sector (particularly the dominance of cis, hetero, white identities and persons without disability) is the impetus for this research. Accordingly, the predominance of cis, hetero, white identities and persons without disabilities among participants of this study is not considered an overrepresentation of these perspectives *according to the industry*. Instead, the majority identities represented in this study help quantify the lack of representation among working creatives in Canada’s film and television sector.

The sample population of this study does, however, reflect an overrepresentation on two demographic variables: location and gender. Participants in this study reported working predominantly in Ontario, which is due in part to Toronto's popularity for film and television production. Additionally, potential participants from some other parts of Canada (e.g., Nunavut, Nova Scotia) declined participation ([see above](#)) citing a lack of belief in the sector's commitment to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, a majority of respondents identified as female (58%), which is an overrepresentation according to broader industry data.

Reporting

Participants in all phases of this research included members from a wide range of communities, reflecting a broad set of identities. The scope of this research, combined with the current workforce composition of Canada's screen sector, means that not all communities had sufficient participation to be differentiated in this reporting while maintaining anonymity.

This research explored DE&I at the sector-level, with the aim of documenting preliminary, benchmarking data about how the concepts of DE&I currently operate in the sector. At this level, participants' responses tended to cluster according to equity positionality. To show the magnitude of this discrepancy (i.e., between equity-seeking creatives and non-equity seeking creatives), this research segments the data according to participants' identification as members of communities that have experienced marginalization.

The consistency across the experiences reported by Black, People of Colour, Indigenous, 2SLGBTIQ+ and Participants with Disabilities in this study cannot be assumed across all settings. That is, it is expected that these communities, and the intersectional identities within these communities have experiences related to access in the sector that merit focused examination that goes beyond the scope of this initial research and would further support the development of specific interventions that meet the needs of each community.

Key Findings

The following summarizes the key findings surfaced through the survey, interview, and focus groups. All interview and focus group participants participated in the survey. Findings did not differ across methods; accordingly, and to preserve confidentiality, the findings discussed combine all methods unless explicitly stated.

1. Definitions and practices about diversity, equity, and inclusion vary throughout the sector.

- Differences across all participants in understandings of DE&I, most notably between participants who identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization and those who do not.
- The concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion have gained new levels of attention considering the social violences that gained more widespread awareness in 2020-2021. But **language without literacy** reinforces a superficial understanding of the issues surrounding DE&I, while creating the perception of understanding.
- Most DE&I language in the sector fails to recognize how a legacy of access and systemic barriers to access comprise the sector's infrastructure; it assumes whiteness, cisness, heterosexuality, and persons without disability, and omits these identities from operationalized understandings of 'diversity'. Importantly, this points to the ways language is an incomplete indicator of understanding and how using the 'right' language can overlook, and indeed, perpetuate barriers to access. **'Diversity' is therefore not inherently anti-racist or anti-oppressive.**

2. Inclusion as an 'achievement' & 'inclusive' as a status

- Diversity appears to be treated as an 'achievement' and inclusion as a status that can be attained, rather than a set of continuous (and evolving) practices.

- DE&I practices focus on numbers, which encourages a superficial understanding of diversity, places most of the accountability on the individual person, perpetuates tokenism and box-checking by creating a sense of urgency based in fear, and situates representation (only) in community projects, creating parameters around when ‘diversity targets’ do and do not matter.
- Accountability is murky - who is responsible for creating and sustaining change? How is the sector held accountable for change?

3. Scarcity & deficit narratives reify oppressive power dynamics

- Prolonged hegemony of the white cis male identity in the sector has created a **narrow set of assumptions about where talent resides** (white cis males) and what talent looks like (i.e., what white cis males create) and has influenced the development of sector infrastructure that supports this narrow definition of success
- **Feelings of ownership over funding and resources** that have regularly been available to white cis (mostly) male creatives perpetuate the narrative that inclusive practices are ‘exclusive’ of white, cis, hetero creatives.
- A seeming **overestimation of the ‘risk’ involved in investing in and supporting equity-seeking creatives** and a resultant reticence to investing in other stories, perspectives, and creative talent.
- This, combined with the fast-paced, high-stakes sector dynamics perpetuates a prioritization of survival over equity, and for some, fighting for privilege over freedom.

4. Systemic biases are self-reinforcing

- White, cis, heteronormativity defines what ‘good’ looks like.
- **Interacting structural issues perpetuate a false narrative that there is “limited diverse talent”**, which is used to rationalize a lack of commitment to increasing workforce diversity.
- There is a self-reinforcing cycle whereby structural inequalities (e.g., access to networks, work experience, funding, development) reinforce a narrative that shapes the actions of individual producers and other creatives (i.e., working within one’s network, risk-aversion), which reinforce structural barriers and limit opportunities to disrupt these narratives.

5. Mismatch between needs, interventions & follow through

- 72.73% of survey participants indicated engaging in inclusive practices *today* that they were not doing two or more years ago.
- Considerable differences were observed in the interventions considered most effective by participants identifying as members of communities that have historically experienced marginalization, and participants who did not.
- **Current interventions** tend to reflect the perspectives of participants who are not equity-seeking within the sector, and consequently, **tend not to match the needs of equity-seeking communities**.
- Most practices emphasize connecting *individual* producers with *individual* creators, rather than building connections between producers and networks/communities of talent (i.e., a broader talent pool). Consequently, **interventions tend to lack scale**.

Recommendations

Specific recommendations were often shared by participants through the open-ended survey questions, interviews, and focus group contributions. The following recommendations summarize these suggestions, with emphasis on themes that emerged consistently across multiple contributions. For example, many participants noted frustrations about performative allyship, confusion about DE&I terminology, and inconsistencies between verbalized commitments and action, alongside clear misunderstandings about these gaps. Together, these point to the need for increased DE&I literacy.

Sector-level

- Make DE&I a lens, not a cause by focusing on access
- Standardize terminology, measures, and accountability practices
- Make policy practical
- Incentivize the process
- Invest in on-going research to support evidence-based interventions

Producer-level

- Build literacy in anti-racism and anti-oppression
- Create resources that meet producers where they are
- Exposure, Access, and Opportunity

A Need for Coordinated Action

2020-2021 has seen an increase in investments in research, programming, and other supports directed toward communities of creatives that have been historically underrepresented in Canada's screen sector. The perspectives, experiences, and needs of these various communities surfaced by these investments is essential to inform actions that will contribute to long-term change. Indeed, several organizations are working hard to disrupt the barriers to access most pertinent to their respective communities.

While the experience of each community is unique, the current research has underscored important similarities that signal shared structural oppressions as the root of those experiences. At the same time, this research has highlighted the limitations experienced by individuals and individual organizations in sufficiently scaling interventions to achieve the desired magnitude of change.

There is an important opportunity to coordinate efforts across organizations – to establish a shared plan of action that leverages the important contributions of each community/organization to accelerate change.

Acknowledgements

Spearheaded by the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent in response to the need for a fair, just, equitable and representative Canadian entertainment industry, *Understanding Inclusive Business Practices Amongst Canadian Producers* was designed to explore the barriers and enablers to creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce from the producer’s perspective.

This study was funded by Telefilm Canada. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Telefilm Canada or the Government of Canada. The author(s) are not mandataries or representatives of Telefilm Canada, or the Government of Canada and Telefilm Canada and the Government of Canada are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

We are greatly appreciative of the participants who took the time to respond to our survey and who engaged candidly in the follow up interviews and focus groups.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



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Introduction

In the pursuit of creating a fair, just, equitable and representative Canadian entertainment industry, the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent believes that producers hold a unique and powerful role. As the key decision-makers, owners and leaders of media projects, producers are in the position to establish business standards, direct hiring practices and are paramount to setting a workplace's culture of inclusivity, safety and belonging. Producers are therefore essential to activating change throughout the industry.

Since the Summer of 2020, 174 production companies from across the country have committed to this pivotal first step towards addressing and dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy in the entertainment industry by signing the [Producer Pledge](#)¹. This is one of many commitments that have the power to dramatically change the landscape for Black, People of Colour and Indigenous artists and professionals of all genders, sexual identities and disabilities working in the industry by providing more opportunities, safer / more conscious work environments and increased agency in representing the stories of their communities on screen.

Rationale

The early traction of the Producer Pledge in the Canadian producer community affirmed both a willingness and an urgency to address systemic racism, sexism, and other damaging forms of oppression by starting with their very own businesses.

While this enthusiasm is encouraging, conversations that took place in support of the Pledge revealed the challenges inherent in transforming optimistic intentions into measurable actions. Layers of systemic oppression that create barriers for Black, People of Colour and Indigenous professionals become system-based resistance that committed producers must also overcome. Uncertainty about the most impactful actions to take, inconsistencies in the way 'diversity' and 'inclusion' are understood, and unconscious biases related to the degree of change required risk undermining change efforts and limiting their effectiveness.

To move beyond 'awareness' of the needs toward sustainable change, a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers to creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce from the producer's perspective is needed. These efforts will provide insight into how best to operationalize the commitments to workplace diversity and will also surface counternarratives held by producers who might not feel accountable for creating change, or who might not believe that change is needed. Overall, such an examination would provide a clear picture of where and why change efforts are working, how best to accelerate them, and where and why those efforts are falling short.

Project Aims

This pan-Canadian research project on the inclusive business practices of producers aims to:

- Surface common attitudes, perspectives, and behaviours of Canadian producers towards inclusion and diversity practices.

¹ The Producer Pledge is call to action for public funders, broadcasters, and media companies to commit to immediate and substantive action toward equity in Canadian Film & TV in five key areas: financial contributions, representation, reframing hiring practices, on-going learning, and advocacy. For more information, visit: <https://www.producerpledge.com/>

- Deep dive into the path to diversity undertaken by producers, establish preliminary benchmarks (starting points), areas of resistance, and encountered barriers.
- Understand the challenges producers face in adopting inclusive business practices. Understand the perspectives of producers who do not wish to adopt inclusive business practices
- Identify what motivates producers to change their business practices and workplace cultures to become more inclusive.

This research may be further mobilized to:

- Inform the development of sector-wide benchmarks for inclusion.
- Establish best practices towards adopting inclusive business practices.

Research Approach

The research began with a review of the current sector landscape, including existing sector research. This landscape scan was followed by two simultaneous, and complementary phases that are on-going: (1) Industry Survey, and (2) Sector Interviews and Focus Groups.

These activities were informed by the following principles:

- The research design (how) and areas of focus (what) are determined using input and direction from the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent and members of the producer community, as well as from experienced researchers.
- The collection and interpretation of data, and the sharing of findings, is conducted in a way that provides individuals with the opportunity to tell their own story, in their own words.
- The participant sample is as representative of the sector as possible at this stage, given the absence of consistent demographic information about the sector.

Industry Survey

The study employed established social research survey methods to collect input from Canadian producers at every career stage to share their experiences, observations, and efforts toward creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce in Canada's Film and TV industry. The Producer Pledge served as a foundation for survey content related to inclusive sector practices.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion research often prioritizes participation from communities that have experienced marginalization to centre perspectives that are often underrepresented. Centering these perspectives is crucial to understanding realistic pathways to a more diverse, equitable and inclusive sector.

Centering these perspectives, however, does not mean placing onus on members of these communities to bear the weight of creating change. Indeed, sector diversity is a shared responsibility, which requires this research to the narratives, counternarratives, misunderstandings, and apprehensions that currently dominate the sector, and enact (intended or unintended) barriers to change.

For this reason, this research sought input from all perspectives about the experiences of Producers of different identities to comment on (1) their personal experiences, and (2) their perceptions about experiences different from their own.

Sector Focus Groups & Interviews

Sector interviews make it possible to cover a range of topics beyond what is normally covered in social surveys, providing texture and depth to the survey-based data. These interviews were opportunities to explore response patterns and emergent themes from the survey data, and to collect personal stories that offered important context and lived examples through which to interpret these findings. The interviews were drawn from industry connections to the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent, volunteers from the industry survey, and industry professionals referred by other sector informants.

Study participants

This study invited participation from Producers working in Canada's screen sector. A total of 237 participants responded to the online survey, and 51 of those were engaged in a follow up interview or focus group.

Participants were recruited using the following strategies:

- Direct email invitations to respond to the survey distributed through the extensive personal and professional networks and affiliations of the Independent Media Producers Association of Creative Talent, including those who have and have not signed the Producer Pledge.
- Outreach to provincial and national producer associations and membership groups (e.g., CMPA).
- Posting to online Facebook groups and discussion forums.

Interview and focus group participants were selected from survey respondents who volunteered for follow up, and by personal, direct invitation to access perspectives that were underrepresented among survey volunteers (e.g., Queer-identifying producers occupying senior, decision-making roles).

Participants across all three methods (survey, focus groups, interviews) were encouraged to share the survey with their own industry contacts and professional networks to expand the potential sample population.

The terminology used in this report and in the collection of demographic and other information in the online survey is based on the Canada Media Fund's recently released Terminology Guide for Data Collection on Racialized and Indigenous Communities developed in 2020 by the Equity and Inclusion Data Collection (EIDC) round table.

For this study, the following definitions and demographic parameters were used to focus the research:

Diverse/Diversity: Differences based on ethnicity, gender, age, race, national origin, sexual orientation, and disability.

Equity-seeking: The term 'equity-seeking' is used in this report according to the EDIC's recommendations to refer to a broad diversity of communities and intersectional identities that have self-identified as experiencing barriers to sector access based on those identities (CMPA, 2020). The term 'equity-seeking' acknowledges that there are multiple points of privilege and/or marginalization that can affect someone's life and livelihood; it reflects systemic, on-going processes – not a permanent state or social location.

