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Changing Narratives Fund

Report on Consultations

June 2023

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Rapport de consultations sur le Fonds pour la diversité des voix

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In respect of the independence of the media, a report prepared by an independent consultant for the media sector is included in Appendix A: Implementing the Changing Narratives Fund in the News Media Sector: Findings and Recommendations, by Research Group:

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[Changing Narratives Fund Report on Consultations](#)

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Catalogue No. CH44-180/2023E-PDF (PDF, English)
ISBN 978-0-660-49189-9

Catalogue No. CH44-180/2023F-PDF (PDF, French)
ISBN 978-0-660-49190-5

Introduction

The Minister of Canadian Heritage's mandate letter includes a commitment to developing a "new Changing Narratives Fund to provide diverse communities with the tools to tell their own stories and to promote diverse voices in arts, culture and media." In response, Budget 2022 announced \$5 million in funding in 2023-24 to Canadian Heritage to launch the Changing Narratives Fund (CNF). The development of this fund is an opportunity for the Government of Canada to help Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority journalists, creators, and organizations have their experiences and perspectives better represented.

Consultations

The Department of Canadian Heritage held consultations in Fall 2022 with a range of organizations, creators, stakeholders from the media and arts and culture sector, as well as the general public. The purpose of the consultations was to identify obstacles to promoting voices from diverse communities, as well as the measures that the Government of Canada may implement to improve access to the media and arts and culture sectors for diverse communities. These consultations took place in a series of four roundtables, interviews, and an online questionnaire.

A team of independent external consultants was hired to conduct interviews with individuals from the media sector and to organize a roundtable in October 2022 with stakeholders from the sector. This approach was preferred in order to respect the independence of the media. A separate report was submitted to the Department and is presented in Appendix A.

In November 2022, two round tables with stakeholders from the arts and culture sector were jointly conducted by Department officials and an expert from the audiovisual sector. Thereafter, a final roundtable, led by the team of independent consultants, brought together some participants from the previous three roundtables to discuss feedback provided earlier.

An online questionnaire was available from November 16 to December 16, 2022 to gather the perspectives of all Canadians about the creation of the Fund.

In the context of the consultations, the media sector is defined as the communication outlets or tools used to deliver information or data. It includes print media, publishing, the news media, photography, broadcasting, digital media, and advertising. The arts and culture sector is comprised of all individual or collective artistic creative expressions, such as audiovisual production, music, books, performing arts and other creative industries.

Consultations during interviews and roundtables provided input and proposals from key stakeholders from each industry. Altogether, 39 artists, professionals and representatives of organizations participated in the arts and culture roundtables and 15 stakeholders participated in the journalism and media roundtables. Lastly, 13 stakeholders took part in the roundtable for stakeholders from both sectors.

Online questionnaire

Nearly 500 individuals responded to the online questionnaire.^{Footnote1} Of this number:

- 13% of respondents reported coming from Indigenous communities, around 30% were from religious communities covered by the Fund and 46% were identified as persons from racialized communities. (Respondents could either answer or not answer each question.)
- 40% of respondents were from Ontario, 16% from Quebec, 14% from British Columbia, 10% from Alberta, and 20% from other provinces and territories.

139 organizations or associations also responded to the questionnaire. Of this number:

- 86% came from the cultural sector, 33% from the media sector and 1% from other sectors (an organization that could represent more than one sector).
- 79% of organizations represented communities covered by the CNF. Of these, 33% reported representing Indigenous persons, 74% racialized persons, and 14% religious communities. It should be noted that an organization may represent more than one community.

In total, around 5% of respondents stated that they had concerns about the creation of this new fund. There were a wide range of reasons cited including the fear of a loss of media independence, the perception of too much government action or the desire for the culture and media sectors to self-discipline without the intervention of the state in order to create more diverse content.

The following sections summarize the consultations and present the main findings of the roundtables and online questionnaire. These inputs do not necessarily reflect the opinions and strategic policies of the Government of Canada. The information gathered and expertise shared during this process will, in the coming months, inform the development of the new Changing Narratives Fund.

1. Obstacles and systemic barriers

The consultations addressed the obstacles and barriers faced by journalists, creators, artists, and organizations from Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities. Obstacles can be, for example, policies or practices that prevent some people from having fair access to jobs, funds or services, and that may be unintended or invisible to those who are not affected. While roundtable participants had the opportunity to discuss all the obstacles and barriers encountered, survey respondents respond to a list of obstacles by indicating their importance to the participation and representation of diverse communities in the media sector and the arts and culture sector.

Discriminatory hiring practices is the main barrier to community representation

Discriminatory hiring practices: In general, stakeholders identified discriminatory hiring practices as the main barrier to community representation, both in the culture and media sectors. While several respondents said that the labour market is increasingly open and diverse, some discriminatory behaviours remain. Several respondents reported direct discrimination experienced by several members of their communities, reporting situations where an employee or applicant was treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation, for example. Other testimonies described indirect discrimination or a seemingly neutral practice that, in reality, disadvantaged members of a community and this would be felt more strongly in the culture sector.

Lack of opportunities for young graduates: Respondents also addressed hiring processes, which seem to pay little attention to young creators and journalists. Often, these -recent graduates are a strength for their communities. The absence of opportunities or readily available job prospects often turn graduates away from the art or industry in which they trained. However, some respondents also mentioned the difficulty of recruiting journalists and creators from Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority communities in certain sectors or certain regions who are available to be hired quickly.

On the other hand, hiring journalists and creators from diverse communities, especially new talent, alone cannot guarantee that diverse perspectives will be presented in media coverage or in the arts. If these new talents are not trained or allocated budgets or resources to share their stories, they may well remain invisible. For these stories to be seen, a paradigm shift is needed in a way that traditional and/or news media share the stories of Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority communities.

Limited access to leadership positions: It would be more difficult for people from these communities to access management and decision-making positions, particularly within a media organization.

Unpaid internships and training: Discrimination does not only affect employment, it also affects training and internships, which are often unpaid for those hired from diverse these communities.

Lack of diversity at decision-making levels in media, arts and funding organizations

For many, the relatively homogenous composition of panels and selection committees that make decisions about project funding and their publication or posting online does not promote diversity. They are often industry professionals from a majority culture and who do not necessarily have the sensitivities or experiences to fairly assess the work of creators from diverse communities. Many respondents reported vexation, misunderstandings, and discrimination from decision-makers in grant organizations. This translates into a kind of pessimism among the creators and journalists covered by the Fund, and an exodus and loss of talent when they leave for another sector.

Lack of awareness and limited access to funding programs for diverse communities

Lack of awareness of programs: According to the respondents, there is a lack of awareness of existing funding programs to help Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities share their stories across all sectors. Several respondents noted that there was already a significant pool of diverse creators and that better financial support may have a positive impact in the short term.

Limited access to funding: The consulted organizations affirmed that difficulties in accessing existing funding programs are the main obstacle facing Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities. They cited a lack of targeted funding for projects in these communities or for the organizations that represent them as an important concern. They indicate that few of the various programs in place have mechanisms or criteria to support these communities and supported projects often have limited budgets or are very local in nature.

Laborious process: Some respondents have argued that the process of applying for various existing programs and funds can be laborious for community members. Coaching or better guidance is needed and may be facilitated by increased funding from the government to organizations in various communities that plan to apply.

Concerns about the reach and commercial viability of community stories

Respondents mentioned that journalists or creators from Indigenous, racialized, or religious minority communities are hired but it is difficult for them to complete projects on their communities. Reasons are cited such as concerns about the commercial viability or perception that their stories and experiences would not be enjoyed by an audience with different experiences. The employers who employ them are often small media or cultural companies that do not necessarily have a broad reach or the ability to invest in developing new business opportunities.

Limited access to essential digital or technological equipment

During consultations, some participants stated that several creators have difficulty accessing essential digital or technological equipment to present their stories and experiences. This is a reality that particularly affects Indigenous communities or communities that are far from major urban centres. Improving the technological equipment available in schools or community centres could partially address this digital deficit.

Coverage of diverse communities is stereotypical and harmful

A number of organizations have argued that media coverage of the reality of their communities has not only been historically deficient but has often been detrimental. Consequently, the lack of regular and daily contact between majority and minority communities leads to a misunderstanding of the other and worsens stereotypes and negative attitudes.

All of the abovementioned obstacles result in difficulties in creating cultural references and a common and inclusive imaginary among the various groups of society. The obstacles listed hinder a fair place for racialized, Indigenous, and religious minority communities in the media sector and the arts and culture sector.

