

SIA'S Equity Strategy Journey



How did we get here?

A timeline of our journey

- An inciting incident and a catalyst to change
- Recommendations Report requires an Equity Strategy by Paulina O'keefe Anthony Artistic Equity Consultant
- Our experience as racialized folks in the theatre industry
- The change we make needs to start at home
- In the words of one of the greats...



“

Michael said it best!

If you wanna make
the world a better
place take a look at
yourself and make
the change!





Iteration leads to innovation

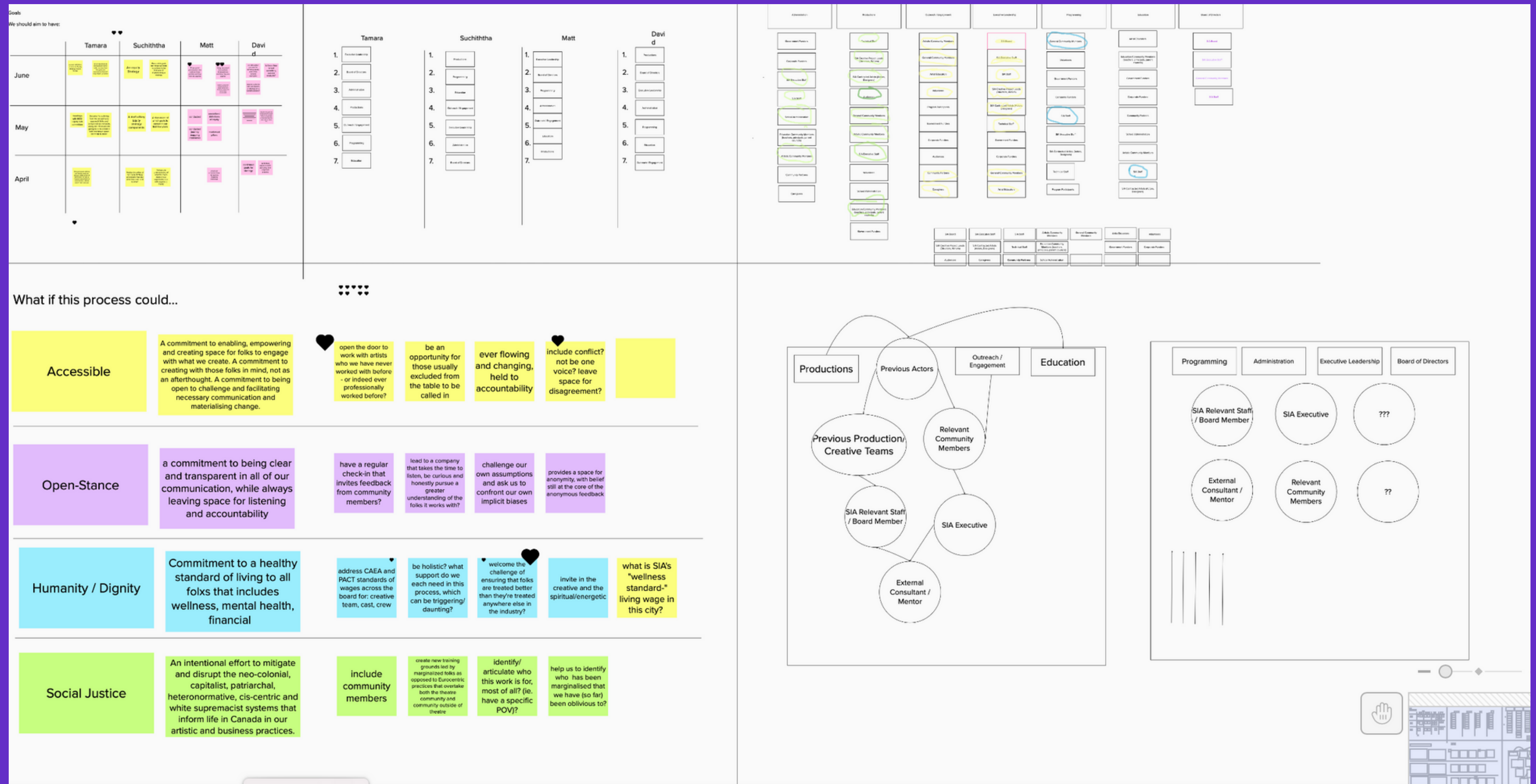
Our search for a modality

- Releasing perfection and how it was liberating
- Seeing this strategy as a prototype and allowing the process to be iterative



What our process looks like...