The term 'equity-seeking' is used in this report under one of two conditions:

- (1) When a set of intersectional identities reported reflects small sample size that would compromise the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality; and/or,

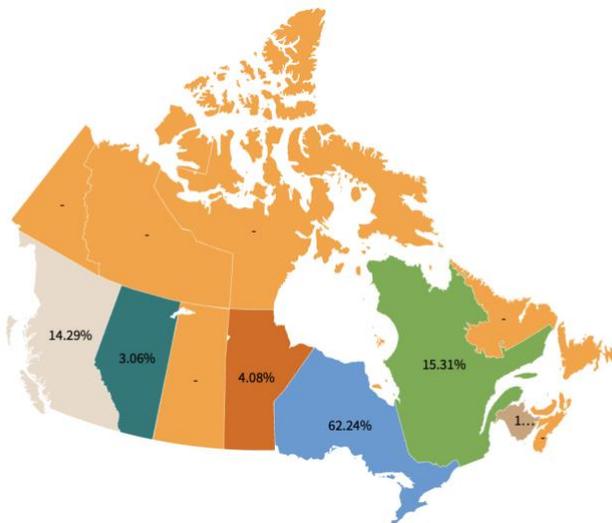
- (2) When the differences in survey responses between groups was not significant, and the aggregate of those groups was significantly different from sector hegemony.

Given the purpose of this preliminary research is to understand the ways diversity, equity, and inclusion operate in the sector, the most informative distinctions in the data were often found between participants who identify as members of communities that have historically experienced marginalization, and participants who did not identify in this way.

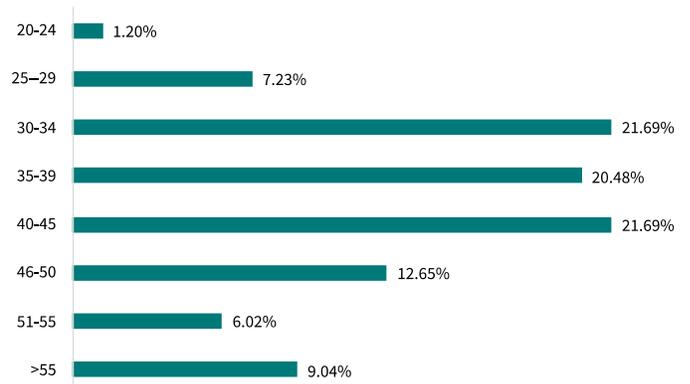
It is important to acknowledge that the consistency across the experiences reported by Black, People of Colour, Indigenous, 2SLGBTIQA+ and Persons with Disability in this study cannot be assumed across all settings. That is, it is expected that these communities, and the intersectional identities within these communities have experiences related to access in the sector that merit focused examination that goes beyond the scope of this initial research and would further support the development of specific interventions that meet the needs of each community.

Demographics

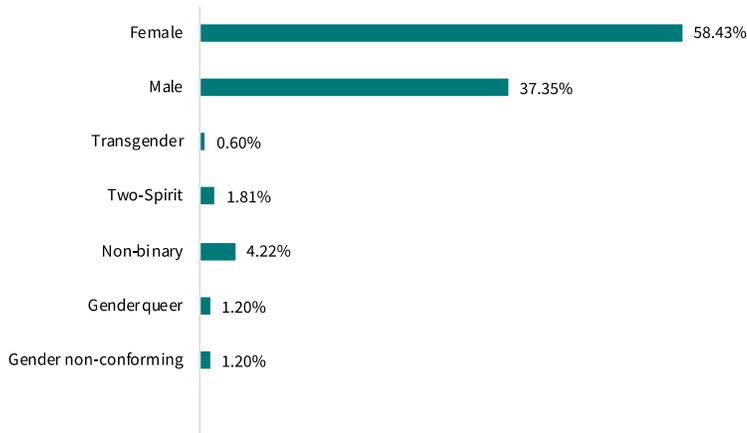
Location



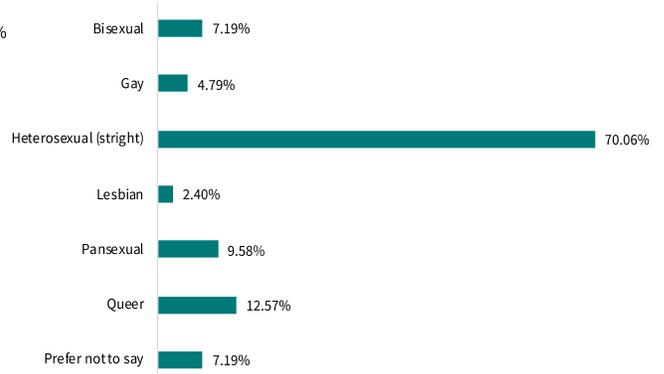
Age



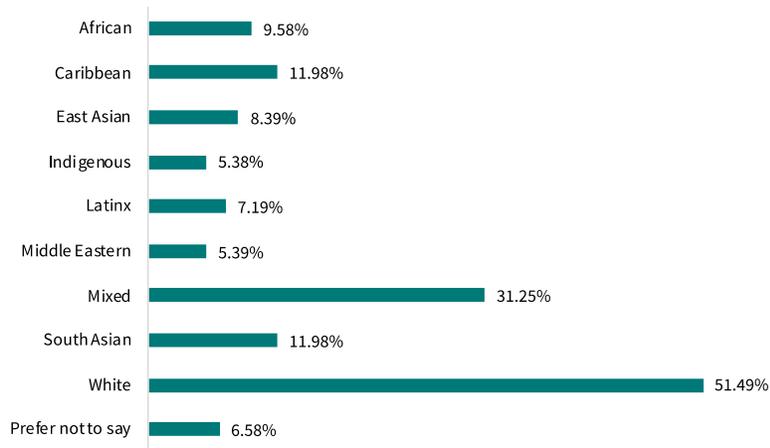
Gender



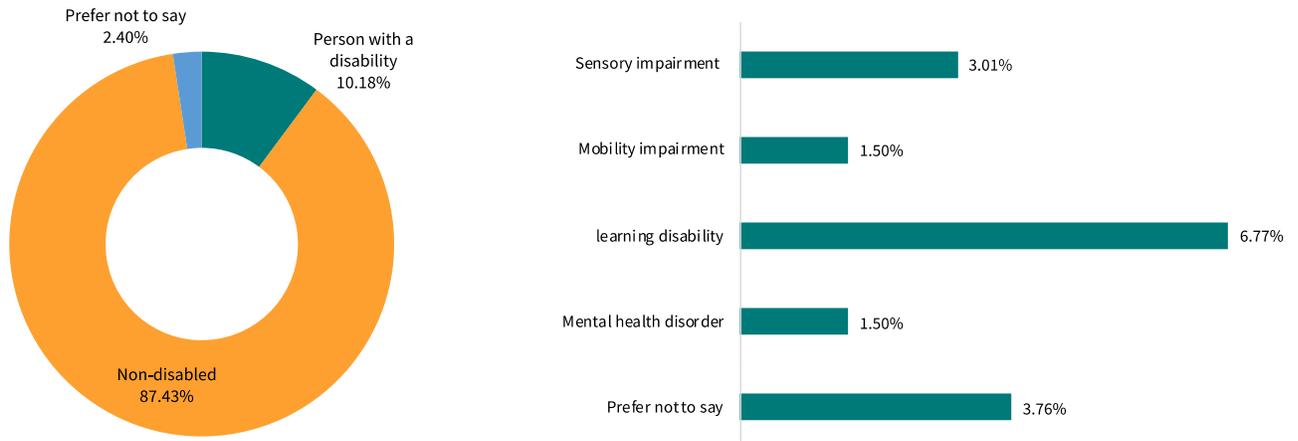
Sexual orientation



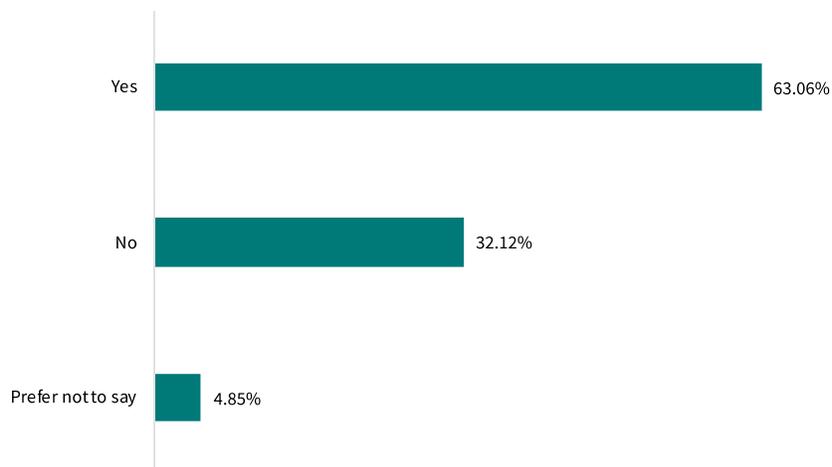
Ethnic background



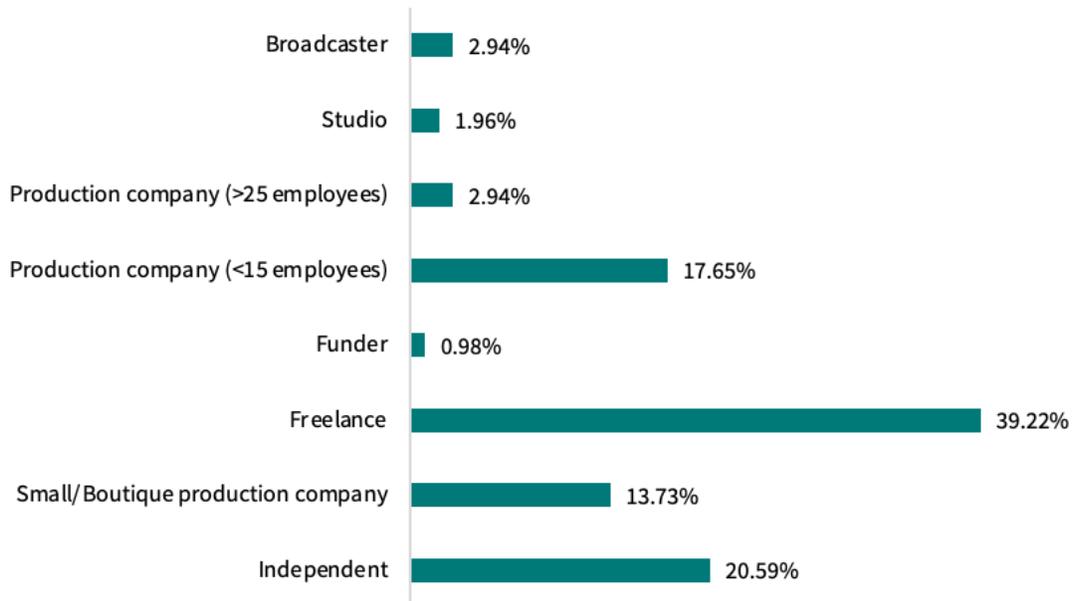
Persons with disability



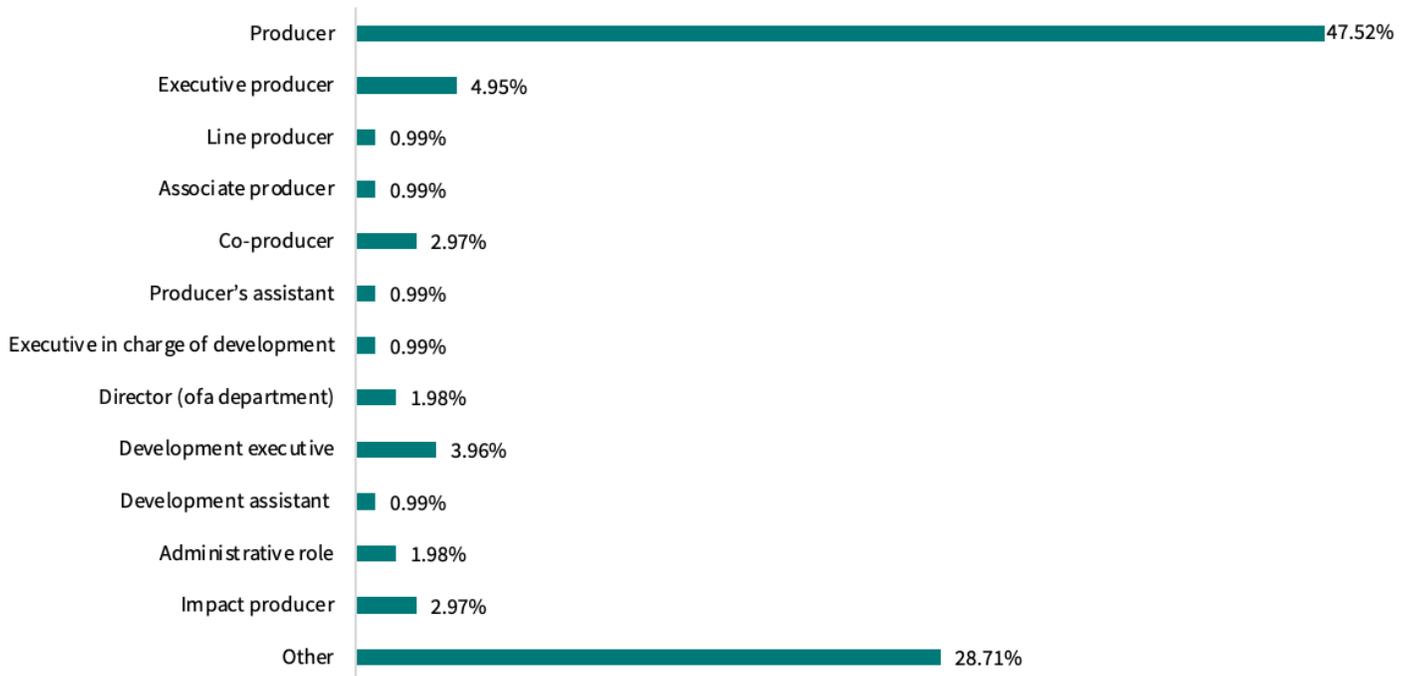
Do you identify as a person from a group that has underrepresented or is equity-seeking in the screen-based industries?



