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**Building an Anti-Racism Strategy for Canadian Broadcasting: Conversation & Convergence
Vancouver Event Summary Report**

The May 14, 2022, Vancouver convergence was the second of a series of facilitated regional meetings on anti-racism and Canadian broadcasting. The first event took place in Montréal on April 30, 2022.¹ Subsequent events will be held in Halifax, Calgary, and Winnipeg, culminating in a national conference to be held at Carleton University in Ottawa. These important and timely events are organized by the Community Media Advocacy Centre (www.CMACentre.ca) and supported by Heritage Canada's Anti-Racism Action Program. The Vancouver meeting took place at the University of British Columbia (UBC) with support from the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning. The meeting began with an opening statement² from the project steering committee read by Laith Marouf, senior policy consultant with CMAC, on behalf of the project steering committee. Marouf explained how media has been crucial to the self-determination of First Nation communities, including radio stations like Nuxalk Radio in Bella Coola and Secwepemc Radio originally broadcast on the Neskonlith Reserve in 2005. Marouf added that Vancouver is home to Co-op radio (also known as CFRO) established to serve low-income communities in the Downtown Eastside neighborhood, and which was among the first experimentally licensed community radio stations in Canada. After presenting the project steering committee's opening statement, Marouf noted the intersections of settler colonialism in the media from Turtle Island to Palestine and invited the audience to join in a moment of silence dedicated to Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. A renowned journalist reporting for over 30 years, Abu Akleh was assassinated by an Israeli military sniper while on assignment covering the Israeli military invasion of the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank on May 11, 2022.

The keynote address³ was given by Dr. Karim H. Karim, Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University's School of Journalism and Communication. Dr. Karim's presentation titled

¹ Read the summary report from Montreal:

<https://www.antiracism.media/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Montreal-Summary.pdf>

² From 00:00:00-00:09:46: <https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-1.mp4>

³ Read Dr. Karim's written remarks:

<https://www.antiracism.media/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Identifying-Principles-for-an-Anti-Racism-Strategy.pdf>

“Identifying the Principles for an Anti-Racism Strategy”⁴ provided an overview of the dominant colonial hegemonic discourses of media in Canada and proposed three main strategies for anti-racism in Canadian media. He has worked on media, diaspora, and inclusion and has conducted research studies for Canadian broadcasters on the representation of diversity. Dr. Karim led the administrative process to establish the Canadian Race Relations Foundation at the Department of Canadian Heritage, where he also served as the elected chair of an advocacy organization for racialized employees. Dr. Karim explained how the dominant societal discourses use a defined network of terminology, visual images, and symbols to uphold its colonial and white supremacist legacy and infrastructure. Dr. Karim explained how states considered of the first world, including Canada and the United States, actively maintain poor infrastructures in areas where Indigenous, Black and racialized communities live--both domestically and through their foreign policies. Dr. Karim identified what he considers as the basic principles for building an effective anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting. He said:

1. Justice is the cornerstone of a well-functioning society and on its rests the obligations for the ultimate goal of democracy. White supremacy has created structures of injustice towards racialized peoples who are left out of key modes of participation and who face silencing and media distortions. The media must abide by professionalism proper to their sector which is incumbent on fostering social justice as a basic ethic and mandate.
2. Respect must be a primary requirement for media in society and serves as a model for good public behaviour. It enables the self to enable the stranger. Respect keeps us vigilant against those relentless discourses that disparage people and requires one not to attach an individual to an entire group.
3. Understanding and mutual understanding in which one has to understand the self in order to know the other. Being open to long term endeavors of mutual understanding between people is essential for a healthy and diverse society open to all cultures and religions. Dominant discourses can be re-examined if one is committed to principles of understanding.

The second presentation of the Vancouver meeting featured esteemed media practitioner and director of the Nat and Flora Bosa Centre for Film and Animation at Capilano University, Doreen Manuel. In her presentation titled “Decolonizing the Film, TV & Media Industry,”⁵ Manuel provided a historical account of the current state of Canadian media and shared from her expertise on the importance of political strategy in decolonizing the media

⁴ From 00:09:46 until end of part 1, then from 00:00:00 until end and then continues in part 2 from 00:00:00 until 00:59:30:

<https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-1.mp4> & <https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-2.mp4>

