

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT:

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

2020 STATUS OF CANADIAN BLACK, INDIGENOUS, & PEOPLE OF COLOUR IN CANADA'S SCREEN-BASED PRODUCTION SECTOR

FINDINGS OF A NATIONAL SURVEY ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MARKET

Commissioned by Reelworld Film Festival and Reelworld Screen Institute

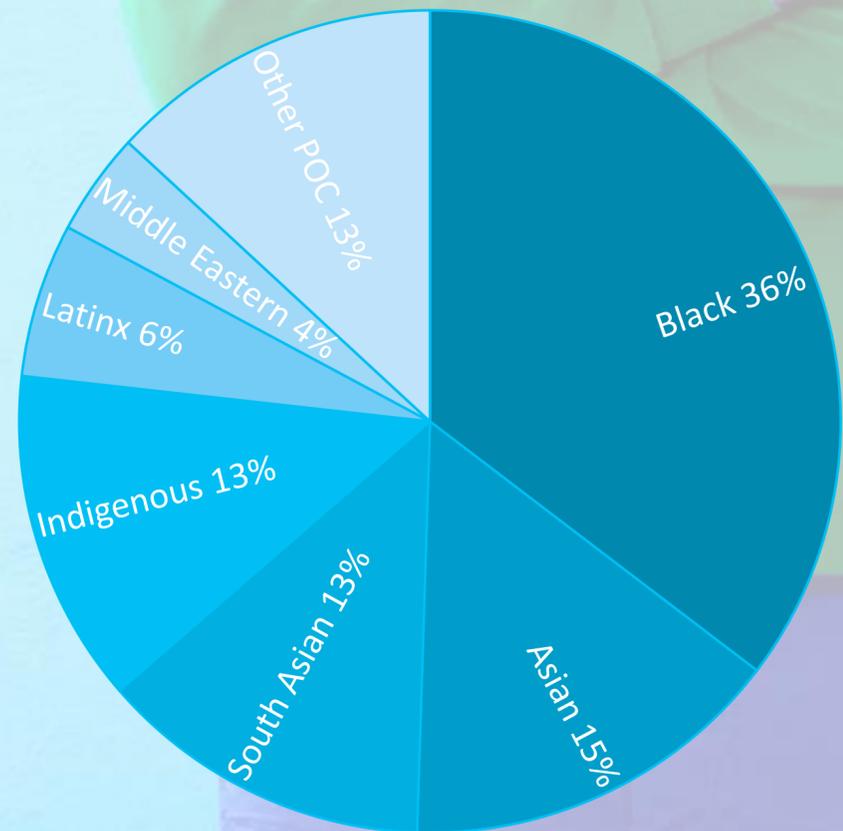
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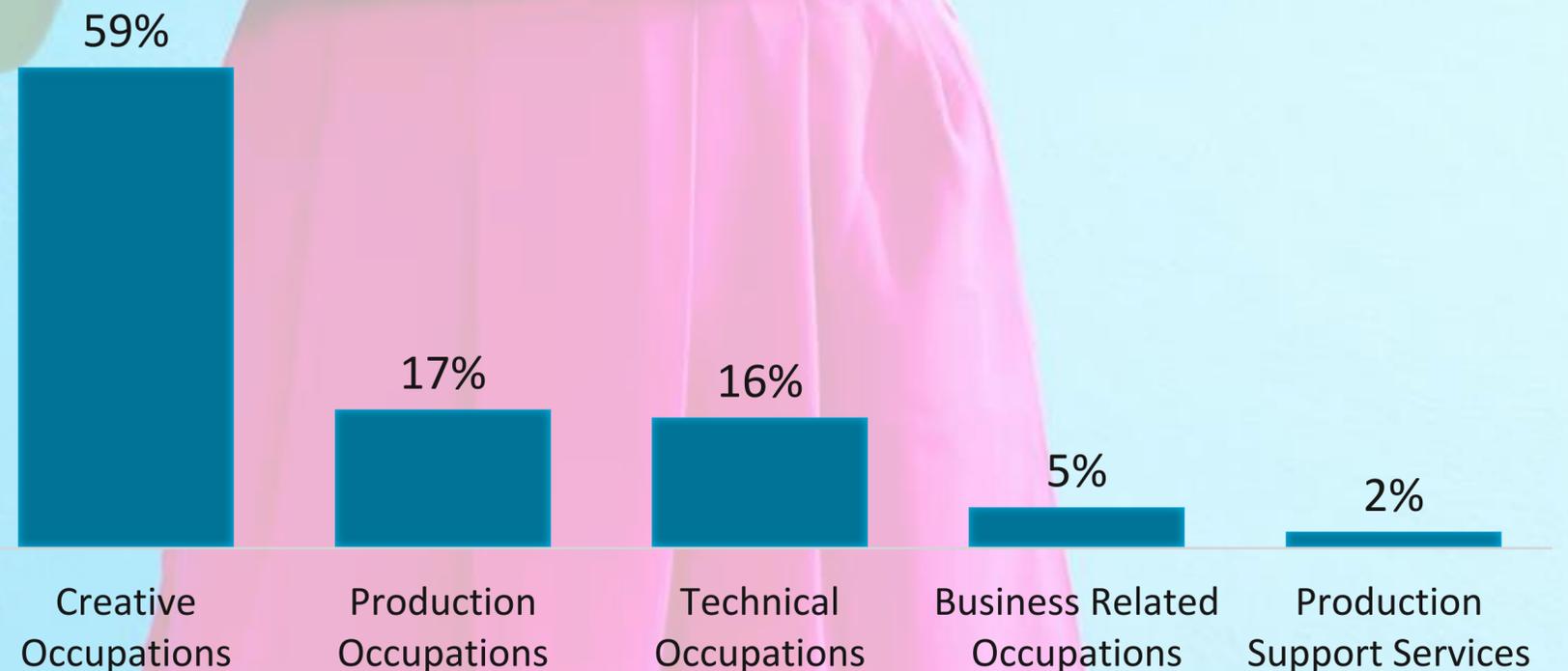
INTRODUCTION

