

## Parminder Vir OBE

Parminder Vir has dedicated her career to positively impact and transform lives through her work in philanthropy, film and television production, arts and culture, entrepreneurship, and investment funding. Throughout her multifaceted career she has put her skills and expertise in the service of the work she cares passionately about, and the different communities represented in the work. She is an inspirational leader, who has excelled, not just in one field, but many. Passion, vision, integrity, tenacity, and curiosity are qualities that lie at the heart of her achievements.

She served as the CEO of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, Africa's leading philanthropic organisation based in Lagos, Nigeria from April 2014 to April 2019. She brought her unique mix of skills, talent, and imagination to design, develop, and launch one of the most ambitious entrepreneurship programmes on the continent - the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme, a 10-year, \$100 million commitment to identify, train, mentor, and fund 10,000 entrepreneurs from across the continent. Under her five-year leadership, the Foundation has cemented its role as the principal advocate for African entrepreneurship, empowering thousands on their path to economic and social transformation.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Parminder has enjoyed a distinguished career, spanning two decades, as an awarding winning film and television producer with BBC and Carlton Television, and as the CEO of her independent production company, Formation Films. Parminder's desire to make films was born out of a passion for storytelling. From 1986 to 2004, she generated a body of work that challenged the mainstream of film and broadcast media to open itself up to perspectives that emerge from the margins, where cultural innovation so often begins. She expressed these sentiments in a defining statement about the highly regarded 1992 film, she produced *Algeria: Women at War*: *"There are many truths, just as there are many faiths and many voices. The role of film and media is to respond to these different voices. My work is to present the truth from places that are not recognised"*.

In 2000, UK ethnic audiences were deserting mainstream television. Parminder challenged the UK film and broadcast industry to adapt or become increasingly irrelevant to modern multicultural Britain. She developed and implemented the business case for cultural diversity as a commercial opportunity for the UK film and broadcast industry. This led to the formation of the Cultural Diversity Network, an alliance of UK broadcasters and film industry committed to increasing the range and diversity of talent on and behind the screen. In 2005, she consulted with the UK mainstream arts, cultural, theatre, sports and media organisations faced with the same challenges to help design and implement their cultural diversity strategies. The initiatives achieved diversity facelift but the challenge for institutional transformation continues.

In 2006, Parminder moved from film and television production to develop her expertise in film and media finance while manager of Ingenious World Cinema Fund, investing in content originating from the World's emerging economies. She sourced single film projects, structured, and negotiated the financing of two international film slates valued at £40 million and introduced a new investor base to the company, including high net worth individuals. She represented the company as a speaker at international media conferences across the emerging markets and the developed world. In 2008, she joined Goldcrest Films as non-executive director, where she advised on the investment of a £20m capital fund which included investments in Oscar-winning and critically acclaimed feature films.

In 2008, Parminder founded PVL Media Emerging Markets, and from 2008 to 2013, she consulted with companies, entrepreneurs, governments, multilateral development organisations, corporates and investors looking to access the emerging markets for business opportunities. The implementation of her international business strategies helped secure global business partnerships between the SMEs in the UK with India, Africa, and the Middle East.

In recognition of her ground-breaking work in the film and television industry as an award-winning producer and campaigner for equality, Parminder was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Queen's birthday honours list in June 2002.

Parminder has extensive board room experience. She served as the founding Board Director of UK Film Council from 1999 to 2005. She contributed to the development and implementation of its international strategy which embraced the film industries of emerging markets through new co-production treaties with India, South Africa, Morocco, and China. She played a pivotal role in ensuring that equality and diversity commitments were fully integrated into every aspect of the organisation's activities.

From 2006- 2011 Parminder served as non-executive director at Department for Culture, Media, and Sports (DCMS), under the leadership of the late Dame Tessa Jowell DBE MP. She made significant contributions to the overall strategy, policy, effective management of the Department and key programme areas including the creative economy, philanthropy, international strategy, equality, and diversity. She brought genuine external challenge, and new thinking on how DCMS could support the more commercial elements of the creative industries, through exports.

Parminder began her career in 1979 in Arts Administration working with Minority Arts Advisory Service and Commonwealth Institute where she programmed the first Festival of Black American Independent Cinema. In 1982, the Scarman Report, following the 1981 civil disturbance, highlighted the cultural marginalisation of the UK's ethnic minorities, and forced a review of funding and cultural policy towards black and ethnic minority arts practitioners. Parminder was appointed to head the Race Equality Unit in the Arts and Recreation Department of the Greater London Council. She managed a grant aid programme, valued at over £4 million, funding a wide range of ethnic minority artists and organisation, many of who are internationally renowned today. She established policy initiatives for the development of minority arts; created training schemes in arts administration attached to mainstream arts organisations for ethnic minorities; and lobbied for the representation of ethnic minorities on the bodies of the major arts organisations in the UK.

Parminder was born in rural Punjab, India. Her Father was a primary school teacher, who became a voucher migrant to England in 1963, leaving behind his wife and three daughters. Two years later, having never left her village, at the age of 10 and not speaking a word of English, Parminder found herself on a train and then a plane to England!

She is married to Professor Julian Henriques, of Jamaican heritage, a distinguished teacher, writer, and award-winning film director. They have two daughters: Mala Henriques who lives in Medellin, Colombia working with Impact Hub, supporting social entrepreneurs. Anuradha Henriques lives in London and works for Fable Pictures as production and development assistant. She is the co-founder of Skin Deep Race+Culture, a London-based multimedia platform which works with new artistic talent to amplify discussions of race, culture and politics through print, film, and live events.