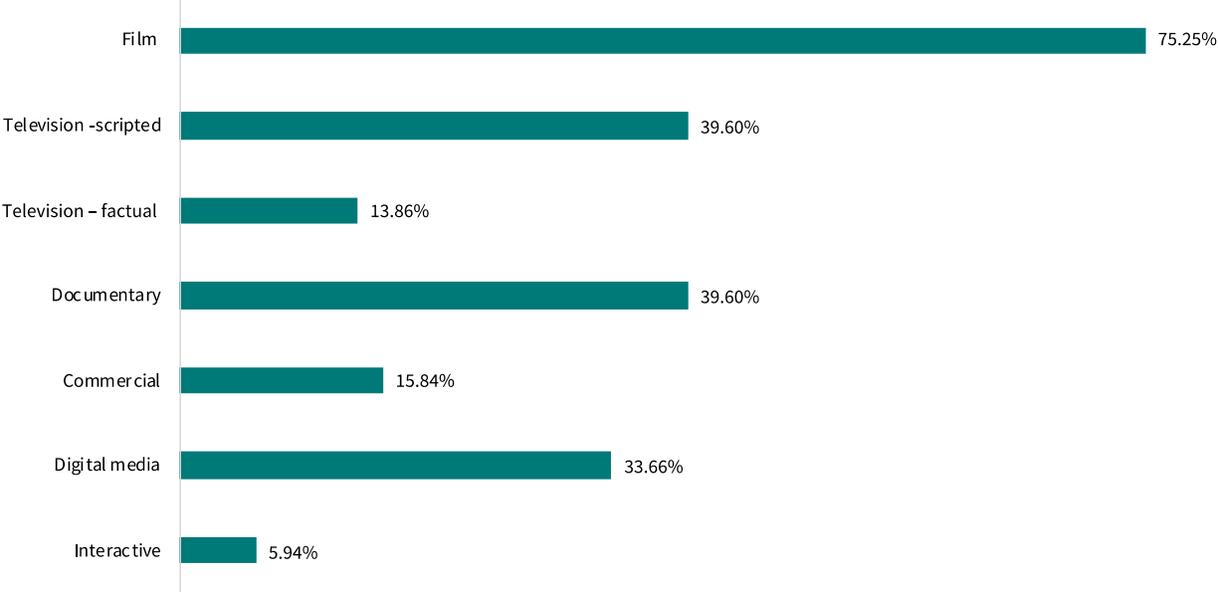
What is your primary (current) place of occupation?



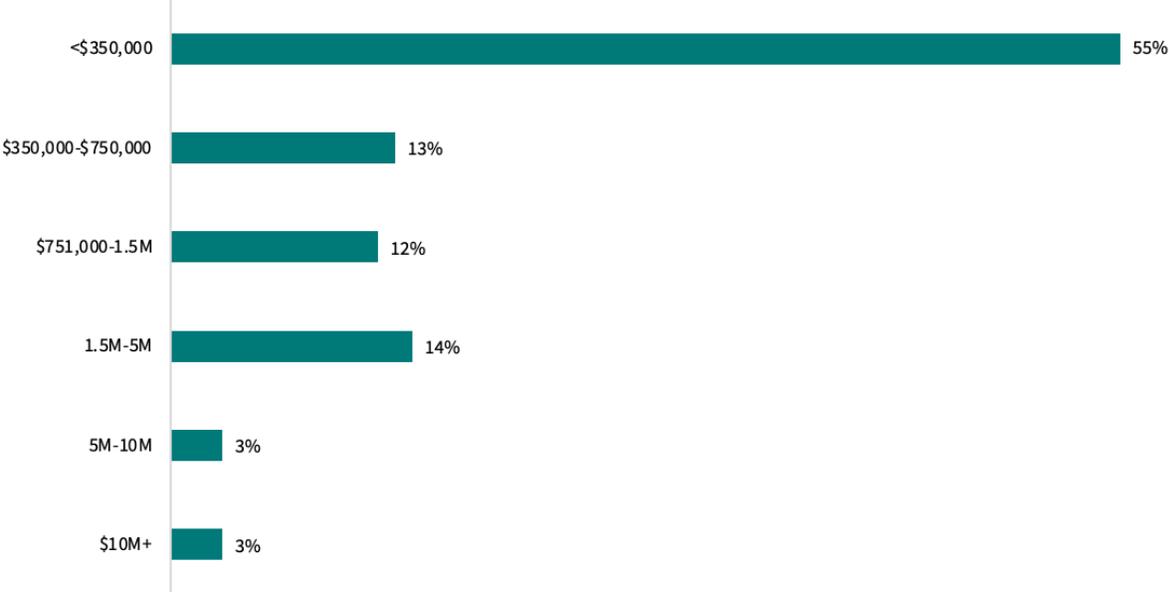
What is your primary role?



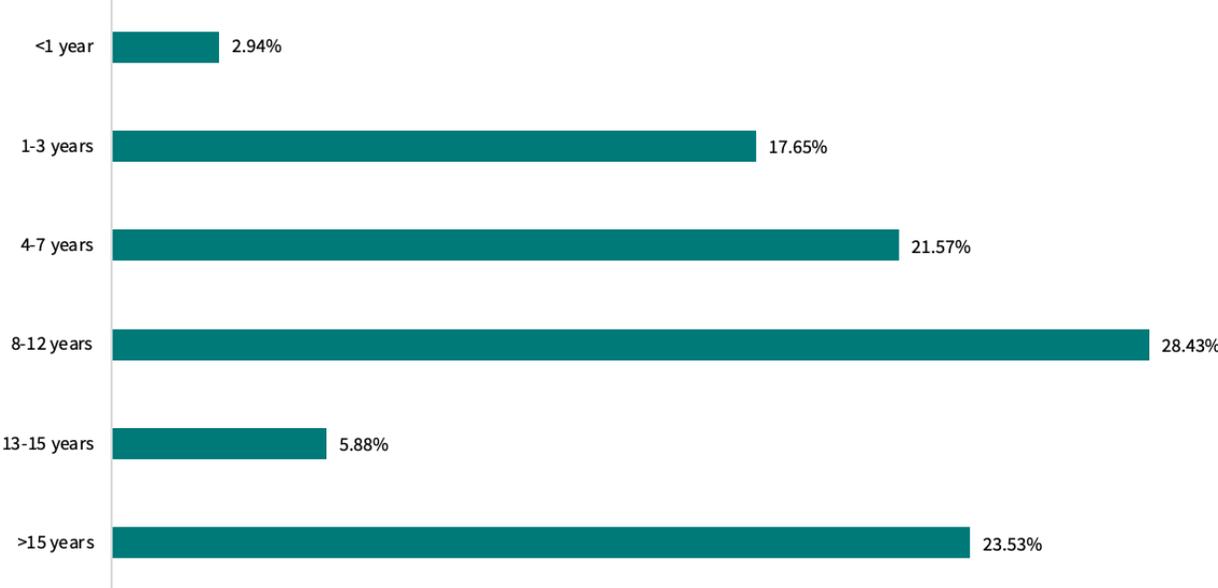
Which of the following industry sectors is/are your primary area of work/focus? (Select all that apply)



What size of budget do you tend to work with?



How many years have you been working in Film & Television?



Research Context & Limitations

Legacy of distrust

Identity information is not collected in the Canadian Film and TV Production sector and many equity-seeking participants are reluctant to self-identify due to long histories of oppression and discrimination. Without a benchmark, it is difficult to ascertain the representativeness of the study's sample population beyond Canada's Census (which uses different categories to describe sector and employment than are used by the sector at large).

Additionally, the oppressive experiences that have made it unsafe for equity-seeking professionals to self-identify are equally likely to discourage participation in these early research efforts (due to historic lack of trust). **Indeed, several producers and organizations declined participation citing the (especially recent) history of failed promises and unfulfilled commitments to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector.**

It is expected that consistently ethical research practices, observable actions paired with measurable accountability in response to this and other research will support improved participation in future research.

Inconsistent language, measures, and limited accountabilities

Limited funding has been committed to statistical research on the sector's workforce diversity, especially among producers, contributing to a lack of consistent definitions and measures of diversity and workforce composition. Currently, there is no benchmark against which to compare changes year-over-year to assess the (in)effectiveness of various diversity initiatives. Moreover, without standardized measures, it is difficult to define clear 'goals' for improvement.

Reporting

Participants in all phases of this research included members from a wide range of communities, reflecting a broad set of identities. The scope of this research, combined with the current workforce composition of Canada's screen sector, means that not all communities had sufficient participation to be differentiated in this reporting while maintaining anonymity. Further analysis did not reveal substantial differences in the data between equity-seeking groups but identified significant differences when the data were split between participants who identified as members of groups that have experienced marginalization and participants who did not. For this reason, most comparisons in this summary of findings are between the total participant population, and participants identifying as members of equity-seeking groups.

Importantly, the combined analysis of equity-seeking groups does not imply that all communities represented in this research share the same experiences, nor that it is safe to assume that identities, even within a particular community, can be consolidated.

This research explored DE&I at the sector-level, with the aim of documenting preliminary, benchmarking data about how the concepts of DE&I currently operate in the sector. At this level, participants' responses tended to cluster according to equity positionality. To show the magnitude of this discrepancy (i.e., between equity-seeking creatives and non-equity seeking creatives), this research segments the data according to participants' identification as members of communities that have experienced marginalization. Research focusing on

specific communities is essential to complement and expand upon the current study, to ensure interventions address the variable effects of systemic barriers to access.

Race was central to participant responses across all phases of the research. In many cases, race was the primary focus in how diversity was understood and operationalized, often operating as an anchoring variable to which other identity variables (e.g., sexual orientation) were added. Accordingly, much of the discussion that follows is from a racial lens, because this is what appeared in participants' responses.



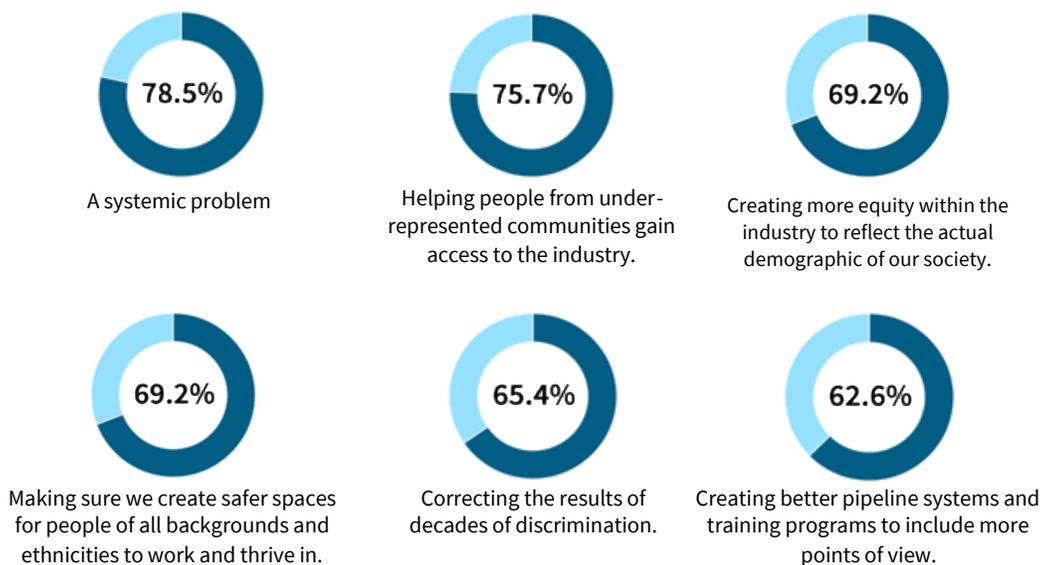
Summary of Findings

The following summarizes the key themes and important findings that emerged from both phases of the research. The complex nature of the sector necessitates a holistic approach to interpretation to combat enduring barriers to access that have benefited from the disconnectedness of sector stakeholders. For reference, a summary of survey findings by question can be found in the appendix.

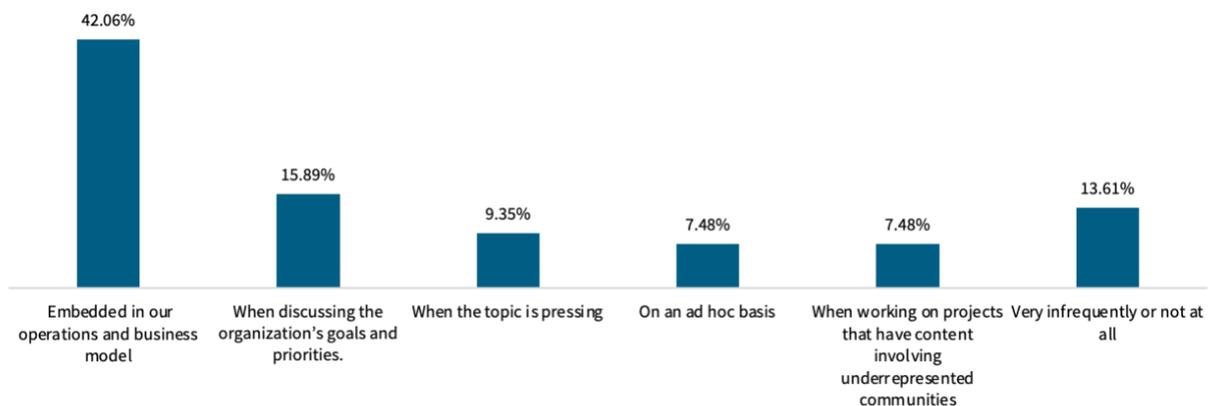
1. Definitions and practices about diversity, equity, and inclusion vary throughout the sector

To establish context, participants were invited to share their understandings of the terms ‘diversity’, ‘equity’, and ‘inclusion’, as both general concepts and the way these ideas are operationalized in the industry.

