

# Building our Capacity

Annual Report 2017 - 2018

CAPACITY



Black Business Initiative



**Black Business Initiative**



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## Board of Directors' Statement

The annual report of the Black Business Initiative for the year ended March 31, 2018, is prepared to account for and report on our fiscal responsibilities, operating activities and achievements to government, community and the public and private sectors. This is our commitment to transparency in the planning and delivery of our services and strategic direction.

We acknowledge that this annual report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set for the reporting period.

It includes reports from the Society's Chair and CEO, a financial overview as well as a report on operations with both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Full audited financial statements are available on the BBI website.

## BBE Board of Directors

Cassandra Dorrington  
Chair

Cynthia Dorrington  
Secretary /Treasurer

Rustum Southwell  
Vice Chair, CEO (Interim)

Paul Walter  
Member

Joe Parris  
Member

David Eisnor  
Member

Deborah Windsor  
HR & Governance

Yemi Akindoju  
Audit and Risk

## MESSAGE FROM THE

# BBI Board of Directors



**Cynthia Dorrington**  
BBI Board Chair

**"The horizon leans forward / Offering you  
space to place new steps of change."**

**- Maya Angelou**

### BBI Board of Directors

**Cynthia Dorrington**  
Chair

**Yemi Akindoju**  
Treasurer

**Deborah Windsor**  
Member

**Ross Simmonds**  
Member

**April Howe**  
Member

**Burtley Francis**  
Member

**Elizabeth Cooke-Sumbu**  
Member

**Leslie Amegavie**  
NSBI Resource

**Matthew Johnson**  
Resource Member

**S.I. Rustum Southwell**  
CEO (Interim)/ Ex-Officio

**Charles Sheppard**  
Member (January 2018)

After spending 16 years working at one organization, I began to seek change. While unsure of what change and in which capacity, I began serving on a number of local organization's boards: the Halifax Corwallis Progress Club, the Greater Halifax Partnership, the Halifax Chamber Commerce and, of course, the Black Business Initiative.

Throughout my time as a member of the BBI's Board of Directors, and the four past years spent as Board Chair, it is my great hope that my desire to support a successful and vibrant African Nova Scotian business community was felt by all members of the business community we touched – be it directly or indirectly – or through osmosis.

The success of the BBI and Black businesses in Nova Scotia has never been about the personal legacy of Cynthia Dorrington, but the lasting legacy of those who came before me and bulldozed paths where none existed; the perseverance of those with whom I stood shoulder to shoulder; and the persistence of young entrepreneurs who see that the only way for all of us to move forward is by reaching back to grab the hands of those who are at risk of being left behind.

The African Nova Scotian business community is intricately woven into the fabric of this province and, as a result of the work of the staff of the BBI who offer not just the right mix of skills, but also strength in skill delivery, BBI's partners are coming online stronger and more prepared than ever before.

Because of a robust and comprehensive strategic plan, we know that we're offering the right mix of programs that Black businesses need to thrive. It is through this work that we realized that to continue to serve our community effectively, we need to extend our expertise to other minority communities in the province – to take the tools we've used to establish the African Nova Scotian business community and edit, personalize and expand them. It's forever in our best interest that when we push the yardstick forward for our community that we do what we can to establish and pull it forward for another minority or Indigenous group. Opportunity is not created in a vacuum and our success is the catalyst for theirs.

As my time as Board Chair for the Black Business Initiative draws to a close, it is with great pleasure that I witness our community's runway continuing to grow longer: for there to be even more space for great ideas to land and businesses to launch to new heights. I am eager to watch what will come to pass as more young people step into the entrepreneurial spotlight and how their pattern will be further woven into the community's legacy.

I have spent the last four years on a rollercoaster. My tenure has been a thrill-ride, an experience for which I will always be grateful. My time as Board Chair has left an imprint on how I think and how I run my own business and has shaped me into a successful businesswoman. Thank you for allowing me to play a small role in fostering a strong, vibrant African Nova Scotian-led economy.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Dorrington'.