2. Design and principles of the Changing Narratives Fund

During online consultations, respondents were able to react to a list of initiatives that may be undertaken by the government and identify those that they felt should be prioritized. They were also able to propose ideas for initiatives that may be undertaken to help Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority journalists and creators overcome the identified obstacles.

Table 1. Percentage of online survey respondents who indicated that the following initiatives should be a priority.

	Individuals		Organizations	
	Media	Culture	Media	Culture
Promoting job opportunities through marketing platforms to identify and recruit diverse talent.	52.1%	42.7%	20.5%	18.7%
Implementing internships or other learning opportunities at post-secondary institutions to support skill development and job training.	58.8%	54,8 %	25,6 %	16,8 %
Implementing internship or other learning opportunities in the workplace to support skill development and job training.	56.4%	57.8%	51.3%	41.1%
Identifying mentors who could work with communities to assist them in sharing their own stories.	52.7%	53.3%	20.5%	21.5%

Recruiting community members with cultural knowledge and expertise to be actively involved in the planning, development, and implementation of community projects to ensure meaningful and accurate depiction of lived experiences and local stories.	74.6%	72.9%	41.0%	57.9%
Providing dedicated funding (from government) for the communities.	70.3%	74.4%	74.4%	71%
Partnering diverse journalists or creators with companies or small businesses to provide equitable access to key technology, infrastructure, or collaborative spaces; and establishing regional and national creative spaces as needed.	44.2%	42.2%	20.5%	25.2%
Develop regional and national creative spaces, if necessary.	49.1%	52.8%	20.5%	24.3%
Offering translation or interpretation services to make cultural content more widely accessible to non-community member audiences.	46.7%	42.7%	15.4%	6.5%

Dedicated funds and enhanced funding

Dedicated funds: A high proportion of surveyed individuals and organizations mentioned the need for government funds that are dedicated to creators and journalists from Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority communities in the media and culture sectors. Several noted that these funds must be added to existing programs and be complementary to the current system, but not a small-scale recreation. Funding should be stable and targeted. Several roundtable participants noted that the announced budget for the creation of the Fund is limited and that higher amounts must be allocated to have a real impact. The pandemic has had a destructive impact on many industries, weakening many businesses while further affecting communities covered by the Fund. Some mentioned the need to extend targeted aid measures for industries by including diversity-related conditions.

According to the vast majority of stakeholders, recipients should exclusively be creators or journalists who are part of the Fund's target population: Indigenous, racialized or religious minority communities. However, many stakeholders suggested that the Fund should also be open to other groups, such as the LGBTQI2SAA+ community or persons with disabilities.

There was no unanimity about media and cultural activities that should be eligible or supported by the Fund. Some respondents mentioned that forms of art or expression have traditionally been poorly supported by existing grant and contribution programs.

Thresholds and quotas

Quotas: Some indicated that they prefer recommending quotas within existing initiatives rather than additional targeted funding, lest their community be confined to programs on the periphery of major grant and contribution programs. Others mentioned that to meet the thresholds set by the quotas, companies often hire creators or journalists who are new and have not developed their voice, instead of hiring in decision-making positions or promoting employees who are mid-career.

Content thresholds: In the media sector, although an increased presence of journalists from these communities in newsrooms is seen in a positive light by the participants, they stated that this is not necessarily a guarantee of better coverage of community-specific issues. The content proposed by these journalists may sometimes be rejected or judged too niche for a wider audience.

A long-term vision

Several respondents suggested that the Fund should be built around long-term goals. The strategic vision should not change based on current events or the short-term interests of the industry or governments.

Some argued that diversity has often been a circumstantial or temporary issue, rather than a standing priority. In addition, the CNF should be designed, implemented and administered with broader interests, like social justice and the public interest, in mind.

Need to collect data on communities

More broadly, roundtable participants stressed the importance of gathering data on the situation of creators and journalists from Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities. These data should be used to develop public policy by defining, for example, the thresholds and benchmarks or by measuring the evolution of results. Their analysis would adjust the parameters of the Fund or improve other federal government programs or policies. The communities—particularly Indigenous ones—should be involved in the analysis and interpretation of these data.

Profit from the expertise of diverse communities

During the online survey, a majority of respondents raised the importance of recruiting community members who have cultural knowledge and expertise to actively participate in the planning, development and implementation of projects for the target communities. Such an approach would ensure that local experiences and stories are represented in a fair, relevant and sensitive manner.

Training is crucial

Mentorship: Learning and mentorship are priorities for the majority of respondents. It was proposed that mentors work directly with community members to share their experience and knowledges.

Support for management positions: Many participants also raised the concept of *leadership*. It is important to invest in individuals, their training, expertise and experiences, and not just in the projects that they put forward. The presence of community members in decision-making positions within various organizations would help in having a positive long-term impact.

Career acceleration program: During consultations, several participants mentioned the positive impact of implementing career acceleration programs, which are indispensable to the success and lasting transformation of the industry. This type of program generally involves regular coaching for a young creator, journalist or manager from an accomplished mentor. Young people can then test their ideas, develop a network of contacts within the industry, acquire professional and relational skills, and learn from the experience and journey of members of their communities.

Better dissemination and greater visibility

Reach and promotion: For the media sector, a few participants proposed that the Fund be used in part to increase the visibility of publications, namely through better promotion or by organizing business innovation workshops. The holding of major events was also put forward for the cultural industries. Conferences and fairs could bring together employers, broadcasters and creators from a variety of backgrounds.

Indigenous languages: Language does not generally seem to be a problem in the dissemination of cultural and media content. Relatively few respondents expressed a need for translation or interpretation services to make cultural content more widely accessible to the public outside of communities. However, several respondents mentioned that the Fund should support works produced in Indigenous languages.

3. Administration and delivery of the new Fund

Participants expressed a range of perspectives on the administration of the new Fund. The differences between the ecosystems of the cultural and media industries were raised.

Single administrative agency: Most respondents had concerns about the creation of a single administrative agency, because of the level of funding that would be required for its maintenance and because a single agency may not be able to meet the needs of both sectors.

Community organizations: For many, the ongoing management of the Fund must come from local or community organizations that are present in the field, since they would have better knowledge of the community and its needs.

Organizations led by target communities: Some respondents argued that the organizations administering the Fund should come from the target communities. Opinions were shared on the capacity of existing organizations, which usually target majority communities or a wider public, to manage the Fund. While there are granting agencies from diverse communities that are well established in the arts and culture sector, the same is not true for the media sector. For the media sector, the federal Local Journalism Initiative program was raised as a possible model, but there was no unanimity. If such a model were created, Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities should be represented in the majority.

Eligibility criteria by industry: Participants mentioned that the eligibility criteria for the new fund should be specific to each industry.

Minimum funding: Participants noted that it is difficult to establish minimum project funding for the new Fund. These amounts must take into account a variety of factors and be adapted to each industry. For example, it was suggested that \$25,000 should be the minimum funding amount to help new journalistic businesses. However, this amount should be much higher for other industries, particularly the audiovisual industry.

A separate approach for the media sector

The media ecosystem is constantly evolving, with a steady decline in sources of revenue from advertising and broadcasting. Quality journalism is expensive to produce and must compete with channels that do not always broadcast accurate or verified information. Thus, the following measures were proposed for the media sector.

Journalism companies: A consensus emerged during the consultations on the scope of the Fund as to the importance of supporting journalistic businesses from diverse communities. These businesses could be established media, but also emerging businesses or proposed start-ups that do not exist yet, but come

from the communities. Participants at the roundtables, however, were very nuanced on the eligibility of traditional media, although they play an essential role in normalizing diversity.

Role of local media: According to the participants, local media play an essential role in Indigenous, racialized and religious minority communities. They promote social cohesion and community development, create bridges between cultures and foster the integration of new arrivals. For example, Indigenous media provide content that reflect the distinct culture of diverse communities and helps break their isolation.

Free news service: Some ideas were discussed during the roundtables. For example, creating a news service that specializes in community issues and stories, and that Canadian media could use free of charge.

Salaries for freelancers: Some participants suggested allocating funds for the work of freelance journalists, of which there may be many more who could help with the writing of stories about their communities. Others were opposed to such an approach, stressing that it could help confine more journalists to the precarious role of collaborator.

A simplified and improved process

Simplicity: There was a strong consensus among participants from the cultural and media sectors that the funding application process must be simple and inclusive, with particular attention to small organizations and associations that generally do not receive funding from institutions.

Awareness and support: One respondent suggested that the administrators of the new Fund should organize a virtual “training camp” for potential candidates, which would also help to make the Fund widely known.

