

# Transforming the Mirror

## CBC TELEVISION'S COMMITMENT TO REFLECTING CANADA

CBC has a mandate to reflect Canadian culture – in all its incarnations. As the face of Canada is changing, so are we. In an age when diversity is celebrated as a unique aspect of our national identity, we have renewed and strengthened our commitment to ensure that we reflect today's Canada back to our viewers. That means working strategically to remain relevant and connected to a contemporary Canadian audience.

Since the Fall of 2003, CBC Television has been engaged in a process of examination and dialogue to help shape our approach to diversity initiatives, both on and off the air. As a result, we've developed a multi-faceted strategy that seeks to make diversity a core aspect of all key activities at CBC Television.

Our Express Diversity initiative is designed to ensure broad representation in all of our programming, as well as in the development of opportunities for emerging and established talent. It encompasses five key areas of focus.

### The Five Pillars

- PROGRAMMING
- HIRING PRACTICES, RETENTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- INTERNAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION
- COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION
- STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### Today's Mirror

Canada's cultural makeup contains more variety than meets the TV screen, with 13.4 percent of the population (2001 Census) consisting of visible minority groups, 3 percent of aboriginal origin, and 14 percent individuals with disabilities.

A commissioned research study conducted by a Carleton University team sampled 126 hours of CBC Television network programming over a 3 month period and determined that reflection of visible minority groups was slightly above the national average. However, people of aboriginal origin were depicted at levels below the national average and the portrayal of people with disabilities was well below the census data.

The study provided further breakdowns for specific content genres so that programmers can use this information in planning for the coming season. Our goal is to increase the visibility and participation of these under-represented groups, both on the air and behind the scenes, to better reflect contemporary Canada.

*"It is extremely gratifying to see our public broadcaster taking the lead in the creation of an entertainment industry composed of a diversity of voices and talents in front of and behind the camera."*

– Floyd Kane, Producer, Drama Serial

*"I can't put into words how much I appreciate you guys picking up my film. One year ago we finished shooting and here I am now at Sundance." – Jeff Barnaby, Filmmaker, Mix Flicks*

### Express Diversity Phase One (Fall 2003 – Spring 2004)

The Express Diversity strategy has been implemented in three phases. Phase One, now complete, focused on research and consultation, and included the following activities:

- Survey and analysis of on-air cultural reflection
- Survey of international broadcaster best practices
- Research on Canadian population diversity
- Community and stakeholder consultations across Canada
- Sounding board sessions with staff across the system



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## Express Diversity Phase Two (Spring 2004 – Spring 2005)

Phase Two activities centred on developing and introducing initiatives that would have immediate impact on air and behind the scenes. Highlights include:

- **New Faces/New Voices Rolodex:** An intranet database available to all CBC journalists and researchers listing more than 400 experts and analysts from a variety of backgrounds.
- **Aboriginal Content Unit:** This Saskatchewan-based team is building connections with, and developing stories around aboriginal communities in the Prairies.
- **Program Executive in Residence:** A new initiative designed to inject fresh perspectives into senior program decision-making. A one-year management appointment will be made annually and rotated through CBC Television departments over the next two years.
- **Drama Serial:** CBC Television invited pitches for a new serial drama to portray contemporary Canadian life and employ a culturally diverse production team. Test episodes for two potential series have been produced.
- **Mix Flicks:** CBC Television spent a quarter million dollars over two years on the development and production of 19 short films which explore Canadian cultural crossovers. Ninety percent of the production teams included key members from under-represented communities.
- **Moving On Integration Producer:** A new position was created to take program content and expertise from *Moving On*, a network series about disability and independence, and migrate it to other parts of the news and current affairs schedule.

*"I have the privilege of finding filmmakers who can tell stories that reflect our multicultural society with passion and contemporary edge."*

– Sunny Yi, Program Executive in Residence

## Joint Initiatives

CBC Television is working in conjunction with CBC Radio and the Human Resources department to execute joint plans in a number of key areas, including:

- Hiring of a full time Project Coordinator
- Examination of the CBC workforce in order to improve levels of diversity
- Creation of workshops to assist CBC managers in effectively leading diversity initiatives within their departments
- Creation of new recruitment tools to reach out to a new generation of Canadians interested in broadcasting careers at CBC

*"The Leading Diversity workshop is a fast-track wake-up call reminding us that the diversity we keep hearing about is anything but skin deep. Stereotypes crumble. Assumptions collapse."*

– George Anthony, Production Executive

## Up Next...

Phase three of Express Diversity is being launched in Spring 2005. The enhancement of CBC Television's overall diversity will be a key objective for all senior managers for the 2005/06 season. They will develop comprehensive diversity plans for their departments, and will be held accountable for the results.

*"Having the opportunity to develop a drama serial has connected us to a typical Canadian community, and has revealed what a wealth of multi-ethnic talent exists."*

– William B. Davis, Producer, Drama Serial

## CBC Radio

We work closely with our colleagues at CBC Radio on joint initiatives affecting all CBC staff. And like CBC Television, CBC Radio also has an array of distinct initiatives to establish diversity as a core value in their programming. All programs are developing concrete ways to increase and measure the reflection of diversity on air; they are working to build new and stronger relationships with diverse communities in every region of the country; and managers are responsible for achieving strategic diversity objectives.



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