Cynthia Dorrington



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**“Changing lives by enabling economic independence” will become the clarion call for the next twenty years.**

**Rustum Southwell**  
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)

At the Black Business Initiative we have lived and stayed focused on our original vision of a “Dynamic and Vibrant Black presence within the Nova Scotia business community” for the last two decades. For me “Changing lives by enabling economic independence” will become the clarion call for the next twenty years. The change will add to the many success stories, some known and others not yet told, of accomplishments throughout the years.

Our journey forward will be led by an accomplished staff team, staged and ready to move the needle in all aspects of the business spectrum. For Black business owners and economic development in the wider Black community as a whole, the BBI will assemble the strategies and resources to get us more involved in the enrichment of the Nova Scotian economy.

We are seeing a renewed energy at the BBI since the reintroduction of the Business Summit in 2017. This conference opened the door to significant partnership opportunities with institutions such as Dalhousie University and corporations like Stewart McKelvey Law.

We retooled the organization. We engaged Knightsbridge Robertson Surrette to revise our organizational chart and job descriptions to make us more efficient and impactful. And, we hired the right people for the right roles. BBI will continue to invest in our staff team.

We are working better with our funders. For over twenty years, we have enjoyed a symbiotic and productive relationship with both levels of Government, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) on behalf of the federal government and Department of Business, Labour and Advanced Education on behalf of the provincial government. Because we are still relevant the relationship will get stronger.

We are using our entrepreneurial model to build capacity within our community, in particular, our youth. Consequently, we have redoubled our efforts to ensure that our youth will not fall behind in driving the new innovative and technologically-savvy economy. To that end our entrepreneurial focus will build on past successes of the Business is Jammin’ program and introduce youth to coding, architecture, science and other necessary business skills.

It is important for us to serve you the best we can and teach our clients the roadmap to business success. We cannot do this without our volunteer board along with our staff team past and present. Finally, we say thank you to Cynthia Dorrington for her years of leadership at the helm of BBI Board. We are better because of her service.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rustum Southwell'.

Rustum Southwell

## BBI 2017-18 Staff

**S.I. Rustum Southwell**  
CEO (Interim)

**Ayo Makanjuola**  
Director Corporate Services

**Laurissa Manning**  
Director, Stakeholder &  
Community Relations

**Njabulo Nkala**, Director  
Innovation and Growth

**Rodger Smith**  
Entrepreneurial Engagement  
Manager

**Paul Rukidi**  
Entrepreneurial Engagement  
Manager

**Tracey Williams**  
BIJ Youth Coordinator

**Otni Chinenere**  
Office Administrator

**Emma Beukema**  
Special Projects

**Victoria Lake**  
Accounting Assistant  
(April 2018)

**Emmanuel Itiveh**  
Director, Entrepreneurship  
(March 2018)

**Akira McQuay**  
Training Manager  
(March 2018)

**Amber Grosse**  
BIJ Coordinator  
(January 2018)

**Donna Colley-Howe**  
Executive Secretary  
(August 2017)

## BOARD REPORT

# BBCIFL

## Black Business Community Investment Fund Limited

At the fifteenth-year anniversary, BBCIFL remains unwavering in its mandate to help grow Black-owned businesses in Nova Scotia. We aim to be the foremost vehicle for the capitalization of businesses, ensuring they have adequate access to good funding sources that enable them to build capacity and create wealth in the community. Attainment of this ideal rests entirely on our ability to transform BBCIFL in becoming more relevant in the current business environment, and to our community of shareholders who provide the capital that we invest.



### BBCIFL Board Members:

David Eisnor, Chair

Sylvia Parris, Secretary

Greg Nazaire, Treasurer

Ann Divine, Member

Greg Browning, Member

Paul Walter, Member

Joseph Parris, Member

Andrea Jackson, Member

Rustum Southwell, Member

Miranda Mavhunga, Member

Njabulo Nkala, Member

As part of the critical next step, the BBCIFL Board continues to pursue new partnerships and innovative ways to create growth, stability and long-term sustenance of BBCIFL. With urgency and resolve, we are drawing upon multiple sources and engaging in research to inform how we proceed.

