

media
ACTION
média

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

THROUGH MEDIA ANALYSIS AND ACTION

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ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



girls in Canada are accurately and fairly reflected in the media.

Expansion and renewal have entailed a number of financial and governance challenges for Media Action Média's Board of Directors in 2011-12, but also presented us with just as many successes. Our signature projects—*Informed Opinions*, *Finding Words*, and *Represent*—have won the organization much acclaim and attention across the country from an increasingly engaged public. As a result we have a growing legion of talented, enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. More than ever, the time is right for us to be moving forward to promote the positive representation of girls and women in the media.

Our traditional focus has been on educating media industries and the public, and conducting research and

It has been a great pleasure this past year to continue serving as President of Media Action Média, and working with media-makers from coast to coast to ensure that the voices, images and concerns of all women and

analysis. Today we bear witness to a shifting media landscape, due partly to the explosion of social media, with its ubiquitous tweets, blogs and media-savvy users with the power to turn mainstream media on its head. To this growing online universe we will be turning our attention and devoting our energies over the next several years in newly relevant and innovative ways.

Canadian society is a cultural mosaic enriched by the differences of the various identities within it. Change is fundamental to altering the current social climate in which gender inequality and gender-based violence are pervasive. Transforming the media environment from one in which women are either invisible or stereotyped, to one in which women are realistically portrayed and equitably represented—in all our physical, economic, racial and cultural diversity—is our ongoing challenge. But we are making headway and the conversation is shifting in a positive way as evidenced by our many recent successes.

Media Action Média is proud to be part of the national conversation.

Amanda Parriag

» VISION

As the *go-to* source for informed opinion and catalyst for action on gender and media in Canada, Media Action Média bridges the gender gap in public discourse on current and emerging issues.

» MISSION

Media Action Média envisions a media environment that respects and reflects people in all their diversity, celebrates their capacity and contribution, and nurtures rather than erodes their self-esteem and opportunities. The organization's mission is to facilitate action by all Canadians so that they can mobilize around the gender and media issues they wish to change. Through analysis, we raise public awareness of the impact media portrayals of women and media practices have on social attitudes and behaviour, and engage in constructive dialogue

with media producers about the desire to see more responsible practices. We challenge socially destructive myths—that sexuality, for example, is the primary source of women and girls' power—and seek to replace denigrating portrayals with realistic and inspiring ones.

» VALUES

Media Action Média strives to practise inclusive feminism. We understand that many of the obstacles faced by women lie at the intersection of various forms of oppression, including race, age, class, ability, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender identity. We strive to help communities, groups and individuals take action to bridge the gender gap in our media environment, thereby allowing a diverse base of stakeholders to help set the agenda for the organization.

GOALS

Following a period of regeneration and expansion in 2011-2012, Media Action Média pursued the following goals:

1) Outreach to women, including younger and marginalized women, engaging with them to better understand their priorities, concerns and beliefs relating to the media portrayal and representation of the women who they knew and respected.

2) Delivering public education and conducting research by engaging expert women in academia and non-profit organizations through Informed Opinions; completing and publicizing the Diversity in Canadian TV analysis; and expanding and promoting a database of women experts.



3) Building partnerships and networks by researching the work other organizations and individuals are doing on issues of interest and relevance to our mandate, in order to build networks of expertise.

4) Strengthening governance and financial stability by bringing new members and their expertise to the Board, exploring diverse areas of fundraising, identifying like-minded foundations for grants and fundraising opportunities.

Goals for 2012-2013 include creating a positive space online to discuss and disseminate ideas and issues relating to the media portrayal and representation of women and girls, as well as streamlining governance structures and placing the Board on a financially sustainable footing.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND KEY ACTIONS

These initiatives reflect the Board's objectives and evolving online presence by encouraging public engagement both on the Web and at the grassroots.

» PRIORITY 1: EXPANDING OUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOOTPRINT TO SPARK DISCUSSIONS ON THE FAIR AND ACCURATE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE MULTIMEDIA-VERSE

Key Actions:

- Through its signature media project, Represent., Media Action Média is seeking video submissions from the general public on problematic representations of women in the media—the goal being to foster genuine dialogue online between the public and the media.