AFTER TWENTY YEARS of supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) in the Canadian film and television industry, Reelworld has commissioned Communications MDR to assess the employment conditions of Canadian BIPOC professionals and the extent that they participate equitably in Canada's booming screen-based production industry. In 2016, 22% of the population identified as belonging to a visible minority group and 5% identified as indigenous, making equitable access and representation a major issue in Canadian film and television. This study is based on a review of literature focused on selected jurisdictions, thirteen interviews with BIPOC freelance professionals and industry representatives, and a survey of 663 self-identified BIPOC freelance professionals working in the screen-based production sector nationwide. Based on Reelworld Commissioned Study by Communications MDR, key insights reveal that far-reaching change is needed to improve access to employment opportunities and adjust the colour balance in Canada's screen-based production industry.

RESPONDENT COMPOSITION



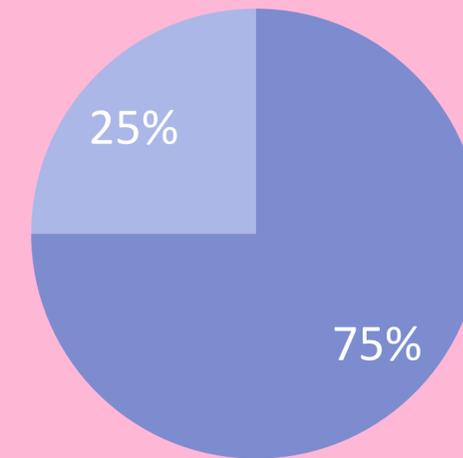
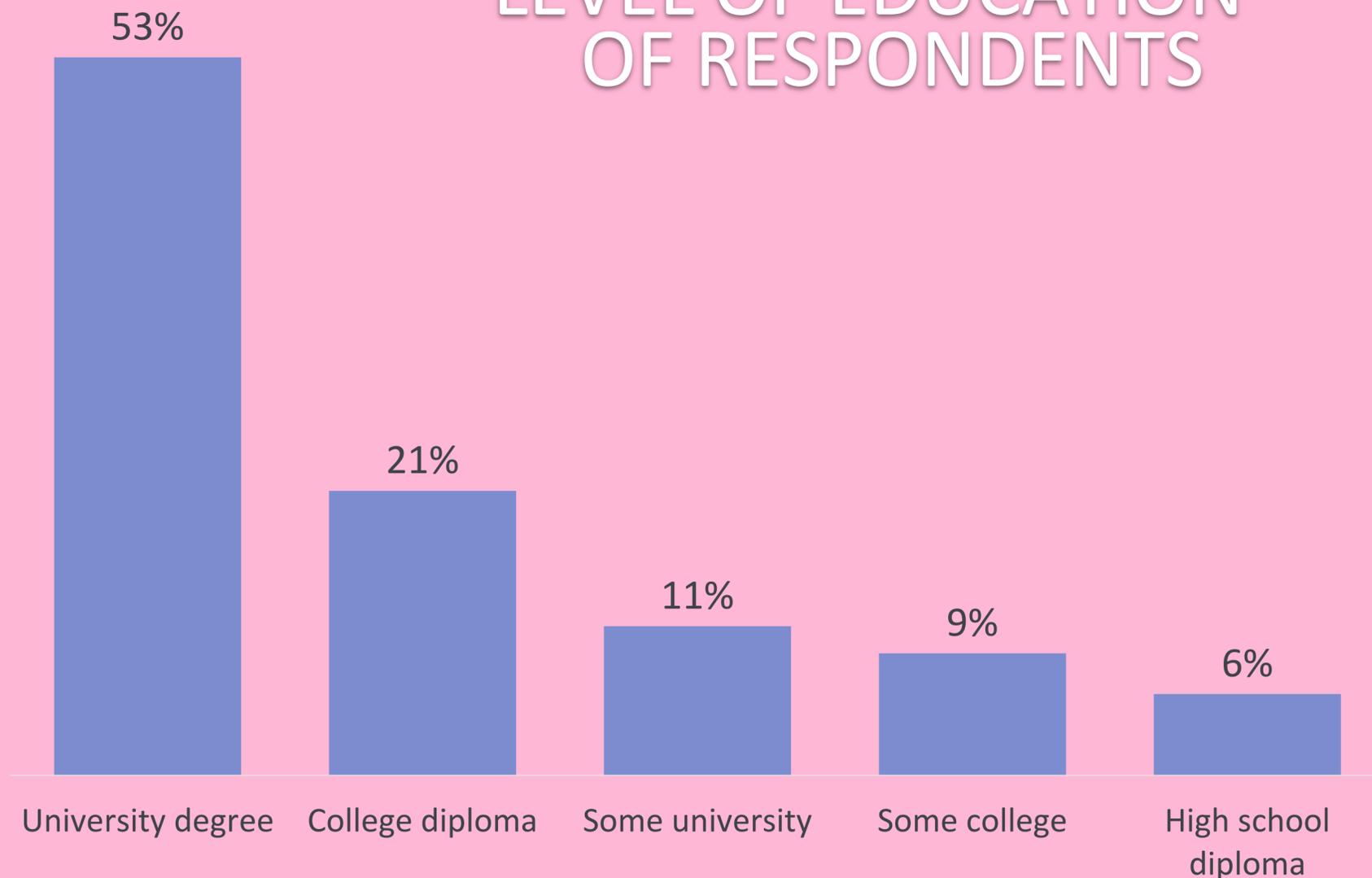
RESPONDENT'S OCCUPATIONS



EDUCATION & TRAINING

The survey of BIPOC professionals provides a portrait of highly educated, well trained individuals who nevertheless still face barriers to employment due to systemic discrimination and unconscious bias within the industry.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS



