

A black and white photograph of a large audience in a theater. The audience is seen from behind, filling the foreground and middle ground, looking towards a stage. On the stage, a large, bright rectangular screen displays the word "VIFF" in a bold, stylized, sans-serif font. The theater has a curved stage and a balcony with a few more people visible in the upper right. The lighting is dim, focusing on the screen.

**VIFF**

**VIFF Strategic Plan**  
2021-2023



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

VIFF thanks the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations for their continued stewardship of the unceded and occupied land on which our work takes place.

As an organization founded and predominantly directed by settlers and immigrants, we understand that we have a responsibility to seek out and build authentic relationships with Indigenous communities, to allow their knowledge and wisdom to influence our practice.

As part of this process, we remain committed to engaging with, welcoming and supporting Indigenous artists, filmmakers, curators and audiences.





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# Executive Summary

On the threshold of its 40th anniversary, VIFF has been an organization in flux for nearly a decade. This familiarity with change has allowed us to adapt remarkably well to the global crisis. Paradoxically, the pandemic has, in some ways, allowed us to circumvent some of the remaining roadblocks in our evolution. The next step is to seize the opportunity offered by this transitional period, and set the newly stabilized organization on a course of meaningful growth.

In recent years VIFF enjoyed an explosion of program development and rapid expansion which engaged new and younger audiences while nearly doubling the organization's operating budget. Such rampant growth came at a cost however, as VIFF's staff and systems struggled to keep pace. Externally, the array of new programs led to a disjointed and unfocused curatorial identity.

Concurrent with VIFF's evolution, there has been a sea-change in the nature and purpose of arts and culture organizations, and the value they must bring to the communities they claim to represent and wish to serve. Society at large is trying to confront the impacts of systemic racism, colonialism, and climate change. To remain relevant and impactful, arts organizations need to contend with long-standing issues; they too must provide leadership and space for dialogue. VIFF is no exception.

Despite the myriad of COVID-related challenges, VIFF finished 2020 in remarkable form. The organization's strength lies in its capable and dedicated staff, who displayed ingenuity and resolve in the face of such an existential crisis, mounting an impressive 'online festival'.

Such a strong response to the pandemic has left VIFF uniquely well-positioned to accelerate out of the crisis. This Strategic Plan outlines how VIFF will capitalize on this advantage in measured and sustainable ways.

- VIFF will clarify its programmatic identity and integrate its curatorial efforts.
- VIFF will address core capacity issues, and restructure the organization to support future growth.
- VIFF will embrace community engagement and position itself as a major cultural leader in the region.
- VIFF will build on the ground gained in 2020, establishing new audiences across the province.

In the pursuit of these objectives, VIFF will develop into a vibrant cultural leader programming for diverse audiences across British Columbia through a dynamic and well-defined series of impactful, community-oriented programs. The organization will grow in size and scope, supported by careful restructuring and resourcing. VIFF will gain national and international prestige for its unique offerings, and distinctly Pacific Northwest character.

VIFF has been laying the foundations for this transformation for a few years already, and the pandemic hasn't slowed the process. If anything, it's allowed and encouraged the organization to bring more ambition and aspiration to this Strategic Plan, and to truly understand and appreciate the opportunity this moment affords.



Far beyond simple film exhibition, we strive to engage and empower communities, encourage dialogue, educate, and champion local artists.

# Introduction

## Who We Are

VIFF is the home of film and film culture in Western Canada.

Driven by passion and curatorial excellence, VIFF encourages understanding of the world's cultures through the art of cinema. We believe that film has a unique ability to celebrate the complexity of the human condition, and that it is our responsibility to steward that power towards creating meaningful change in our world.

Far beyond simple film exhibition, we strive to engage and empower communities, encourage dialogue, educate, and champion local artists. Our year-round home, The VIFF Centre, is the premiere arthouse of the Pacific Northwest. Hosting hundreds of screenings, talks, and community partnerships each year, the VIFF Centre is a major cultural landmark in the region.

