

## THE EDI PROJECT

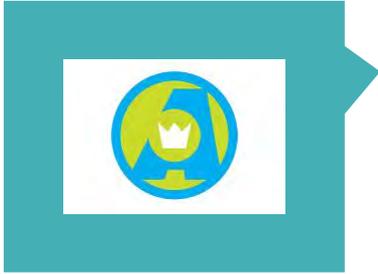
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- a brief update on our work,  
by Simrit and David

SK: Hello, for those of you that don't know me my name is Simrit Kainth and I have been a board member with the ACNW since 2016,

DV: My name is David, I am the Secretary of the Board since the November 2018 AGM. For the next few minutes, we will briefly be speaking to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion project that the Board has been working on.

# Report to the AGM of the ACNW, Nov. 28, 2021. (6 pages)



**Our staff and board are committed to the following actions to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in our programs, outreach and development projects:**

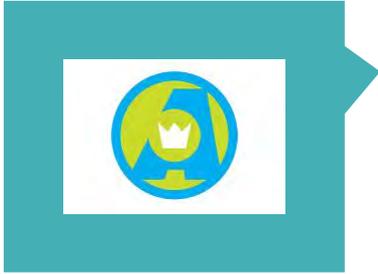
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- Identifying the ACNW's contributions to oppressive structures and practices, whether inside or out of the council, and creating a plan to dismantle them.
- Continuing our own personal and organizational education about policies and actions that foster diversity, equity and inclusion.

SK:In the beginning of this year, the Arts Council of New Westminster had put out a Statement of Intention/commitment with the goal to create real changes with the way we navigate pillars of Equity Diversity and inclusion within our organization. You will see the main foundations of the intentions on the slides above [read out the bullet points]:

- 1 ) Identifying the ACNW's contributions to oppressive structures and practices, whether inside or out of the council, and creating a plan to dismantle them.
- 2) Continuing our own personal and organizational education about policies and actions that foster diversity, equity and inclusion.

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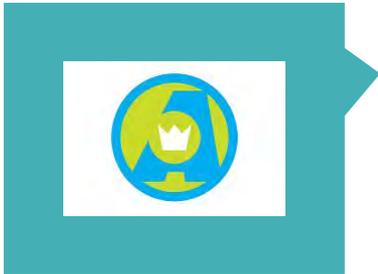
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- Establishing actionable policy for matters of EDI that will be informed by and shared with the membership, to be reviewed annually.
- Committing time and resources to develop more diverse leadership on our board.

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- 4) Committing time and resources to develop more diverse leadership on our board.

We are pleased to report back to the membership that we have made a lot of progress on this project and have been making this a top priority.

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*search for*

[Expressions of Reclamation](#)

in Youtube,

hosted by curator Tim Elijah

**Our staff and board are committed to the following actions to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in our programs, outreach and development projects:**

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- Priority
  - We made time - Brainstorming and having the difficult conversations with ourselves and each other
  - Consent agenda
- Workshops
  - Ongoing education about actions that foster diversity, equity and inclusion.

SK:With the support of our Executive Director we moved towards a consent agenda structure in our meetings to leave ample amount of time for us all to continue parsing down the answers to the questions we had posed. We learned a lot as we navigated this new board meeting style beginning with our Board meeting in June.

DV:We also decided to proceed with meetings across the summer months in order to privilege these conversations. During this period of the year the Board normally pauses to give space for program delivery and provide a break to the volunteer board. We were also examining our strategic plan during this period and reflecting upon the relationship between the EDI work and the vision of the organization. The Expressions of Reclamation Indigenous Artists series, supported by the Deux Mille Foundation and hosted by curator Tim Elijah, continued across these months.

SK: Additionally, Board members and staff have completed a few EDI workshops with the leaders in the field of its study where we were able to examine our own biases and will continue to do so.

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Establishing actionable policy for matters of EDI that will be informed by and shared with the membership; to be reviewed annually.

