DOCUMENTARY
ORGANIZATION OF CANADA
DOCUMENTARISTES
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THE DOCUMENTARY ORGANIZATION OF CANADA RELEASES WHAT WE HEARD: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS REPORT 2025

Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, September 19, 2025 - The Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) has released ***What We Heard: Community Consultations Report 2025***, a landmark publication capturing the voices of documentary filmmakers, producers, and creators from coast to coast.

What We Heard draws upon a series of cross-country consultations conducted by DOC in late 2024 and early 2025, hosted by DOC's six regional chapters: DOC Alberta, DOC Atlantic, DOC Manitoba, DOC Northwest, DOC Ontario, and DOC Québec. These facilitated discussions spanned six months and brought together diverse perspectives from over 200 documentary creators across the country, encompassing emerging, mid-career, and veteran professionals.

Participants shared insights on working with funders, broadcasters, and streamers, as well as on equity programs, discoverability, and the realities of building careers outside of the major industry hubs of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Their feedback highlights systemic challenges in the documentary sector, including the underfunding of feature-length films, regional disparities in access to resources and decision-makers, and a major gap in marketing support that limits the visibility of completed works. While equity initiatives show promise, participants observed that long-term support is needed to build sustainable careers for underrepresented filmmakers. The report and consultations were supported by the Canada Media Fund.

"At this critical juncture for the Canadian audiovisual industry, it is essential that the policymakers who are reshaping our broadcasting system take account of the experiences of grassroots creators. Undertaken as a complement to our regular quantitative *Getting Real* publications, this report is a qualitative synthesis of the challenges and opportunities voiced by independent documentary creators nationwide. While Canadian documentaries have seldom enjoyed robust marketing support, it is now particularly crucial that we take action to ensure Canadian docs remain discoverable as viewers shift to content-saturated digital platforms. Likewise, as our industry increasingly seeks to court global audiences, we must make dedicated efforts to ensure that regional stories are discoverable and duly resourced. The findings in this report have already been incorporated into DOC's ongoing advocacy efforts before the CRTC, as the Commission implements *The Online Streaming Act*, with impending regulatory decisions set to shape Canada's audiovisual landscape for years to come."

What We Heard was launched during the opening session of Lunenburg Doc Fest's the Dock

Market, presented by DOC's Operations Manager Tazeen Ahmed and Executive Director Julian Carrington. DOC's decision to launch the report in Lunenburg reflects the festival's role as key event for the Atlantic documentary sector, and a vibrant gathering place for the broader Canadian documentary community.

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About DOC

The Documentary Organization of Canada / l'Association des documentaristes du Canada is the collective voice of diverse independent documentary filmmakers across Canada. DOC is a member-driven, not-for-profit association representing over 1500 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 screen industry.

The full version of *What We Heard: Community Consultations Report 2025*, as well as a summary report, can be accessed here: https://docorg.ca/report/what-we-heard-community-consultations-report-2025/

French versions of the report and summary report will be available on September 26

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Further information on DOC is available at: www.docorg.ca
Further information on Lunenburg Doc Fest is available at:
https://www.lunenburgdocfest.com