The most potent expression of our programming is the Vancouver International Film Festival, an annual world-class celebration of the year's finest International and Canadian films. Now entering its 40th edition, the festival is the foundation upon which the organization was built, and is known for a vibrant program of expertly curated narrative and non-fiction films from every corner of the world. In recent years, inspiring new program streams were developed to add balance and depth to our offerings, while engaging new and diverse audiences. Those programs (Catalyst Mentorship Program, AMP, Immersed, LIVE) have matured into hallmarks of the modern VIFF program.

In the competitive landscape of international festivals, VIFF distinguishes itself through excellence in programming:

- A wide range of impeccably curated International features
- A strong balance of narrative and documentary work
- The best of new Canadian cinema
- The largest BC film program in the world
- The best of new directors from East Asia
- World-class live programming (Talks, Labs, multidisciplinary LIVE performances)
- Education (mentorship, conferences, and workshops)

Through decades of experience and inspired program development, VIFF has evolved into an acclaimed annual festival and a premiere arthouse cinema. With a complex and impactful year-round program that boasts over 1500 annual screenings and events, VIFF has become the most prolific and engaging cinematic entity in the region.



# History & Context



The Vancouver International Film Festival was founded in 1982, and rose to prominence over the following years by providing Vancouver audiences unique access to the year's best cinema. Through the vision and hard work of a founder and long-serving Festival Director, along with a small dedicated team, the annual festival grew from a grassroots organization into one of the largest cultural events in the city.

In 2005 the Vancouver International Film Centre, a state-of-the-art cinema, was opened as VIFF's year-round home. While the cinema offered the organization a new revenue stream and programmatic outlet, the festival remained the primary focus both internally and externally. As a result, the Film Centre's growth had been slow until recent years, and its impact on the local community has not met its potential.

The organization underwent a leadership transition in 2012, with the addition of VIFF's first Executive Director. This was a monumental shift in structure, and proved the first change in what would become a period of significant evolution and growth for VIFF. New priorities emerged, with efforts focusing on industry relations, high-profile guest attendance, and a rejuvenation of year-round programming at the Film Centre. All of this resulted in a 40% increase in budget by 2019. Particular emphasis was put on program development, culminating in the 2016 launch of the 'Films+ Model', a dynamic, creator-focused, and heavily branded festival structure designed to reframe existing programs into 'streams' which would encourage new sponsorship revenue and engage new (and younger) audiences.

A strong leadership team and staff had been assembled to execute the programming's ambitious new scope, but they were challenged by constant reinvention and insufficient resources to meet the objectives. While capacity investments were made during this period, they were unable to serve the dual needs of program development and addressing aging infrastructure. Programmatic focus suffered too, as new programs were developed adjacent to existing ones, with few points of intersection or collaboration. Each programming team planned in relative isolation, with very few films, guest speakers, themes, or resources shared between them.

By the time the Executive Director departed in 2019, VIFF was a vastly expanded organization, capable of engaging new audiences through a dynamic year-round programming model. But it also suffered from over-extension and a lack of unified curatorial vision. As the board of directors prepared for a leadership search, they engaged an Interim Executive Director, who they tasked with stabilizing the organization's growth and stewarding stakeholder relations, while championing emerging programmatic values in education, community engagement, and diversification. It was under this new leadership that VIFF entered 2020, and faced the most challenging year of its history.





# The Pandemic

## The challenge

2020 was always going to be a complex year for VIFF. After three years of planning, the VIFF Centre (formerly the Vancouver International Film Centre) broke ground on a \$2.8m capital renovation. This ambitious project promised to completely modernize the VIFF Centre, while adding key programmatic spaces in the Media Lab, Education Suite, and 41-seat Studio Theatre.

It was at this precarious moment, immediately after demolition began, that the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. The Centre's Vancity Theatre, intended to operate throughout renovation, was closed in March, and all operations shifted to working remotely. Over the ensuing months, VIFF grappled with the combined challenges of shifting the annual festival online, a projected decrease in budget of over 50%, and a wildly uncertain film ecosystem, on top of the monumental task of completing the capital project. As with most other arts organizations, the pandemic posed a genuine threat to VIFF's survival and sustainability.

## The result

Despite the mounting challenges, VIFF rose to the occasion.