LEADING SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP →





Coming to the table with our own definitions of Equity



Acknowledging that systems have unfairly been structured for while male cis hetero able-bodied people, and making intentional system changes and disruptions to ensure all people living at various marginalized intersections in our society can access and bring their whole self into our spaces.

liberation	bias and favouritism	"coming to the table"	access to what they need
optimal selves			

A stepping stone towards liberation, not the final goal

Freedom from bias	All voices are included		
Acknowledging that systems have been unfairly structured	Disruptions	Freedom	

Freedom from bias and favoritism (including that wrapped in nepotism) that is fair and impartial to all those coming to the table. All voices are included, heard and acknowledged.

stepping stone towards liberation	acknowledging that systems have unfairly been structured	intentional system changes	
everyone in a space has access to what they need to experience their optimal selves			

The phenomenon where everyone in a space has access to what they need to experience their optimal selves specific to their oppression, lived reality, optics and all other relevant factors.

systems have unfairly been structured	intentional system changes and disruptions	various marginalized intersections	bring your whole self
a stepping stone	freedom from bias	fair and impartial	all voices included, heard, acknowledged at the table





Working Definition 1

LEADING SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP →

“

A stepping stone on the journey towards optimizing the human experience accomplished by challenging unfair systems and championing marginalized groups at a fair and impartial table where all voices are heard, acknowledged and empowered.





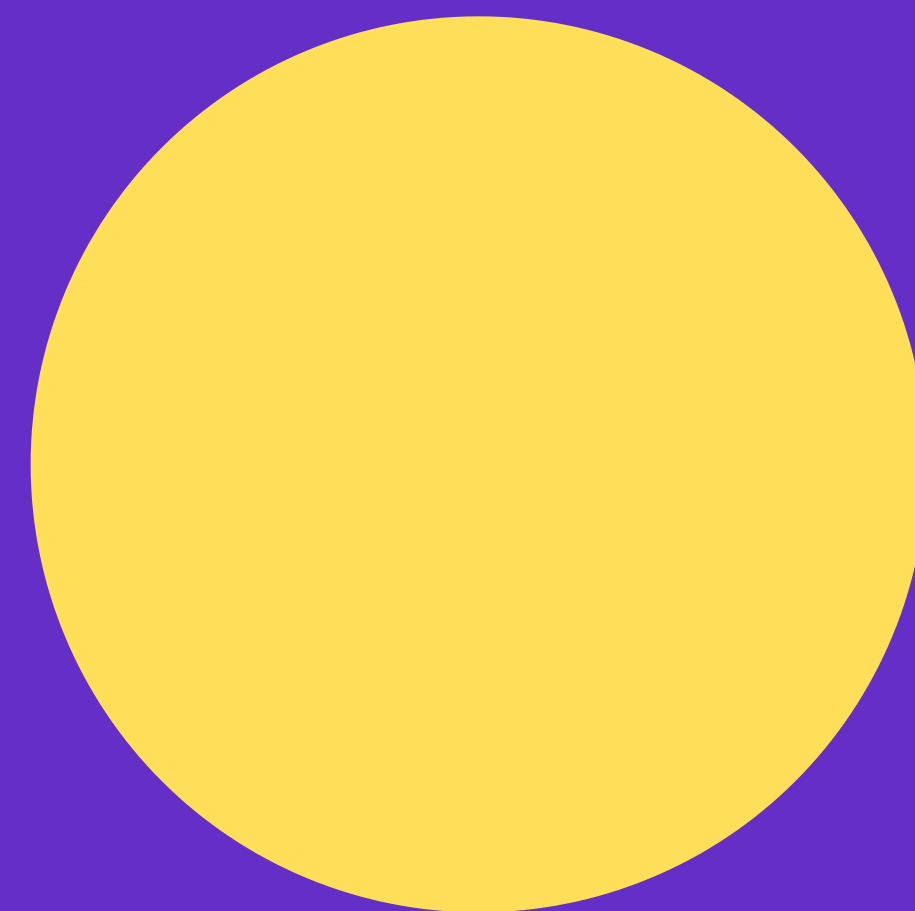
Working Definition 2

LEADING SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP



“

A process that disrupts the status quo through an acknowledgement of unfairly structured systems that gestures toward the possibilities of a future without inequities, and along the way develops the spaces for more people with various identities to engage





The pillars of Equity at SIA

What holds up Equity as we've defined it at SIA?



Accessibility

A commitment to enabling, empowering and creating spaces for folks to engage with what we create. A commitment to creating with those folks in mind, not as an afterthought. A commitment to being open to challenge and facilitate necessary communication and materializing change.



Open Stance Mindset

A commitment to being clear and transparent in all of our communication, while always leaving space for listening and accountability.



Empathy and Humanity

A commitment to a healthy standard of living to all folks, that includes wellness, mental health, and financial wellbeing.



Social Justice

An intentional effort to disrupt the neo-colonial capitalist patriarchal heteronormative cis-centric and white supremacist systems that inform life in Canada in our artistic and business practices.



Defining SIA

What are our organizations component parts?