Continuous improvements: Respondents agreed that the Fund should be subject to some form of evaluation to determine whether it is meeting its goals after the first year and to refine its eligibility criteria.

Considering the particularities of language markets

Distribution (official languages): Stakeholders contended that, from the moment it is created, the administration of the Fund should include decision-makers who are very familiar with Francophone realities in Canada and the reality of media production in French Canada, both in Quebec and elsewhere in the country. The Fund should also ensure an equitable distribution of support to various creators, journalists and organizations in both official languages.

Support for other languages: Some participants argued that the Fund must be open to projects produced in a language other than English or French.

Involvement of all stakeholders

Lastly, the multilateral importance of funding was highlighted, while the respondent mentioned that government priorities must be shared and explained to the private sector. Generally, in the arts and culture sector, a project cannot succeed if it is not first supported by a producer or broadcaster that believes in the relevance, importance or viability of the work. Since government funding is often only a fraction of the funding allocated for projects, it is essential that the various levels of government and the private sector work together to support greater diversity.

4. Next steps

Canadian Heritage would like to thank all individuals and organizations that took part in the consultations. The comments that were received will help the Department to consider and make decisions on the development and implementation of the Changing Narratives Fund.

Canadian Heritage is pleased with the ongoing collaboration with all interested stakeholders to help the Minister fulfill his commitment made as part of his mandate to “provide diverse communities with the tools to tell their own stories and to promote diverse voices in arts, culture and media.”

Appendix A: Report of the independent consultant for the media sector

Implementing the Changing Narratives Fund in the News Media Sector: Findings and Recommendations

Final Report
January 2023

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1. Procedure and Consultations

Our group was commissioned by the Ministry of Heritage to consult and advise on the implementation of the Changing Narratives Fund within the news media sector. We contacted and consulted with a range of organizations that represent journalists and the news media in Anglophone and Francophone Canada; with news media entrepreneurs who have launched publications that emerge from BIPOC communities; and with racialized journalists who have been leading advocates for change in media coverage of diverse communities and for change in the composition and news priorities of Canadian newsrooms. A group from the Ministry's Anti-Racism Secretariat conducted parallel consultations with representatives of the wider (i.e., non-news media) arts and culture sector.

Our consultations proceeded in three stages. We first conducted one-on-one consultations with the news media sector participants. We then invited them to join in a virtual roundtable on October 5, 2022, moderated by Prof. Adrian Harewood in English and Prof. Patrick White in French. The roundtable

provided an occasion for participants to hear one another's views and to express their thoughts on the most salient aspects of the Changing Narratives Fund, and how it should be designed and implemented. A fruitful and informative discussion, the roundtable was in many ways an elaboration of what participants told us in the one-on-one consultations. Finally, we convened and hosted a "validation" roundtable on December 13, 2022, that brought together members of the news media sector who had been consulted by our group with members of the arts and culture sector who had been consulted by the Anti-Racism Secretariat. This was again jointly moderated by Prof. Harewood and Prof. White. The intent here was to find commonalities of interest between the sectors where these exist, and to draw distinctions between the two where necessary, and to seek the most practical advice as to how the CNF should be best designed.

2. Findings from the News Media Sector Consultations

- There was resounding agreement on the need for such a Fund, based on a unanimous recognition of the need for change in how diverse communities are represented, both to themselves and to wider society. Diverse communities too often lack news sources of their own, while the legacy news media too often view Canadian society through a lens that does not register the reality of Canadian diversity. A number of participants held that the coverage of diverse communities by the legacy news media has not simply been wanting but has been harmful to these communities and to their place in Canadian society.
- Participants in the consultation understand that the Fund alone will not solve the problem it is designed to address. Nonetheless, it is a formal recognition that the problem exists and a welcome source of assistance to those who would seek to redress it.
- Uniformly, participants recognized that the news media sector struggles in an environment where responsible journalism is expensive to produce, can no longer command the advertising revenue it once did, and must compete for attention against inflammatory content that is cheap to generate and that distorts rather than documents reality. In such a dysfunctional information market, responsible journalism requires some form of aid, and the Changing Narratives Fund was welcomed in that light—though respondents were divided on the types of media enterprises that should find support through the Fund.
- Although the initiative is welcomed by participants, they also recognize that it will have to work to counter complaints or misperceptions that it amounts to a form of government interference in the news media. A lack of trust in reputable news sources is already a problem, and in some quarters the news media are viewed as instruments of the government of the day. Even within the journalistic community, there are prominent voices who oppose any form of state support for the news media. A program that seeks to change journalism practice using public funds will have to win the trust of both diverse communities and the general public.
- In the one-on-one consultations, two priorities prominently mentioned were mentorship and leadership. By mentorship, respondents meant recruiting, supporting, training and promoting early career journalists of colour and difference. By leadership, they meant having experienced journalists of colour and difference in decision-making positions throughout the news media as a matter of course. There was a recognition that the Changing Narratives Fund lends itself to assisting with mentorship, but leadership change is a longer-term project.
- At the same time, many participants argued that the mere presence of BIPOC, LGBTQ+ or disabled journalists in newsrooms that are otherwise predominantly white, heterosexual, and able-bodied is at present no guarantee that the media will adopt racialized, non-cis or non-ableist perspectives in news coverage. Respondents recounted that story suggestions of clear relevance to diverse communities were often dismissed in mainstream newsrooms as being of niche interest, or the journalists proposing such stories as being "too close" to these communities, or that they were acting as advocates rather than journalists. A number mentioned racialized journalists leaving legacy media newsrooms in frustration because their perspectives were not valued. This point would inform the roundtable discussion on where funding priorities for the CNF should lie.

- Francophone respondents from Quebec, Ontario and Acadie emphasized the need for training and professional formation so that entry-level BIPOC journalists can launch careers either in the mainstream media or with outlets addressed to specific communities. It was suggested that the CNF might support scholarships and paid internships for student journalists. Other respondents noted that there was also a need in French and English Canada for training more broadly in how to cover diverse communities, and to sensitize those currently in editorial leadership roles to the realities of Canadian diversity and to racialized experience.
- Francophone respondents also emphasized that journalism practice in French Canada differs in important respects from that of English Canada—for example, news reporting in French Canada tends to be more analytical than is the norm in English Canada, where neutrality of voice and “objectivity” are the conventions in news reporting. The administration of the Fund, they insisted, would have to understand and accommodate these differences, and indeed the differences within Francophone journalism practice, and would have to include members experienced in Francophone journalism culture. The needs in Acadie are not the same as in Quebec, for instance.
- Respondents were agreed that the Fund should support responsible, conscientious, professional journalism that produces news coverage, rather than outlets whose purpose is purely to polemicize. At the same time, they cautioned that certain coverage of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ issues will of necessity take the form of advocacy—to expose wrongs and effect change—just as much of mainstream journalism is conducted in the name of social justice and the public interest.
- Respondents all agreed that the Fund should support journalistic enterprise emerging from diverse communities—either established outlets, emerging enterprises, or proposals for start-up ventures that do not yet exist. They were not of like mind as to whether corporate mass media organizations should also be eligible for funding, or, if they should be eligible, in what way.
- On the one hand, they recognized that the reach of the corporate news media exceeds that of specialty publications or programming serving diverse communities, and that the goal of “changing narratives” requires change in the coverage offered by the largest media outlets. What is needed is not simply robust and reliable coverage of diverse communities but change in how these communities are seen by those who are not members of them. This cannot come about if the Fund only supports media outlets targeted at diverse communities exclusively. On the other hand, some argued that the corporate media have had plenty of opportunity to change the composition of their newsrooms and the priorities of their coverage. Why should their failure to do so be rewarded by allowing them access to this limited pool of funds that might be more effectively used to support existing and emerging outlets that forthrightly cover diverse communities? It was suggested that one way to effect change in what the legacy media cover and how they do so might be precisely through establishing prominent BIPOC media, the way in which APTN (the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) has helped, in some instances, to alter how the mainstream media cover Indigenous issues, if only by its existence and example.
- Some participants favoured using the Fund to finance reporting or editing positions in existing newsrooms, along the model of the Local Journalism Initiative. This would provide stable, reasonably well-paid staff positions in outlets with proven reach. Just as the LJI was created to provide assistance to underserved communities and “news deserts,” the tapestry of diversity in Canadian society can equally be viewed as underserved by the existing news media.
- Others, as mentioned, expressed scepticism that a small number of new, junior BIPOC or LGBTQ+ staff members dropped into omnibus newsrooms across the country would bring about meaningful change, particularly if the perspectives of these staff members were not incorporated into the organization’s news values and priorities. With limited funds available, those who opposed the LJI model favoured prioritizing existing ventures that specifically address diverse communities and providing seed support for new, start-up enterprises.
- Among those who accepted or favoured the LJI model of funding staff positions, some would restrict eligibility to BIPOC- and LGBTQ+-led initiatives that emerge from and direct themselves to diverse communities, excluding from eligibility the newsrooms of general broadcasters or corporately owned newspapers. (As one participant put it, although the legacy media are struggling and require assistance, they should not be able to draw support from this Fund specifically, which has been created for a different purpose.) An advantage of supporting media

outlets led by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC journalists is that they would already have racialized and non-cis staff in decision-making capacities. Others thought that smaller, regional newsrooms might particularly benefit from CNF-funded staff positions on the model of the LJI—here, a single appointment might well effect realistic change in news practice, while underserved diverse communities in rural towns, where immigration is changing population demographics, would benefit from journalistic coverage that previously had been lacking or absent. There was very little support for using the Fund to finance staff positions in large, urban, legacy media newsrooms.