## Goal 3

**Goal 3 SK/DV**

- Establishing actionable policy for matters of EDI that will be informed by and shared with the membership, to be reviewed annually:
- all intertwined: people, creativity, action (in a circle)
- set goals: for example Board funded bursary: share with membership (see other previous remark)
- connecting to our prime vision/vision - do we work as an ally to groups like SERA? Do we work in a similar space? what is unique to us and our mission
- working to "Bringing the Community" together - how are we doing this? what are we not doing to connect with diverse communities in New West (also future proofs the organization, part of the succession planning)
- hiring practices, targets for membership diversity, through vertical alignment
- examining the name of Arts Council and the assumptions of power structure that are communicated
- negotiating /reimagining the public perceptions of how we are, moving to a contemporary and authentic founding for the AC

**Goal 3 Andrew and Lindsay**

- Review policy and what we're doing annually
- Dedicating time every board meeting going into 2022
- Specific ways (measurables) that we're going to achieve the goal

**Goal 3 - Stephen**

- Expand the format of the AGM to draw in members beyond their current n
- Turn the AGM into an i
- Establish Key Performance program evaluation
- Create method for rep
- Create mechanism for
- Track diversity through participation

**Goal 3 - Bob +Laura**

- Advisory group - go to for unique perspective
- maintain online platform meetings
- online meetings elimi

**Goal 2** Continuing our own personal and organizational education about policies and actions that foster diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Immediate**

- Listen to and engage people who are on all sides of the structure that are oppressive (ex. roundtables)
- Host cultural forums for discussion, in the Lodge (next 5 months)
- Solution focused- something like a book club with work from local bi-poc authors and artists and engage as a community with their work on their own terms.
- this is most important: identifying what is oppressive : listening and learning (basic definitions or terminology used for EDI should be listed somewhere for the board/community to access- all on the same page)
- Quarterly assessment of programming outcomes
- Review of programming policies
- recognizing the centres and the need to decentre, positioning us in a place to learn... understanding the phenomena by contextualizing with past journey, such as recognizing the problem of sexual harassment , and understanding consent (in hindsight can we imagine a time when it was OK to sexually harass?)

**Internal**

- this is most important: identifying what is oppressive : listening and learning (basic definitions or terminology used for EDI should be listed somewhere for the board/community to access- all on the same page)
- recognizing the centres and the need to decentre, positioning us in a place to learn... understanding the phenomena by contextualizing with past journey, such as recognizing the problem of sexual harassment , and understanding consent (in hindsight can we imagine a time when it was OK to sexually harass?)
- Regular workshop for EDI training for Board and Staff
- what are microaggressions? how do we respond to being called out for things we don't know to be performing or don't understand? learning about our privilege and how we operate within that privilege

**Systemic**

- Staff training for recognizing bias
- Indigenous cultural training.
- continue education in a tangible way & promoting education to

- examples of slides from our online meetings

SK: These conversations are difficult ones that we have had over a series of online board meetings. We made time to discuss the importance of what we were doing and really started from scratch. The beginning stages of moving this statement forward looked like a lot of brainstorming. We asked ourselves, what does each one of the bullet points mean to me? where do each of these goals fit within the ACNW as a community organization? what are we doing well? what can we do better?

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**Our staff and board are committed to the following actions to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in our programs, outreach and development projects:**

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- In progress...
  - In the process of creating actionable policy
  - consultation with specialists, the new Board and our membership/community
- join us to contribute to this important work  
contact Stephen at [info@acnw.ca](mailto:info@acnw.ca)  
Simrit at [simritkainth@hotmail.com](mailto:simritkainth@hotmail.com)  
or David at [david.sceno@gmail.com](mailto:david.sceno@gmail.com)

DV: Lastly, we are moving forward with the policy/plan we have created to attain the goals of the statement of intention. The summary of the proposed actions includes specific initiatives in growing new leadership (including among younger members of our community), opportunities for direct investment in arts and cultural production by equity seeking members of our community, reducing and eliminating barriers to participation and engagement, ongoing and regular learning opportunities for the staff and Board members, improving our ability to report on the programming and actions of the ACNW, improving the way we connect with the community and tell our stories (including a website development project), launch an Advisory Council to provide input and comment, among other things. We have established timelines to accomplish this work, from immediate through to long term and sustained actions. The next step will likely be an external review of the document we have created by specialist consultants and colleague leadership from other arts councils. Once we are able to gather that feedback we will continue to advance this document with the new Board and bring these ideas and initiatives to the membership for sustained input and review.

SK: We wanted to take this time to acknowledge that this is an ongoing process and will continue to be. We aim to be transparent in our actions. It's our intention to proceed forward in ways that make sense for the organization and the community it serves, and to accomplish change that is both sustainable and sets the foundation for a successful, equitable, diverse, and inclusive Arts Council. The board and staff are accountable to the membership and community of New Westminster to follow through on our plans and keep you all informed about what we are doing. We thank the members of the Board who have contributed to this work, including Bob, Rosie, Andrew, Lindsay - and our staff, Laura and Stephen. We welcome your interest and invite you to join us in this important work as we move into 2022.