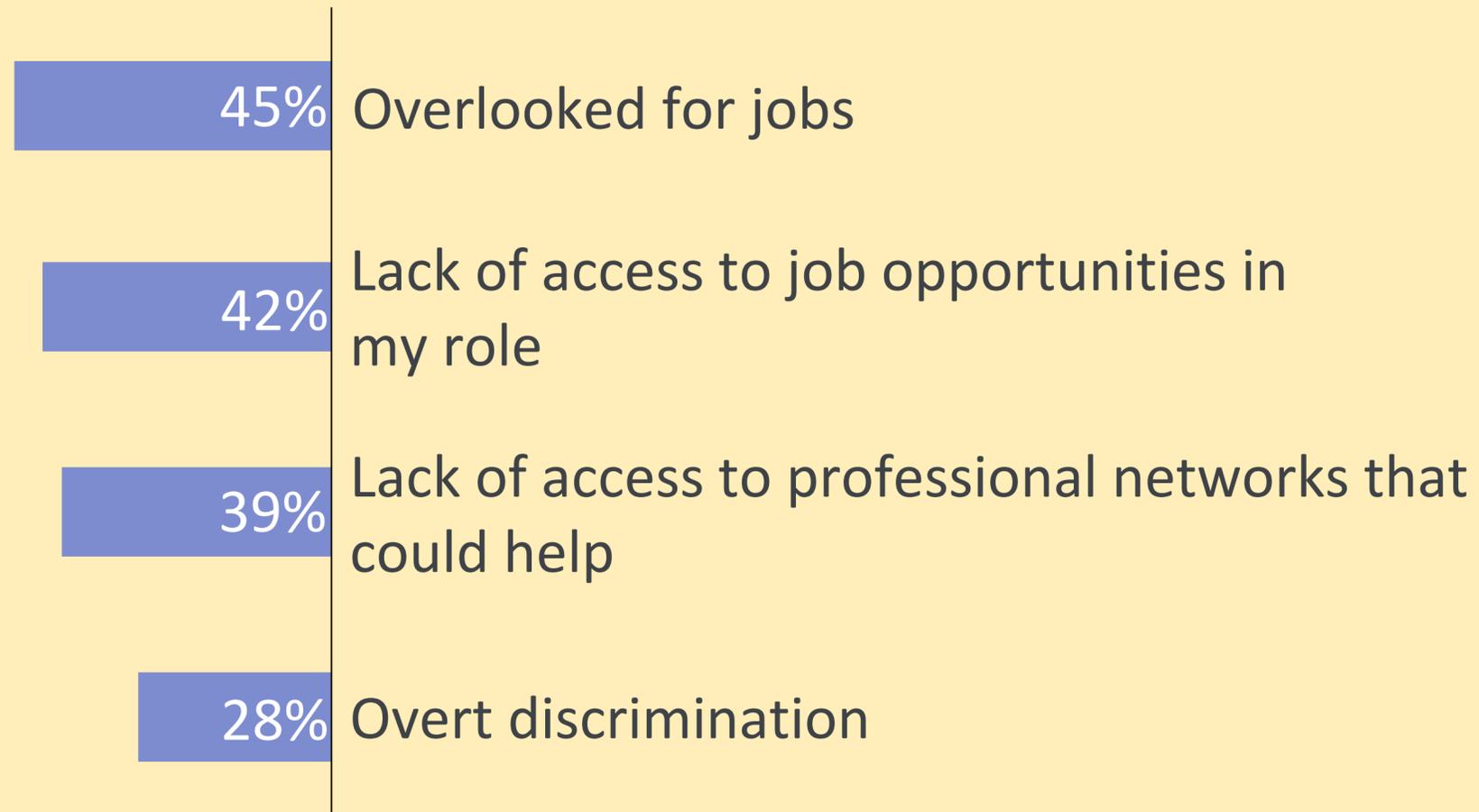
75% of respondents have received professional industry training.

- 33% from a university or college
- 18% from an institution such as the Canadian Film Centre, the National Screen Institute (NSI), the Institut national de l'image et du son (INIS) or the Vancouver Film School

BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT

Joining guilds, unions, and professional networks is crucial to employment in an industry that prioritizes who you know over what you know. Most work is secured by personal referral such that opportunities often stay within a closed network. Respondents recognize this and two thirds are members of a professional union or guild in the screen based sector. However, for BIPOC talent, membership does not necessarily equal access. 45% of Ontario respondents cite a lack of access to professional networks as a major barrier to employment.

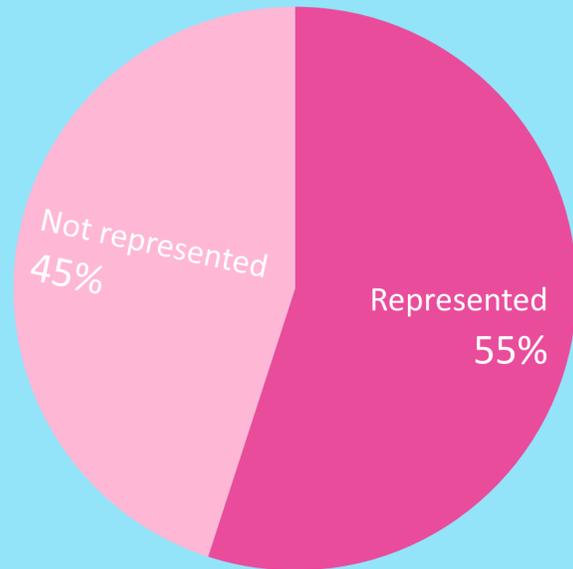
BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



Reported Factors in Discrimination

- Belief that there are few qualified BIPOC professionals
- Belief that non-white performers in lead roles will not be popular with audiences
- BIPOC performers not seen for non-BIPOC roles

ACCESS TO AGENTS



Only 55% of respondents in the talent category (directors, composers, performers, writers) are represented by an agent or manager. Indigenous talent shows the lowest rate, at 36%.