- Although participants agreed that eligibility considerations should take into account the sustainability of ventures seeking funding, so that monies are not wasted on initiatives that flounder and cannot find audiences, there was broad agreement that commercial viability should not be the determining factor. If there is not already a robust ecosystem of media outlets providing coverage of diverse communities, this is in part because the market alone does not provide sufficient support for it. And publicly funded media such as CBC/Radio-Canada, TVOntario and Télé-Québec exist precisely to provide programming that the private sector either cannot or will not; they are not intended to be commercially profitable. So, while some new media ventures might become commercially self-sustaining after being launched with CNF support, others might be viable only given some form of publicly funded support. Participants therefore agreed that sustainability and impact would be better considerations for assessment and eligibility, though they recognized that these would be difficult to codify.
- There was broad support for using the CNF to incentivize and finance partnerships or collaborations between established, larger media outlets (the corporate media) and BIPOC/LGBTQ+ outlets, with the caution that the smaller partner must clearly benefit from the collaboration. Here was a way to capitalize on the greater reach and resources of the corporate media (the larger partner would be able to publicize and market the joint project far more widely) while the smaller partner retained editorial authority. Such partnerships might also work to introduce greater diversity of perspective to the news criteria of the legacy media and sensitize both mainstream newsrooms and mainstream audiences to issues of diversity and difference.
- An example of a start-up venture that found support was the suggestion of a news service specializing in BIPOC issues and stories that outlets across the country could use without cost, and to which they might contribute. Here, again, editorial decision-making on what stories to pursue and how would lie with the BIPOC staff, while the use of the service's output in the mainstream media would raise the visibility of diverse communities, normalize the fact of diversity, and so potentially contribute to the goal of "changing narratives." Not all media outlets are inclined to use wire stories—it would be unusual, for example, for magazines such as *The Walrus* or *L'actualité* to use stories provided by a wire service—but they are nonetheless a staple of print, digital, and broadcast newsrooms, along with social media platforms, and so such a news service would have the potential to find wide exposure for its output.
- Some favoured using the Fund to support freelance projects, in addition to or instead of staffed positions, operating grants for existing publications, or seed money for start-up ventures. An argument in favour of grants for freelance work is that the money could be spread over many more journalists, while commissioning publications would be able to call on numerous contributors rather than a single staff member, thus supporting a multiplicity of voices and expanding diversity of perspective. An argument in opposition is that to create a category of support for freelance projects is to instantiate piecemeal over stable, staff positions and further marginalize BIPOC and LGBTQ+ journalists. (The difference of opinion here may reflect different journalistic backgrounds. Newspaper content has been traditionally supplied by staff reporters, columnists, and wire services, while freelancers have contributed only a small proportion of copy. Most magazines, by contrast, have traditionally relied on a stable of freelance contributors.)
- There were also arguments in favour of using the Fund to aid publications in raising their profile and expanding their reach, for example by assisting in marketing and promotion, or running business innovation workshops.
- Respondents did not have firm or concrete proposals for how the Fund should be administered, or by whom, beyond the near unanimous insistence that it be autonomous from the state and seen to be so. Some thought the administration of the Local Journalism Initiative provided a ready model. Others thought the LJI, administered as it is by industry organizations, favours the status quo.

- Respondents were agreed that the application process for funding should be as straightforward, streamlined, and inclusive as possible. Especially for small outlets, the administering body should provide guidance and support in preparing applications. One respondent suggested that the administering body should hold a virtual “boot camp” for potential applicants, which would also serve to widely publicize the fact of the Fund.
- Respondents recognized that the Fund would have to be subject to some form of assessment as to whether it was accomplishing its goals, and to fine-tune its criteria of eligibility and assessment after being in operation in its first year or years, but there was no agreement on the specific metrics or mechanism by which this should be done.

3. Findings from the “Validation” Roundtable

The validation roundtable brought together members of the news media sector with representatives of the arts and culture sector. In the previous, parallel consultations, members from both sectors pointed to barriers of systemic racism that have led to the same outcome: the marginalization of racialized representation and perspective in media content. Canadian film and television production has overwhelmingly featured white protagonists and white-centred narratives, while the lens of Canadian news journalism too often occludes coverage of, and from, communities outside what is taken to be the “mainstream.” Overall, the joint labour of the news media and cultural industries has been to affirm a depiction of the country in which white, middle class, cis-gendered Canada is the norm.

Both sectors stressed the need to normalize BIPOC/non-cis gatekeepers and decision-makers at every level of the media and the arts, from assignment editors to granting authorities. Both recognized the need for training and mentorship in order to advance the next generation.

At the same time, there are important differences between the news media and the arts and culture sectors, not the least of which is that art and culture deal in worlds of imagination, whereas the news media chronicle a world of actuality. Both, obviously, pertain to lived experience—they seek to enlighten, inform, and make sense of reality. Both hope to capture the attention of audiences, and often, if not always, to “entertain” them. And both use much the same media: film, television, radio and sound recording, print and digital publishing. However, the means and the methods of poets and painters, musicians and moviemakers are quite distinct from those of news journalists. (In the university, similarly, the humanities and the natural sciences are both intellectual efforts to apprehend truth, housed in the same institution, but they are so categorically different that they cleave into separate granting agencies: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council.)

Canadian arts and culture have also long been supported by a regulatory regime and state funding apparatus. In the face of competition from the US juggernaut, without Canadian content regulations and a suite of tax credits there might not be a Canadian independent film and television industry, a Canadian publishing industry, or a Canadian recording industry. These policy measures have been successful: entire cultural industries exist today in Canada because of them. Arts organizations and production companies are therefore accustomed to dealing with structures and agencies of state funding. They may chafe at the process even as they appreciate the support it provides. But they are accustomed to it, in a way that news journalism is not.

Over the years, news journalism has benefitted from state support, from postal subsidies to the Canada Periodical Fund, but none of these measures was created specifically to aid news journalism. The news media traditionally neither required nor requested state support. First, because until recently they were so profitable that they did not need government grants or protectionist statutes. Second, because an independent press cannot be indebted to the government it is supposed to be holding to account. Hence, there is no equivalent of the CRTC (a licencing body) or Telefilm (a granting agency) for the Canadian news media.

With this in mind, and asking for their most practical advice, we posed four main questions to the joint roundtable.

First, could this Fund be administered to both sectors by a common authority in the interests of efficiency, potential synergy, and to minimize administrative overhead?

Overwhelmingly, the consensus was that a single administrative body would be inadvisable, because the needs and *raison d'être* of the two sectors are so different. Participants pointed out that the people responsible for administering the Fund must be members of the BIPOC communities who are especially knowledgeable about the business realities of the relevant industries, and in that regard the two sectors are simply too dissimilar. Even if administration were housed in a single body, participants agreed that it would have to divide itself into at least two streams, with separate funding criteria for each, run by individuals with sector-specific expertise. And even then, one participant observed, there would be the potential for conflict of interest since some of the labour of the news media involves business coverage of the entertainment industries and criticism of artistic work.

There was discussion of whether existing bodies might be able to administer the Fund. While this was conceivable in the case of the arts and culture sector, which already has granting agencies such as the Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm, and the Canada Media Fund, it was problematic in the case of the news media sector. Professional associations such as the Canadian Association of Journalists and the Canadian Association of Black Journalists were mentioned, along with the CRTC. Some participants said pointedly that they would not welcome the Fund being administered by the same bodies—namely, industry associations—that currently manage the Local Journalism Initiative.

