

**2003-04 ANNUAL REPORT  
ON THE OPERATION OF THE CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM ACT**

<b>Organization:</b> THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS
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The role of the Canada Council for the Arts is “to foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts,” through the provision of grants, services and awards to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations.

The Council is committed to supporting cultural diversity in the arts in Canada, which in turn helps facilitate the dynamic nature of our culture, as new artistic practices are introduced, invented and reinvented. In order to address historic issues of under-representation of culturally diverse practices at the Council, the Equity Office was created to support the Council’s strategic focus on equality of opportunity for visible minority artists and organizations. The definition of visible minority artists includes, but is not limited to, those of Asian, African, Latin American, Arab, and mixed heritage. The Equity Office also collaborates with the Council’s Aboriginal Arts Secretariat, which focuses on Aboriginal artists and arts organizations, its definition of Aboriginal including status, non-status, Métis and Inuit people.

In determining its vision and objectives, the Equity Office monitors demographic analyses of Canadian society and the cultural sector, noting that according to the 2001 Census, the visible minority population in Canada was 13.4%, and is projected to be 20% by 2016. Such data informs the Council’s objectives in the areas of employment equity and the funding that supports cultural diversity.

Equity is at the centre of the Council’s commitment to the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. By “equity,” we mean the principles and processes, throughout our institution, that respond with fairness to all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or age. Through equity, the Canada Council for the Arts contributes to a pluralistic vision of Canadian society.

**1. Describe how your policies, programs and practices enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada. Please specify any measures or performance indicators used to assess your performance.**

The Canada Council for the Arts has been actively engaged with issues of equity and diversity since 1990, through a national consultation that led to the establishment of the Equity Office. In collaboration with Council resources and the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts (REAC), the Equity Office monitors the impact of our policies, programs and practices on culturally diverse arts communities, contributing to their development, and proposing strategic initiatives to improve accessibility and awareness. The Equity Office ensures that equity is not only a strategic priority, but a normalized value of our institution. For example, the Equity Office participates in the work of the Council’s Employment Equity committee, ensuring that members of the four

designated Equity groups are represented on Council staff. The Committee regularly measures such representation against demographic studies and Federal Public Service employment equity benchmarks, and the Council has met or exceeded its targets in each case.

The keystone of the Council's operations is peer assessment, which places arts professionals at the centre of the granting process. Thus, peers assess artistic merit within a national comparative context, and lend their perspective on trends in artistic practices and communities. Our peer assessment policy recognizes cultural diversity ("representation of artists and arts professionals from the diverse ethnic, racial and cultural communities of Canada") as one of the aims in selecting a committee. The Council reviews the committees in each of its arts sections annually, and an annual report on the peer assessment system is made to the Council's board. In 2003-04, 15% of peers identified themselves as culturally diverse.

Council's programs are open to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations. The definition of "professional" emphasizes specialization, recognition by one's peers, commitment, and public presentation, and is designed to be responsive to the diverse nature of artistic training, education and practice.

Council regularly conducts outreach to inform arts practitioners of the grants and services offered by the Council. A key priority is to reach underserved communities, including artists of colour, Aboriginal artists and young artists. Program literature reiterates that programs are open to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations, including culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists and arts organizations. The Equity Office and the Arts Services Unit are attentive to demographic analysis to determine into what languages Council literature will be translated: currently, these include Mandarin, Punjabi and Spanish. (According to the 2001 Census, Chinese and Punjabi remain the two most common non-official languages spoken at home among recent immigrants.)

The Canada Council monitors direct and indirect funding to culturally diverse individual artists and arts organizations.<sup>1</sup> In 2002-03, the Canada Council for the Arts gave \$6.5 million in grants directly to culturally diverse individual artists and arts organizations, most of which was awarded through non-dedicated programs.<sup>2</sup> Of the \$6.5 million in total direct funding, \$4.5 million (69%) was from non-dedicated programs while \$2.0 million or 31% came from the two dedicated programs: the Equity Office's Capacity Building Initiative and Visual Arts' Assistance to Culturally Diverse Curators for

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<sup>1</sup> *Direct funding* refers to funding going directly to culturally diverse artists and arts organizations; *indirect funding* refers to funding to non-culturally diverse artists and arts organizations that is of benefit to culturally diverse artists or organizations (e.g. a grant to a publisher which publishes a book by an author of colour). We also distinguish dedicated and non-dedicated funding. *Dedicated* funding is exclusively for a particular group; examples include the Aboriginal programs in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts and Writing and Publishing, or the funds distributed through the Interdepartmental Partnership with Official Language Communities (IPOLC). *Non-dedicated* funding refers to funding that did not go to culturally diverse artists or organizations but which involved the creation, production, presentation, exhibition or publishing of works by artists of colour.