While we will continue to serve the Black business community, we propose to expand our investor pool beyond the traditional boundaries. Growing the shareholder base will create a larger pool of investment funds, empowering us to undertake bigger, more profitable ventures, thereby creating better returns for shareholders. At the same time, we are continuing to assess the strength and viability of existing investments with the help of Board committees set up for that purpose, aiming to maximize outcomes for the fund's shareholders.

We remain open for business throughout this process, and will continue to seek viable opportunities for investment. We are also contemplating a new share offering for a single, robust investment opportunity. Stay tuned!

## BOARD REPORT

# BBC

## Black Business Consulting

The theme of BBI's consulting arm for 2017 was "Expanding Our Reach."

This was a year of new partnerships and exploring how we can work to create new opportunities. BBI had the opportunity through the Department of Energy to attend the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC 2017) in May in Houston, Texas. We sent a young consultant specialized in the energy sector who made connections with companies in the Oil & Gas sector. As a result of these connections, we created a partnership with an offshore catering company looking to hire and train African Nova Scotians to work offshore.

Representation in the supply chain is another facet of expanding the reach of our Black Businesses. BBI held the Supplier Diversity conference in collaboration with NSBI, CAMSC, CWB and ISANS. This full day event consisted of workshops in the morning and roundtable B2B meetings in the afternoon with corporate procurement specialists.

It's no secret that BBI has always been able to bring in exciting speakers for our summits. In 2017 we took this to the next level by partnering with Ascendant Global to create a CEO branding company and speakers bureau.



### BBC Board Members

Paul Walter, Chair

Rustum Southwell, CEO (Interim), Vice Chair

Carlo Simmons, Member

Milton Williams, Member

Barbara Miller-Manning, Member

Nicole Johnson-Morrison, Member

Dr. Mary Kilfoil, Member

Saeed El-Darahali, Member

## BOARD REPORT

# BIJ

## Business is Jammin'



As part of the overall re-branding of the BBI, Business is Jammin' revealed its new logo and started on the path to creating more meaningful programs for the youth we serve.

BIJ ran summer camps across the province to teach youth about entrepreneurship and build leadership skills. We contributed to youth employment by hiring students entering university to facilitate these camps. Our most successful camp was held in Cape Breton in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club where we had a whopping 150 kids out over the course of the camps.



### BIJ Board Members:

Joseph Parris, Chair

Rustum Southwell, CEO (Interim), Vice-Chair

Jocelyn Dorrington, Member

Bruce Johnson, Member

Tracey Thomas, Member

Keisha Jefferies, Member

Terry Dixon, Member

Samantha Parris, Member

BIJ ran a community garden this past year. North Preston Greenhands was a project funded by the United Way, where youth from the community were taught to plant and take care of a garden. They learned how to create healthy meals and even sell their produce at Shop on Spring Garden, our annual showcase of local African Nova Scotian business.

BIJ held its 8th Annual Charity Golf Tournament in September. This fundraising event ensures we can continue to create and run programs that expose youth to the business of entrepreneurship.

The year kicked off with our ever-popular school program – Role Models on the Road. The BIJ team visited schools from elementary to high school bringing with them a panel of entrepreneurs, business people and risk takers who shared their experiences with the youth. These interactive sessions created a dialogue and encouraged youth to think ahead and plan for the future.







## Building our Capacity

### Bridget Williams

When Bridget Williams enrolled in BBI's Financial Management training she was managing her lifestyle blog and just trying to get by. Through the training Bridget gained valuable insight to the financial aspect of running a business. She also met mentors who encouraged her to pursue a career that capitalized on her talents as a writer and speaker.

Today, Bridget is the proud owner of Adjusting Your Life Style Frugal Spending. She is a published author, trainer, mentor and speaker. She has been recognized by the Alignable: The Small Business Network, and the Global Society of Empowered Women. Bridget credits her present knowledge and success with BBI's outstanding instructors and programs and the ongoing support she has received.

### Juanita Peters

Juanita Peters had previous experience running a small business but needed help ironing out the finer details. In BBI's Financial Management training she learned the essentials of business growth and management.