Second, if there is \$5 million to disburse each year, what is the maximum amount that might be awarded to any single recipient? What is the minimum?

The intent in this question was to tease out differences in realistic expectations between the two sectors. As one participant pointed out, a \$5,000 grant might be enough to launch an investigative journalism project but would be next to meaningless to the budget of a feature film. Another cited the need for seed money for start-up ventures in the news media sector, as there are currently few sources for such funds. The Canadian Association of Black Journalists provides a small number of \$5,000 grants to support start-ups, but experience has shown that this is not enough. It was suggested that \$25,000 should be the minimum funding amount to aid new journalism ventures. Some discussants argued, as had been argued at the previous news media sector roundtable, that whatever the funding amounts, BIPOC-owned or—managed ventures should either be the exclusive recipients of funding or be heavily favoured in the funding criteria. Some felt that funding in the past has favoured the larger players and corporate media rather than smaller enterprises. There was also discussion of the need for stability and reliability of funding.

Third, how should the government take into account the differences between English and French Canada—as well as regional differences between Francophone Quebec and Francophone communities outside of Quebec—in shaping the design of the program and its management?

Discussants pointed out that, just as English Canadian independent film and TV production competes with the American product, Francophone production must also compete for audience attention against the North American and global product. Discussants held that, from its inception, the administration of the Fund should include decision-makers knowledgeable of the Francophone realities in Canada and of the realities of media production in French Canada, both in Quebec and in other parts of the country, and that the Fund should be sure to be equitable in how support is distributed in both official languages. One participant argued that the Fund should not overlook the regions outside the metropolitan centres of film, television and news production—just as the Local Journalism Initiative was created to address news deficits in non-urban areas, so perhaps the Changing Narratives Fund should have as one of its goals supporting content production in otherwise underserved regions and communities.

Finally, we asked participants for one thing they would like to say to the Government of Canada as it designs this initiative.

Here, there was no single point that emerged. Participants mentioned, again, support for smaller ventures; support for ventures in languages other than English and French; and that the different realities of the French and English markets be taken into consideration. They were unanimous that this Fund is a

welcome development and look forward to seeing it put in place, one way or another. At the same time, however, they emphasized that \$5 million a year, in the larger scheme of things, is a very small amount, especially when spread across both the arts and culture and the news media sectors. By itself, it will not bring about the change that equity and justice require. One participant argued that, the Changing Narratives Fund aside, every publicly funded cultural enterprise should be required to commit itself to equity goals, and should be held accountable to them.

4. Recommendations for Consideration

The vitality of the Canadian arts and culture sector is a triumph of the creative communities and a testament to the success of well-conceived policy measures over the years. It is this very vitality, however, that presents a problem for the best and most effective use of the Changing Narratives Fund.

The arts and culture extend from the music industry to poetry slams, from feature films to live theatre, from orchestras and dance companies to video game design, from gallery art and publishing imprints to cultural festivals.

Even if all \$5 million of the Fund were allocated to the arts and culture sector, to the exclusion of the news media sector, the money would all but disappear without a trace. In television alone, the production costs of a single hour-long episode of a program such as *Heartland* run to some \$1.3 million. Unless the money were targeted toward highly specific ends—given in its entirety only to film and television production, for example, through the Telefilm Development Stream for Racialized Persons or the Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators—the danger is that it would smear itself in a thin veneer of public funds spread across a wide spectrum of cultural industries. The expenditure would be of little effect in shifting the terms and perspectives of how we see ourselves, which is the purpose of the Fund.

If, however, a priority of the CNF is to effect immediate and vivid change in cultural representation, as well as to wrest maximum effect from a limited pool of funds, the Government might consider committing the entirety of the Fund to the news media sector, at least at the outset.

Because production costs for news journalism are a fraction of those for film, television, the recording industry, fine art and video gaming, the limited funds currently committed to the CNF would go much further if concentrated in the news sector. In television, a sum of \$5 million would barely cover the costs of three hours of dramatic programming. In journalism, \$5 million would underwrite a torrent of news, current affairs, and documentary content.

As well, culture and the arts already have their funding agencies—the Canada Council, Telefilm, the Canada Media Fund, and others—which could, as a matter of policy, choose to emphasize racial and other forms of diversity in funding allocation (and indeed have already begun to do so). The news media sector as yet has no such equivalents.

We therefore recommend that the Government consider prioritizing the news media sector in the launch of the Changing Narratives Fund. Failing that, the Fund should be split evenly between the news media and the arts and culture sectors—\$2.5 million annually each.

However much is allocated to the news media sector, it begs the question of how the money should be administered. State support for the news media, in whatever form, is fraught, because in a liberal democracy the press must be independent of the state, and seen to be so, with absolute liberty to chronicle, comment on, and criticize the actions of government. In authoritarian societies, the state holds the media to account. In free societies, the news media hold the government to account. Any use of public funds to underwrite journalistic enterprise, therefore, must come with scrupulous guarantees that the content of news reporting and analysis is in no way subject to the authority of the government of the day.

This is not to say that the state can have no influence whatsoever in media affairs. The mere commitment of public funds in the first place is a form of influence. But any such measures must be undertaken solely in the interests of the public good and must entail no direct or discretionary government control of news

content. Just as the state supports the news and current affairs divisions of public broadcasting on the grounds that society benefits from news coverage provided by media outlets not driven by the profit imperative, so an innovation such as the Local Journalism Initiative is justified as a remedy to the manifest harm inflicted on communities by the loss of reliable, professional local news sources. The Changing Narratives Fund, similarly, is an attempt to correct a failing in the media marketplace, but beyond that government can have no say in the content of the coverage the funds are used to produce.

In the case of the Canada Periodical Fund, the money is disbursed according to a formula that removes discretion from the process inasmuch as possible: publications receive funding in light of a raft of considerations, including how much they invest in the production of editorial content. The Canada Media Fund, by comparison, is a discretionary body. Its decisions as to which projects receive funding are not made by algorithms. They are informed judgments guided by the mandate of the CMF and rendered by individuals with sector-specific expertise. Crucially, the provider of the funding—the government—has no latitude to involve itself in the deliberations of the funding body.

With the Local Journalism Initiative, the Government of Canada made the decision to fund a number of reporting positions with existing news media outlets across the country in areas of “news poverty.” But it then delegated the task of administering the Initiative to a suite of industry associations. Media outlets apply for LJI positions and juries of industry professionals decide which receive funding. Hence the news media maintain their autonomy from the state, even as they benefit from its financial aid.

The most expedient way to administer the Changing Narratives Fund to the news media sector would be to do so through the existing Local Journalism Initiative. The CNF could be used to finance staffed newsroom positions for racialized, queer, disabled journalists, and journalists from other diverse communities, with a mandate to provide coverage of, from, and for communities of diversity. These positions would not only go some way toward generating the type of coverage that has been lacking in Canadian news content but bolster newsrooms struggling in straitened economic circumstances. The government could be seen to be helping in an issue of social justice while at the same time remaining steadfastly uninvolved in how the work of the fourth estate was conducted: that would be a matter for the news media themselves to decide. And because the CNF monies would be managed by industry associations, there would be no need to create a new, non-governmental organization to administer the Fund. Problem solved.

But also, opportunity lost. Although there are certainly advantages to funding staffed positions in existing newsrooms, almost everyone with whom we consulted hopes for more from the Changing Narratives Fund, and they identified a series of needs, from mentorship to seed money for start-up ventures, that would be neglected if the Fund was channelled exclusively into staffed positions as a subset of the Local Journalism Initiative. As well, some of those consulted would prefer that the LJI and the CNF not be administered by industry associations.

While delegating the management of the LJI to industry associations was a ready solution for a government looking to remove itself from the process, it is not without its difficulties. Because industry associations exist in large measure to negotiate the conditions of their trade with government, by handing the administration of the LJI over to organizations such as News Media Canada and Réseau.Presse, the government in effect put the Initiative in the hands of lobbying groups.

An industry association such as News Media Canada typically represents corporate interests. It is a confederacy of companies. The owners and managers of companies all too often understandably equate their interests with the interests of the “industry,” but an industry is almost always more than just its corporate incarnation. Contrast an industry association such as News Media Canada to a professional association such as the Canadian Association of Journalists. Professional associations represent the people who do the work, the employees who produce the content the industry makes, and that therefore makes the industry. Both have their place. The industry association works in what it takes to be the best interests of owners, managers, and employees, and does so at the level of trying to win favourable treatment in tax law and the like. Professional associations concern themselves with how the work is and should be performed. They are focused on standards and practices, and they hold quality of work as their paramount value.