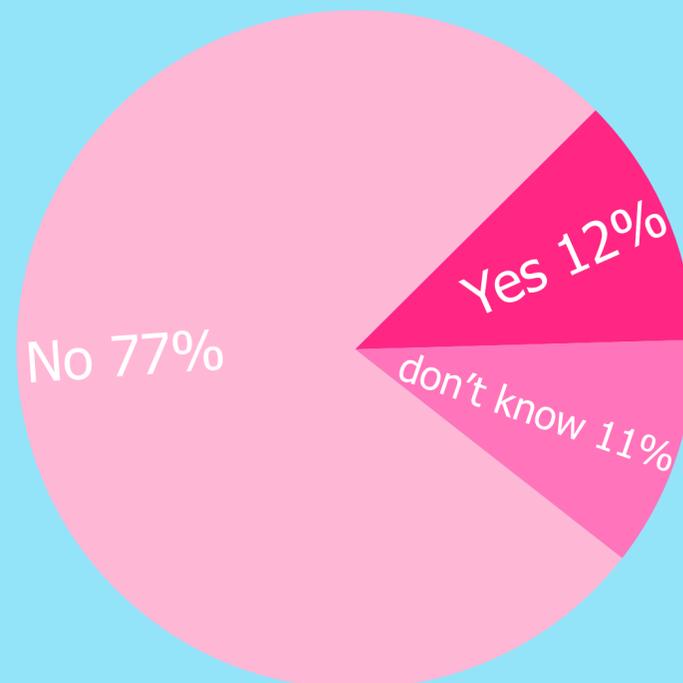
SOME COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

“I’ve heard “we already have one of you” or “you would clash with one of our other clients that looks like you.” Meanwhile their roster has endless white actors.”

“They will only submit me for “minority” roles, not regular roles that fit my age range.”

ACCESS TO BIPOC AGENTS

Only 12% of respondents have access to agents or managers who identify as BIPOC. BIPOC agents have a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by BIPOC talent and a better ability to manage their career development.