The skills she gained at BBI have been instrumental to her work as the General Manager of the Africville Museum. She has also used what she learned in the program to further her career as a playwright, producer and filmmaker. Juanita considers her experience with the BBI as a priceless investment in her professional and personal life.

Thanks to the professional training characterized by tailored classes, relatable content and proficient instructors, these dynamic women are blazing new trails while challenging others to take advantage of the high-quality programs that BBI provides.

APRIL 1, 2017 - MARCH 31, 2018

# Financial Overview

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year ended March 31	2018	2017
Total Revenue	\$ 994,056	\$ 1,303,829
Total Expenses	1,160,507	1,107,633
Excess of revenues over expenses before amortization and other operating expenses	(166,451)	196,196
Amortization and other operating expenses	8,301	6,545
Contributions from operations	(174,752)	189,651
Investment income	3,521	5,226
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ (171,231)	\$ 194,877

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

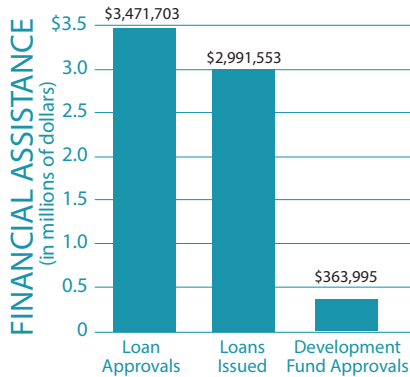
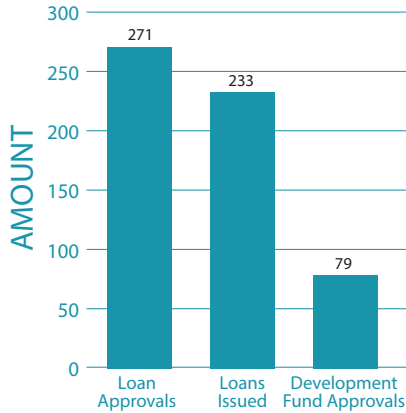
As on March 31	2018	2017
Total assets	\$ 968,933	\$ 1,324,957
Liabilities	146,124	330,917
<b>Net assets</b>		
Investment in capital assets	26,989	24,855
Internally restricted net assets	450,000	450,000
Unrestricted net assets	345,820	519,185
Total Liabilities	\$ 822,809	994,040
	\$ 968,933	\$ 1,324,957

Full audited financial statements are available at the BBI website.

# BBI Loans

(all information since 1996)