Managing to retain capacity and deliver mandate, VIFF mounted arguably one of the strongest online festivals in the world. Offering a robust and diverse program — delivered through an exceptional customer experience — VIFF 2020 vastly exceeded viewership and revenue expectations. For the first time, VIFF was able to reach audiences throughout the province, providing a case study for future expansion. By all accounts, the festival offered a uniquely engaging and rewarding online festival experience for filmmakers and audiences alike.

Beyond the festival's success, the renovation project was completed only one month behind schedule, and significantly under budget.

While most arts and culture organizations struggled with existential threat, VIFF found a way to prosper. Embracing the challenge, the organization sought to lay foundations upon which future festivals could benefit. The task of completely reinventing the organization brought with

VIFF is uniquely positioned to accelerate past the pandemic, into a highly productive and impactful future.

it the opportunity to divest itself of historical financial constraints and outdated practices.

The financial steadiness afforded by the success of 2020, has allowed VIFF to approach the second year of the pandemic from a position of flexibility and with potentially significant advantage. While the first

half of 2021 will come with its own particular challenges, VIFF is uniquely positioned to accelerate past the pandemic, into a highly productive and impactful future. This Strategic Plan outlines the four strategic priorities needed to focus efforts, act decisively, and regrow sustainably — with purpose.



A low-angle shot of a person with curly hair looking up at a circular ceiling with multiple blue-lit recessed lights. The person is wearing a dark jacket over a light green shirt. The background is dark, and the ceiling lights create a strong blue glow.

# Strategic Priorities & Criteria

Strategic planning during a global crisis is an exercise in determination. Too easily, one can become overly focused on the moment's crisis, or overwhelmed by the uncertain prospect of the future.

In July of 2020, VIFF's senior leadership team opted to perform an adapted SWOT analysis, which took into account the interruption of the pandemic. The team focused on identifying:

- Key strengths and weaknesses
- Challenges that impeded the organization *before* the pandemic
- Strategic directions which balance impact and financial sustainability

The process continued throughout the remainder of the year, with board consultation in August, and a senior staff review in November. Particular emphasis was placed on planning for 2021, while accounting for the ever-changing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Critical issues

- VIFF has yet to reestablish a clear identity. Years of transition and program development generated growth, but at the cost of a distinct and communicable sense of purpose.
- The internet has vastly changed the film exhibition industry over the past two decades, and fundamentally shifted the role of arthouses and festivals. VIFF needs to redefine the value it provides to remain relevant.
- As the world continues to grapple with the existential threats of systemic racism, climate change, colonialism, and globalism, communities and funders look to arts and culture organizations for leadership and change. To meet this need VIFF must shift focus from reach to impact.
- VIFF must modernize its digital infrastructure and HR practices in order to remain competitive and financially sustainable in a rapidly changing environment.

# Criteria

Emerging from the planning process, strategic priorities were identified and evaluated by the following criteria:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Impact</b><br>Furthers mandate, mission and artistic vibrancy                                  | <b>Revenue</b><br>Stabilizes existing revenue sources and develops new funding streams |
| <b>Relevance</b><br>Renews and expands VIFF's reputation locally, nationally, and internationally | <b>Capacity</b><br>Ensures the structure properly supports the ambition                |

# Solution

To meet the challenges of a shifting film industry and a changing world, VIFF will:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Clearly define its identity  | Establish a stable, well-resourced, and competitive infrastructure                               |
| Devote significant attention and resources to diverse communities in addition to individual audience members | Become a <i>cultural</i> leader locally and provincially   |
| Develop audiences and partnerships across the province   | Increase national and international recognition as an inspiring example of the 'modern' festival |

This will be accomplished over the next three years (2021-2023) by focussing on these four strategic priorities:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Evolve Programming</b><br>to strengthen VIFF's identity for years to come  | <b>Improve Capacity</b><br>through focusing on attracting and retaining top tier staff, accelerating philanthropic fundraising, and improving customer service |
| <b>Build Community</b><br>by increasing VIFF's impact and cultural leadership | <b>Expand Geographically</b><br>to share VIFF's programming and resources across the province  |





# 1 | Evolve Programming

For many years VIFF's identity and reputation was stable and unchanging, rooted firmly in the festival's International Features program. Over the last decade, the festival's Canadian and Creative Engagement streams have become significant revenue drivers and core parts of VIFF's offerings, while developments in education and provincial programming promise new customer engagement and revenue growth. Due to a lack of resources the VIFF Centre was slow to establish itself, but has evolved in recent years into a highly productive and dynamic venue. Current year-round offerings feature strong film programming, Q&As, and panel conversations directed at a core audience combined with co-presentations with smaller local film festivals.