⁵ Doreen Manuel – Decolonizing the Film, TV & Media Industry [from 00:59:30 until end]: <https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-2.mp4>

sphere. The sixth child of Grand Chief Dr. George Manuel and Spiritual Leader Marceline Manuel, Doreen Manuel comes from a long line of oral historians and factual storytellers from her First Nations traditional background. Manuel has extensive experience working in First Nations education and community development in both rural and urban centers. She is currently the principal owner of Running Wolf Productions, on the Board of Directors for *The Knowledge Network* and Moving Images Distribution. Manuel explained how teaching Indigenous history through personal connections and lived experience is a powerful life-saving force because it explains and contextualizes current social and political conditions in Canada. The history of media needs to also include Indigenous history and a history of Canada's genocide in order to correctly represent the state of media in Canada.⁶ From television, books, to radio, Manuel noted that an important part of decolonization is to question everything, analyze, and dissect every aspect of mainstream society. She explained that this requires the collective effort of likeminded people who are trying to decolonize. Manuel stressed the dire importance of unity and winning, calling for Indigenous and marginalized peoples to sit on committees and be there to advocate for equity in the media. Manuel presented the following seven action items for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. Every government agency and funding organization that serves media should be mandated to set goals of hiring 50% marginalized employees and to open seats on their boards for marginalized community representatives. Mandate industry unions to create pathway programs to fast-track achieving equity and inclusion.
2. Equity and inclusion coordinators should be hired to monitor every production. Manuel has already developed a job description for this role and it is expected that it would be easy for unions and organizations to implement equity and inclusion coordinators, just as they implemented the role of intimacy officer.
3. All Canadian broadcasters and industry organizations who receive government funding should commit to an equity audit of their administration and staff. Organizations must set realistic goals, if they do not have them, to improve and meet equity standards.
4. An Equity Seeking Tax Credit should be implemented. Marginalized producers rely on the tax credit they receive after the production is finished as a large chunk of the budgeted funding for their projects. Manuel explained that a study by the Racial Equity Media Collective reveals that tax credits make up the largest of all funding

⁶ See for example:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20141114044333/http://www.indigenoumedia.ca/indigenous-communications-in-canada-our-history>

going into the media industry.⁷ However, these tax credits are not subject to any equity related standards, which makes them the biggest equity omission in the system.

5. Banking and funding institutions must change the way they evaluate Indigenous people for loans. Indigenous Peoples are often not given loans for their productions because of racism in banking and funding institutions. Manuel explained that the standards by which loans are approved are not equitably implemented, adding that this is unacceptable.
6. Better statistics are needed on equity in the media sector. As a primary strategy in any recommendations, better statistics are needed that will help support better hiring practices.
7. Mandates are needed to ensure that funders and the CRTC support the evolution of true Indigenous cinema. Funders and the CRTC must dedicate a majority of Indigenous hires for the largest salaried positions above the line (e.g. writer, director, lead actor, etc.) for Indigenous productions with a minimum of 40% Indigenous crew.

The third presentation titled “Inclusion vs. Exclusion” was a panel of four members of Vancouver’s Co-op radio: Gunargie O’Sullivan, Hanna Kawwas, Abdel Saleem Moosa Naroth, and Dr. Alnoor Gova.⁸ The first speaker on the panel, Gunargie O’Sullivan, is a Kwakwaka’wakw who was born in Alert Bay, BC, and her people originate from Turnour Island and are from the Tlowitsis Nation. O’Sullivan is a radio host, media producer, actress, writer⁹ and an arts organizer who was chosen in 2018 as the Radio Legend by National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA). At Co-op radio, O’Sullivan hosts three weekly programs *Late Night with Savages*, *Kla How Ya FM*, and *When Spirit Whispers*.¹⁰ O’Sullivan presented on the state of community radio in Vancouver based on her own experience as a media practitioner of over 30 years and called on the broadcasting industry to improve employment practices to actively employ Indigenous people. O’Sullivan explained how for many Indigenous and marginalized people in Vancouver, getting involved with radio and media work was a way to bring people together and be part of a collective. For 30 years O’Sullivan has been producing shows, conducting trainings for broadcasters, traveling long trips for radio meetings, and often leaving

⁷ <https://www.re-mc.org/research>

⁸ Programmers from Campus and Community Radio – Inclusion vs Exclusion [from 00:00:00 until 01:24:15]: <https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-3.mp4>

⁹ O’Sullivan’s poems have been anthologized in the annual series, *Gatherings*, published by Theytus Publishing.

