



NEW CANADIAN MEDIA

THE PULSE OF IMMIGRANT CANADA

2021

Annual Report

January 13, 2022



Collaboration has been our watchword in 2021 and will continue to guide us next year. (Credit: Collective member Seckin Ergun)

NOTES FROM BOARD CO-CHAIRS



YAA-HEMAA OBIRI-YEBOAH
Board Co-Chair

It has been a great pleasure to serve as Board Co-Chair with the esteemed Gavin Barrett. We have witnessed the growth of New Canadian Media and the increasing number of achievements by the platform. NCM stands out for its commitment to the stories that aren't often highlighted in mainstream newsrooms and challenges common tropes in traditional media. It truly is the voice for immigrant and BIPOC communities in Canada. As a member of the board, I have been proud to see the effort NCM has made to diversify its revenue sources and continually adjust its operations and reporting to ensure its sustainability and relevance. The team continues to be ambitious and we look forward to seeing the next set of milestones that will be reached.

It is hard to believe that it's been a year since I said yes to co-chairing NCM's board of directors in partnership with the very capable Yaa-Hemaa Obiri-Yeboah. Hard to believe that we've just celebrated a second Christmas in a pandemic setting. Hard to believe that we're still discussing adequate representation for immigrant voices and an immigrant journalism that does Canada's commitment to multiculturalism proud.

As I write this, a mainstream journalist resigned from Canada's national news organization and exiled herself to the email newsletter platform Substack, ostensibly to protest the organization's lack of "journalistic integrity." In reality, it was a poorly disguised tantrum by an entitled establishment writer railing against the too-little, too-late attention being given to more fulsome and sensitive coverage of minority perspectives after the murder of George Floyd and after the tragic discovery of the unmarked graves of 215 indigenous children in Kamloops. These events and the coverage around them underscore the need for a rebalancing in the way we tell stories about ourselves and who should tell those stories. In other words, the need for New Canadian Media has never been stronger.

George and his team have not disappointed. Over the year, NCM hit the 2000 stories milestone, was recognized as a Registered Journalism Organization (joining an elite group of only five other Canadian organizations), strengthened partnerships with The Walrus and the Canadian Association of Journalists, began building bridgeheads with international news partners in Nigeria and the Middle East, and attracted some \$200,000 in public funding.

I am confident that these achievements, together with a renewed commitment to developing self-sustaining revenue streams, will see NCM well into the future.



GAVIN BARRETT
Board Co-Chair

NOTE FROM SHELLEY AMBROSE, CHAIR OF ADVISORY COUNCIL

If George Abraham had not conceived of, founded, and worked ferociously on bringing New Canadian Media into existence, we – as engaged and diverse Canadians – would have to invent it. That is how revolutionary and how necessary New Canadian Media is to our world view, our journalism, our country. The voices of journalists living in Canada who hail from many places, nations, and cultures on this planet have a platform on New Canadian Media where you will find stories from individuals who see and know the world in many disparate ways and unlike anything offered in so called “mainstream” Canadian media.

Lucky enough to have met George more than a decade ago, I’ve been honoured to collaborate with New Canadian Media as publisher of The Walrus and, now, as Chair of NCM’s volunteer Advisory Council. I hope you will read and follow NCM’s extraordinary journalism and that you will – like me – find it worthy of your support – emotionally, intellectually, and financially. As a registered Canadian charity, you’ll get a tax receipt and so much more. You’ll see the world through different and essential perspectives. New Canadian Media is an eye opener. Thank you George for your vision.



OVERVIEW



GEORGE ABRAHAM, PUBLISHER
AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2021 has demonstrated that NCM’s unique journalism is needed more than ever before. Caught between a reckoning around race relations, a rekindled understanding of the pain inflicted on Indigenous peoples and the global pandemic of the last two years, we stepped up our game and bolstered our newsroom strength. We did stories that were picked up by other Canadian news organizations and cemented the NCM Collective’s working relationship with the Canadian Association of Journalists. You may well see NCM reporters nominated for National Newspaper Awards this year. In May, we were cited by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism as an example of “[new diversity initiatives](#)” that are leading the discussion around race and inclusion in Canadian newsrooms.