The VIFF Centre remains distinctly separate from festival programming, and has yet to reach its full potential as a cultural hub. While rapid program development has reached new audiences, it has also created a lack of cohesion, with each curatorial stream operating in relative isolation. While most of VIFF's programs are strong and distinct on an individual level, the organization's overall profile has suffered, as its identity took on a scattered and unfocused appearance. In the long term, this may well lead to stalled public funding, reduced private donations, and a dimming of overall reputation. VIFF's sprawling program and an ill-defined internal structure could compromise the organization's ability to capitalize on recent successes.

Clarity of purpose, refined identity, and artistic vision are key to VIFF's long term sustainability.

An evolution of the programming model — realized through a dynamic, integrated, multi-year plan — will solidify the society's identity, honour the loyalties of existing audiences and attract new ones, while enticing

new sponsors and funders. Reinvigorating, refining, and promoting VIFF's unique identity on a national and international level will provide access to top tier international films, filmmakers, and creators in a highly competitive market. International recognition benefits local relevance, which in turn drives revenue. Clarity of purpose, refined identity, and artistic vision are key to VIFF's long term sustainability.



# 1 | Evolve Programming

## OBJECTIVE

Devise a new Programming structure

Develop an integrated and sustainable program plan

## TACTIC

1. Implement a phased and strategic restructuring of the Programming Department(Y1)
2. Onboard curators to authentically represent, and program for under- and mis-represented communities\* (Y1-3)
3. Create Programmer development process/ framework (Y2)
4. Institute Artistic Director role (Y3)

1. Redefine the scope of the annual festival (Y1-2)
2. Formalize education and youth engagement initiatives (high school program, family programming) (Y1)
3. Launch new competition and other showcases for International talent (Y1-2)
4. Commission new LIVE performances and workshops (Y3)

## OUTCOME

- More defined program focused on core differentiators
- Diverse range of programing voices
- VIFF's reputation solidified amongst international film festivals and centres
- Increased visioning, stakeholder management, and support for revenue generation

- More financially balanced and sustainable festival model
- Multimedia and educational programming offerings for partnerships
- Cultivate future audiences
- Enhanced national and international profile
- New foundation and philanthropic fundraising possibilities
- Export of commissioned work, in partnership with other International festivals

*Wet Season, dir. Anthony Chen, VIFF 2019*





Monkey Beach, dir. Loretta Todd, VIFF 2020

# 1 | Evolve Programming

\* VIFF seeks to serve a diverse range of communities and cultures. The team of programmers and consultants should include members who can draw from lived experiences when programming for their communities. This is particularly important when programming for communities that are often under- and mis-represented, including Indigenous, Black, people of colour, LGBTQIA2S, people with disabilities (visible and invisible).

\*\* All financial figures are estimates intended to indicate scale and impact of initiatives.

## INDICATORS

- Addition of 1 FTE, year-round IBPOC curator (Indigenous, Black, person of colour)
- Addition of contract curators – 2.5 FTE equivalent (must include IBPOC curators)
- Festival paid attendance reaches 65% of capacity
- Addition of 2 new programs (Youth Engagement, Commissioned Works)

## INVESTMENTS

- Full time curatorial changes \$145,000
- Program logistics labour \$50,000

## RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

- Expanded program support through grants and sponsorships \$250,000
- Earned revenue from new programmatic spaces \$160,000 (net)





## 2 | Improve Capacity

After years of rapid growth, VIFF requires significant investment and alterations to existing infrastructure. Program development was successful in attracting new audiences and expanding VIFF's curatorial offerings, but the burden of such growth has been largely borne by a dedicated but under-resourced staff and infrastructure.