The administration of public funds provided to the news media in the service of the public good should certainly involve industry representation together with representation of the professionals who carry out the work, but it should no more be a creature of corporate interests alone than it should be an arm of the state.

We understand the government's reluctance, when the Local Journalism Initiative was implemented in 2019, to create a non-governmental entity that would manage it. However, if the Changing Narratives Fund is to involve more than just newsroom placements, it will require an administrative body that cannot and should not be an industry association offshoot.

We therefore recommend that the Changing Narratives Fund be implemented and run by a new non-governmental body. We further recommend that the Government consider transferring responsibility for the Local Journalism Initiative, and any other publicly funded aid to the news media, to this agency.

This recommendation is consistent with the arguments made in the Public Policy Forum's 2022 report, *The Shattered Mirror 5 Years On: Platforms, Innovation and Local News*. (Full disclosure: one of the authors of the present report was the principal writer of the Public Policy Forum document.)

There will be those who will argue that the Changing Narratives Fund cannot accomplish all that the discussants in our consultations would wish for it: that it is too much to expect the CNF to function simultaneously as a job placement agency, a granting body for journalistic enterprise, a bank for start-up ventures, a professional development and training office, and a mentorship program. We believe that it can, and that if well managed it can do so nimbly and efficiently.

What follows are merely back-of-the-envelope suggestions and estimates simply to illustrate how this might be done. One can play with the various amounts, and certainly a more detailed and exacting accounting would be necessary before putting in place anything along these lines. It should go without saying that the administration of this agency would be representative of the BIPOC+ communities it has been created to serve, would be attuned to the realities of Anglophone and Francophone Canada, in Quebec and in other parts of the country, as well as to the ethnic diversity of the nation, and have the necessary understanding of the news industry and best journalism practices.

Let us assume that the large, established, urban news media (*The Toronto Star*, *The National Post*, *Le Journal de Montréal*, CBC/Radio-Canada, CTV, etc.) would not be directly eligible for CNF funding, although there would be incentives for the sort of collaborations imagined by our discussants, in which a small BIPOC+ initiative or project could partner with a larger outlet so as to give greater reach to coverage initiated by the smaller partner.

Scenario #1: \$5 million

In this scenario, let us assume that all \$5 million of the Changing Narratives Fund is allocated to the news media sector.

- If \$2.5 million of this is earmarked for paid, newsroom positions on the model of the Local Journalism Initiative, at a salary of \$45,000 per annum (the value of SSHRC and NSERC postdoctoral fellowships) this would generate 55 new staff positions for outlets across the country, from regional newsrooms to emergent publications. Applications would be reviewed by a suitably credentialed jury assembled for the purpose, in the way the Michener Awards are currently administered.
- One million dollars might be devoted to grants for start-up ventures, to bring new outlets into being and put wind in the sails of emergent enterprises. Applications would be reviewed by a panel with entrepreneurial and business experience in the news media. The value of awards might range from \$50,000 to the full \$1 million. (For example, if a compelling proposal was submitted for the launch of a BIPOC+ wire service, as imagined by some of our discussants, this might require between \$500,000 and \$1 million to realize.) If the average amount awarded was \$100,000, this would fund 10 start-ups.

- Six hundred thousand dollars might be allocated to funding individual projects: these could be documentary film projects, investigative projects, collaborations between BIPOC+ outlets and larger media, and the like. Grants might range from \$10,000 (for a magazine article or newspaper investigation) to \$30,000 (for a documentary film). Applications would be reviewed by a jury of seasoned journalists with experience as producers and commissioning editors. If the average amount awarded was \$15,000, this would fund 40 original projects a year.
- One hundred thousand dollars might be set aside for training: incubator sessions for news media entrepreneurs, leadership training for BIPOC+ journalists moving into positions of editorial decision-making, workshops for current news media management on recognizing, embracing, and advancing change and diversity in the newsroom and the industry. This should be done in collaboration with those already working in this area, such as the Canadian Association of Black Journalists' Media Startup Bootcamp.
- Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars might be devoted to fellowships, placements, and summer jobs for students. This should support initiatives already put in place such as the Canadian Journalism Foundation's Black Journalists Fellowship Program. If each fellowship was valued at \$7,000, this would support placements and professional experience for 50 students.
- Fifty thousand dollars might support and enhance mentorship programs already in place, such as Journalists for Human Rights' BIPOC Youth in Journalism Project, the National Media Awards Foundation's BIPOC Mentorship Program, the Shared Bylines program of Canadian Journalists of Colour, the Canadian Association of Black Journalists' J-School Noire, and the mentorship programs of New Canadian Media and the Canadian Journalism Association, among others.
- Four hundred thousand dollars might be required for overhead, staffing and administrative costs, though perhaps this could be reduced if the agency created to administer the Changing Narratives Fund in the news media sector could find a home within an existing NGO or non-profit organization. Permanent staff should be kept to a minimum. The juries who decide on the newsroom placements, the start-up grants, and the individual projects should be compensated for their time and commitment, but not exorbitantly so.

Scenario #2: \$2.5 Million

Should the news media sector be allocated only \$2.5 million of the Changing Narratives Fund, the funding estimates and allocations above could be cut in half, though unfortunately the administrative costs would likely be only slightly reduced. On the other hand, if responsibility for the Local Journalism Initiative were transferred to this new agency, the administrative costs would not appreciably increase.

Possible funding allocations under this scenario:

- One million dollars for paid newsroom positions would generate 22 new staff positions across the country.
- \$450,000 for start-ups. If the average grant awarded was \$75,000, this would finance six new ventures.
- Three hundred thousand dollars for project grants. If the average amount awarded was \$15,000, this would finance 20 projects.
- One hundred thousand dollars for training.
- Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for fellowships, placements, and summer jobs for students. This would support placements and experience for 35 students.
- Fifty thousand dollars for mentorship programs.
- Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars for administrative costs, salaries and overhead.

5. Our Thanks

The research team thanks everyone who joined in this project by agreeing to be consulted and by participating in the roundtable discussions. We apologize for the imposition on your time, but your counsel was invaluable, and we hope we have done justice to your contributions.

We also thank the Periodical Publishing Policy and Programs unit of the Ministry of Canadian Heritage for inviting us to take on this study. We learned a great deal from doing so and we hope this report will be helpful as the Government of Canada deliberates on how best to implement the Changing Narratives Fund.

6. About the Authors

- Christopher Dornan taught at Carleton University for 33 years, where he served for nine years as Director of the School of Journalism and Communication and six years as Director of the Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. He was a co-author, with Edward Greenspon, of the Public Policy Forum's 2017 report *The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age*, and the principal writer of its follow-up in 2022, *The Shattered Mirror 5 Years On: Platforms, Innovation and Local News*.
- Adrian Harewood is a professor of Journalism at Carleton University. He is the former host of CBC Ottawa's drive-home radio show *All in a Day*, and was the anchor of *CBC Ottawa News at Six* from 2009-2022. In 2022, he won the Canadian Screen Award for Best Local Anchor. He has been the guest host of national programs on radio and television including *The Current*, *As It Happens*, *Sounds Like Canada*, *The House*, *Counterspin*, *Hot Type*, and *Power & Politics*. He was also the host of programs on BRAVO and PBS, including *Literati*, *The Actors*, *The Directors*, *Playwrights & Screenwriters*. He is a board member of Journalists for Human Rights and the Writers' Trust of Canada. He created the Carleton Journalism School's first-ever course focused on race, a graduate seminar called Journalism, Race and Diversity, and also the first course in Canada devoted to the study of the History of Black Canadian Journalism.
- Patrick White has been a Quebec journalist since 1990. Over the years, he has worked for CTV National News, Canadian Press, Reuters, the Huffington Post and Quebecor Media (Canoe and Le Journal de Québec). He is now director of the Journalism program and professor of Journalism at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).
- Micaal Ahmed took his Bachelor of Journalism at Carleton University and is currently a Master's student in Carleton's Graduate Program in Political Management. He has worked with newspapers, magazines, politicians, and non-profits — and has a wide range of communications, marketing, and writing experience. He was the research assistant for *The Canadian Federal Election of 2021* (McGill-Queen's University Press).
- Wafa El-Rayes is an Ottawa journalist completing the fourth year of her Bachelor of Journalism at Carleton University. Her work has been featured in The National Post, CTV's The Social, Capital Current, and The Charlatan. She is the co-host of a weekly broadcast on CKCU FM which features local artists and changemakers.
- Sébastien Chicoine has worked as a translator since 1991 and has several areas of specialization in this profession. He has also been a journalist and senior editor of the news and arts and culture verticals for a major online media (Canoe) throughout the 2000s.