<sup>2</sup> 2003-04 statistics were not yet available at the time this report was prepared.

Residencies (see below). In addition to direct funding, culturally diverse artists and organizations benefited from \$4.4 million in indirect funding in 2002-03. Altogether, in 2002-03, a total of about \$10.9 million in direct and indirect funding benefited culturally diverse artists and arts organizations. This was up 6.6% from the total of \$ 10.2 million for 2001-2002, mostly in the form of indirect funding, representing a growing responsiveness to culturally diverse artistic practices.

The Prizes and Endowments Division of the Council has also noted that an increasing number of awards are going to culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists. For example, culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists were winners in categories of the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition and the 2003 Governor General's Literary Awards.

### **2003-04: Status Report**

The Council is currently in the third year of a three-year Corporate Plan which states support for cultural diversity as a strategic priority. In outlining its rationale, Council noted the institution's achievements in equity and diversity, including the healthy percentage of funding to individuals going to artists of colour (our estimates indicate between 15% and 18% over the past four fiscal years). The latter percentages exceed the population share of visible minorities according to the 2001 Census (13.4%), reflecting the dynamic creativity and demographic of culturally diverse citizens in Canada.<sup>3</sup> However, Council identified funding to culturally diverse organizations as a key area of concern, noting that 4% of all arts organizations funded on an annual or operating basis represented culturally diverse communities, and that total support to culturally diverse art (individuals and organizations) in 2002-03 was 8.4% of the Council's funding.

In 2001-02, Council responded to this challenge through the Capacity Building Initiative, a targeted, three-year initiative of the Equity Office composed of three strategies:

- **Capacity Building Grants:** Multi-year grants in the amount of \$90,000 over three years to develop organizational strength and resiliency;
- **Stand Firm:** Networking and professional development opportunities for capacity building support recipients (a partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage);
- **Arts Management Internships:** Training and internship opportunities for culturally diverse arts managers through the Income Managers Program of the University of Waterloo.

To date, 61 organizations have received capacity building support and participated in the networking and professional development opportunities through Stand Firm; five culturally diverse individuals have graduated from the Income Managers Program and participated in internships in national arts institutions. The Capacity Building Initiative

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<sup>3</sup> While Human Resources and Skills Development Canada was still using 1996 Census results for the period covered by this report, the Council has worked on making progress against the latest available data.

now represents an investment of \$5.75 million over three years in a culturally diverse arts infrastructure.

The Visual Arts Section offers two dedicated programs to develop curatorial and critical practice: the Assistance to Culturally Diverse Curators and the Assistance to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies. The Assistance to Culturally Diverse Curators for Residencies in Visual Arts Program is intended to expand the national pool of curatorial professionals, and to advance knowledge and expertise in Canadian visual arts institutions. In the five years since its inception, a total of \$233,000 has been awarded through this program.

Other non-dedicated programs enjoy a high degree of participation by culturally diverse artists and arts organizations. The Multidisciplinary Festivals Project Grants program in InterArts was created with culturally diverse organizations in mind and responds well to their needs; similarly, the Spoken Word and Storytelling Program in Writing and Publishing responds to oral traditions widely practiced in culturally diverse communities. The Artists and Community Collaboration Fund, a two-year investment that increases the Council's commitment to artistic activities that bring together professional artists and the broader community, has had significant impact in culturally diverse communities.

The opportunities created by initiatives such as the Capacity Building Initiative or the Artists and Community Collaboration Fund – as well as the values inherent in their design – are deeply appreciated by the arts community. This point was emphasized by the Stand Firm participants who attended the Department of Canadian Heritage's Minister's Forum on Culturally Diversity in April 2003.