Here’s what stood out: we published a total of 352 stories in 2021, offered training to over 100 immigrant journalists, launched this country’s first-ever study on immigrant and refugee journalists, took our editorial cachet to Nigeria ... and became a “charity” under Canada’s tax rules. We grew our newsletter subscribers by 33% and our website traffic increased three fold year-on-year.

EDITORIAL

By Fernando Arce, Assignments Editor

On Nov. 2, we put out a [news release announcing](#) our 2,000 stories to date. Over the past several months, we have hit a steady publishing flow of a minimum of five articles a week, at least one a day. In addition to being featured on our site, all our stories are put out via a weekly newsletter that goes out Friday afternoons to about 2,000 subscribers. We are now putting out enough stories to make our reporters eligible for nominations to the National Newspaper Awards (NNAs).

This year, NCM's reporting tackled some tough themes like our ongoing series on Afghanistan refugees, the international student/immigration consultant industries and the disproportionate impacts of COVID on racialized individuals/newcomers. Our reporters have been able to file stories on these themes more consistently, with a tighter focus per story and with an ever-widening array of voices (sources) to flesh out government and industry perspectives. Our reporter bylines under the Local Journalism Initiative have been featured on media platforms across Canada, most consistently in the Toronto Star.

In fact, we are in the process of choosing three articles from our Afghanistan series to submit for consideration for the Canadian Journalism Foundation (CJF) Jackman Award for Excellence in Journalism. We may also have a fair shot at the CJF-Facebook Journalism Project digital News Innovation Award, which "recognizes innovations in digital media that have a demonstrated impact in advancing the quality of digital journalism."

FRENCH EDITORIAL

By Andreina Romero, French Editor

In its continued effort to elevate the voices of immigrant and refugee journalists across Canada, New Canadian Media is in the process of creating a French version of its website. The goal of this project is to create a space dedicated to topics of interest to readers in francophone communities, and in particular in Quebec, which has a quite distinct discourse around immigration.

As part of this project, NCM began to publish stories in French in Spring 2021. At year's end, we had published about 20 stories in French covering issues such as the long delays experienced by permanent residence applicants hoping to settle in Quebec, the impact that Bill 96 (a bill that would increase the mandatory use of French in Quebec) would have on new immigrants, and the barriers immigrant and refugee journalists face when trying to pursue their career in the province.

“ We plan to become a fully bilingual site – with separate English and French versions –by the end of March, and continue to grow our roster of French journalists to cover francophone stories across the country. ”

SPECIAL PROJECTS

By Daniela Cohen, Assistant Editor (Special Projects)

TRAINING AND MENTORING FOR IMMIGRANT JOURNALISTS

From January to March 2021, NCM in collaboration with The Walrus held 6 groundbreaking journalist training webinars with a total of 158 workshop spots taken. This was the second NCM-The Walrus series, following on from the one held in the first quarter of 2020. All these webinars were held online to accommodate restrictions during COVID-19. We had 19 active mentees in the NCM Mentoring Program, who published their stories with the guidance of NCM's top notch mentors, and we have continued the process of onboarding more mentees.

“ We also hosted a challenging panel discussion with senior editors from The Canadian Press, The Globe and Mail, Postmedia and The Walrus Lab around increasing inclusivity in the media and ventured into new explorations of potential collaboration with Indigenous and Francophone immigrant communities. ”

NCM has also just launched an Advanced Training and Mentorship Program for Immigrant Journalists in collaboration with [Village Media](#). The program will run from January to March 2022, and provides a unique opportunity to learn from renowned journalists in a small group setting.



Building on our educational mandate, we are currently exploring a micro-credentialing program in 'Multicultural Journalism' with Seneca College.

BRIDGING THE MAINSTREAM - ETHNIC DIGITAL DIVIDE IN COVID-19 LITERACY

Two NCM researchers, Naser Miftari and Alicja Minda, compared coverage of COVID-19 in ethnic versus mainstream media. They analyzed ethnic media coverage between May 1, 2020 and January 15, 2021, using 1,130 individual web, print and broadcast news summaries provided by Multilingual International Research and Ethnic Media Services (MIREMS), and compared it to 544 articles, opinions and editorial pieces from Toronto Star in the same period to highlight similarities and differences.