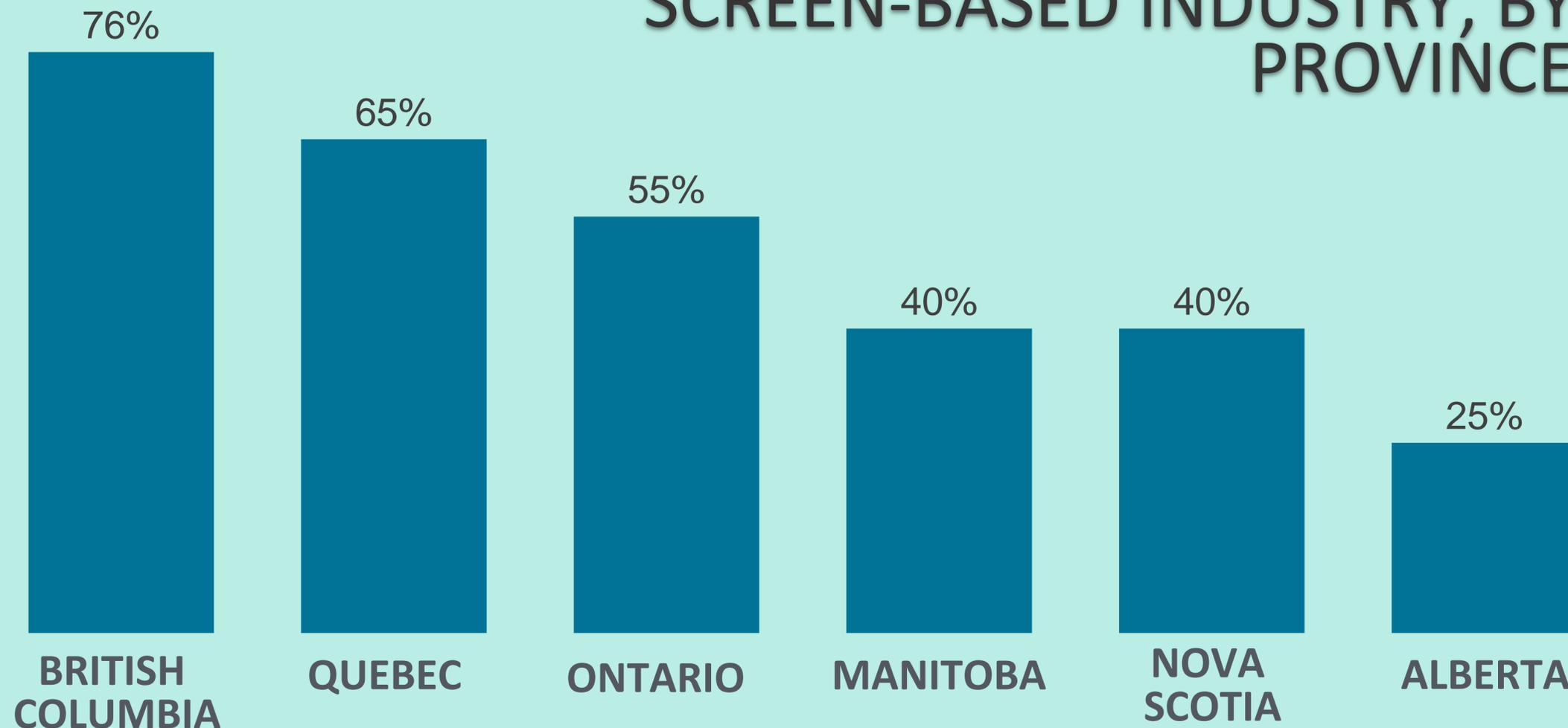
“I've been unable to find a director/content creator manager or agent, but outside of a couple of individuals, I'm unsure of where to look for one.”

“Absolutely. As a Black person, I’ve been ignored and overlooked by many companies in Toronto and white managers.”

INCOME & PAID WORK

For those able to obtain employment opportunities, work is sometimes unstable, unpaid for, and not a primary source of income.

PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS EARNING THEIR INCOME PRIMARILY FROM SCREEN-BASED INDUSTRY, BY PROVINCE

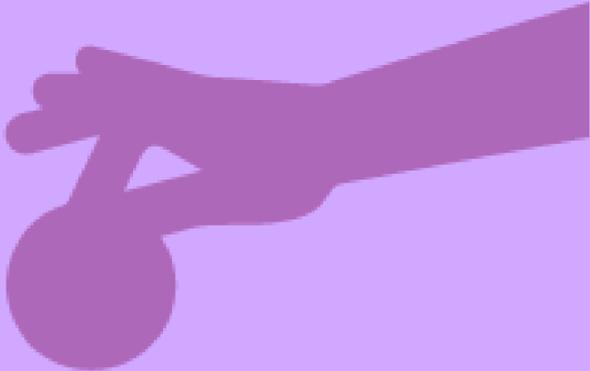


Last year, on average...

- 40% of respondents worked for no pay
- 57 days of unpaid work

FUNDING

Respondents believe a disproportionate amount of funding goes to white creators, while BIPOC creators have to accept smaller amounts targeted at emerging talent. One reason cited for the lack of access to funding is the lack of BIPOC professionals on selection committees for recommending funding decisions.

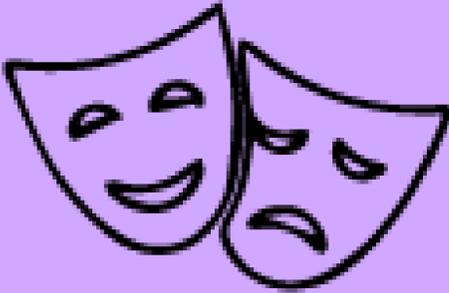


FUNDING TARGETS

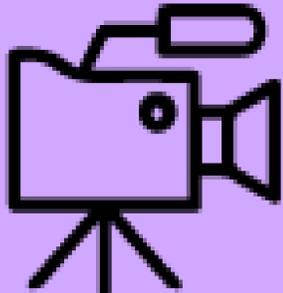
Implementing funding targets was the most popular proposed measure to improving access to employment for BIPOC professionals. This entails public funding agencies setting targets for funding that is available to BIPOC creators and stories.