Lastly, the Equity Office contributes to the outreach efforts of the Council, and in 2003 worked in collaboration with the Arts Services Unit and the Arts Division to offer information sessions within a framework of equity and diversity in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax. Sessions included program overviews; grant-writing and budgeting workshops; professional development and networking opportunities; and one-on-one consultations. Over 30 artists of colour participated in these two-day sessions in Vancouver and Toronto; in Halifax, Council reached over 50 artists of colour, many of them artists who had never applied to the Council.

**2. Describe how your policies, programs and practices enhance the understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society. Please specify any measures or performance indicators used to assess your performance.**

The Council's commitment has led to an increased diversity on the staff, Board of Directors, advisory committees, peer assessment committees and other bodies associated with the work of Council. Artists of colour have also contributed to our consultation processes through participation in five successive REAC committees, which have included over thirty resource persons, including artists from the community, Council staff and Board members. This has ensured a transfer of knowledge from artists "on the ground" to the highest level of the institution, and vice-versa. This dialogue allows the Council to remain abreast of equity and diversity issues, of national and international shifts in demographics, cultural developments and artistic practices.

In the Winter 2003 issue of the Council's newsletter, *For the Arts*, the Council communicated aspects of its current priorities and strategies through a feature article on a new generation of culturally diverse artists. Citing such exciting new talents as the Butta Babees, Motion, 4Unity Productions, and Chanti Wedge, the article spoke of "this new generation of artists is creating work that blends sources of inspiration and weaves new patterns of artistic practice and philosophical approach. A highly visible symbol of the current experience of young people, hip-hop, with its distinctive music, its urban yet lyrical vocabulary and its spoken-word poetry, represents an artistic bridge – and intersection – between cultural sources."

Strategic initiatives act not only as a development opportunity for the arts community, but also for the institution. Through the Capacity Building Initiative, the Equity Office has worked in close collaboration with the Arts Division in program development and implementation. The Arts Division and the Equity Coordinator jointly monitored the objectives, strategies and achievements of recipient organizations, enhancing program officers' ability to provide guidance. Program officers also participated in Equity Office activities related to capacity building. In 2003, 17 staff members, including heads of sections and program officers, traveled with the Equity Coordinator to deliver information sessions and conduct site visits and one-on-one consultations, meeting project clients that might have otherwise been a second priority. In this way, the Capacity Building Initiative has been a means for Council to renew its engagement, and to enrich our understanding of how to best serve a diverse arts community.

Finally, through bold initiatives such as *Sonic Weave*, the Council creatively and strategically showcases the artistic excellence of culturally diverse artists. Through the *Sonic Weave* tour, six Canadian groups and solo artists performed on the stages of major European world music festivals last summer. The acts, selected from among 284 entries in a nation-wide competition, are "a cross-section of the unique Canadian sound in folk and world music, one shaped by the many cultural and linguistic influences that define Canada today." The Sonic Weavers performed before live audiences of some 80,000.

**3. Describe how your organization collects statistical data to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada. Please describe any studies undertaken.**

The Arts Services Unit works in tandem with program officers, the Equity Office and the Aboriginal Arts Secretariat to collect statistical data on cultural diversity. Artists are invited to self-disclose their cultural identity when they participate in a peer assessment committee of the Council, through a form developed by the Arts Services Unit. This information is collected to monitor the representation of cultural diversity on peer assessment committees.

The percentage of resources allocated to culturally diverse creation, production and dissemination by arts organizations is estimated by the program officer and reviewed by the Arts Services Unit and the Equity Coordinator. This percentage is based on the mandate, artistic leadership/core, and artistic practice described by the applicant arts organization. This is an estimate only, and allows us to see progression or regression in the institution's support of diversity in the arts.

The percentage of resources allocated to culturally diverse creation, production and dissemination by individual artists is estimated by the program officer and reviewed by the Equity Coordinator. This is based on the definition of cultural diversity of the Equity Office, and is only collected in aggregate statistics, in order to respect *The Privacy Act*.

Council also monitors the percentage of resources allocated to strategic funding to equity and diversity initiatives, and the number of new arts organizations receiving Council support. Council also reviews final reports to assess impact of supported activities.