## PORTFOLIO AUTHORIZATION

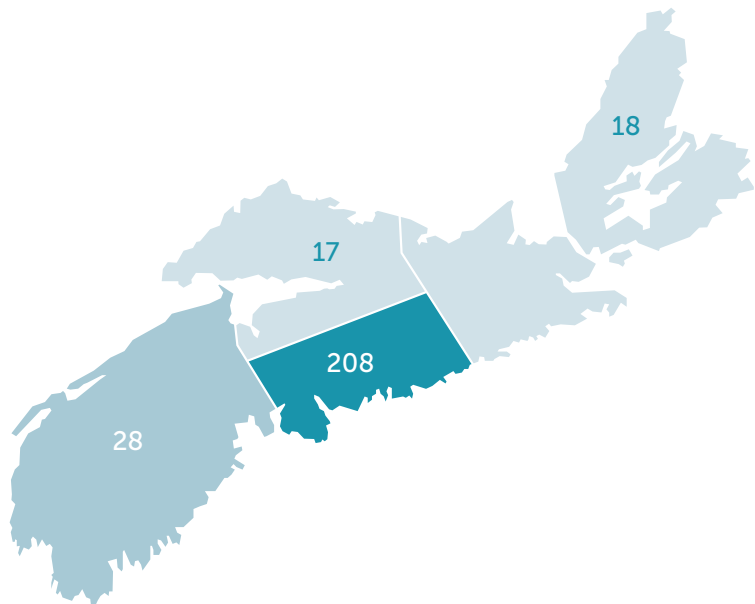


## NUMBER OF LOANS BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Metro	208
North	18
Central	17
South	28

## LOAN DISTRIBUTION BY SECTOR

Loan Distribution	Number of Loans Approved	Percentage of Loans Approved
Automotive	13	5%
Barbershop/Hair Salon	15	6%
Construction/Contracting	34	13%
Convenience Store	7	3%
Courier	3	1%
Entertainment	11	4%
Environment/Recycling	13	5%
Event Planning	2	1%
Exports	5	2%
Fashion Consultant	2	1%
Film/Photography	8	3%
Fitness Sports/Dance	10	4%
Manufacturing	6	2%
Professional Services	24	9%
Publishing	2	1%
Restaurant/Food	31	11%
Retail/Bookstore	2	1%
Retail/Clothing	15	6%
Tailoring	11	4%
Tourism	4	1%
Transportation	8	3%
Wholesale	8	3%
Other	37	14%
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>100%</b>





## Building Global Connections

Ten years ago, Catharine Liaison could not have imagined where her love of Spanish and proficiency in language could have taken her. She was living in Mexico, where she ran a part-time language services business. She had learned the power of communicating with people in their own language but had not managed to harness this power into a full-time career.

After completing her master's degree and starting a family, Catharine moved to Halifax in 2017. Still committed to growing her language services into a business, she enrolled in two classes with the BBI - Business Planning and Financial Management. These classes helped her understand the mechanics of running a small business and were instrumental in turning her part-time hobby into a full-time career.

Today, Catharine is the proud owner of Oasis Language Solutions, providing certified translations, interpretation, writing and editing services in Spanish and English. Her business spans the legal, medical, technical, immigration and military fields and extends to North America, Latin America and the UK. Working with the BBI helped her increase her income, expand her reach, and set her "on the right path to ensure continued growth in a managed and responsible way."

Outside of work, Catharine serves on the board of the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Nova Scotia. Her next endeavour is to begin blogging, and she hopes to become a member of the standing order for Canada's Border Services and immigration agencies. She credits her confidence and success with BBI's "life-changing" courses, networking events and continued support, all of which she describes as a "wonderful, wonderful experience."





## Building New Opportunities

When Dennis Mbeba and his partner Melissa moved to Halifax, they had no idea what life would bring. Dennis had no job lined up and they were unfamiliar with any opportunities available in this new city. They wanted to use Melissa's training and experience as a pastry chef to start a dessert business but were apprehensive at the challenge of starting a new business in a new community. With their passion, determination, and a little help from the BBI, they were able to turn their idea into a career.

BBI provided Dennis and Melissa with financial and promotional assistance and helped get the local community talking about their desserts. BBI also welcomed them into places where they could gain exposure to the wider business community and to new clients.

Today, Dennis and Melissa are co-owners of Delectable Desserts Inc., a wholesale and retail dessert company based in Burnside. The company is positioned to become a major producer of fresh wholesale and retail desserts in the region. They remain grateful to BBI for being supportive of their idea from its inception and providing them with the tools they needed to reach their full potential. They encourage anyone dreaming about becoming business owners to "just go for it!"



## Building Information Networks

East Preston native Tyson Tolliver is passionate about preserving and promoting African Nova Scotian culture. Nine years ago, Tyson began researching African Nova Scotian heritage and history and was disappointed to find that the information available was often scarce, inaccurate, or non-existent. He resolved to address this gap in information and began spending his own time and money travelling the province and conducting research.

With BBI's guidance and connections, Tyson enrolled in the Volta Academy, a program that teaches entrepreneurs in information technology how to grow their start-ups. With BBI and Volta's help, Tyson has founded the African Nova Scotian Directory, a website and app that acts as a platform for African Nova Scotian data, history and heritage. He hopes to continue to grow the directory into a valuable resource for African Nova Scotians looking to learn more about their communities.

Tyson eagerly anticipates the directory's formal launch to the public. Looking into the future, he envisions the directory as a large-scale platform where all Canadians can share information about their communities. Tyson is confident that the connections he has made at the BBI and his knowledge and experience will contribute to a shift in Canadian culture where people feel more connected to both their neighbours and their cultural history.