- In support of the project, action kits have been sent across Canada to post-secondary (university and college) institutions to encourage video contest entries, solicit submissions for the video contest and organize multimedia literacy events on campus.

- A diverse panel of media-makers across the country (advertising executives, journalists, filmmakers, etc.) will view each video contest submission and provide feedback to be used as part of the evaluation criteria for the videos that are submitted to the contest. Winners will be celebrated at Media Action Média's inaugural International Women's Day Represent. Women and Media Forum and Film Festival in March, 2013. Workshops, panel discussions and presentations on topics raised in videos will celebrate the "change-makers," reinforce Media Action Média's role as a hub for discussions on media and gender, and develop a best-practices model for media-makers portraying women.

» PRIORITY 2: DELIVER PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CONDUCT RESEARCH

Key Actions:

- Finding Words Part II seeks to give successive generations of immigrant and racialized women and girls the power to connect with other women and their larger communities through storytelling, increased media literacy and the development of technical production (audio-video) skills.

- Research carried out within the organization this year has exposed gaps, absences and niches in the landscape of North American media and literacy organizations. Findings have suggested that there is a clear role for Media Action Média to play as a Canadian voice on the representation of girls and women in the media and the go-to organization for information and action in this area.

» PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Key Actions:

- Review the non-profit and charitable governance structures associated with Media Action Média in an effort to streamline our reporting, fundraising and finances.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND OUTCOMES

» REPRESENT.

Goal achieved: Outreach to women, including younger and marginalized women, talking to them to better understand their priorities, concerns and beliefs relating to the media portrayal and representation of women.

In the spring of 2012, Media Action Média launched its latest project *Represent.*, a new forum for Canadians to engage with media-makers in meaningful discussions about media representations of women. *Represent.* is designed to inspire today's generation of journalists, filmmakers, and media-storytellers to embrace their voice, deliver and shape representations of women in the media. The project is divided into three parts:

1) *The Represent 3-Minute Video Contest, which offers entrants the opportunity to reach out to media-makers through three-minute video submissions, is already underway and will run until January 31, 2013.*

2) *In November, 2012, Represent. Action Kits were sent to post-secondary campuses across the country and used to initiate media literacy discussions about various representations of women, as well as inspire campus groups to submit entries to the Represent. Video Contest.*

3) *Represent. will culminate in a two-day International Women's Day event, to be held at the beginning of March in Toronto: a Women and Media Forum and Film Festival. This event will bring the Canadian public together with a diverse group of media-makers to discuss the impact of media representations of women, and develop strategies for promoting more realistic and complex portrayals of*

women. It will also feature winning entries from the video contest, as well as professional short and feature films portraying diverse, realistic and complex women.

As a result of *Represent.*, Media Action Média has brought aboard 20—and counting—new and highly-skilled volunteers. It has also established numerous new partnerships with other Canadian organizations, including media partnerships with *Shameless* magazine and *Gender Focus*. Media literacy workshop videos



contained in the *Represent. Action Kit* were all made in collaboration with other organizations, including *Equal Voice*, *I Can MANifest Change* and *Women Action Media! Ottawa*.

For more information about *Represent.*, please visit the web site: <http://www.media-action-medi.com/representproject/>

» INFORMED OPINIONS PROJECT

Currently in its third year of programming, *Informed Opinions* Media Action Média trains and supports experts in making their ideas and knowledge more accessible to print, broadcast and online information media. The project delivers provocative and informative keynote presentations, dynamic and practical workshops, ongoing editing support and strategic advice. In the process, *Informed Opinions* builds women's leadership capacity through media engagement and bridges the gender gap in public discourse. The project delivers guest lectures, motivational keynotes and interactive and applied workshops for women with informed

opinions who are capable of contributing commentary and analysis on current affairs and topical issues.

