



Help us to equip The New Albany

Mr. John Buston,
Grants Officer,
Room 684,
County Hall,
London, S.E.1.

25th January, 1984.

Dear John,

Please find enclosed a copy of the Community Video Distribution Study proposed, for the Community Arts Sub-Committee.

There are a number of ways in which the study relates, and will be of benefit to, the Greater London Region. London groups constitute around half of the membership of the committee that is managing the study. (Since the proposal was drawn up it has been joined by London Video Arts, who will be able to contribute their knowledge of video distribution to the group). The London-weighted Membership of the committee reflects the concentration of community-based and independent video production in the capital: Consequently there is a greater need here, in proportion to the rest of the country, for the work on distribution proposed in the study to be done. Also, London as the capital city and a Communications Centre, would be the most likely site for any future development in Video Distribution, which might emerge from the study, whether it involves collaboration with existing groups or an independent initiative.

Finally, though the research programme has not been finalised yet, we are planning to do a couple of regional studies in depth, as well as getting the overall national picture. Clearly, London would be one of regions we would look at, because of the concentration of work here.

The funding situation is as follows:

Gulbenkian Foundation.....	£7,500 (secured)
British Film Institute.....	1,000 (secured)
Channel Four.....	1,000 (secured)
G.L.A.A. (B.I.F.).....	2,000 (applied for)

Consequently we would like to apply to the G.L.C. for £3,500. We would have a strong indication of GLAA's intentions within the next few days (though no definite answer until the end of February). If we are successful with them and the Community Arts Sub-Committee we would have reached our budget goal. If not, both Channel Four and the B.F.I. have said that we can go back to them in the new financial year, but haven't specifically committed themselves.

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We at Albany Video are administering the project for the next few weeks, until workers are appointed and its properly set up. So should the G.L.C. give us a grant, it should be made payable to "Deptford Fund / Video A/C"

Please ring me if you have any enquiries about any of this. See you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Downunt
For the Community Video Distribution Study.

Enc.

c.c. Nick Garnham.
 Alan Tomkins.
 Liz Rhodes,
 Lorraine Leeson.
 Simon Blanchard.

Community Video Distribution: A Proposal

WE ARE SEEKING FUNDING FOR A SIX MONTH INTENSIVE STUDY INTO THE DISTRIBUTION (BOTH ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL) OF COMMUNITY AND INDEPENDENT VIDEO WORK IN GREAT BRITAIN, TO PROVIDE BOTH A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF WHAT EXISTS NOW, AND SPECIFIC, WELL RESEARCHED OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

THE ORIGINS OF THIS PROPOSAL

At almost every gathering of community based video workers, and with increasing urgency over the last 2 or 3 years, the area of tape distribution has been identified as a priority. In 1979, the London Community Video Workers Collective published a "National Directory of Videotapes". Subsequent years saw an enormous increase in the availability of domestic playback equipment, and a number of proposals (including Ordonez/Nichols (1981), Concord Films (1982), Film Workshop Trust (1982), and Annares Co-operative (1983)), for distribution schemes, which have met with interest, but no concrete support from funding bodies. At the same time, a large number of groups have produced tapes which have found an audience nationally, largely through the promotion and distribution work put in by the groups themselves. Two groups (Tower Hamlets Arts Project and Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre) have started to look at distributing video through Community Bookshops, and "Labour Research" have expressed an interest in the field.

At the Community-based Video Conference in Liverpool in March of this year, there was a workshop on distribution. As well as sharing information on the current situation, the workshop successfully proposed to the Conference as a whole that a group be set up to fundraise for a Distribution Feasibility Study. This proposal is the work of that group. Its members are drawn from the following organisations:

- Cardiff Video Workshop.
- Jubilee Community Arts, West Midlands.
- Nottingham Video Project.
- Birmingham Trades Union Resource Centre.
- Ipswich Film & Video Workshop.
- Film Workshop Trust, Edinburgh.

From London:

Annates Co-operative.
 Action Space.
 Gay Video Project.
 Albany Video.
 Oval Video.
 Tower Hamlets Arts Project.
 West London Media Workshop.

THE NEED FOR A STUDY

This group so far has reached 4 main conclusions;

1. Community-based Video groups and producers do not have the time or resources to explore the full distribution potential of their tapes themselves.
2. The way to more effective distribution of Community-based Video is promotion; finding new audiences and supporting and expanding the networks that already exist.
3. To develop distribution effectively we need more information, on both audiences, available tapes, and financial and technical logistics.
4. In the light of the above, we need to set up a short but intensive feasibility study, to gather information and present a range of viable options for future development.

THE CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

We intend that the study be carried out by two self employed workers on a six month contract. The project would be managed by a Committee Representative of the group making this proposal, who would meet once a month to supervise and support the workers. On completion of the study we would call a meeting of interested parties to present and discuss its findings.

It is planned that this study would produce information on the following items:

1. Number & Type of Tapes Available for Distribution

Information on what tapes production groups have for wider distribution. Their quality, availability, and potential audience.

2. Existing Schemes

A study of existing Community Distribution Schemes looking at the range of issues covered, the geographical area serviced, structure of distribution system and its limitations. Also, how larger organisations such as Concord Films, the ILEA and The Other Cinema run their distribution.

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3. Audiences

- i) To look at existing audiences for community tapes, how they use tapes, what extra information these audiences need and how they could be better serviced.
- ii) To seek out new audiences for video, by contacting national youth/community/social work groups and umbrella organisations, promoting existing video tapes and discussing these organisations needs with them.

4. Legal Structures

Information about distribution contracts and copyright law.

Having collated this information it is proposed that the researchers would then look at the feasibility of a range of distribution schemes.

These may include;

1. A national distribution and marketing scheme for community video tapes. This would include estimated turnover needed to break even, information on expected tape life, need for equipment such as dubbing facilities and computers, staffing levels and management structure.
2. Inter-linked local schemes with production groups distributing their own and other groups tapes in their area. Each group running a similar system and a standard charging policy.
3. Setting up a National Catalogue with a marketing and promotion strategy with each production group handling their own distribution. This would require information on how to set up distribution systems and a structure for updating Tape Catalogue etc.
4. New Outlets: To look at possibilities of marketing through Community Book shops, Resource Centres, Trades Councils, Libraries etc, etc.
5. Linking up with existing groups such as Concord Films, The Other Cinema or local education authorities.

BUDGET

We would emphasise that the following figures represent the minimum necessary to carry out the study effectively. This is why we are proposing a self employed contract for the workers; the travelling expenses - (items 6 and 8), though substantial, are calculated on the basis of "cheap day" rail tickets, with no provision for overnight stay or meal allowances. The workers figure was arrived at in consultation with Joan Munro at the Community Projects Foundation, whose job entails a comparable amount of travelling.

1. 2 Workers for 6 months	£ 8,000
2. Office Rent/Heating/Light	1,500
3. Secretarial Services	750
4. Phone	500
5. Stationary, Printing, Publicity	750
6. Travel Expenses for Workers	1,500
7. Office Equipment	600
8. Travel Expenses for Management Committee	750
9. Expenses for Meeting/Conference on Publication of the Study.	250
10. Miscellaneous Research Expenses	400
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TOTAL	£15,000

JULY 1983