Appendix B: Questionnaire – Online Consultation

Identifying the respondent

1. Are you 16 years of age or older?

- Yes
- No (Thank the respondent and have them exit the questionnaire.)

2. Are you responding on behalf of an organization?

- Organization (See organization demographic questions.)
- Private citizen (See private citizen demographic questions.)

Organization demographic questions

Before beginning, please tell us a little about yourself and the organization you represent.

3. What is the name of your organization?

4. What is your name (first and last names)?

5. What is your role/title in the organization?

6. Is your organization involved in the following sectors? (multiple responses)

- **Media sector:** In the context of this consultation, media is defined as the communication outlets or tools used to delivery information or data. It includes print media, publishing, the news media, photography, broadcasting, digital media, and advertising.
- **Cultural sector:** In the context of this consultation, the cultural sectors are comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions. Activities under the cultural sector would include music, audiovisual production, books, performing arts and other creative industries.
- My organization is not involved in either of the sectors listed.

7. Please indicate which of the following group(s) your organization represents, directly or indirectly. Choose all that apply.

- Indigenous Peoples
- Racialized communities
- Religious communities
- My organization does not directly represent members of these groups.

8. In which province/territory is your organization's headquarters?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon
- Outside of Canada, please specify:

9. What is the geographic reach of your organization's activities within Canada? (Select all that apply)

- National (Canada-wide)

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon
- International
- Organization does not operate in Canada

Private citizen demographic questions

Before beginning, please tell us a little about yourself.

1. In which province or territory do you live?

- Alberta
- British Columbia
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Ontario
- Prince Edward Island
- Quebec
- Saskatchewan
- Yukon
- I do not live in Canada

2. Are you an Indigenous person?

- Yes, First Nations
- Yes, Inuk (Inuit)
- Yes, Métis
- No

3. Which of the following best describes you? (Select all that apply)

- South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, etc.)
- East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Indonesian, etc.)
- Middle Eastern, West and Central Asian (e.g., Iranian, Lebanese, Afghan, Palestinian, etc.)
- Asian, _____ (please specify)
- North African (e.g., Egyptian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.)

- Black Caribbean (e.g., Jamaican, Haitian, Trinidadian/Tobagonian, etc.)
- Black African (e.g., Nigerian, Congolese, etc.)
- Black, _____ (please specify)
- Latinx (e.g., Colombian, Salvadorian, Peruvian, etc.)
- White
- Multiracial (please specify) _____
- I identify as: _____

4. Which religious/spiritual traditions do you practice?

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism
- Traditional (African) spirituality (e.g., Vodun, Yoruba, Candomble)
- Traditional (Indigenous) spirituality
- Other religion(s), please specify:
- No religious affiliation/agnostic/atheist

Introduction

1. Would you like to share views on: (Please select one)

- The media sector**
 - In the context of this consultation, media is defined as the communication outlets or tools used to delivery information or data. It includes print media, publishing, the news media, photography, broadcasting, digital media, and advertising.
- The cultural sectors**
 - In the context of this consultation, the cultural sectors are comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions. Activities under the cultural sector would include music, audiovisual production, books, performing arts and other creative industries.
- Both the media and the cultural sectors**

2. Please select the response to the statement below that best aligns with your perspective.

The federal government should play a role in ensuring that Indigenous people or individuals from racialized or religious minority communities in Canada have greater opportunities in participating and being represented in the media and the cultural sectors.

- Agree
- Disagree
- I don't know

IF (DISAGREE): Please explain why you think government should not play this role. (Open Text).

Section A: Barriers

1. Below is a list of often-cited barriers encountered by Indigenous, racialized and religious minority creators, artists and organizations in the media, arts and cultural sector landscape. Please indicate how

significant each of the following barriers are for Indigenous peoples, racialized and religious minority communities in terms of participating and being represented in the media and/or cultural sectors. For each of the statements, you can also provide additional comments.

	Indigenous peoples	Racialized communities	Religious minority communities	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the media sector. • Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the cultural sector. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult for journalists to access training or mentoring at the beginning of their career. • It is difficult for creators to access training or mentoring at the beginning of their career. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult for journalists to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a media organization. • It is difficult for creators to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a cultural organization. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects of underrepresented communities in the media sector. • There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects of underrepresented communities in the cultural sector. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)

<p>sharing their stories in the media sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in sharing their stories in the cultural sectors. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories. • Creators are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists might be hired in media organizations but are unable to propose their stories to editors due to concerns related to commercial viability and reach of audience. • Creators might be hired in cultural arts organizations but are unable to see their work be realized due to concerns related to commercial viability and reach of audience. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remoteness of some communities from major urban centres is a challenge in the media sector. • The remoteness of some communities from major urban centres is a challenge in the cultural sector. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is a barrier for production, and access to, media content in communities. • Language is a barrier for production, and access to, cultural content in communities. 	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	Very significant/fairly significant/not very significant/not significant at all	(Open text)

2. What are other barriers encountered by racialized and religious minority journalists, creators, artists and organizations in the arts and cultural sector landscape? (Question for organizations only.)

3. Some initiatives could be undertaken to help Indigenous, racialized, and religious minority journalists and creators overcome the barriers mentioned above. Of the initiatives listed below, which ones would you consider as your top priorities?

-	Indigenous peoples	Racialized communities	Religious minority communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting job opportunities through marketing platforms to identify and recruit diverse talent. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing internships or other learning opportunities at post-secondary institutions to support skill development and job training. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing internship or other learning opportunities in the workplace to support skill development and job training. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying mentors who could work with communities to assist them in sharing their own stories. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruiting community members with cultural knowledge and expertise to be actively involved in the planning, development, and implementation of community projects to ensure meaningful and accurate depiction of lived experiences and local stories. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing dedicated funding (from government) for the communities 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering diverse journalists or creators with companies or small businesses to provide equitable access to key technology, infrastructure, or collaborative spaces; and establishing regional and national creative spaces as needed. 	-	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering translation or interpretation services to make cultural content more widely accessible to non-community member audiences. 	-	-	-

Section B: The Changing Narratives Fund

4. **A) Media sector:** What actions could the federal government take to effectively support the meaningful, accurate and respectful representation and participant of diverse **journalists** in publishing content that reflects their experiences and perspectives?

4. **B) Cultural sectors:** What actions could the federal government take to effectively support the meaningful, accurate and respectful representation and participation of diverse **cultural content creators** in producing content that reflects their experiences and perspectives?

5. What should be the scope of the new fund and how should it be designed (in terms of eligibility criteria and activities that would be supported)?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Appendix C: Summary Tables

Below is a list of often-cited barriers encountered by Indigenous, racialized and religious minority creators, artists and organizations in the arts and cultural sector landscape. Please indicate how important each of the following barriers are for Indigenous peoples, racialized and religious minority communities in terms of participating and being represented in the media/cultural sector.

Table 1. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the media sector.

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	77.0	15.3	2.2	0.0	5.5
	Racialized Communities	77.8	15.9	1.1	0.0	5.3
	Religious Minority Communities	34.5	29.4	11.3	6.8	18.1
It is difficult for journalists to access training or mentoring at	Indigenous Peoples	52.6	16.0	2.9	0.6	28.0

Table 1. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the media sector.

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
the beginning of their career.	Racialized Communities	52.0	21.8	2.8	0.6	22.9
	Religious Minority Communities	22.5	27.8	5.9	7.7	36.1
It is difficult for journalists to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a media organization.	Indigenous Peoples	63.5	12.6	3.6	0.0	20.4
	Racialized Communities	64.0	14.0	4.1	0.6	17.4
	Religious Minority Communities	24.7	25.9	10.5	5.6	33.3
There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects from underrepresented communities in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	49.4	27.4	3.0	3.7	16.5
	Racialized Communities	53.0	27.4	4.2	1.8	13.7
	Religious Minority Communities	27.8	27.8	7.6	10.1	26.6

Table 1. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the media sector.

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in sharing their stories in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	69.1	15.4	2.5	0.6	12.3
	Racialized Communities	66.5	18.0	3.0	0.6	12.0
	Religious Minority Communities	34.4	28.6	9.1	4.5	23.4
Journalists are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories.	Indigenous Peoples	39.4	22.5	5.6	1.2	31.2
	Racialized Communities	33.1	27.7	9.0	1.2	28.9
	Religious Minority Communities	20.5	26.3	9.6	6.4	37.2
Journalists might be hired in media organizations but are unable to propose their stories to editors due to concerns related to	Indigenous Peoples	68.6	13.2	0.6	1.3	16.4
	Racialized Communities	68.3	15.2	0.6	1.2	14.6

Table 1. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the media sector.