- *Highly rated keynotes and workshops in Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Ottawa, Halifax, London, Waterloo and Kingston, with others scheduled in Regina and Winnipeg*
- *More than 65 published newspaper commentaries by workshop participants, some of which generated additional broadcast interview requests and media coverage*
- *Coverage of the project in the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Victoria Times Colonist, London Free Press, Western News, Vancouver Sun, Ottawa Citizen, Montreal Gazette, University Affairs and Academic Matters, and on J-Source and CBC Radio*
- *Engagement and support for the project from journalists across Canada*
- *The support and endorsement of an accomplished group of Honorar Patrons, including former Prime Minister, Kim Campbell; former Governor General, Michaëlle Jean; former Supreme Court Justice, Louise Arbour; and award-winning author/activist Sally Armstrong, among others.*
- *A growing list of testimonials from participants (see <http://www.informedopinions.org>)*

» MEDIA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

An internal project, *Media Landscape* helped achieve Media Action Média's goal of building partnerships and networks by researching what other media activist organizations and individuals were doing on issues of interest in order to build networks of expertise. The *Media Landscape* project identified like-minded foundations for funding grants and fundraising opportunities.

The *Media Landscape* Project was a two-part research initiative, which sought to solidify institutional understandings of Media Action Média's foundations and plans for future work. The first stage of the project involved a review of Media Action Média's history and activities, with the aim of establishing a clearer perspective on the organization's identity and future goals. The second phase included an updated environmental scan of the various social justice media organizations operating in North America, with a focus on those in Canada, and those sharing a similar mandate with Media Action Média.

This internal project established a stronger foundation from which Media Action Média can serve the larger media literacy project in Canada. As a result, Media Action Média is now better equipped to establish strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations and to solicit external sponsorship and support for its future projects.

» FINDING WORDS

This year, Media Action Média completed the Finding Words, its media-arts and storytelling program for young racialized, immigrant and newcomer women. In partnership with Toronto's Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre and Unison Health and Community Services, Media Action Média ran weekly workshops, which included critical discussions on how participants see themselves represented in the media, and how media representations affect their understandings of themselves and the stories they tell.

Participants shared funny and inspiring personal stories on an array of topics including female role models, favourite foods and places, tips for new Canadians and what Canada means for them. These stories were then expressed through digital storytelling/audio recording clips, podcasts and other media.

This project aims to demonstrate how we can make our research and advocacy relevant to the lived experiences of marginalized women and girls. The accessibility of media tools and opportunities to tell their own stories enables young women to increase their community engagement and capacity for leadership.

Finding Words seeks to facilitate the empowerment of young women, by supporting the development of their media skills, as well as their overall ability to connect with other women and the communities around them.

To see the final products of the *Finding Words* workshops or for more information on the project, visit <http://newwordsnewvoices.wordpress.com>.

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM GENERATION 'NEXT' – ROYAL ROADS

With Media Action Média 's resurgence as an online organization, and in response to a widespread decline in funding to non-profits, one of our main points of focus



this year has been to seek stability and growth through reliable and diverse funding sources.

To that end, as part of their academic curriculum, MBA Royal Roads University students from across Canada were invited to work with Media Action Média to identify its financial challenges through 'problem' statements, develop competing business and community models, and suggest recommendations for increasing the organization's profile . The resulting proposals ranged from leveraging social media and building networks with like-minded groups, to creating academic scholarships and mentorship programs.

From these and other recommendations, Media Action Média has developed a dynamic social media presence with the potential to generate sustainable revenue stream sources and to create various mechanisms for online support. We have strengthened our links to social justice and media-literacy organizations, with a view to building a donor base from our increasing membership, through direct mail and annual giving campaigns.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

This year, through its project work and collaborations, Media Action Média saw the most significant growth in its community of partners, sponsors, volunteers and supporters in the last 10 years.

Recognizing the need for greater community outreach, the organization has launched several projects aimed at creating more opportunities for Canadians to improve the media landscape through strategic analysis and targeted, thoughtful action.

Through its highly rated keynotes and workshops, Media Action Média 's *Informed Opinions* project garnered media coverage from outlets across Canada, including the *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and CBC Radio. The initiative also grew its coterie of Honorary Patrons, outlined earlier, which include former Prime Minister, Kim Campbell; former Governor General, Michaëlle Jean; former Supreme Court Justice, Louise Arbour; and award-winning author/activist Sally Armstrong, among others.

Several of Media Action Média 's new projects created exciting opportunities to engage with diverse communities through collaboration with new partners. Part of the express mandate of the *Finding Words* program was to engage at the community level. To this end, creating the partnerships with Toronto's Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre and Unison Health and Community Services was a particularly exciting development in the success of this project.