DIVERSITY STANDARD

As a point of reference, the BFI Diversity Standard requires applicants to the majority of UK public funding to demonstrate a commitment to inclusion in two of the four follow areas:



On-screen representation



Creative leadership & project team



Industry access & opportunities



Audience development

No similar initiative exists in Canada. Interviewees note that standards like these could have industry-wide impact, particularly if these diversity standards become a condition of funding for production companies, distributors and training institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEASURES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR BIPOC PROFESSIONALS

- Funding targets
- Targeted initiatives (eg. Networking and tribute events for BIPOC professionals)
- Special membership categories in unions/guilds
- Mentorship and paid internships
- Job opportunities and career support for BIPOC professionals at senior positions
- Technical training and talent development
- Hiring incentives/targets
- BIPOC professionals in decision-making positions
- System of checks and balances to ensure that diversity standards are upheld

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIPOC DECISION-MAKERS

The perceptions of decision-makers (eg. agents, managers, producers, funding committees) are critical, as they are gatekeepers to employment, but many hold unconscious biases or are unaware of BIPOC professionals who have the skills they need. For these BIPOC professionals, a lack of employment leads to greater challenges in qualifying for union/guild membership. Respondents in our study feel shut out of many professional networks and development opportunities, despite ample experience and abilities.

There is a view that having more BIPOC decision-makers would facilitate greater employment for BIPOC freelancers

- BIPOC professionals on funding committees can bring more awareness and opportunities to BIPOC creators and stories
- BIPOC agents and managers have a greater appreciation for the challenges faced by BIPOC talent, which fosters better representation
- BIPOC producers can create BIPOC stories that both employ BIPOC professionals and alter biases that hinder inclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA COLLECTION

Lack of access to reliable data is an obstacle to evaluating policies and programs designed to cultivate an industry inclusive of BIPOC professionals. There is a great deal of potential data available from an industry that is highly subsidized and consequently, accountable to a range of federal and provincial agencies.

Data can also be organized into searchable directories, which can identify BIPOC professionals and their skills for potential employers. Interviewees in the study also stated that it is imperative to encourage the growth and development of networks between BIPOC professionals in the industry. Industry directories identifying BIPOC freelance professionals would go a long way to help develop stronger networks.

Beyond Reelworld, other public institutions who are well positioned to collect data on inclusivity and diversity include CBC, Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit, NFB, CRTC, CMF and Telefilm Canada.

Reelworld has introduced **Access Reelworld**, an online database for BIPOC freelance professionals in the Canadian film and television industry, which can be found on the Reelworld website at www.reelworld.ca.

Initiatives in Selected Jurisdictions

Canada should look to successful programs in the USA, UK and Australia. The DGA, WGAW, WGAE, Directors UK, PACT, BFI, UK Broadcasters, AWG, SPA, Screen Australia and their Broadcasters, create targeted initiatives, collect data, set funding targets, create employment opportunities and prioritize BIPOC people in decision making roles.



CONCLUSION

- The survey of BIPOC professionals provides a portrait of highly educated, well-trained, and experienced professionals who face barriers to employment based on discrimination and unconscious bias that limits their access to professional networks, resulting in a lack of awareness of job opportunities and being overlooked for jobs.
- There is very little data currently available on the employment of BIPOC freelance professionals in the industry. Better reporting is crucial, as it can result in a more accurate understanding of the state of BIPOC employment and the measures that would be most effective in improving the situation.
- Beyond data collection, there must also be institutional change, starting with funding targets that prioritize BIPOC projects and diversity standards that determine whether production companies, distributors, and training institutions receive funding. There must be more targeted initiatives and networking, along with more BIPOC professionals in decision-making positions, supporting BIPOC storytelling and employment.
- A diversity of writers, directors, producers, craftspeople, and screen performers is key to developing innovative, globally competitive, high quality audio-visual content that can connect with broader audiences. The time for discussion is over; we must become accountable for tangible plans and actions that encourage diversity and inclusion within our screen-based industry.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNERS!

FUNDERS



OUTREACH PARTNERS