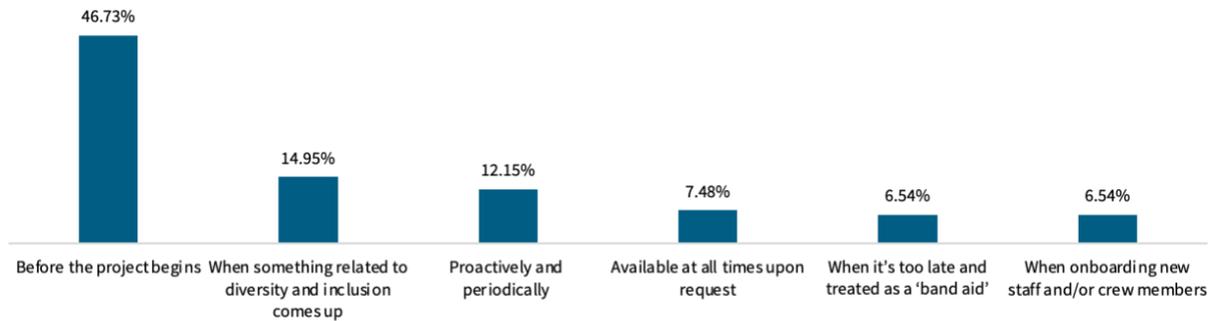
When it comes to the sector, survey participants indicated that issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion tended to be framed as:



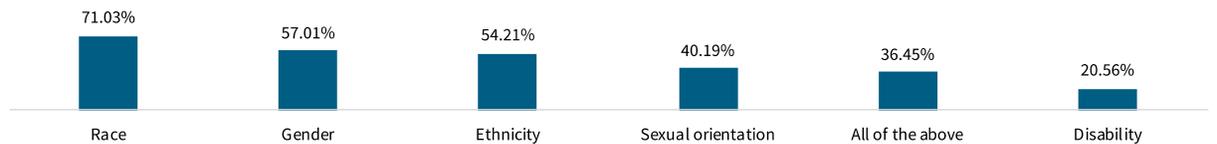
86.9% of participants indicated that diversity, equity, and inclusion are stated values and/or priority areas in their primary workplaces, and cited a focus on DE&I:



In the context of projects, survey participants reported the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion are typically part of the discussion:

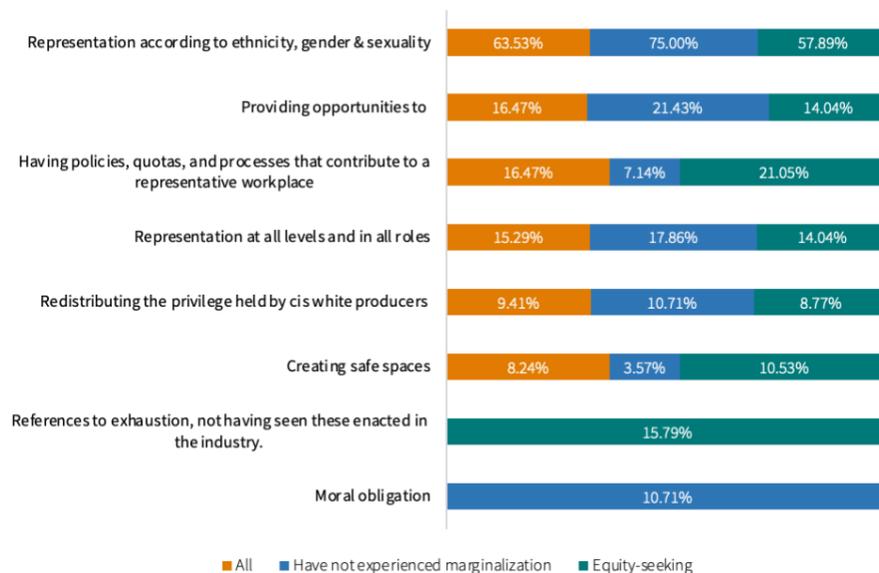


In addition, when matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion are in focus, survey participants reported a focus on the following concepts:



Participants were also invited to provide their own definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the form of open-ended survey responses. These definitions tended to be expansive and encompassing, with many participants taking care to list the qualities and identities that come to mind (e.g., Black, People of Colour, Indigenous; 2SLGBTIQA+). DE&I language that has gained traction in recent years was prevalent throughout these definitions.

While all participants focused on the notion of 'inclusion' to anchor their understanding of DE&I practices, there were observable differences in the details of these definitions between participants who self-identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization, and those who did not:



Participants who do *not* identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization (37.2%), definitions of DE&I and descriptions of inclusive practices focused on high level concepts.

- For example, most of these participants indicated the importance of ‘hiring inclusively’ and ‘giving everyone an opportunity’.
- When invited to elaborate on how these concepts are operationalized during the interviews and focus groups, nearly all participants focused on numbers – increasing the *number of people* in ‘all roles’ from various ‘equity-seeking’ groups.
 - It is worth noting this view of diversity as encompassing distinct groups, without attention to intersectionality.
- Also absent from these definitions were practical descriptions of how these aims were or could be achieved, or the specific practices they, themselves, enact.

In contrast, participants who *do* identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization (62.8%) tended to share holistic definitions of DE&I that included specific, practical examples of what inclusive practices look like.

- These descriptions tended to emphasize intersectionality, underscoring the challenges presented by policies that focus exclusively on numbers to reflect representation.
- These definitions also tended to include examples of the activities that producers and other decision-makers can take to encourage inclusive practices drawn from their own experiences of both navigating access for themselves and increasing access for others through their own projects.

These differences (conceptual definitions vs practical definitions) reflect a recurring contrast in narratives that emerged throughout the research, suggesting there is a difference between knowing the *language* of DE&I and being *literate* in these practices.

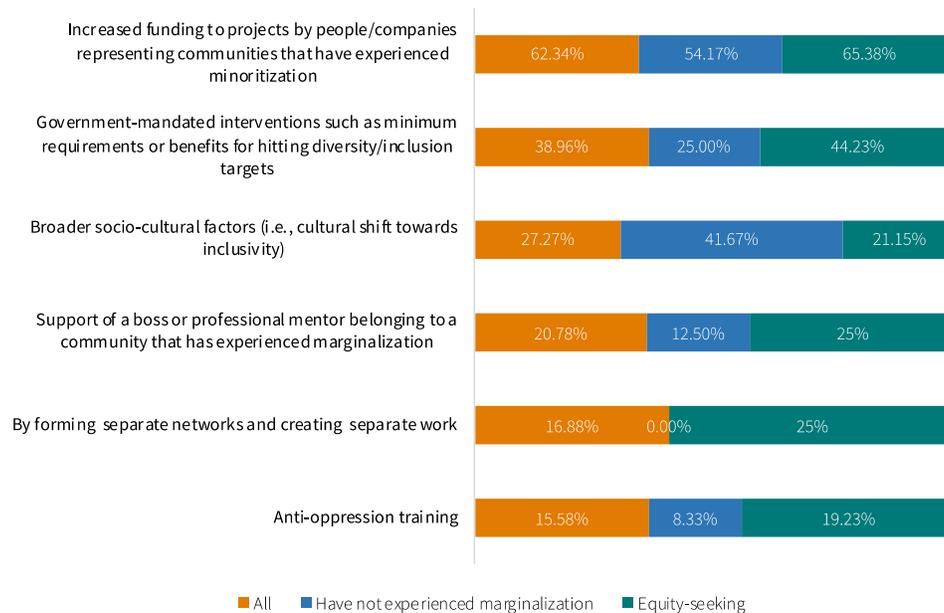
Language without literacy

The concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion have gained new levels of attention considering the social violences that gained more widespread awareness in 2020-2021. This has resulted in the development of new and evolving language, with more people becoming aware of diversity terminology.

Language about identity, diversity, inclusion, and equity was evident in the open-ended survey responses and throughout the interviews and focus groups. Significant differences seem to exist, however, in participants’ *literacy* when it comes to DE&I. The difference between being familiar with DE&I language and being *literate* was most obvious when participants were invited to share, pragmatically, the actions they were taking to increase diversity on their own projects or within their companies.

- For example, most respondents who did not identify as having experienced marginalization could share conceptually about their DE&I practices, but were unable to detail the actual steps taken, what seems to really work (or not) and why, or what makes a workplace more, or less safe for a diverse workforce.

Clear differences were also observed around which practices participants believed were most effective or made the most difference to having safe, equitable workplaces:



Language without literacy threatens to reinforce a superficial understanding of the issues surrounding DE&I, while creating a *perception of understanding*. Indeed, the interviews and focus groups suggested that this perception of understanding caused some participants to feel confident in the changes they were making, and less receptive to additional learning, without having the practical examples to demonstrate real efficacy.

‘Diversity’ is not inherently anti-racist or anti-oppressive

Open-ended responses to the survey, along with the testimonies shared in interviews and focus groups highlighted that the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion used in the sector take as normative white, cis, hetero identities, and persons without disability, and defines ‘diverse’ as identities that differ from these baselines. References to *‘normalizing’* diversity and including *‘opposite’* voices/perspectives were common, underscoring the assumption that what is *dominant* defines what is *normal*:



In the context of my workplace, it's diversity of experience, inclusion of opposite voices, equity of opportunity.

This idea of ‘normalizing’ (versus, for example, standardizing) fails to recognize how a legacy of access (e.g., to social and financial capital) and systemic barriers to access (i.e., racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression) informed the creation of the sector’s infrastructure and continue to maintain it. Moreover, this orientation assumes whiteness, cisness, heterosexuality, and persons without disability, and omits these identities from operationalized understandings of ‘diversity’.

Such language reflects a deficit lens – it describes people by what they are not instead of *who they are*. Indeed, there was a common misunderstanding among interviewees about the term ‘diverse’, which is an adjective, but was often used as a noun to describe an individual (i.e., “a diverse person”).

The centring of whiteness, cisness, heterosexuality, and persons without disability, also had implications to the ways interview and focus group participants of all identities described *practicing* inclusivity, such as “making room for”, “letting in”, or “giving opportunities”. This is not the language of disruption, rather, it seems to reinforce a system in which the various forms of sector capital (e.g., social capital, financial capital, creative capital) are the property of white, cis, hetero, and creatives without disability. This language, which signals implicit (even if well-meaning) beliefs belies other encumbering narratives shared by participants, including concerns about the increased competition for limited resources and opportunities that would result from ‘diversifying’ the workforce.

These nuances are important, because they point to the ways language is an incomplete indicator of understanding. And how using the ‘right’ language can overlook, and indeed, perpetuate barriers to access embedded in the sector’s understanding of DE&I, potentially limiting the prospect of sustainable change.

There is, therefore, considerable opportunity to use language as a vehicle for dialogue and collaboration by uprooting and exploring the range of assumptions held in concepts like ‘diversity’, ‘equity’, ‘inclusion’, ‘inclusive hiring’, and ‘access’.

 *Capacité d'accueillir, d'intégrer, de faire retenir et faire progresser les personnes aux origines et parcours atypiques.* (Survey participant)

2. Inclusion as an ‘achievement’ & ‘inclusive’ as a status

Participants of all identities acknowledged a growing awareness of the need for change and increasing desire to support the change, while acknowledging considerable limitations to an active and on-going commitment to this change.

Among these limitations was a clear theme in the way sector members and companies seem to situate themselves in relation to creating diverse, inclusive workplaces: **diversity appears to be treated as an ‘achievement’ and inclusion as a status that can be attained, rather than a set of continuous (and evolving) practices.** This framing seemed to shape the kinds of initiatives sector members prioritized, and for some, influenced expectations about the need for continuous learning, reflection, and improvement.

DE&I practices focus on numbers

The prevalent focus on numbers that characterizes many of the inclusive practices described by participants makes sense: numbers are a way to make tangible what can otherwise feel intangible, and they are a clear, seemingly objective way to promote accountability.

Participants identifying as having experienced marginalization expressed concern about an overemphasis on numbers such that ‘achieving’ a certain proportion of representation has become the *only* aim. That is, target

numbers are pursued without understanding *why* they are needed in the first place – what barriers to access exist, what different types of access are involved, and the ways these barriers to access persist *even with* a broader diversity of people occupying roles throughout the sector.

These numbers are limiting because they:

- Encourage a superficial understanding of diversity without attending to the multiple barriers and enablers to access that are mediated by identity, which contributes to an overestimation of the magnitude and pace positive change.
- Focus on individual creatives, in some ways placing accountability on the individual person, which risks making the lack of diversity an individual problem rather than a systemic issue.
- Risk encouraging tokenism by treating diversity as items on a checklist.
- Miss the need for changes to the workplace environment, which means potentially introducing more creatives into environments that feel emotionally and psychologically unsafe.
- Associate representation with community projects. For example, understanding the importance of having the stories of a particular community told by members of that community, but not extending the importance of diverse representation across all projects. The focus on numbers seems to include when ‘diversity targets’ do and do not matter.
- Frame the ‘problem’ as singular, without acknowledging (and addressing) the ecosystem of interacting issues that manifest systemic barriers to access.

“...while Calgary is the third most diverse city in Canada, at approximately 35% visible minorities, that proportion is MUCH LESS in the film industry...when these quotas are applied...it causes problems as their design doesn't reflect our locales. In fact, it actually tokenizes the minoritized filmmakers in our community, as their identity's value is "inflated" due to scarcity.”
(Survey participant)

A majority of Black, People of Colour and Indigenous participants, and participants identifying as members of 2SLGBTIQ+ communities shared sector experiences of DE&I as ‘lip-service’ rather than systemic and enduring change.

- Some of this was attributed to a selection of decision-makers who, during their own interviews, indicated that hard work and talent prevailed over racial and other biases.
- A more nuanced oversimplification of DE&I was its framing as a ‘cause’ - a belief shared by 33.64% of survey participants. Important differences in the meaning behind DE&I as a cause were revealed through participant focus groups: white participants who held this view expressed it as a cause that was *external to them*, something they could opt-into or out of. In contrast, for participants who identified as members of communities that experience marginalization, framing DE&I as a cause seemed more like an attempt to contain it; to facilitate communication about something that is complex and deeply rooted in the social constructs that extend well beyond the sector.
- In other cases, the reactivity of efforts made to support DE&I (e.g., the narrow allocation of funding to specific identity groups) seem to reinforce and even reward DE&I as a status to achieve, rather than an on-going practice.
- Similar observations were made of efforts to ‘increase diversity in hiring’ – while this might aid in bringing greater representation to the workforce *in this moment*, doing so does not address the beliefs, language, and practices that perpetuate the insularity and exclusivity of the sector.

Urgency based in fear perpetuates box-checking and tokenism

63.9% of survey participants confirmed having DE&I programs or strategies in place at their primary workplaces, with the aims of “making a workplace that is inclusive and safe for everyone” (42.99%) and “contributing to making the industry more equitable” (22.43%).