VIFF requires a modernization of HR processes, investment in data-driven marketing, and the adoption of basic philanthropic fundraising practices. The organization struggles to attract and retain staff with its current wage levels, lack of professional development opportunities, and woefully labour-intensive processes. External changes have also strained capacity. From seismic shifts in the film exhibition marketplace, to advancements in ticketing, web design, and communication technology, VIFF is at risk of becoming outdated and uncompetitive. The imperative to augment our institutional resources extends beyond rudimentary technical concerns.

Addressing these shortcomings is long overdue — offering the potential of cost-saving efficiencies, enhanced productivity and morale, improved resiliency, and an organization capable of attracting and retaining high-calibre staff.



# 2 | Improve Capacity

## OBJECTIVE

## TACTIC

## OUTCOME

Invest in progressive Human Resource practices

1. Institute Performance Management Process (Y1)
2. Adopt succession planning process for all key positions (Y1-2)
3. Benchmark wage levels against industry standards (Y2)
4. Develop an employee retirement savings strategy (Y3)

- Improved efficiency with clear and aligned expectations
- Retention of key staff, knowledge, and practices
- Enhanced reputation as a competitive employer
- Healthy work culture and staff morale

Improve organizational capacity

1. Invest in restructured Marketing and Communications department (Y1-Y2)
2. Transition to new film exhibition oriented ticketing and CRM software. (Y1-2)
3. Launch newly designed and functionally improved website (Y1-2)
4. Draft new mission, vision, and value statements (Y2)

- Optimized marketing and PR strategies
- Improved VIFF customer experience
- VIFF is rendered more competitive through data analysis and CRM driven marketing
- Shared strategic direction, identity, vision and purpose

Invest in fund development

1. Launch multi-year plan to grow contributed revenue, with a focus on philanthropic fundraising (Y1)
2. Hire Director of Philanthropy (Y1)
3. Properly resource a Department of Philanthropy (Y2-3)

- Increased revenue diversification and financial stability
- Improved internal leadership and experience with philanthropic giving
- Multi-year operating support from the Canada Council for the Arts
- Settle construction loan debt (Y3)

*The Curse of Willow Song, dir. Karen Lam, VIFF 2020*







Synonyms, dir. Nadav Lapid, VIFF 2019

# 2 | Improve Capacity

\* All financial figures are estimates intended to indicate scale and impact of initiatives.

## INDICATORS

- Speed of online sales increased by 25%
- Volume of online sales increase by 4%
- Frequency of small (point-of-sale) donations increased by 500% (approx 2200)
- Living wage provided to all staff including casual, contract, and full time

## INVESTMENTS

- Completed Digital Systems upgrade \$100,000 (one-time)
- Development Department \$250,000
- Wagelevelling Estimated 20% increase per FTE \$300,000
- Retirement planning \$125,000
- Professional development funds available to all FTE : \$25,000
- Organizational Development training: \$20,000

## RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

- Philanthropic Donations \$800,000
- Canada Council Operating \$75,000
- Corporate philanthropy \$150,000
- Philanthropic capital campaign (40th anniversary) \$1,000,000 (one-time)
- Naming partnerships for new spaces \$600,000 (multi-year)





VIFF can demonstrate a sense of purpose that extends well beyond the limits of pure film exhibition.

## 3 | Build Community

Over its 40-year history, VIFF became a pillar institution in the provincial film community. Through community marketing and novel initiatives, VIFF worked with cultural groups and other charities to bring value to the city as a whole.

Over time, the city has changed, and so has its culture. What value the organization had to offer is insufficient to service the community today. Epochal shifts in film exhibition and content consumption, combined with sea changes in the cultural sector (from ‘celebrating the arts’ to a more ‘impact driven’ industry), have fundamentally changed what VIFF’s role in the world should be. The modern arts organization must extend beyond simple presentation, and strive for impactful community engagement in service of relevance and long-term sustainability.