¹⁰ *When Spirit Whispers* covered the Vancouver event and the archive is available here: <https://ia802501.us.archive.org/12/items/antiracism-media/2022-05-09%20-%20When%20Spririt%20whis pers%20-%20full%20show.mp3>

the station late at night putting her life at risk without ever benefitting from employment or salary from Co-op radio. O'Sullivan presented the two following urgent strategies for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. The radio sector needs to actively employ Indigenous people, many of whom are doing a bulk of the work without getting compensated by broadcasters who are reaping the benefits of their volunteer labour.
2. Getting involved in media and to use it in meaningful ways is essential. This requires access to resources that should be made available to Indigenous and racialized peoples particularly in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

The second speaker on the panel from Co-op Radio Vancouver was Hanna Kawwas, the chair of the Canada Palestine Association, writer, and broadcaster as co-host on *Voice of Palestine*, the first Palestinian radio show in Canada, produced for over 30 years.¹¹ In his presentation, Kawwas provided an overview of his experience as a broadcaster and contextualized media repression by apartheid Canada and Israel. Kawwas provided a brief history of his show on Co-op Radio, *Voice of Palestine* which he launched in 1987, to counteract what he argues is a pro-Israeli media bias in Canada. *Voice of Palestine* continues today through an online format and remains one of the most important shows in Canada for the struggle of the Palestinian people. Kawwas notes that the influence of corporate media in community broadcasting is an issue that needs to be addressed at the CRTC level. Kawwas offered the following suggestions for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. Tokenism promotes racism and is not the solution; rather, the apartheid systems in Canada and Israel need to be dismantled. U.S. and Canadian media serve the interest of imperialist foreign policies promoting white supremacist ideology and genocide of indigeneous peoples.
2. Canadian media need to stop anti-Palestinian racism¹² and recognize Palestine. Education at every level, including at the CRTC, is required to stop the racism that is steeped into media organizations.¹³

The third speaker on the panel was long-time artist, broadcaster, tour manager, and music media practitioner Abdel Saleem Moosa Narooh. Narooh was a broadcaster at Vancouver Co-op radio and was one of the founders of Smithers Community Radio, which he set up upon his move to Smithers, B.C. in Gitdumden Territory. Prior to this, Narooh was a prominent member of community media and activism as part of the anti-apartheid movement in his home-country of South Africa. Narooh offered from his experience in South Africa, U.S., and Canada and stressed the importance of anti-racism education and mobilization in the media

¹¹ <http://voiceofpalestine.ca>

¹² <https://podur.org/2021/05/23/anti-palestinian-racism-a-resource/>

¹³ <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/01/cbc-still-reviewing-why-it-deleted-the-word-palestine/>

sector. Naroth explained that throughout his experience in radio, it is too common to see white folks steal the ideas and work of BIPOC people and claim it as their own, while at the same time tokenizing racialized people. Naroth presented the following five strategies for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. We need economic power. The government needs to fund, without reservation, broadcasting organizations that are run and controlled by BIPOC communities.
2. Stations must not be run by people with colonial mentalities. Station staff and boards must share power in a way that supports the needs of BIPOC communities.
3. Media is an essential part of making the voices of BIPOC people heard. There needs to be a place where racialized communities can air their own voices.
4. Education. Naroth presented education as the most important part of any anti-racism strategy because without it we will not learn how to lead in the footsteps of those that came before us in order to change the course of our destinies. Naroth emphasized that women and girls' education is essential because most radio organizations are male top heavy.

Naroth concluded by adding, "We must demand that these things are instituted immediately; if not, we need to mobilize to get them instituted."

The fourth speaker on the panel "Inclusion vs. Exclusion" was Dr. Alnoor Gova, a member of Co-op radio for over 20 years. Dr. Gova curates two shows on Co-op, *Bulland Awaaz* and *The Rational*, covering local and national current affairs with a focus on systemic racism and inequality, and sharing responses and strategies in dealing with structural inequality. Dr. Gova provided an analysis of how the broadcasting sector excludes racialized members, sometimes through narratives of exclusion, citing his and his fellow panelists' experiences as broadcasters and board members at Co-op radio. Dr. Gova gave a few examples of exclusion of Indigenous and racialized members at Co-op radio. He also observed that Co-op radio receives much of its grant funding based on the quality of the diverse programming, such as having the most Indigenous and people of colour programming that station members like Dr. Gova and O'Sullivan continue to host without benefit from the funds raised by the station. Dr. Gova offered the following recommendations for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. There is an urgent need for direct pathways for radio programmers to secure their own funding for their shows that are independent from the radio station and the NCRA. Currently, there are no such avenues which leads to lack of solid support for BIPOC programmers. When community radio stations get funding for having diverse programming, Dr. Gova explained that BIPOC producers do not benefit from this funding.