Participants reported these efforts most tended to focus on:

- Recruiting creatives and crew from underrepresented communities (57.94%)
- Ensuring accurate and informed representation of stories/peoples from underrepresented communities (44.86%)
- Developing a pipeline of projects reflecting diverse voices/perspectives/stories (37.38%)

Interestingly, despite these stated efforts, focus group and interview participants had difficulty detailing specific activities undertaken to pursue these aims (e.g., specific steps to recruiting creatives from underrepresented communities). Moreover, contrary to this initial reporting, **76.57% of participants disagreed with the statement that “most people in the industry demonstrate commitment to creating diverse and inclusive environments”.**

Inquiry into these competing claims revealed conceptual commitments to change, that participants suggested are compelled by the need to ‘get out of discomfort’ and being ‘afraid of being on the wrong side of history’.

- For some white participants, these feelings of discomfort felt implicating. This increased awareness of the role they occupy in the need for change invited constructive reflection, self-analysis, and an observable commitment to change within their scope of influence. For example, several participants detailed commitments (with examples) to engaging in mentorship, offering paid internships on every project, partnering with creatives from historically marginalized communities, and investing in the development of emerging Black, People of Colour, and Indigenous creatives.
- Other white participants indicated that an urgency to *reduce the discomfort* was a strong motivator for action.

Participants detailed a difference between systemic change and changes that reduce discomfort. Namely, that a focus on reducing discomfort encourages a transactional approach to change and activities that remain superficial (e.g., having a policy without acting on it, hiring a Person of Colour). Participants described two extremes to the implications of such actions: at best, superficial and/or passive activities do not work toward long-term resolution, while at worst, these activities actively harm members of equity-seeking communities.

A major challenge that seems to be perpetuating these different approaches is an uncertainty about their differences. According to participants, this is especially true considering the responses to calls for equity actions made by funders and major broadcasters that seem to prioritize ‘adding numbers’ and ‘having policies’ without addressing the structural oppressions that are embedded into the systems that characterize the functioning of the sector, and the equivalent processes within screen media companies.

Fearing mistakes

Although 76.23% of survey participants confirmed feeling “personally able to address/influence diversity and inclusion”, participants’ general inability to offer specific examples of *how* they enact change in their workplaces led to questions about response motivations.

57.34% of survey participants reported observing or experiencing “being afraid to do or say the wrong thing”, and 44% of interview and focus group participants who did not identify as members of communities that have

experienced marginalization referred to **feelings of paralysis** – an acute sense of urgency for change was complicated by the embeddedness of racism and systemic oppression in society as whole (not only the industry), leaving them **unsure about what to do, and whether their efforts can make a difference**.

- For these white, cis, hetero participants, the feeling of personal implication activated a fear that their lack of knowledge or understanding would lead to ‘doing the wrong thing’ and inflicting further harms. In a minority of participants, this emerged as defensiveness (e.g., saying that *they*, themselves, had not created these barriers, calling for greater empathy / understanding because it ‘wasn’t them’).
 - Though in some cases well-meaning, these orientations problematically reinforce divisions among creatives in the sector whereby equity-seeking creatives are excluded *by* the issues of systemic racism, sexism, and other oppressions, and creatives who comprise the dominant sector identities are excluded *from* addressing these issues.
- Optimistically, a larger proportion of participants who did not identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization, felt compelled to action by this implication but struggled to understand the tangible steps they might take to create change. These participants were conceptually ‘bought-in’, but the access enabled by their identities made it difficult to understand the variety of access touchpoints that lead to ‘being at the table’.
 - This seems to be one of the factors reinforcing a focus on numbers (i.e., number of people who identify in different ways and occupy various roles), due to their tangibility, without recognizing the barriers to social capital, skill development, mentorship, equipment, etc. that lead to success in those roles.
- Fearfulness about making mistakes was also observed as a consequence of the ‘achievement’ orientation toward DE&I held by the sector. The binary treatment of DE&I as a status, along with the permanence of that status that comes with labelling, undermines learning because mistakes and ‘getting it wrong’ threaten to garner reputation-damaging labels. Consequently, rewarding inclusion and safety as an achievement creates a cycle of guilt, shame, and then fear around acknowledging ‘not knowing’, making mistakes, and learning. **Moreover, when funding is attached to the ‘achievement’ of DE&I, creatives experience a material loss for approaching DE&I as a continuous process – ironically, being penalized for taking the steps that will lead to real and enduring change.**

Accountability is murky

Overall, an overwhelming majority of participants (89.23%) independent of identity, felt that more support (e.g., tools, resources) should be provided to production companies to help increase diversity and inclusion. While the provision of resources is important, bigger questions about accountability emerged during the focus groups, namely, who is responsible for taking action and how these actions are reinforced.

Who is responsible for creating and sustaining change?

The sector is governed by a complex mixture of social agreements, relationships, politics, gatekeepers, and stakeholders. Participants recognized that real change cannot be limited to a single group. In fact, current barriers to progress might reside in efforts to assign one or two groups as the *most* responsible, or to determine ‘who’ should move ‘first’. Systemic change often requires synchronous effort across all parties, and participants expressed nearly unanimous agreement that sustainable change results from the combined effects of large, structural interventions and individual, daily, project-based commitments that are upheld.

Consensus was also observed among participants that while interventions are required simultaneously and at all levels, major stakeholders (e.g., large broadcasters, networks, and production companies) and key

gatekeepers (e.g., funders, unions) play a crucial role in both redistributing power (since power is money) and in forcing accountability through policy and funding.

How is the sector held accountable for change?

As previously outlined, participants recognized the important role of structural guardrails that will mandate, motivate, and reward change efforts. The difficulty, however, is a tendency toward incomplete and superficial interventions (see [Urgency based in fear perpetuates box checking and tokenism](#)) and a generalized inability to recognize the insufficiency of these solutions (i.e., not recognizing that adding more numbers addresses current workforce composition without addressing the barriers that threaten to reproduce this problem in the future).

- Adding to this difficulty is that a typical means of introducing accountability – the assignment of target metrics – can (and current seem to) perpetuate an incomplete understanding of DE&I.
- Missing from these metrics are measures of processes that support DE&I and indicators of progress. Indeed, a more comprehensive definition of DE&I (that includes ways of working, qualitative aspects of work environments, contents of creative outputs, etc.) seems necessary, which would not only provide more accountability touchpoints, but would encourage engaging DE&I efforts as a learning process (not an achievement).

3. Scarcity & deficit narratives reify oppressive power dynamics

The narratives of scarcity and deficit are common throughout the sector. While based in truth (i.e., funding and other resources are limited), these narratives augment success narratives about talent and hard work (i.e., it is so difficult to be successful in this industry that those who are *must be* the *most* talented, hardworking, etc.).

The prolonged hegemony of the white cis male in the sector seems to have established a narrow set of assumptions about where talent resides (white cis males) and what talent looks like (i.e., what white cis males create). This conflation of identity and talent has led to sector infrastructure designed to support a narrow definition of success, with predictable consequences: feelings of ownership over funding and resources that have regularly been available to white cis (mostly) male creatives, a seeming overestimation of the ‘risk’ involved in investing in and supporting creatives who depart from this hegemonic identity, and a resultant reticence to investing in other stories, perspectives, and creative talent.

Survival before Equity

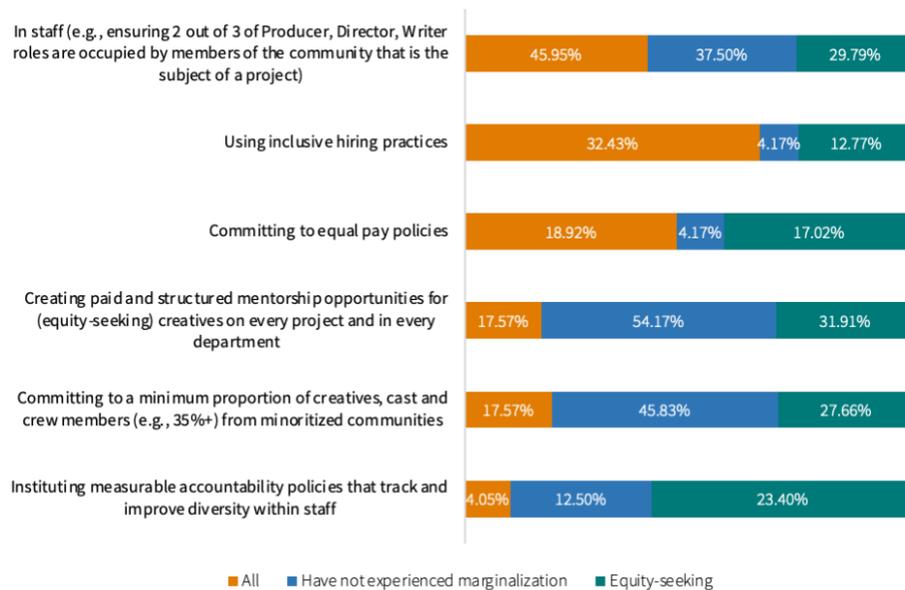
The pace and competitive culture of the sector was central to most DE&I barriers discussed by participants. While this is, in part, simply the nature of the business (fast-paced, limited resources), the need to prioritize oneself *and one’s network* in allocating opportunities underscores another important finding that is becoming increasingly clear:

The importance of diversity is not unanimously accepted as essential to the quality of creative work.

That is, while participants expressed that prioritizing diversity was ‘the right thing to do’ and 96% of survey respondents, regardless of identity, indicated that increasing diversity would benefit their work, and 100% agreed it would benefit the sector, there was little mention by white, cis, hetero participants (who comprise most of the sector workforce) of the *creative value of diversity*. Indeed, when asked about their experiences

working on more diverse teams, less than 3% of white cis hetero participants referred to improved quality or creativity of outputs was among the benefits.

These findings seem to help clarify the discordant survey results in which participants agree diversity is important, while at the same time feeling challenged by the notion of accountability to inclusive practices – especially those with financial implications.



Participants elaborated on these findings in both the interviews and the open-ended survey questions.

“Get the project completed and if we have time to ensure that underrepresented people are included it is fully endorsed.” (Survey participant)

“We are still at the stage where we need funding for projects and operations, before we can think about hiring others.” (Survey participant)

“First and foremost, getting the project funded is the priority. So, it’s challenging to guarantee these two directives. It’s possible to give best efforts in these sections, realistically, until there is more equitably across the entire industry.” (Survey participant)

“Difficulty in creating paid mentorship opportunities without the assistance of a network or other partner to help subsidize. Development and production budgets tend to be so tight (or financed at a deficit) that they cannot support paid mentorships in every department.” (Survey participant)

This position underscores one of the strongest narratives uncovered so far, which is the scarcity of resources, and an apprehension that a redistribution of resources will threaten the livelihood of others in the sector. It is from this position that inclusive practices are approached with an attitude of ‘when I have enough, then I can help others’ (‘I have to feed myself first’).

It is this same narrative that seems to underlie the tendency to prioritize representation for ‘diverse projects’ (a term used to describe stories that centre characters who are not white, cis, hetero, or persons without

disability). In fact, **for many participants, the ‘place’ for diversity was only these projects**, with several participants expressing a sense of ownership over current, mainstream stories.

This binary approach to ‘who’s story belongs to whom’ and therefore ‘who does (and doesn’t) belong in which spaces’ offers insight into the ‘rights’ several participants feel are at risk, and the internalized discomforts they hold about changing the sector’s current ways of working. These insights also help clarify the tendency for more than half of participants to express conceptual understanding of diversity and inclusion without implicating themselves in specific inclusive practices or other commitments to support change.

Funding and lack of risk-taking

Funding barriers were a primary concern across all participant groups, who also cited the importance of sector-level interventions to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion:

Increased funding to projects by people/companies representing communities that have experienced marginalization	62.34%
Industry mentorship programs	41.56%
Government-mandated interventions such as minimum requirements or benefits for hitting diversity/inclusion targets	38.96%
Diversity & gender parity policies/programs	35.06%

How barriers to funding affected efforts to support diversity and inclusion, however, and *what* those barriers were, varied significantly across participants. These variations were most evident between participants who identified as members of communities that have experienced marginalization, and those who did not.

Participants who identified as members of communities that have experienced marginalization identified an overall lack of access to funding as a central indicator of the sector’s attitude toward DE&I.

These barriers to access referred to the allocation of funds, and the processes and criteria that govern who can apply for different types of funding and other resources.

- Participants observed that the criteria for funding eligibility seem based on traditional pathways to sector entry and navigation, assuming a level of sector social capital and paid work experience that often differ for members of communities that have experienced marginalization. These differing pathways and access to critical sources of capital (social, financial, etc.) creates a systematic disadvantage for these participants.

Recent efforts made by funders to allocate resources to creative communities that have been underrepresented in the sector were appreciated, but also received with some apprehension.

- Participants reported observing a general lack of understanding by sector gatekeepers about the multiple types of ‘access’ involved in creating a truly diverse and inclusive sector, leading to their concern that the sudden availability of funds might be viewed as a sufficient intervention to reconcile the systemic inequities they experience.
- Recurring barriers to access, however, can influence skill development, which can mean not all funding recipients are set up to succeed against the criteria the sector uses to evaluate the quality of creative outputs. This is an important observation that goes beyond objective skill level and is particularly problematic when these criteria are used to award funding, to determine the kinds of supports that a funded project might require to be successful, and when evaluating the outputs of funded projects.

- Participants voiced strong concerns about the systemic implications of recent approaches – without acknowledging the barriers to access that have characterized the career paths of many diverse creatives, the sudden influx of funding availability comes without the wrap-around supports that would enable success (e.g., support network, further development). **Participants reflected on how these partial efforts reliably create barriers that threaten to reinforce the dangerous narrative of diverse creatives being ‘less talented’, ‘less able’, and higher risk.**

“As emerging BIPOC, I find it very difficult to find BIPOC producers and prodco's that are established with a track record that can come on board a project and help secure financing as partners and collaborators. At this advanced level, they are far and few in between and they have their own projects and priorities. To a large extent, this is the result of decades of neglect by the industry to build career advancement opportunities for marginalized content creators.”