- Administration
- Programming
- Outreach / Engagement
- Executive Leadership
- Education
- Board of Directors
- Production



Creating a Matrix



SIA - Audition/Rehearsal/Production Checklist

AUDITIONS

Accessibility	Y	N	Other
Have we offered ASL/Foreign Language Interpreters/Additional Support?			
Do we have a warm up room?			
Is the waiting area welcoming, warm (heated) and spacious?			
Is the audition space a creative space? Is the space distracting or focusing?			
Were the auditionees sent info two weeks before the audition?			
Were all audition breakdowns accessible and widely disseminated? (Including at non-traditional venues)			
Did the director feel they had sufficient time to evaluate and then finally select their cast?			
Are readers sufficiently prepared?			
Were the auditions structured as an open working session? (Non-prescriptive)			
Online auditions available?			
Did all auditionees receive meaningful engagement and feedback? Did we ask for their feedback?			
Did we host general auditions this year?			
Did we host an annual week of free workshops for Learning, Growth, Experience and Networking targeted at actors who are new to industry?			

Open Stance	Y	N	Other
Were CAEA + SIA Equity Statements in Every Posting?			
Did auditionees feel that expectations in the room were clearly articulated? What are our expectations? (This needs a list) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What material do we need them to prepare?• Have we told them who is in the room?• Have we told them how long they will have and how the audition will go (order of material? Redirect?)• Are "generals" standardized?• Have we articulated callback material and/or what the process of casting will be like?• Expectations re: off book?• Speak in their own voice, no additional voice work needed.			
Did we set and articulate clear boundaries for how much time we spend with each auditionee? And do we follow this?			
Was the minimum rate of pay articulated?			
Were auditionees informed of who would be in the room? (Including readers)			
Did we offer follow up/feedback and let them know?			
Did we ask for and receive feedback? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did they feel in the room?• Did they feel welcomed/judged in the room in the clothes they were wearing?• Did they feel that their comfort with Shakespeare was a barrier?• Did they feel able to surprise us/open to play?• Do you feel like you can answer this survey honestly?• Did we spark your curiosity about this project?			
Have we made space for questions? (And made sure that not having questions is			

Screenshot



Creating a Matrix

SIA - Audition/Rehearsal/Production Checklist

Dignity / Humanity	Y	N	Other
Did we follow up with everyone we brought in to audition?			
Did we offer a token of thanks/appreciation for the actor's time they took?			
Did we provide other avenues for participation with SIA?			
Did we honor the distinction between a person's individual identity and their racial optics? (Example "What are you?" question versus "How do you relate to XX themes/identities")			
Are actors provided with some freedom on what they bring as an audition piece? (inclusive of explicitly stating that we are not expecting monologues that match the age, race, gender identity of the character)			
Have identities of panelists been made available in advance? (ie. languages, beliefs, etc?)			
Did we invite actors to bring audition material that shows them in their best light / while providing show related materials as well?			
Is there opportunity for conversation in the audition room?			
Is timing articulated in advance of the audition?			
Is there a time-keeper in the room? Does the time-keeping respect the actor's focus, time and work (ie. no harsh alarms, checking watches)			
Are show expectations and risks clearly articulated in advance of the audition?			
Are comforts and amenities easily accessible in the waiting room (ie. water, coffee, blankets, etc)			
Does allotted time match the casting asks/			

Social Justice	Y	N	Other
Was 60% of the audition panel BIPOC?			
Was there a land acknowledgement made accessible and was it supported by articulated actions?			
Was the audition schedule / dance call not gender specific?			
Was there an accessible audition workshop / training for artists that face systemic barriers?			
Is there a social justice statement in plain language included in the audition breakdown?			
Were all audition time slots the same regardless of union status - in terms of length of time.			
Were we open to having our perception of the gender, race and sexual orientation of the role in question challenged by the interpretation of the actor.			
Were voices from a range of lived experiences able to contribute to the casting decision			
Did we make sure we did not ask any actors to play into racial stereotypes during the audition			
Did the audition meet our accessibility guidelines and protocols			
was the audition room layout conducive to the actors doing their best work, did it create a sense of non-hierarchism and equity and uphold our values of empathy and equity			



Key Elements

LEADING SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP →

Transparency

Creating a strategic revisioning section on our website where anyone can see updates on our process.



Diversity

- Our board is now 55 percent POC**
- Our permanent staff is now 75 percent POC**
- We now have an Equity Subcommittee on our Board of Directors to oversee development of our Equity Strategy**



Consistency

- We have found carving out regular time to work on this to be very helpful**
- We acknowledge that in every decision there is an opposite**
- Staying true to the spirit of Iteration**





Thank you!

LEADING SOCIAL JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP →

**We've learned so much on
this ride with you all!**

Most importantly we've learned...

***When in doubt
dance it out!!!***

