

Minutes of meeting with Funders over Boyden Southwood report

7th July 1989

Russell Southwood presented the paper. Was it the end of the sector, he asked? How far did the mixed economy enter into it? How much funding would be cut? He believes that many of the sector's ideas have been incorporated into the mainstream. Although this report did not deal with production, he believes production is central to the sector, or rather production which is well-regarded, critically acclaimed and above all seen. He thinks we should be looking at producing 5 - 10 films of the quality of looking for Langston a year! Films must be seen and discussed by many, audiences could and must be opened up. Funders should set earned income thresholds which will be different for different levels of activity to "free up" money for areas which have to be subsidised. He believes extensive training in finance and marketing and management necessary. The sector does many things well, but not this. Detailed EOPs are necessary, and also a change in attitudes.... There should be £ direct financing for an audience development worker, and equipment pools to facilitate training and access.

Questions

A woman from the Rio said RS sees funding only for particular types of exhibition, not revenue funding for cinemas. He doesn't understand anything about cinema and the way community cinema is programmed etc. They're promoting independent product.

Karen from Circles wanted to know what local authorities had told him because many councils brought videos from them but this wasn't reflected in the report. Jenny from Circles said there were many gaps in the report, for instance he didn't realise that audiences benefitted from their process of distribution. Some groups were highlighted in the report, some were ignored.

Sue Hall said there had been no consultation with their own clients over what they had thought of the service they got from Fantasy Factory. Education went to the independent sector for help, not the other way round.

Nadine Marsh-Edwards said that everything written about Sankofa was wrong. No mention was made of audience building which took place over a long period. If groups don't get revenue funding they won't be able to make films like Looking for Langston etc. If they become production companies, who's going to be teaching black representation in media studies. Teachers go to them for advice. (Here RS said he agreed, and this was so important that it would be dealt with in section 2. It wasn't.)

Funders' Responses

Irene said she would make no detailed critique, but all the funders endorse the thrust of the report. But that doesn't mean it will be endorsed in that way. It will also take 18 months to 2 years to implement. All groups will meet with funder (s) to discuss what will happen and all groups will know one way or another by December. If funding is going to change from revenue to

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contract funding, it won't change immediately but will begin gradually in 1990. It is very important for the work to survive. In future, all groups will be funded by one funder only. Black workshops are a priority (although that doesn't mean they'll all survive) but will help them with C4. They also want to make sure there are facilities, with ladders of training provision.

Colin Wright: LBGS took social aid as its model and had a populist policy with regard to leisure. Film and video did not have a large enough audience. Next year LBGS had only £100,000 for F & V, which would be geared for vocational training, with priority to access courses.

Dave Curtis: The ACGB was not part of the original commissioning group. They were working to get money from eg the BBC, Gulbenkian etc and saw themselves as having an advocacy role for F & V. They had funded a marketing post for LVA and may do the same with the LFMC.

Felicity: Resources at present are spread too thinly; there should be a better thought out infrastructure. Should be equipment pools connected with training and production but perhaps separately funded. Exhibition was very important; also cultural debate.

Questions

LVA: What about local authority matching funding?

Irene: They can facilitate meetings. Revenue funding was likely to go for all groups. But they'll still give money for certain things, like eg packaging, capital investment etc. A plan needs to be worked out for each group. At present there are many groups with are OAPs(!)

Karen (LFMC): Is this document really a draft? Will there be consultation or is it going on already? She definitely feels the need for another meeting.

Felicity: GLA is already implementing it.

Steve (Paddington ARts) How will it all be affected by the GLA reorganisation.

Seona Reid: Strategic objectives are being redefined, which will define budgets, categories etc.

Hoppi: The need to get money means you have to take work even when you really don't agree with it.

Irene: Yes, there are inherent problems. She's at present writing a paper to write about the restructuring of F&D. For instance, at present RFTs are not allowed to take screen advertising. F & D must go to get other money, yes, for groups.

Schlake: There is a need to contact Europe, because there's less money here for film than in other Euro countries.

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Colin: LBGS is in a grant trap itself, because if they raise money from elsewhere, the local authorities will have to pay less.

Dave Curtis: The ACGB can and does raise money. Thinks a development agency may be positive.

(?) Funders are increasing assisting C4 in becoming a British style PBS.

Felicity+ They are anxious that there should be a wide screening for product, not just sitting on people's shelves.

Sue Hall: It will be very hard to make money for the sector when, as in the report, the culture of the sector is downplayed. They'd also been trying to develop a distance learning package, but couldn't get any money.

Irene: That's the problem when almost all money is swallowed up in revenue funding.

Clare (Four Corners) What about buying in Broadcast time? What about work with local communities: people don't want to travel.

Felicity: It hasn't been decided about the former yet. But they'll still be working with local authorities.

Paul(?) Why isn't anyone from C4 here? C4 has always downplayed the sector.

Felicity* Funders will lobby. But why aren't the constituency/ IFVPA lobbying?

Schlake: Don't you know about the C4 campaign group, or the work of Sylvia Harvey?

Karen (LFMC) Are we meant to be providing cheap £ training for industry, or the sector training itself?

Felicity: There need to be levels of accreditation, and lobbying towards modular courses.

Paul(?) The report is technically illiterate.

Steve P: Network of viewers? This was tried before and failed. Why fund the AIP/IPPA, they're against what we stand for although we may be members. Why no network of film-makers?

RS: There's a need for TV to be interactive, and a need to engage with AIP/IPPA to change them.

Abina: Audiences have already been built up over the years. Ken Fero* Will there be any money for new groups?

Irene: When deadening funding is removed, there should be money.

RS: If anyone wants to be revisited, call him. The final report will be out September.