Inclusion/exclusion binary oversimplifies oppression for creatives who haven't experienced it

Participants who did not identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization invoked the issue of funding in a different way, which also surfaced with a counternarrative that emerged periodically about the definitions of oppression and discrimination. Some white cis participants who had not experienced systemic marginalization as a function of their identities had difficulty differentiating between the access they had *earned*, and the access they had *inherited* as members of the hegemonic sector culture. This confusion led some participants to question DE&I policies and practices that seek to reduce barriers to access for communities that have historically experienced marginalization, citing that these policies have the effect of ‘reverse racism’ and of blocking them from accessing resources they believed they have a right to.

- While there was an overall sense that resources are scarce, ‘lack of funding’ was often referenced by these participants to explain why a commitment to inclusive practices felt undesirable. These participants more often expressed concerns about feeling excluded from funds allocated to specific communities (especially recent funding set up for creatives who identify as Black, People of Colour and Indigenous) but did not demonstrate awareness of the barriers to access faced by members of those communities when it came to core funding.

“It's now become about your skin colour, gender, or sexual orientation. They've stopped asking about your experience or the project or asking tough questions about a system that has long being inequitable (to everyone except a handful of producers). As a white facing male, I'm now told openly by these funders that I need to be wiped out, they google my picture so I'm ineligible, that I've got nothing to say or add anymore. Openly and without fear. These are the same people 'fixing' the system.” (Survey participant)

This lack of awareness seemed to perpetuate a narrative that inclusive practices were ‘exclusive’ of them, contributing to the idea that the jobs and opportunities they currently rely on would be placed at risk by diversity and inclusion initiatives.

- Some white cis participants felt this was true but appropriate – increased competition is the reality of having a larger number of talented people vying for the same resources, and that is not a reason to avoid addressing barriers.

- 57.34% of survey participants reported observing or experiencing concerns about increased competition for job, funding, and/or other resources
- Others discussed their feelings that these were jobs and opportunities they had earned and have a right to and expressed (the misunderstanding) that inclusion practices would ‘bring in’ less qualified talent.
 - 54.05% of survey participants reported concerns that programs privileging certain identities will unfairly mitigate access to jobs, funding, and/or other resources.

Racism, sexism, queer phobia, ableism, and other forms of oppression require power and prejudice. Given the white cis hegemony of the sector, notions of ‘reverse racism’ or ‘reverse oppression’ are false, because power remains held by white cis hetero identities.

Funding and access to resources is central to the issue of diversity and inclusion, and to understand and address its role in supporting a diverse and inclusive sector, it is essential to expand the conversation about funding to the issue of ‘access’. Equally, it is important to understand that the topic of funding is experienced differently by different people, and that references to funding, talent, and quality can be indicators to deeper feelings of personal threat (to one’s livelihood, for example). To create sustainable change, it is important to unpack these narratives to identify the forces at work in perpetuating and sustaining the systems and processes currently in place that go beyond ‘talent’, ‘hard work’ and ‘funding’.

Fighting for freedom vs fighting for privilege

Scarcity and deficit narratives revealed further consequences for creatives who have historically experienced marginalization in the form of *internalized oppression*.

- Participants frequently shared experiences involving other creatives who have achieved success according to the sector’s hegemonic culture, who reproduce the harms delivered to them and pass oppression on to others. Participants described some of the ‘old guard’ – who endured violences and oppressions and ‘paved the way’ for future generations of creatives - as ‘wearing it like a badge of honour’.
- This sentiment was corroborated by some of the more experienced participants who framed it as ‘protective’, suggesting that their role in sustaining barriers to access helps prevent emerging creatives from ‘getting ahead without having the skills’. Some of the more experienced female-identifying participants felt their navigation of sector barriers is how they earned access. Barriers, therefore, serve the function of selecting the talent the ‘deserves’ to be there.

These experiences highlight the difference between fighting for freedom, which seeks to dismantle systemic barriers to access that unjustly limit creatives based on identity, and fighting for *privilege*, in which individuals seek to gain some of the social currency (and resultant opportunities) defined by hegemonic culture.

4. Systemic biases are self-reinforcing

Underlying the observations made throughout this research, and creating the most enduring obstacles to change, is the taken-for-grantedness of many sector practices (including language) that centres white, cis, hetero, and persons without disability as normative. These assumptions lead to misaligned, albeit earnest, attempts to engage in inclusive practices without understanding what makes the environment exclusive in the first place.

White, cis, heteronormativity defines what ‘good’ looks like

The decades-long dominance of white, cis, hetero, creatives without disability in the sector has meant that quality is defined by the cultural norms of those populations. Interviews with participants across all demographics clarified, that **the continued privileging of these ways of evaluating work quality can lead to other stories and ways of storytelling being mislabelled as underdeveloped or of lower quality, and the creatives behind those stories as ‘less talented’.**

- Participants detailed increased expectations placed on producers and creatives from communities that have historically experienced marginalization (i.e., needing more experience, having to prove oneself at scale before attempting a larger project).
- This was not limited to size and scope of projects, but also to the content of those projects: storylines departing from traditional white cis heteronormative narratives are perceived as ‘niche’, and of interest to small, highly specific audiences. Participants highlighted the ways this feedback makes identity the story, often missing the actual story and its appeal based on a shared human experience.
 - The reduction of stories to identity variables also seems to perpetuate another form of box-checking and tokenism. Participants from communities that have experienced marginalization shared having projects turned down because the box of representation had already been checked by another project (e.g., ‘we’ve already done a show with a queer character’). This occurred independently of the actual storyline, often focusing instead on the identity of the story’s characters.

“Canada is conservative and protectionist. They won’t take risks and promote before they’re ready and let them learn on the job.”
(Survey participant)

Participants explained that these narrow definitions of quality also infiltrate the development of creative *practices*, such as screenwriting. Development programs, which remain difficult to access, are designed to reproduce the methods of storytelling that have historically been successful – without questioning the ways this success has been tested and evaluated.

A faulty justification of ‘limited diverse talent’

Participant interviews, focus groups, and open-ended responses to survey questions offered a clear example of how systemic barriers to access manifest at the individual producer level or project level to impede DE&I efforts, in the form of a story about the ‘lack of diverse talent’. As an absolute judgment, participants generally agreed that it is false to say that diverse talent does not exist (though some participants did hold prejudiced beliefs about ‘who’ is and is not talented). However, the observation that there are fewer creatives in the sector workforce who identify as members of communities that have historically experienced marginalization, is true.

The trouble with the using the fact of underrepresentation of equity-seeking creatives in the sector to *explain* individual limitations to creating more diverse workplaces, is that creatives identifying as members of communities who have historically experienced marginalization are not fully booked. Moreover, sector research focused on emerging creatives reveal a significant pool of diverse creatives who are under-funded and under-employed (POV, 2019).

The persistence of the ‘limited available talent’ narrative, therefore, seems to be the product of interacting structural issues:

- Systemic barriers to access at every stage of career development limits the number of diverse creatives who gain proximity to the sector, and to various roles within the sector. This limits the size of the talent pool sector members are aware of.
- The networked nature of sector employment, combined with the pace and stakes of production, mean most creatives look to their own networks for talent. Participants commonly revealed the homogeneity of their professional networks and expressed uncertainty about how to expand those networks to be more representative. This makes it more difficult to connect with creatives outside of one’s network and means placing trust in someone ‘unknown’. This is perceived as a significant risk, which participants referred to as governing their future career prospects.
 - 68.42% of survey participants reported a lack of diversity in professional networks (not having someone to hire) as a barrier to increasing workforce diversity.
- Hegemonic definitions of creative quality, some of which appear to conflate talent with identity, lead to the perception of diverse creatives as ‘higher risk’ – which participants indicated occurred independently of actual talent or experience. Participants explain that, combined with the ‘unknown’ of collaborating with creatives outside of one’s network, the perceived ‘higher risk’ of diverse creatives further raised the stakes.
 - 61.84% of survey participants reported observing or experiencing concern about the caliber of talent or experience of diverse creatives.
- Funding and development program criteria are shaped by the sector’s hegemonic culture, privileging access for white cis hetero creatives. This means that diverse creatives who ‘break in’ to the sector and ‘stay in’ also receive fewer supported opportunities to develop their craft and technical skills. Consequently, participants with more sector experience could detail experiences in which creatives who are new to their workplaces did not have the level of knowledge, skill, or experience they expected. This reinforced some participants’ preference for working with people they already know, and in more extreme cases, seemed to further conflate talent and identity.

“...it is difficult to hire experienced crew at even the best of times. So, despite our best intentions to hire diverse crews, there are some roles where we may have few choices of available applicants, at which point you must hire who is available...regardless of inclusion policies...” (Survey participant)

Participant testimonies culminated to reflect a self-reinforcing cycle whereby structural inequalities (e.g., access to networks, work experience, funding, development) reinforce a narrative that shapes the actions of individual producers and other creatives (i.e., working within one’s network, risk-aversion), which reinforce structural barriers and limit opportunities to disrupt these narratives.

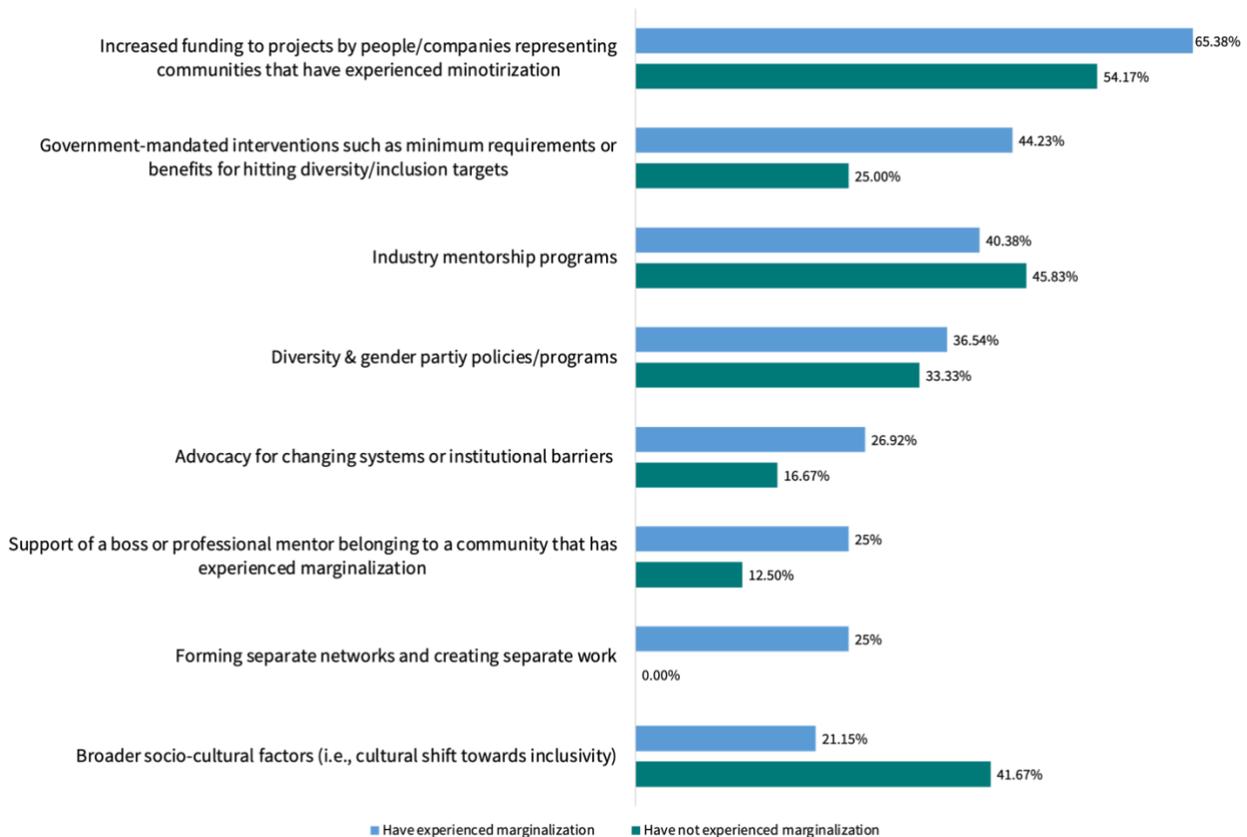
5. Mismatch between needs, interventions & follow through

A significant priority of this research involved identifying the pathways producers are taking to create inclusive workplaces and increase workforce representation. 72.73% of survey participants indicated engaging in inclusive practices *today* that they were not doing two or more years ago. Interviews clarified that some of these practices were not entirely new but involved becoming more intentional about consistently applying them. Participants offered the following activities as most effective in creating diverse and inclusive workplaces:

- Making an increased effort to diversify new hires
- Expanding one’s personal network to build relationships with people of different identities.
- Seeking to work with vendors and other partners who share the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Leveraging hiring tools that enable access to more representative talent (e.g., HireBIPOC.ca).
- When available, using protocols and practice documents to support engaging with different communities (e.g., On-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories).
- Trying to have more open conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Looking at an organization’s processes to explore where a workplace might be systematically reinforcing barriers to access (e.g., examine hiring practices when a set is all white).

Interventions do not match needs

Expanding on these reported practices, survey responses quantified considerable differences in the interventions considered most effective by participants identifying as members of communities that have historically experienced marginalization, and participants who did not.



Notably, participants who have experienced marginalization highlighted the relationship between policy-based interventions (e.g., increased funding, government-mandated interventions) and the individual practices that increase access to the social currencies (connections, relationships, trust) that govern sector navigation (i.e., mentorship programs, support of a boss or professional mentor). Significantly, these participants underscored the importance of representation at the level of relationship support – prioritizing a professional member belonging to a shared community, for example.

One of the most remarkable differences in perspectives involved the need for equity-seeking creatives to establish **alternative spaces** (i.e., forming separate networks and creating separate work). This strategy was not recognized at all by participants who have not experienced marginalization.

Participants from communities that face systemic sector barriers to access elaborated on the importance of alternative spaces during the interviews and focus groups by emphasizing their role in providing safety, building resilience in response to frequent harms experienced in the sector, and enabling authenticity (i.e., versus ‘code switching’², self-surveillance and monitoring).

