



DOCUMENTARY  
ORGANIZATION OF CANADA  
DOCUMENTARISTES  
DU CANADA

215 Spadina Avenue  
Suite / Bureau 126  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5T 2C7  
416.599.3844  
1.877.467.4485  
www.docorg.ca

For immediate release  
May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014

## ENTREPRENEURIAL CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY PRODUCERS ARE *GROWING THE PIE!*

Entrepreneurial, resourceful, tenacious and innovative – just a few of the qualities demonstrated by Canadian documentary makers who are finding alternative means of financing their projects. This is what lies at the heart of DOC's latest research paper, *Growing the Pie – Alternative Financing and Canadian Documentary*.

Spurred by the calls of documentary filmmakers bemoaning that the traditional funding model for one-off and feature documentaries in Canada is “broken”, DOC undertook to find what other means producers are employing to finance their films.

*Growing the Pie* seeks to identify and define various means of alternative financing available to documentary producers; highlights the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches and investigates other jurisdictions and sectors to seek out additional funding alternatives.

The paper finds that some producers are turning to crowdfunding, equity investment, international co-productions, corporate branding and third sector investment (NGOs and foundations) to secure financing. Although not necessarily “alternative” - except maybe for crowdfunding - these approaches are decidedly not traditional.

Crowdfunding has evolved from a fringe activity spurred by social networking into a robust industry, one that has generated great traction in the documentary sector. In 2012, \$1.6B was raised in North America across all industries through crowdfunding.

In the United States, foundations are a major source of mission-related documentary financing. Between 2009-2011, American foundations awarded \$1.86B in media-related grants. Although there are forward-looking foundations in Canada, overall, their support of media-based projects remains sparse.

Based on an industry survey, literature review, consultations and producer interviews, the paper features five case studies. The conclusion: while innovative practices help **bridge** budget gaps, and the resulting new partnerships can add value beyond a monetary one, the dollar value remains too modest to replace the lynchpin in the current Canadian funding model - the broadcaster licence.

Faced with having to reconcile new alternative approaches with the traditional financing structures producers report encountering barriers at every step—legal, administrative and regulatory.

Approaches in other jurisdictions such as the U.S., the UK or Australia point to possible solutions of keeping up with an evolving market, but only if greater flexibility is built into our financing system.

Which is why, with the paper’s publication, DOC calls on industry stakeholders to engage in a conversation aimed at finding ways for our film and television sector to keep ahead of market changes.

Pepita Ferrari, Chair of DOC says: “This report shines the light on numerous possibilities that, if adapted to the Canadian context, would propel innovation and economic activity in a vibrant sector. Furthermore, as the report attests, the challenges faced by Canadian documentary-makers are common among other cultural industries, therefore the need to put our collective creative heads together is a matter of interest to many stakeholders in the cultural milieu.”

Written by consultant Tracey Friesen with case studies provided by Susan Brinton also acting as an advisor on the project, *Growing the Pie – Alternative Financing and Canadian Documentary* will be released at the Doc Summit on May 2, during the industry conference at the Hot Docs film festival. The research received financial support from the Ontario Media Development Corporation and Telefilm Canada.

Paper available [here](#)

- 30 -

The Documentary Organization of Canada / l’Association des documentaristes du Canada is the collective voice of independent documentary filmmakers across Canada. DOC is a national nonprofit association representing over 700 directors, producers and craftspeople in the Canadian documentary community. DOC advocates on behalf of its members to foster an environment conducive to documentary production and strives to strengthen the sector within the broader film production industry.

For more info:  
Lisa Fitzgibbons - Executive Director  
(416) 258-5993  
lfitzgibbons@docorg.ca