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
commercial viability and reach of audience.	Religious Minority Communities	41.2	23.5	5.9	3.3	26.1
The remoteness of some communities from major decision-making or creative centers is a challenge in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	75.8	16.6	0.0	0.0	7.6
	Racialized Communities	54.3	23.8	7.3	4.3	10.4
	Religious Minority Communities	32.7	24.2	11.1	7.8	24.2
Language is a barrier for production, and access to media content in communities.	Indigenous Peoples	57.7	17.3	6.4	1.3	17.3
	Racialized Communities	49.7	22.7	9.8	1.8	16.0
	Religious Minority Communities	29.6	21.1	13.2	6.6	29.6

Table 2. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	75.5	15.6	1.6	1.6	5.7
	Racialized Communities	71.3	22.8	1.0	1.5	3.5
	Religious Minority Communities	37.4	29.9	8.0	5.3	19.3
It is difficult for creators to access training or mentoring at the beginning of their career.	Indigenous Peoples	63.2	18.9	2.7	0.0	15.1
	Racialized Communities	59.4	25.4	3.0	0.5	11.7
	Religious Minority Communities	33.9	26.1	7.8	4.4	27.8
It is difficult for creators to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a cultural organization.	Indigenous Peoples	70.1	18.7	0.5	0.5	10.2
	Racialized Communities	67.2	22.7	1.0	1.0	8.1
	Religious Minority Communities	35.0	26.7	5.6	6.1	26.7

Table 2. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects from underrepresented communities in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	54.1	23.5	3.8	3.3	15.3
	Racialized Communities	55.4	27.7	2.6	2.6	11.8
	Religious Minority Communities	32.6	24.7	5.1	10.1	27.5
There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in sharing their stories in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	67.8	20.8	1.6	1.6	8.2
	Racialized Communities	68.4	23.0	2.6	1.5	4.6
	Religious Minority Communities	40.7	22.6	6.8	5.6	24.3
Creators are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories.	Indigenous Peoples	49.2	25.4	5.5	0.6	19.3
	Racialized Communities	44.3	28.9	8.2	1.5	17.0
	Religious Minority Communities	27.3	25.6	10.8	6.2	30.1

Table 2. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by individuals in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
Creators might be hired in media organizations but are unable to propose their stories to editors due to concerns related to commercial viability and reach of audience.	Indigenous Peoples	72.0	12.1	4.9	0.5	10.4
	Racialized Communities	68.4	19.2	2.6	1.0	8.8
	Religious Minority Communities	45.7	18.9	6.9	6.3	22.3
The remoteness of some communities from major decision-making or creative centers is a challenge in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	75.7	13.8	1.1	1.1	8.3
	Racialized Communities	49.2	26.4	9.8	2.6	11.9
	Religious Minority Communities	31.2	21.6	9.7	8.0	29.5
Language is a barrier for production, and access to, cultural content in communities.	Indigenous Peoples	54.2	23.5	5.6	1.7	15.1
	Racialized Communities	50.3	27.2	7.9	0.5	14.1
	Religious Minority Communities	30.7	23.3	9.1	7.4	29.5

Table 3. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the media sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	64.7	23.5	0.0	5.9	5.9
	Racialized Communities	65.9	24.4	0.0	4.9	4.9
	Religious Minority Communities	37.5	25.0	15.6	12.5	9.4
It is difficult for journalists to access training or mentoring at the beginning of their career.	Indigenous Peoples	57.1	25.7	0.0	0.0	17.1
	Racialized Communities	59.5	26.2	0.0	2.4	11.9
	Religious Minority Communities	30.3	36.4	9.1	6.1	18.2
It is difficult for journalists to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a media organization.	Indigenous Peoples	70.6	11.8	2.9	0.0	14.7
	Racialized Communities	75.6	9.8	4.9	0.0	9.8
	Religious Minority Communities	43.8	21.9	6.2	9.4	18.8

Table 3. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the media sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects from underrepresented communities in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	70.6	17.6	2.9	0.0	8.8
	Racialized Communities	75.6	19.5	0.0	0.0	4.9
	Religious Minority Communities	43.8	31.2	6.2	3.1	15.6
There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in sharing their stories in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	72.7	21.2	0.0	0.0	6.1
	Racialized Communities	75.6	17.1	2.4	0.0	4.9
	Religious Minority Communities	51.6	25.8	9.7	3.2	9.7
Journalists are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories.	Indigenous Peoples	57.6	27.3	3.0	3.0	9.1
	Racialized Communities	57.5	27.5	2.5	2.5	10.0
	Religious Minority Communities	32.3	29.0	16.1	6.5	16.1

Table 3. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the media sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not Important at all	I don't know
Journalists might be hired in media organizations but are unable to propose their stories to editors due to concerns related to commercial viability and reach of audience.	Indigenous Peoples	60.6	21.2	3.0	6.1	9.1
	Racialized Communities	60.0	25.0	2.5	5.0	7.5
	Religious Minority Communities	38.7	25.8	9.7	12.9	12.9
The remoteness of some communities from major decision-making or creative centers is a challenge in the media sector.	Indigenous Peoples	69.7	18.2	6.1	0.0	6.1
	Racialized Communities	52.5	25.0	12.5	0.0	10.0
	Religious Minority Communities	35.5	22.6	22.6	3.2	16.1
Language is a barrier for production, and access to media content in communities.	Indigenous Peoples	53.1	28.1	12.5	0.0	6.2
	Racialized Communities	53.8	28.2	10.3	0.0	7.7
	Religious Minority Communities	40.0	23.3	20.0	3.3	13.3

Table 4. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	I don't know
Discriminatory hiring practices continue to prevent candidates from being recruited into the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	64.9	12.8	5.3	1.1	16.0
	Racialized Communities	71.7	14.2	3.8	2.8	7.5
	Religious Minority Communities	38.9	20.0	5.6	4.4	31.1
It is difficult for creators to access training or mentoring at the beginning of their career.	Indigenous Peoples	63.7	18.7	1.1	0.0	16.5
	Racialized Communities	66.7	24.5	1.0	1.0	6.9
	Religious Minority Communities	31.8	21.6	6.8	3.4	36.4
It is difficult for creators to transition into decision-making leadership roles within a cultural organization.	Indigenous Peoples	66.3	18.0	2.2	0.0	13.5
	Racialized Communities	72.0	20.0	2.0	1.0	5.0
	Religious Minority Communities	37.6	17.6	8.2	3.5	32.9

Table 4. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	I don't know
There is no targeted funding for organizations or projects from underrepresented communities in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	51.1	21.1	7.8	6.7	13.3
	Racialized Communities	59.0	24.0	9.0	4.0	4.0
	Religious Minority Communities	35.7	22.6	7.1	3.6	31.0
There is a lack of awareness and limited access to existing funding programs to support underrepresented communities in sharing their stories in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	67.0	18.2	2.3	2.3	10.2
	Racialized Communities	69.0	24.0	3.0	0	4.0
	Religious Minority Communities	43.4	20.5	3.6	3.6	28.9
Creators are unable to access key digital or technological equipment to showcase their stories.	Indigenous Peoples	48.3	18.4	6.9	2.3	24.1
	Racialized Communities	53.5	23.2	8.1	1.0	14.1
	Religious Minority Communities	28.9	21.7	7.2	3.6	38.6

Table 4. Level of importance of various barriers (%) as indicated by organizations in the cultural sector

Barrier	Community	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not important at all	I don't know
Creators might be hired in media organizations but are unable to propose their stories to editors due to concerns related to commercial viability and reach of audience.	Indigenous Peoples	49.4	18.8	9.4	3.5	18.8
	Racialized Communities	57.0	22.0	7.0	5.0	9.0
	Religious Minority Communities	32.5	15.7	6.0	6.0	39.8
The remoteness of some communities from major decision-making or creative centers is a challenge in the cultural sector.	Indigenous Peoples	66.7	17.2	1.1	2.3	12.6
	Racialized Communities	48.5	27.7	7.9	5.9	9.9
	Religious Minority Communities	31.8	17.6	8.2	5.9	36.5
Language is a barrier for production, and access to, cultural content in communities.	Indigenous Peoples	37.6	25.9	12.9	4.7	18.8
	Racialized Communities	46.0	19.0	13.0	9.0	13.0
	Religious Minority Communities	26.5	15.7	14.5	7.2	36.1