VIFF has the opportunity to cement its position as one of Vancouver’s most valued cultural institutions, by repositioning itself as an impactful community leader. By connecting its varied constituents and providing them with access, support, education, and resources, VIFF can demonstrate a sense of purpose that extends well beyond the limits of pure film exhibition. This will be accomplished through a formalized plan, transparent practices, and outreach, complemented by the development of an internal Cultural Access Fund designed to provide complimentary access, staffing, and programming to the region’s many impactful community organizations.



# 3 | Build Community

## OBJECTIVE

Champion diversity, representation, and accessibility

Position VIFF as a cultural leader in the local community

## TACTIC

1. Develop a programming team that represents the communities VIFF seeks to serve\* (Y1-3)
2. Prioritize access, resources, and space for under- and mis-represented communities (Y1-3)
3. Develop a framework to support meaningful relationships with the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and other Indigenous peoples living in the region (Y1-3)
4. Implement structures to support IBPOC creators (Y1-3)
5. Educate staff and board on systemic racism, colonialism and best practices for enacting organizational change (Y1-3)
6. Formalize an accessibility strategy (Y2)

1. Craft a multi-year Community Engagement Plan (Y1-2)
2. Develop a Youth Engagement strategy, including a robust High School Program (Y1-3)
3. Share knowledge and other resources with arts and culture organizations province-wide (Y1-3)
4. Establish a fund to allow low-barrier access to VIFF Centre for cultural groups (Y2)
5. Increase co-presentations and partnerships with like-minded arts and culture organizations (Y2-3)

## OUTCOME

- Curatorial team with requisite knowledge, expertise and profile
- Diversification of local creative communities
- Relevant UNDRIP, Truth and Reconciliation calls to action incorporated into all areas of the organization
- VIFF is a safe and rewarding space for all staff, creators, and audience members
- Reduced accessibility barriers for majority of patrons
- Focused community development priorities
- Expanded Education department to develop future audiences and filmmakers
- Strengthened and mutually supportive ecosystem
- Meaningful engagement with new audiences and communities
- New avenues to diversify programming and enhance local relevancy



*Sometimes Always Never*, dir. Carl Hunter, VIFF 2019





# 3 | Build Community

\* All financial figures are estimates intended to indicate scale and impact of initiatives.

## INDICATORS

- Completed accessibility audit, combined with action plan
- VIFF Centre usage by community groups and partners increased by 20%
- Formalized Community Partnership structure
- Youth engagement (5-20 years old) increased by 200% (20 engagements in 2019)

## INVESTMENTS

- Consultation funds, honorariums, and hospitality for leaders and community members of Indigenous nations \$30,000
- Staff and board training in Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion practices, systemic racism, and accessibility \$30,000
- Accessibility investments (VIFF Centre & festival) \$20,000
- Cultural Access Fund \$50,000
- Youth Engagement programming and coordination \$95,000

## RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

- Cultural Access Fund philanthropic base \$50,000
- Increased annual Youth Engagement Program revenue \$130,000





VIFF can increase its presence and audience scope, and permanently cement its identity as the home of film in Western Canada.

## 4 | Expand Geographically

Shifting the festival online in 2020 allowed VIFF to reach audiences across the province for the first time. Additionally the opening film was simultaneously screened at 11 arthouse cinemas across British Columbia, initiating new partnerships and establishing key relationships, while demonstrating a demand for VIFF programming beyond Vancouver's city centre.

The success of the 2020 festival has inspired VIFF to expand beyond the confines of its historical footprint, into a province-wide presence. The City of Vancouver represents only 13% of the population of the province, while the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) makes up 51%. VIFF is currently only reaching a fraction of the population, despite there being no tangible market force preventing expansion. Through GVRD growth and the development of a province-wide network of arthouse cinemas, VIFF can increase its presence and audience scope, and permanently cement its identity as the home of film in Western Canada.

Operating at that scale offers the organization access to new audiences, new partnerships, increased public and private support, and a significantly larger role to play in the region's film exhibition ecosystem. Reaching a vastly expanded audience alone would be a strategic advantage, but the opportunities that will result in terms of increased relevance, revenue, and impact are undeniably compelling.