## Building a Diverse Workforce

When Charles Mmoloke left Botswana to study at Dalhousie, he was a brilliant young student looking forward to studying Civil Engineering in a new country. However, shortly after arriving in Halifax he lost his funding and was forced to consider other options. He found work as a hotel dishwasher, but for several years continued to dream of going back to school. His chance came in 2010 when he signed up for BBI's Constructing the Future program.

With BBI's guidance Charles resolved to enroll in NSCC's Civil Engineering Technician program, gain experience in the industry and then pursue a bachelor's degree. After graduating from NSCC in 2012, Charles worked as an engineering technician, and with the support of his job, received time off to study at Dalhousie University.

In May 2018, Charles realized his dream and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. Looking back, he believes the engagement with BBI was pivotal to his success. According to Charles, without the boost in confidence and determination he gained working with BBI, he might still be washing dishes.

Charles plans to use his experiences to inspire and mentor others. He wants to encourage anyone thinking of returning to school, starting a business, or going for a promotion to capitalize on any opportunity available and make their dreams a reality. As for his own dreams, Charles continues to work as a civil engineering trainee with his sights set on becoming a professional engineer.

# Making an Impact

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One of the most important ways BBI builds capacity is through our staff and board members. We are proud to attract talented and innovative people who make significant contributions to the community both during their time with BBI and in their subsequent endeavours.

**Tracey Thomas**

**Black Business Initiative**



**Funmi Joseph**

**Leah Jones**

**Jill Provoe**

**Mahogany Lucas O'Keeffe**

**Sheldon States**

## BBI ALUMNI

### **LEAH JONES**

**BIJ Summer Coordinator**

McMaster University, Med-school Residency  
in Family Medicine.

### **JILL PROVOE**

**Training Associate**

Dean, School of Access NSCC

### **FUNMI JOSEPH**

**Training Department Director**

Manager, Community Economic Development  
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

### **SHELDON STATES**

**Regional Business Development Manager**

Vice Principal, West Hants Middle School

### **TRACEY THOMAS**

**Director of Client Development**

Senior Policy Analyst, African Nova Scotian Affairs

### **MAHOGANY LUCAS O'KEIFFE**

**Training Associate**

Education Officer, Nova Scotia Human Rights  
Commission



Cynthia Dorrington

Ross Simmonds

April Howe

Hector Jacques

Candace Thomas



## BBI BOARD

### ROSS SIMMONDS

**BBI Board Member-Currently**  
**BIJ Participant**

Serial Entrepreneur,  
Hustle and Grind, Foundation Marketing,  
Member, Board of Directors, Volta Labs,  
Member, Board of Trustees, Phoenix Youth

### APRIL HOWE

**BBI Board Member-Currently**

Executive Director, People and Culture, Nova Scotia  
Public Commission  
Member, Board of Directors, Halifax Partnership  
Member, Board of Directors, United Way  
Member, Board of Trustees, IWK Foundation

### HECTOR JACQUES

**First BBI Board Chair, 1997**

Former co-founder and CEO of Jacques  
Whitford Group,  
CEO, Halipharms Holdings Ltd  
Chair, Halifax Port Authority  
2001 Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame Inductee,  
2007 officer of the Order of Canada.

### CANDACE THOMAS

**BBI Board Member, 2014**

Partner, Stewart McKelvey  
Member, Board of Governors, Dalhousie University  
Member, Board of Governors, Sacred Heart School  
of Halifax  
Member, Board of Directors, East Preston  
Empowerment Academy Society

### CYNTHIA DORRINGTON

**BBI Board Chair-Currently**

President, Vale & Associates Human Resource  
Management and Consulting Inc  
Principal Partner, Global Professional Services  
International  
1st African Nova Scotia Chair of the Halifax Chamber  
of Commerce  
Commissioner, Human Rights Commission,  
Nova Scotia

# Purpose



## CHANGING LIVES BY ENABLING ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE





**Black Business Initiative**



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