Through Media Action Média's newest initiative *Represent.*, many new media partnerships were formed, including collaborations with *Shameless* magazine, *Gender Focus* and *Canadian Kiosk*. The project, which is creating a new, multifaceted forum for Canadians to challenge damaging media portrayals of women, has also introduced more than 20 new, devoted and highly-skilled volunteers to Media Action Média .

Media Action Média has been overwhelmed by the interest and enthusiasm of those who have offered us their support. We would like to thank all our volunteers for their tireless efforts, without whom our work would be impossible. Another sincere thanks is due to the generous sponsors, loyal partners and dedicated supporters that have enabled Media Action Média to grow and provide Canadians with new and innovative opportunities to promote gender equality through the media.

» SPONSORS

Public Policy Forum
MCR Rental Solutions
Status of Women Canada
Ekos Research Associates
Research House
Patterson, Langlois Consultants inc.
March Entertainment
Multiplicity Communications
CanadianKiosk

» PARTNERS

Shameless
Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women
Free For All Marketing
Media Smarts
White Ribbon Campaign
Higher Unlearning
Gender Focus
Three Little Birds
Kathy Smart – Live the Smart Way
Natalie Kahale
Wam! Ottawa
Equal Voice
I Can Manifest Change
Amber Bromby Photography & Design

» VOLUNTEERS

Lucas Armstrong – Represent. Project Assistant
Naila Baig
Jay Behm
Sadie Behm
Layla Cameron – Represent. Project Assistant
Zach Desson – Represent. Research Coordinator
Paul Dukes - Graphic Designer Volunteer
Adam Fezzani
Chloë Hanes
Amy Johnston
Shewit Kalaty
Rebecca Liu – Represent. Communications Coordinator
Melody Maclean – Web Volunteer
Rukshan Mehta
Komal Minhas
Moraa Mochama
Dan Kearns
Naya Kearns
Sawyer Kearns
Beulah Parriag
Shirin Paynter
Annika Rautiola
Karine Renaud
Guillaume Semblat - Web Designer
Volunteer Coordinator
Alana Simpson
Paula Tillotsan
Danielle Marentette

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT MARCH 31, 2012

	2012	2011 (UNAUDITED)
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$89,348	\$147,662
Accounts receivable	1,884	-
	<u>\$91,232</u>	<u>\$147,662</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$16,589	\$7,996
Due to related party (note 4)	6,679	6,679
Deferred contributions	-	44,218
	<u>23,268</u>	<u>58,893</u>
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	67,964	88,769
	<u>\$91,232</u>	<u>\$147,662</u>

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2012

REVENUE		
Grants	\$44,218	\$70,782
Workshops and lectures	45,358	17,150
Contributions	-	15,000
Book sales	4,160	-
Royalties	9,078	-
Other income	2,196	-
	<u>105,010</u>	<u>102,932</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Administration (note 3)	8,981	7,736
Diversity Research project	1,900	5,175
Informed Opinions (note 3)	114,934	70,782
	<u>125,815</u>	<u>83,693</u>
NET REVENUE (EXPENDITURES)	(20,805)	19,239
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	88,769	69,530
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$67,964	\$88,769

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2012

	2012	2011 (UNAUDITED)
CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN)		
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net revenue (expenditures)	\$(20,805)	\$19,239
Net change in non-cash working capital items:		
Accounts receivable	(1,884)	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8,593	7,026
Deferred contributions	(44,218)	44,218
NET CHANGE IN CASH	(58,314)	70,483
CASH - BEGINNING OF YEAR	147,662	77,179
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$89,348	\$147,662
ADMINISTRATION		
Board meetings and travel	\$2,275	\$3,948
Strategic plan	-	2,520
Office	357	1,268
Audit and accounting	4,500	-
Publicity and communications	1,849	-
	\$8,981	\$7,736
INFORMED OPINIONS		
Staff	\$95,086	\$57,651
Supplies and equipment	1,049	148
Meetings and travel	5,883	1,376
Publicity and communications	10,044	8,127
Workshops and lectures	2,872	3,480
	\$114,934	\$70,782