# 4 | Expand Geographically

## OBJECTIVE

Grow festival presence beyond downtown Vancouver

Help develop a province-wide network of independent film exhibitors

Strengthen regional stakeholder relationships

## TACTIC

1. Establish screening venues in neighbouring cities in the Lower Mainland (Y1-2)
2. Develop co-presentation partnership model for provincial festival venues (Y1-2)
3. Create activation opportunities and increased recognition for festival partners (Y2)

1. Establish year-round touring circuits (Y2)
2. Expansion of creative engagement and education to a wider, underserved audience (Y2)
3. Act as a regional representative for filmmakers and film sources (Y2-3)
4. Establish new connections with Indigenous communities throughout the province (Y2-3)

1. Improve relations with government officials on all three levels (Y1-3)
2. Participate in government, arts and culture advisory committees (Y2)
3. Help create province-wide independent cinema advocacy group (Y3)

## OUTCOME

- ➔ Increased festival ticket revenue
- ➔ Expanded membership and individual donor base
- ➔ Strengthened metrics for corporate sponsors
- ➔ Increased granting revenue through access to various untapped municipal funds

- ➔ Increased year-round earned revenue and operational funding
- ➔ Access to new contributed revenue sources within respective regions
- ➔ Improved exposure for Canadian films and filmmakers
- ➔ Enhanced reputation and brand recognition across the province
- ➔ Prioritized 'tour' access to Indigenous communities outside the Lower Mainland

- ➔ Greater access to government funding and intel
- ➔ Key influencer of policy development and sector investment
- ➔ Beneficial changes to consumer oversight regulations





*The Reason I Jump*, dir. Jerry Rothwell, VIFF 2020

# 4 | Expand Geographically

## INDICATORS

- GVRD audience expanded by 50%
- Provincial viewership expanded by 80%

## INVESTMENT

- Additional labour (FTE and contract) to service geographical expansion \$140,000
- Equipment acquisition for GVRD screenings \$160,000 (one-time)