2. Station managers and radio stations must have a political will to support BIPOC programming. Station managers must stop appropriating the work of racialized members and, instead, actively work to improve and advocate for better resources and work conditions.

The concluding panel presentation featured expert media practitioners Barbara Lee, President & Founder of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival and Founder of the Racial Equity Screen Office (RESO), Nilesh Patel, Interim Executive Director of the Racial Equity Screen Office, and Sarah Spring, Executive Director Documentary Organization of Canada. They presented on “Why We Need Mandated Racial Equity: A Case Study on the Failures of The Knowledge Network,”¹⁴ sharing from their over 25 years of experience working in the media sector and offering recommendations based on their equity advocacy work. The presenters spoke about the equity mandates that they proposed at the Knowledge Network, BC’s provincial public broadcaster. This advocacy reflects race-based data that RESO released in 2022¹⁵ and called for better data collections to serve racialized people in the media. One study the presenters’ organizations conducted was an equity audit to show the participation of racialized people at the Knowledge Network and to propose a diversity, equity and inclusion action plan.¹⁶ The speakers expressed that bringing forward the data was crucial because it showed that the observations of inequity were backed up by evidence found in the numbers. Figures from their study revealed that 78% of production firms producing for the Knowledge Network are majority owned by white creators and 93.8% of the funds received by production firms from the Knowledge Network are majority owned by white creators who are receiving over \$11.4 million in production funding (see the report linked in FN 25 for more findings). The speakers affirmed that the Knowledge Network must abide by the diversity, equity, and inclusion mandate actions and asked that the network’s board members agree to implement this action plan as soon as possible.¹⁷ Lee, Patel, and Spring presented the following recommendations for building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

1. Implementation of equity mandates at media institutions, such as the Knowledge Network.
2. Advocacy for better funding processes that support racialized creators. Specifically, a film fund is media for BIPOC producers that is also administered by BIPOC producers.
3. Racism in institutions attempts to exclude and split up racialized creators from each other; racialized creators must work in solidarity with one another.
4. Collect better data on equity-related demographics across all broadcasting. Where Canadian demographics are a result of racist immigration and colonial policies, the

¹⁴ From 01:24:15 until end: <https://archive.org/download/antiracism-media/2022-05-14-Vancouver-Part-3.mp4>

¹⁵ <https://vaff.org/vaffs-diversity-on-screen-audit-report-2022/>

¹⁶ <https://www.bipocvandfilm.com/blog/equity-audit-by-knowledge-network-reveals-depth-of-racial-inequities>

¹⁷ <https://www.knowledge.ca/sites/default/files/PDFs/DEI-Action-Plan-Public-Release-February-2022.pdf>

speakers added that these realities should not be a benchmark to limit BIPOC representation in Canadian broadcasting.

After the presentations, CMAC facilitated a concluding open forum session where audience members and presenters gathered to reflect on the strategies put forward throughout the day and the questions presented in the event's Facilitation Guide. The open forum session proposed the following considerations for an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting:

- There must be equity data collection mandated for all broadcasters to ensure active investment in anti-racism at every level of media institutions.
- Tokenism is a prominent issue in the broadcasting sector which relies on appropriating the labour and resources of Indigenous, Black and racialized media workers. This must stop.
- Gatekeeping hinders many racialized media workers from participating and accessing work and resources. Board members, producers, scripters, writers and showrunners that have a colonial privilege are usually the gatekeepers.
- Racialized creators have many barriers to overcome when writing grant applications, unlike white creators. Many racialized creators need support for understanding the funding mechanism in the Canadian system. The brilliance of the many talents is repressed by the lack of a clear pathway to success.
- Where is the accountability for government initiatives on equity, diversity, and inclusion? For example, the law says broadcasters are supposed to have equitable employment in the broadcasting sector. Over 36 years and the broadcasting sector has not delivered, broadcasters should be fined by the CRTC for breaking the law.
- Challenging white supremacy and racism is uncomfortable, but we must change the entire oppressive system. Justice will not be achieved without sacrifice. For broadcasters, this will be an uncomfortable process and institutions must lean into discomfort.

The third meeting on building an anti-racism strategy for Canadian broadcasting will take place in Halifax on June 11, 2022.

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Archive.org page for all events: <https://archive.org/details/antiracism-media>