Meanwhile, survey participants who have not experienced marginalization based on their identities showed a preference for interventions that focused less on individual implications: increased funding, industry-run mentorships, broader socio-cultural shifts, parity programs and government-manded interventions, and advocacy. **Interestingly, the highest-rating individual-level intervention these participants reported as most effective was hard work (e.g., stick-to-itness).**

This belief reflects a narrative that remains persistent in the sector: that access and success are mediated by hard work. Indeed, 40% of participants across all identities agreed that while ‘identity is definitely a factor, but success is mostly about talent/hard work’.

Despite this apparent alignment in perspectives, interviews and focus groups clarified a more complicated understanding.

While 82.17% of survey participants (overall) agreed that identity imposes systematic barriers to access and career progress, when placed alongside talent there was a sense that to acknowledge these barriers implied a lack of talent. This binary thinking (either creatives work hard *or* there are identity-based barriers to access) seemed to operate differently among participants who did have experienced marginalization and those who had not:

- Participants who had experienced marginalization reflected on the dominant narrative that ‘access is about hard work and talent’ that ignores the systemic barriers to access that undermine talent as a currency. These participants detailed how hard work was unavoidable, and the observation that their hard work generated less return due to systemic barriers to access.
- In contrast, participants who had not experienced marginalization seemed to invoke the notion of hard work to combat another binary assumption – that their access is mediated only by privilege (i.e., that their identities confer privileged access, and that they are not talented or do not work hard). Indeed, negative responses to the term ‘privilege’ were common, as it was interpreted to mean (by white, cis, hetero participants) ‘easy’ – that their path to success had been easy, simple, and undeserved.

To be sure, this latter interpretation was generally *not* held by participants who identified as experiencing sector marginalization; yet sensitivity to the term ‘privilege’ operates as an important barrier to acknowledging the effects of structural oppressions. Given the dominance of white cis hetero in decision-making positions in the sector, this resistance carries significant influence (i.e., reinforces the scarcity mindset, nurtures an ‘us vs them’ mentality, fosters resistance to self-implication, and shapes decisions about which interventions are prioritized).

² Code-switching refers to the practice of interacting in different ways according to the social context. While most people interact differently in different settings (e.g., workplace vs home), structural inequalities have institutionalized white cultural norms. This creates incentive for minoritized individuals to improve their prospects by adapting their language and behaviours to the sector’s hegemonic culture (code-switch) (Waring, 2018).

Interventions lack scale

“It's our view that the goal is that all hiring be done based on a meritocracy and actions need to be taken to remove barriers that have put groups at a distinct disadvantage. If the barriers are genuinely lifted- this means everything from personal prejudice to fixing training pipelines- then as a whole it's my belief that hiring the best people will reflect the diversity of the population.” (Survey participant)

76.31% of survey participants at least somewhat agreed that these efforts had resulted in a more diverse workplace. Despite this perceived progress, however, participants expressed significant concerns about the pace of change, and its sustainability. Many of the practices listed above were revealed to be goals and intentions rather than existing practices, which became clear as participants expressed difficulty detailing what the practices looked like ‘in action’ (e.g., How do you hire more inclusively? What are the steps you have taken to expand your personal network? How do you find people, who are part of different communities?).

As presented earlier in this report, these activities tend to focus on the who is in which roles, as producers expressed feeling most influential at the point of hire. **This is important, because it means that most practices emphasize connecting *individual* producers with *individual* creators, rather than building connections between producers and networks/communities of talent (i.e., a broader talent pool).**

- Producers from communities that have experienced marginalization were more likely to detail the barriers to access that result in the lack of representation, especially in more senior or decision-making roles in the sector. Accordingly, these participants were also more likely to describe practices that increase access to development tools (e.g., constructive feedback, on-set experience) and other wrap-around supports (e.g., mentorship) that permit the development of sector-specific social capital and support success when a job is secured.
- In contrast, participants who did not identify as members of communities that have experienced marginalization tended to focus exclusively on the end point (the job), and understood representation as a proportion (i.e., the distribution of creatives who identify in different ways). This seems to be the orientation that underlies many of the inclusive practices gaining increasing levels of adoption in the sector and reinforces how a focus on numbers can be limiting.

“Mentorship programs need to be more regulated and monitored...governed by the funding agencies and mentors should be appointed by the funding agencies so there is accountability. More training is needed in diverse communities in order to build a more skilled staff. What is lacking most with the diverse community is a lack of opportunity for training”. (Survey participant)

Participants’ experiences surfaced the consequences of disconnecting individual actions from system-wide interventions, which prevents their culmination in real, systemic change.



Recommendations

This research underscored the importance of compatibility between sector-level (system) interventions and producer-level (individual) practices. Policies, for example, provide guidelines, safeguards, and incentives but real change occurs through the cumulative effects of day-to-day activities. ‘How to’ is missing from many of the current interventions, which would facilitate action at the producer level, while at the same time ensuring these distributed efforts work together (e.g., a policy that sets targets must line up with producer / company actions that resist tokenism and box-checking).

Accordingly, the following recommendations bridge macro and micro efforts to support measurable, sustainable change.

Sector-level

Make DE&I a lens, not a cause by focusing on access

Engaging DE&I as a lens makes diversity relevant across all contexts and spaces (i.e., not making diversity ‘matter’ in some spaces, and for some projects, but not others). Participants emphasized that from this lens, the problem is *access* at every point of the development pathway. Focusing on access moves away from checkboxes and tokenism by defining access / barriers to access as the problem, rather than understanding the problem as a lack of representation.

- This shift focuses on the *root cause* (barriers to access) instead of the *consequence* (lack of diversity, equity, and representation), recognizing the issue as a systemic problem, instead of just an individual one.
- Focusing on access, which goes beyond access to specific work opportunities. to include access to all forms of capital – social, cultural, financial, creative – and the ways different types of access are implicated at each career stage, resists temporary solutions (i.e., tokenism and box-checking that increase the number of diverse creatives now, without plans to mitigate issues of access in the future) by implicating the principles, processes, and practices that govern the sector overall. It also means creating wrap-around supports that move beyond assigning people to roles and instead examine the barriers to access that *result in* limited representation in those roles.

Standardize terminology, measures, and accountability practices

While participants tended to agree with the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion, lack of understanding (which includes inconsistencies in language and terminology) limits the ability to take action in alignment with these commitments.

- Standardizing terminology and defining ways to measure DE&I (which should include qualitative measures alongside quantitative targets) would help producers and companies identify actions to take and hold themselves accountable to change.
- Consider a DE&I maturity model to track and guide progress at both the sector-level, and at the company-level (same maturity model would work for both). This model should incorporate qualitative measures of practices and processes alongside quantitative targets, and help companies understand what they need to do (i.e., specific actions to take, learning to engage in, commitments to make) to move to the next level of maturity.

Make policy practical

Policies occupy an important role in creating systemic change. At the individual producer/company level but are insufficient in the absence of deliberate, measurable actions, and a shared understanding of *how* these policies are meant to help (i.e., what they are meant to ‘do’).

- Policies without actions seem to contribute to feelings of inertia (e.g., checking the box to meet policy requirements) by suggesting that ‘diverse’ and ‘inclusive’ reflect states or statuses that can be achieved. Some are also experienced punitively, especially when targets, alone, are the focus (i.e., without qualitative guidelines that support *process*).
- Policies connected to defined actions at the company and individual producer level would help make DE&I a continuous practice – where it is safe and expected to learn and make mistakes.
- Participants emphasized the benefits of pairing funding with practical resources (e.g., protocols) and incorporating qualitative guidelines (i.e., not only focusing on the number and providing the ‘why’ behind it) with quotas.

Incentivize the *process*

Participants clarified that DE&I is a continuous process and expressed confusion and frustration about incentives that prioritize universally applied targets (e.g., X number of employees identify in these ways). The emphasis on numbers creates an urgency around ‘getting it right’ instead of ‘doing it right’ and misses the opportunity to incentivize consistent efforts toward progress that result in long-term change.

- Consider incentivizing processes that work toward increasing diversity and representation (e.g., collaboration).
- Consider policies and incentives that reward inclusive *practices* (i.e., sustainable practices vs checklists)
- Embed processes into funding awards (e.g., include mandatory paid internships as part of a funding package).
- Allocate funding and policies to increase the diversity of stories told and communities represented.

Invest in on-going research to support evidence-based interventions

- **Community deep dives:** The present research provides a preliminary view of how DE&I operates in the sector according to producers, and does not fully represent, and differentiate, the specific experiences of the many communities that comprise Canada’s screen sector. Dedicated attention to each community (i.e., community deep dives) that continues to experience sector marginalization is required.
- **Audit current practices:** The discrepancy between language and literacy surfaced by this research calls for further exploration into the actual, day-to-day practices of production companies, broadcasters, etc. to understand pragmatically the extent to which current interventions (e.g., ‘shadowing’ programs) fulfill their intended purpose. At this stage, the sector’s DE&I ‘maturity’ is nascent, and the participants of this study helped clarify inconsistencies in understanding about what makes these interventions work (or not) and therefore *how* they should be carried out (e.g., mentorship can be helpful, but can also reproduce harms depending on the dynamic of mentor/mentee, motivation for mentorship, etc.).
- **Look at career stage:** Participants highlighted the different kinds of influence held by different roles and levels of seniority. Further research to understand the scope of influence of key roles would help create

resources to meet producers (and other creatives) where they are and enable them to focus on the actions available to them.

- **Learn from case study examples:** The US and UK have made important DE&I progress in the screen sector. The US, especially, offers examples of large production companies and networks that have successfully (and quickly) reshaped their workforce (e.g., FX from 2015-2017). There is an opportunity to look at these examples to understand *how* and *why* they were successful, and to test and learn from adapting those practices to the Canadian screen sector.

Producer-level

Build literacy in anti-racism and anti-oppression

A critical factor in the mobilization of policies into action includes producer commitments to anti-racist, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, and anti-oppression.

- Surface and disrupt unconscious bias through anti-racism and anti-oppression training, especially at the executive level – not as a ‘one and done’ but as a continuous learning process. This means making DE&I learning available throughout a career with a practical/application lens.
- Interrogating language that reinforces white, cis, hetero, and persons without disability as normative, and the use of ‘diversity’ to mean ‘everyone else’ (e.g., auditing hiring processes, contracts, company materials).
- Guidelines and other supports to facilitate these open and continuous dialogue to help Producers create environments where the topics of diversity and inclusion are not mysterious or taboo.

Create resources that meet producers where they are

Participants reflected a range of experiences, knowledge, and awareness related to DE&I. Resources must therefore be structured to permit multiple entry points, contexts, and needs reflecting producers’ working environments.

- Resources to appeal to the different levels of needs among producers based on their workplaces and identities/positionality, and guidelines to help producers engage these resources when and in the ways that will have the most impact.
- Auditing and other measurement tools to help producers assess where they are, what they can do, and what they need – and then to track their own progress (accountability).
- Partnership, mentorship, or consulting so that the perspectives of diverse communities are engaged directly in the development of interventions (e.g., within a company, on a project, etc.).
- Continuous education that focuses on practical ways of working and ‘how to’.

Exposure, Access, and Opportunity

Survey, interview, and focus group participants emphasized the need for programming (e.g., mentorship) to move beyond ‘contacts’ and to build ‘connections’ – that is, for these programs to build relationships, provide exposure, and increase their sector-specific social capital. These findings are consistent with other sector research (see for example, POV, 2019).

- Formalized programs that connect equity-seeking creatives to supported development (e.g., mentorship, paid internships) and bridge this development with real, paid work opportunities as part of those programs (e.g., NBC’s ‘Pay or Play’ clause: within one year of completing their development program, participants are guaranteed either a directing credit or the guild-minimum director’s fee, which program alumni can defer in hopes of getting a directing credit from an NCB network in the future).
 - Programs should enable participants to build *connections*, not just contacts – which means building trust and sector social capital and creating exposure to key industry contacts who can become advocates, mentors, etc. post-program.
- Mentorship, internship, and shadowing programs should be alert to and interrogate the implicit hierarchies that can be reproduced in mentor/mentee, etc. relationships. Participants expressed that these mentorships are particularly (but not exclusively) productive when the mentor and mentee have similar / shared identities and positionalities.
- Development opportunities and supports that go beyond the initial mentorship or internship ‘program’, such as building relationships with community/partner organizations that will help with on-going sector navigation and access.

The Need for Coordinated Action

2020-2021 has seen an increase in investments in research, programming, and other supports directed toward communities of creatives that have been historically underrepresented in Canada’s screen sector. The perspectives, experiences, and needs of these various communities surfaced by these investments is essential to inform actions that will contribute to long-term change. Indeed, several organizations are working hard to disrupt the barriers to access most pertinent to their respective communities.

While the experience of each community is unique, the current research has underscored important similarities that signal shared structural oppressions as the root of those experiences. At the same time, this research has highlighted the limitations experienced by individuals and individual organizations in sufficiently scaling interventions to achieve the desired magnitude of change.

There is an important opportunity to coordinate efforts across organizations – to establish a shared plan of action that leverages the important contributions of each community/organization to accelerate change.

References

Canadian Media Producers Association. (2020). Terminology Guide for Data Collection on Racialized and Indigenous Communities / Guide de terminologie pour la collecte de données des peuples autochtones et des communautés racisées

POV. (2019). “Breaking In” to Toronto’s Film & TV Production Sector

Waring, C.D.L. (2018, August 17). Black and biracial Americans wouldn’t need to code-switch if we lived in a post-racial society. [The Conversation, August 17, 2018](#)



Appendix

Survey Responses

How do you understand the terms 'diversity', 'equity', and 'inclusion' in the context of your workplace?

Representation according to ethnicity, gender & sexuality	63.53%
Providing opportunities to	16.47%
Having policies, quotas, and processes that contribute to a representative workplace	16.47%
Representation at all levels and in all roles	15.29%
Redistributing the privilege held by cis white producers	9.41%
Creating safe spaces	8.24%
References to exhaustion, not having seen these enacted in the industry.	

How would you frame the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in this sector?