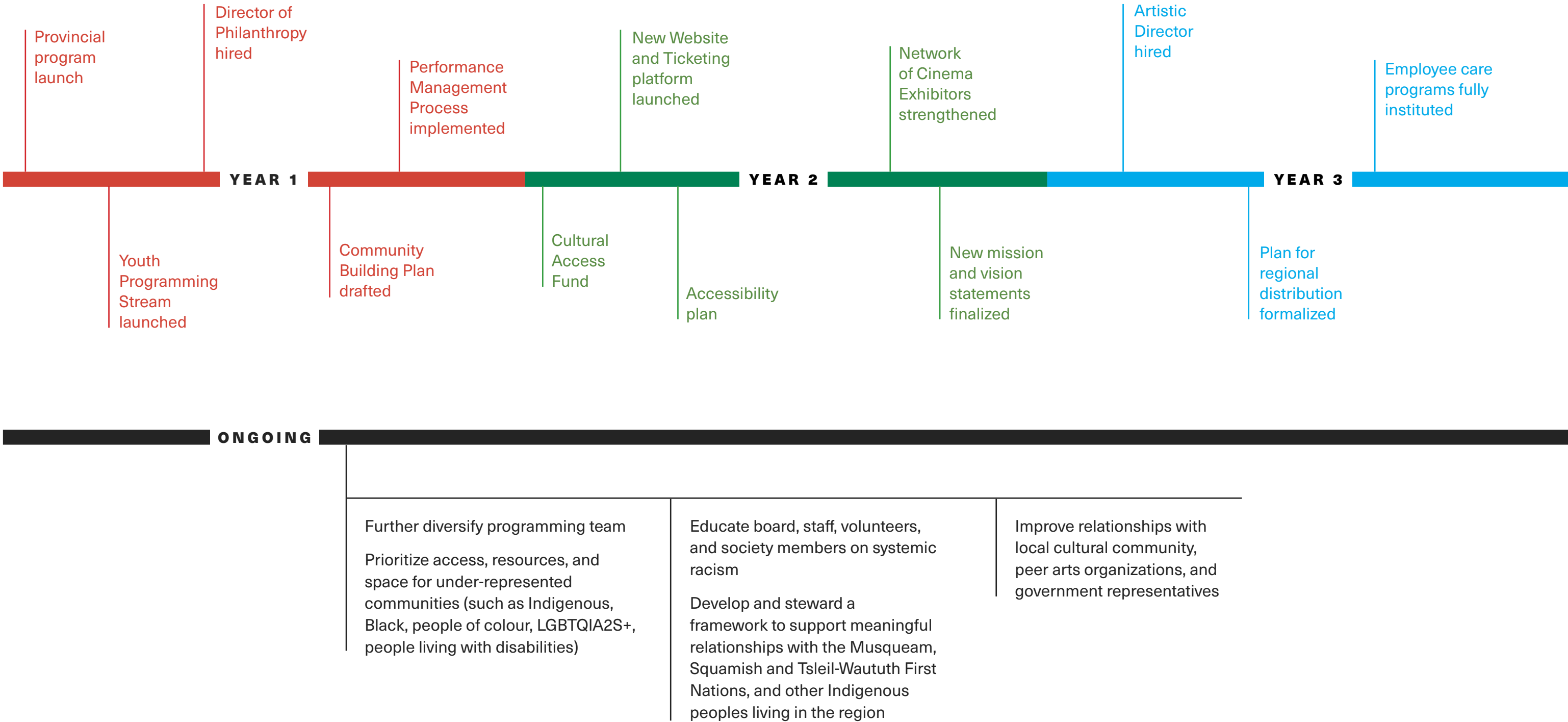
## RETURN ON INVESTMENTS

- Earned revenue (net) GVRD Screenings \$105,000
- Earned revenue (net) Provincial Screenings (festival and touring) \$80,000
- Increased Telefilm funding \$80,000
- Increased BC Gaming Funding \$150,000
- New municipal funding (GVRD) \$80,000
- Region specific support (film commission and tourism) \$40,000
- Increased Sponsorship with new provincial reach \$100,000

\* All financial figures are estimates intended to indicate scale and impact of initiatives.



# Timeline





# Conclusion

## What does success look like?

The priorities in this document reflect a synthesis of the learnings of the pandemic year, alongside the values and interests of the core staff, as they have evolved over VIFF’s long and proud history. The Strategic Plan balances internal calibration and external impact, with particular focus on community building, audience development, and revenue growth.

So, what will VIFF look like, once these objectives have been achieved?

- Resourced, efficient, relevant and sustainable organization
- An annual budget in excess of \$6m, driven by a healthier balance of increased:
  - » Earned revenue in the excess of \$2.5m
  - » Sponsorships and government funding in the excess of \$2.5m
  - » Philanthropic donations (corporate and individual) approaching \$1m
- Concentrated 11-day annual festival, that’s well respected locally, nationally, and internationally, and is uniquely representative of the Pacific Northwest and its peoples
- Diverse audiences connecting with representative programming and outreach activities
- Dedicated resources and access which support rewarding relationships with local Indigenous communities
- Diverse board and staff, with IBPOC representation throughout senior and core staff positions

- Regarded as a competitive employer, offering comprehensive employee benefits
- Respected as a cultural leader in Vancouver
- Driving force behind a provincial network of arthouse and independent cinemas
- Established brand across the province, programming for audiences in every corner of British Columbia

This Strategic Plan is considered a ‘living document’ and will be reviewed annually with the board of directors and senior staff to ensure continued alignment with a changing world and marketplace. Each annual planning cycle will be anchored by an Operations Plan that

By year three, VIFF will have matured into one of the province’s premier arts and culture entities

accounts for the various activities, initiatives, investments, and other key details needed to achieve the priorities as outlined.

By year three, VIFF will have matured into one of the province’s premier arts and culture entities.

Engaged in dynamic programming year-round culminating in an internationally renowned festival, the VIFF brand will be well-defined and fully representative of the region it serves. Education, youth engagement, cultural partnerships, and co-presentations will ensure VIFF’s impact is meaningful and lasting. This focus on community building will develop trust with cultural partners and their constituencies, which in turn will ensure that VIFF remains vital, relevant and sustainable for years to come.