The Council regularly reports its progress on cultural diversity to its Board of Directors through an annual *Performance Indicators Report*.

Increasingly, Council recognizes the need for qualitative data that will enable the development of policies, programs and practices, such as the *Stories from the Field: Best Practices in Culturally Diverse, Aboriginal and Other Community-Based Arts Organizations*," initiated by the Council in response to a proposal from Stand Firm, and a partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage.

**4. How does your organization make use, as appropriate of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins? Please provide any examples.**

The Council requires all staff to be sensitive to issues of equity and diversity. As part of their orientation, new staff are required to meet with the Equity Coordinator in order to gain a perspective on the mandate and work of the Equity Office.

The REAC committee has created a forum for the institution to engage directly with the community, and through the participation of resource persons in the community, Council staff and Board members. Along with the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee, REAC has been essential in providing a critical and creative equity framework for the development of Council programs, policies and practices, from peer assessment policy and the definition of “professionalism,” to strategic initiatives such as our partnership for Arts Management Internship. The value of this was reinforced at the Minister’s Forum on Culture and Diversity, when various artists and resource persons invited by the Department identified themselves as a “past member of the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality.”

**5. How does your organization ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement?**

The Human Resources Section of the Canada Council is committed to employment equity in such areas as recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention, and reinforces this commitment with the Employment Equity Committee. The Committee’s current priority is to build upon the Council’s exemplary record of employment equity by striving for representation of members of equity groups in all divisions of the Council, and by increasing opportunities for such representation at senior management levels. Human Resources maintains statistical data on the percentage of Council’s staff and labour force availability. Human Resources is also planning, for the upcoming year, workshops for Council staff and Board members on cultural sensitivity.

**6. Does your institution have a process of reviewing existing policies and programs in light of the multiculturalism policy? If such a process exists, have any adjustments been made to policies or programs in light of that review?**

The Council’s process of reviewing existing policies and programs is based on the active and positive collaboration of all the Divisions of the Council, particularly the Arts Division, and the Equity Office, the qualitative analysis of the Equity Office and the quantitative performance indicators and analysis of Council. The Equity Office creates an annual action plan that maps diversity initiatives across the Council; the Arts Division sections also create section-specific action plans for equity and diversity, informed by the expertise of the heads of section and program officers, and trends in artistic practice and cultural development in the milieu.

**7. Describe your future priorities and steps to be taken to better implement the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.**

The Council recognizes cultural pluralism as a positive force contributing to vitality and creativity in Canadian society. It maintains culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts as strategic priorities across all programs, recognizing excellence in these arts practices and providing support for their continued development.

The Council made a strong commitment to the support of culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts in its Corporate Plan for 2002-03 through 2004-05, and during the planning period initiated a number of outreach and capacity-building measures. Its original commitment has been restated and reinforced at all levels over the past year in two Council-wide planning exercises designed to provide direction in the development of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2005-06 through 2007-08. *The Road Ahead* was a global overview of directions in Council activities and services. The *Expenditure and Program Activity Review* identified specific strategic measures. Reinforcing culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts continues to be identified as key issues in both of these documents. They are the firm foundation for our specific priorities in this area.

Our first priority is to increase our support to excellent culturally diverse arts organizations through operating grant programs. The Arts Division notes an increasingly diverse arts ecosystem, one that includes newer or more versatile arts organizations that display a breadth of artistic practice and cultural diversity. We generally support these organizations with project funding and seek to move the stronger ones, where feasible, to annual operating grants and eventually multi-year funding.

Our second priority is to support the capacity building of culturally diverse arts organizations who are leaders in artistic practice and community development, and thereby assist in deepening links between artists and communities. Through our evaluation of the Capacity Building Initiative, the Council is developing a tiered model of organizational development and health that is more responsive to these organizations.

Our third priority is reach out to culturally diverse youth and emerging artists, particularly those in the metropolitan centres where cultural diversity is demographically strongest. Artists in this group include Francophone communities of colour in Quebec.

Our fourth priority is to refine our data collection strategy.

**8. Name, title and address of the person responsible for completing the report.**

Anthony Bansfield, Equity Coordinator, Canada Council for the Arts.