It's a systemic problem	78.50%
It's about helping people from under-represented communities gain access to the industry.	75.70%
It's about creating more equity within the film industry that reflects the actual demographic of our society.	69.16%
It's about making sure we create safer spaces for people of all backgrounds and ethnicities to work and thrive in.	69.16%
It's about correcting the results of decades of discrimination.	65.42%
It's about creating better pipeline systems and training programs in order to include more points of view	62.62%
We have a pipeline problem and a training gap	52.34%
It's about combatting discrimination	49.53%
It's a 'cause' that we need to care about.	33.64%

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are stated values and/or priority areas for my workplace.

Yes	57.01%
Yes, and I think it's useful.	29.91%
I don't know	5.61%
Yes, and I don't think it's useful.	1.87%
No	1.87%
No, and I don't think we should	1.87%
No, but I think we should.	1.87%

In my workplace, the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion are talked about:

Equity and inclusion are embedded in our operations and business model	42.06%
When discussing the organization's goals and priorities.	15.89%
When the topic is pressing (i.e., in the news, trades, etc.)	9.35%
On an ad hoc basis	7.48%
When working on projects that have content written by or telling the stories of underrepresented communities.	7.48%
Very infrequently or not at all	5.61%
In regular communications that focus on DE&I	3.74%

At what stage in a project are the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion typically discussed?

Before the project begins	46.73%
When something related to diversity and inclusion comes up (e.g., an issue is raised)	14.95%
Proactively and periodically (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually)	12.15%
Available at all times upon request	7.48%
When it's too late and treated as a 'band aid'	6.54%
When onboarding new staff and/or crew members	6.54%

Other:	2.85%
Embedded/implied	
Don't know	2.85%

When we refer to diversity, equity, and inclusion in my workplaces, we tend to focus on:

Race	71.03%
Gender	57.01%
Ethnicity	54.21%
Sexual orientation	40.19%
All of the above	36.45%
Persons with disability	20.56%
Language	18.69%
Generation/Age	17.76%

My workplaces tend to have programs or strategies in place to:

Recruit creatives and crew from underrepresented communities	57.94%
Ensure accurate and informed representation of stories/peoples from underrepresented communities	44.86%
Develop a pipeline of projects reflecting diverse voices/perspectives/stories	37.38%
Supporting or working with organizations that promote equity, inclusion, and diversity	35.51%
Provide professional development opportunities for diverse creatives or crew.	32.71%
Provide support and/or mentorship for creatives and employees from minoritized groups.	31.78%
Ensure fairness in compensation and promotion decisions.	30.84%
Prioritize diversity when selecting third party suppliers/vendors.	30.84%
Embed inclusive behaviours into everyday job activities and responsibilities.	29.91%
Raise awareness and share resources of diversity and inclusion needs and practices.	28.04%
Provide training in diversity & inclusion, anti-racism, equity, and/or anti-oppression.	25.23%

None of the above	8.41%
I don't know	7.48%

The primary objective of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in my workplaces tends to be:

Make a workplace that is inclusive and safe for everyone	42.99%
Contribute to making the industry equitable	22.43%
Create a sustainable pipeline of Black, People of Colour, Indigenous -created projects	9.35%
Respond to political/social pressures	7.48%
Enhance external reputation / avoid being shamed	5.61%
Promote greater inclusion of employees from different backgrounds	2.80%
Comply with legal requirements	1.87%
Achieve business results	1.87%
Respond to the expectations of industry partners	0.93%
Encourage interaction	0.93%

From what I have observed/experienced, the primary objective of diversity, equity & inclusion efforts in the sector are to:

Make the industry more equitable	33.96%
Respond to political / social pressures	16.04%
Dismantle white supremacy	13.21%
Create a sustainable pipeline of Black, People of Colour, Indigenous-created project	11.32%
Enhance external reputation / avoid being shamed	9.43%
Change the way in which non-white people are perceived via moving images	5.66%
Promote greater inclusion of employees from different backgrounds	3.77%
Make the industry a safer place for everyone	2.83%
Respond to the expectations of industry partners	0.94%

Comply with legal requirements	-
Achieve business results	-
Encourage interaction	-

What do you see as inclusive behaviours in the workplace?

Ensuring representation in all kinds of roles (including decision-making)	91.43%
Having ways to make sure everyone's voice is heard and respected	80.0%
Having people with different identities working alongside one another	79.05%
Talking openly about inequality, and where inequalities persist in the workplace	74.29%
Ensuring that stories are told by people from those communities	69.52%
Having anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies	68.57%
Telling stories of different communities	65.71%
Having space for different cultural and/or religious practices	64.76%
Using specific strategies to attract talent from different communities	61.90%
Committing to a percentage of staff (all roles) on every project being from equity-seeking groups	56.19%
Ensuring that when people from certain communities are featured in roles, that there is a consultant from that community present to provide feedback and ensure 'othering' is not being perpetuated	52.28%
Making everyone attend anti-racism/discrimination/oppression training	46.67%
Committing a percentage of the annual budget to projects that highlight the stories and perspectives of different communities	43.81%
Using a system of reviewing work/project applications to avoid seeing demographic information	30.48%
Have a required reading list of anti-oppressive and anti-Black racism books	25.71%

Which of the following available tools have you/your workplaces used to support diversity, equity, and inclusion (i.e., resources to improve workplace inclusion and diversity)?

BIPOC TV & Film resources	53.40%
HireBIPOC.ca	52.43%

Access Reelworld database	34.95%
On-Screen Protocols & Pathways: A Media Production Guide to Working with First Nations, Metis and Inuit Communities, Cultures, Concepts and Stories	33.01%
Women in View	23.30%
Film in colour	22.33%
Resources to improve workplace inclusion and diversity (CMF)	18.45%
None	18.45%
HERe directory	14.56%
Producers toolkit (CMPA)	14.56%
TIME'S UP GUIDE TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION DURING CRISIS	11.65%
Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion	7.77%
Interactive Ontario Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit for the Interactive Digital Media Industry	4.85%
Ms. Factor Toolkit	1.94%
OTHER	
Local organizations in Calgary: Fairy Tales Film Fest, Treaty 7 Film Collective Pink Flamingo, Action Dignity, imagineNative Film Fest, CultureBrew.Art, Free the Bid	

Thinking about what it is like to work in this sector, how do you feel about the following statements about diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Identifying as female, transgender, Black, a Person of Colour, Indigenous, 2SLGBTIQ+, or a Person with disability presents a barrier to access/career progress.	4.95%	7.92%	4.95%	21.78%	27.72%	32.67%
Identity is a factor, but success is mostly about talent/hard work	14.85%	28.71%	15.84%	22.77%	12.87%	4.95%
Most people in the industry demonstrate a commitment to creating diverse and inclusive environments	15.00%	33.00%	24.00%	23.00%	4.00%	1.00%
Production companies and other gatekeepers are the most responsible for increasing diversity and inclusion within the sector	4.95%	6.93%	6.93%	24.75%	28.71%	27.72%
Funders, unions, and other industry gatekeepers are the most responsible	1.98%	7.92%	9.90%	24.75%	25.74%	29.70%

for improving diversity and inclusion within the sector						
People from minoritized groups are the most responsible for increasing diversity and inclusion within the sector	32.00%	26.00%	16.00%	13.00%	8.00%	5.00%
I feel personally able to address/influence diversity and inclusion	3.96%	12.87%	6.93%	19.80%	34.65%	21.78%
I feel personally responsible for addressing diversity and inclusion	1.98%	3.96%	10.89%	13.86%	39.60%	29.70%
More support (e.g., tools, resources) should be provided for production companies to help increase diversity and inclusion	0.99%	4.95%	8.91%	17.82%	31.68%	35.64%

Of these areas of focus, which do you find the most difficult to implement/commit to?

In projects (e.g., supporting stories that are authored by the community they are about)	60.81%
In staff (e.g., ensuring 2 out of 3 of Producer, Director, Writer roles are occupied by members of the community that is the subject of a project)	45.95%
Using inclusive hiring practices	32.43%
Using your own power and privilege within the industry to insist on real and lasting change at all levels	32.43%
Standardizing diversity on all projects (e.g., hire and feature Black, People of Colour, and Indigenous staff in all roles on all projects, not only those focusing on specific communities)	29.73%
Advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., listening to experiences, affirming the burden of dismantling systemic racism and oppression as belonging to those in power/who benefit from the system, normalizing discussions around equity about wages, representation and authorship).	21.62%
Committing to equal pay policies	18.92%
Creating paid and structured mentorship opportunities for (equity-seeking) creatives on every project and in every department	17.57%
Committing to a minimum proportion of creatives, cast and crew members (e.g., 35%+) from minoritized communities	17.57%
Engaging in ongoing / sustained learning about anti-racism, unconscious bias, and racial equity	14.86%
Instituting measurable accountability policies that track and improve diversity within staff	4.05%

Incorporating anti-racist/anti-oppression resources (e.g., training, unconscious bias assessments) as part of the onboarding process for new hires	2.70%
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Of these areas of focus, where have you / your organization made the most progress?

In projects (e.g., supporting stories that are authored by the community they are about)	60.53%
In staff (e.g., ensuring 2 out of 3 of Producer, Director, Writer roles are occupied by members of the community that is the subject of a project)	44.74%
Using inclusive hiring practices	32.89%
Using your own power and privilege within the industry to insist on real and lasting change at all levels	31.58%
Standardizing diversity on all projects (e.g., hire and feature Black, People of Colour, and Indigenous staff in all roles on all projects, not only those focusing on specific communities)	28.95%
Advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., listening to experiences, affirming the burden of dismantling systemic racism and oppression as belonging to those in power/who benefit from the system, normalizing discussions around equity about wages, representation, and authorship).	23.68%
Committing to equal pay policies	19.74%
Creating paid and structured mentorship opportunities for (equity-seeking) creatives on every project and in every department	17.11%
Committing to a minimum proportion of creatives, cast and crew members (e.g., 35%+) from minoritized communities	17.11%
Engaging in ongoing / sustained learning about anti-racism, unconscious bias, and racial equity	14.47%
Instituting measurable accountability policies that track and improve diversity within staff	3.95%
Incorporating anti-racist/anti-oppression resources (e.g., training, unconscious bias assessments) as part of the onboarding process for new hires	2.63%

What kinds of supports/interventions do you believe are the most useful (make the most difference) to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the sector? CHOOSE 3

Increased funding to projects by people/companies representing communities that have experienced minoritization	62.34%
Industry mentorship programs	41.56%
Government-mandated interventions such as minimum requirements or benefits for hitting diversity/inclusion targets	38.96%

Diversity & gender parity policies/programs	35.06%
Broader socio-cultural factors (i.e., cultural shift towards inclusivity)	27.27%
Advocacy for changing systems or institutional barriers	23.38%
Support of a boss or professional mentor belonging to a community that has experienced marginalization	20.78%
Coming together with fellow marginalized community members	18.18%
By forming their own networks and creating their own work	16.88%
Anti-oppression training	15.58%
Support of a white boss or professional mentor	11.69%
Hard work (e.g., stick-to-itness)	11.69%
Higher education/mor professional certifications	10.39%
Using one’s uniqueness/identity becomes a source of strength/value	10.39%
Campaigns creating awareness about lack of inclusion like #MeToo #Oscarsowhite	10.39%
Discussions at trade conferences, panels, etc. as a way of highlighting the issue	6.49%
Resilience	5.19%
Other	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcasters setting the example (e.g., Netflix) Spreading out funding and ensuring diversity, including limitations on how much / how many a given creator can access More specific funding allocation to artists who are equity-seeking (including changing arts council mandates) 	5.19%

Several factors and/or circumstances have been identified as possible barriers to increased representation. Please reflect on the degree to which you have observed or experienced the following:

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Concern about caliber of talent or experience	6.58%	6.58%	25.00%	26.32%	14.47%	21.05%
Concerns about increased competition for jobs, funding, and/or other resources	8.00%	9.33%	25.33%	22.67%	18.67%	16.00%
Concerns that programs that privilege certain identities will unfairly mitigate access to jobs, funding, and/or other resources	5.41%	14.86%	25.68%	21.62%	17.57%	14.86%
The prevalence of white producers or other controlling stakeholders	2.67%	5.33%	12.00%	24.00%	28.00%	28.00%

Barriers to Black, People of Colour, and Indigenous creatives accessing decision-making roles / positions of power	2.63%	2.63%	9.21%	21.05%	31.58%	32.89%
Lack of diversity in professional networks (not having someone to hire)	2.63%	10.53%	18.42%	27.63%	21.05%	19.74%
Concerns about not fitting in to the workplace	13.33%	32.00%	17.33%	16.00%	13.33%	8.00%
Biased funder selection of projects	5.33%	4.00%	16.00%	21.33%	24.00%	29.33%
White people being afraid to do or say the wrong thing	8.00%	9.33%	25.33%	18.67%	16.00%	22.67%

How do you feel about increasing diversity in the industry?

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Benefit me/my work/my organization	0.00%	1.30%	2.60%	12.99%	9.09%	74.03%
Benefit the industry as a whole	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.90%	12.99%	83.12%

Do you take any actions now that you weren't taking two years ago?

Yes	72.73%
No	19.48%
I'm not sure	7.79%

Thinking about the effects of the increasing focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the industry, select the answer that most closely applies for each of the following:

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Workplaces are much more diverse than they used to be	3.95%	7.89%	11.84%	48.68%	22.37%	5.26%
Diversity and inclusion are improving for some roles more than others	2.63%	10.53%	5.26%	26.32%	40.79%	14.47%
I have personally benefited from efforts to increase diversity and inclusion	2.63%	17.11%	11.84%	23.68%	32.89%	11.84%

I have personally suffered as a result of efforts to increase diversity and inclusion	33.33%	36.00%	9.33%	6.67%	8.00%	6.67%
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When you have worked on a more diverse team, which of the following were true?

It was more respectful	68.00%
Increased learning opportunities for everyone	66.67%
Better decision-making on projects in development, production, and post.	65.33%
Enable greater decision-making for projects with themes from communities that have experienced marginalization.	64.00%
It was more enjoyable	58.67%
It felt safer	54.67%
Less stress	32.00%
Other:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interesting • Better decisions that take longer – diversity means not everyone agrees all the time, but in lieu of speed, you get quality. • No difference / have not experienced this 	