THE FIVE THEMES COVERED WERE:

- ✓ COVID-19 and the question of vaccine;
- ✓ COVID-19 & Collection of Racial Data/vulnerability of racial and visible minorities;
- ✓ COVID-19 & the circumstances of Newcomers, Refugees, International Students, Temp Workers;
- ✓ COVID-19 & Economic Impact/ Impact on the small business sector;
- ✓ COVID-19 and mental health issues.

NCM also created an online 'Fact-Checking Guide' and an on-ground 'Fact-Checking Training program for 10 NCM Collective journalists with Margaret Jetelina, former Editor of the Canadian Immigrant. The journalists who participated in the Train the Trainer Fact Checking webinar then hosted workshops with a total of 20 journalists from their own communities on the harmful potential of disinformation campaigns around COVID-19 coverage and ways to avoid the pitfalls when reporting on COVID-19.

In addition, on January 31, 2021, NCM held a public online webinar titled "Is This a Fact?" led by Kathy English, chair of the Canadian Journalism Foundation, in order to help people discern the accuracy of the news they consume, which was attended by 41 people. Feedback indicated that 89% of participants found the webinar "very informative" to "extremely informative".

RESEARCH STUDY ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE JOURNALISTS

In October 2021, NCM launched Canada's first study on the socioeconomic conditions of first-generation immigrant and refugee journalists. This project is being led by NCM Collective members and journalists, Christopher Chanco and Arzu Yildiz. We are grateful to the eight Collective members assisting to conduct surveys and follow up interviews with participants: Pradip Rodrigues, Isabel Inclan, Ruhina Taskin, Marcus Medford, Adèle Surprenant, Marine Caleb, Tazeen Iman, and Alec Regino.

So far, 90 surveys have been completed and 26 journalists have been interviewed. Collective members are also writing articles on their findings. The first two on "Experienced Latin American journalists kept out of industry" and "Au Québec, les journalistes immigrants naviguent en eaux troubles" were recently published on NCM.

EXPORT PROJECT

In yet another first, NCM is taking its editorial cachet overseas, beginning with Nigeria. Over the coming months, we will be seeking revenue-sharing and editorial collaboration with media in markets like India, the Philippines, countries in the Persian Gulf, etc.

NCM COLLECTIVE

By Joyeeta Ray, National Convenor

As we close 2021, our roster of paid Collective members hit about 100, even as we ramped up outreach efforts to upgrade others who have availed of free enrolment offered at the start of the pandemic (a total of 225 members). A majority of our paid members enjoy cross-privileges in the Canadian Association of Journalists for \$50/year. With a hub up and running in the GTA under the leadership of Minu Mathew, we will be opening a second one in Vancouver early in 2022.

WEB PRESENCE

By Dmitry Beniaminov, Webmaster

We are streamlining how we manage NCM users, authors, contributors and the member database. We are also updating our Collective geo-mapping mechanisms and mailing lists (mapping plugins, mailchimp ongoing). We are also streamlining our content tagging system, in preparation for a bilingual build. And finally, we plan to roll out a new look and feel early in the spring offering our readers and advertisers new functionalities, besides improving website performance. Stay tuned.

BUSINESS

By Kunal Bajaj, Head of Business

NCM took a giant leap in its monetization efforts with this new appointment in September. We are pursuing several hot leads, in addition to exploring webinars for overseas audiences as a source of revenue. We are talking to media agencies, banks, telecoms and immigration consultant/lawyer organizations, turning every stone without compromising our editorial integrity. We're also exploring NCM corporate memberships where we offer Diversity & Inclusion workshops to organizations across Canada.

FINANCES

By Shahid Maqsood, Finance Manager

With approved public funding amounting to just under \$200,000, NCM is ending the year on a sound financial note, albeit overly reliant on federal grants and contributions. As outlined above, it has several funded projects in the works, all of them led and delivered by members of the NCM Collective. Our support from the Local Journalism Initiative (funded through News Media Canada) is a huge boost to our story count.

Our finances were bolstered quite a bit thanks to gaining Registered Journalism Organization status (equivalent to a "charity") this year. We learned of this only Nov. 3, but quickly launched a donations campaign in both official languages, netting us roughly \$5,000. We will be launching a concerted fundraising campaign in the new year to support our inclusive, pioneering journalism. Based on current (2021) spending and producing one story a day, the estimated editorial budget for FY 2022 is \$100,000.