

MEETING OF CIRCLES AND CINEMA OF WOMEN

AT COW OFFICES

Tuesday 7 August 1990 11.00 am

Present: Jenny, Liane (Circles). Jenny, Abina (Cinema of Women).

Apologies: Kim, Carmelita (Cinema of Women)

Minutes: Abina

1. It was agreed that we would take minutes of all future meetings, so that people unable to attend could be kept up-to-date.
2. Circles confirmed they had written to Ian Christie to tell him we were meeting to consider his proposed brief.
3. Circles have prepared an alternative brief. The main changes as follows:

IC's item (1) becomes (1) and (2) as follows:

- (1) To propose an acceptable structure for the continuing existence of two women's distribution companies in receipt of reduced BFI subsidy.
- (2) To propose an acceptable structure which will combine current dist. and advisory activity within a single organisation in receipt of reduced BFI subsidy.

IC's item (2) then becomes:

- (3) To identify economies of scale and operation within film and video distribution within options (1) and (2) (ie for existing two companies and one merged group respectively).

IC's numbers (4) and (5) come together as follows:

- (5) To prepare project applications for new subsidy revenue from the public sector and revenue sponsorship from the private sector.

IC's number (6) becomes:

- (6) To research and develop projects which will attract financial support via the EC.

Cinema of Women will look at this proposal, plus Circles ideas about research to be undertaken and will fax Circles with ideas, etc. Wednesday/Thursday this week. If necessary, more discussion will take place before we send proposal to BFI.

4. Various issues around the proposal and research needed were then discussed. Summarised as follows:

We would need to outline timescales involved, including commitments needed from the BFI. COW expressed concern at looking at merger and survival as separate groups as part of this consultancy, from point-of-view of time and possible difficulties with conflict of interest - both groups chasing same sponsorship, for instance. Jenny at Circles suggested working on complete proposal separately and coming together for collation. Abina objected to this on grounds of covering same areas being time-consuming. Should individuals research various areas and then come together on work on pooled information? Liane thought looking at task as two separate groups would show what a merged group could be. Jenny (COW) thought we would be more attractive to potential sponsors as a merged group. Could it be more profitable to look at brief as a potential merged group? Should we take this as an opportunity to use for strength of women's film distribution, not as being forced on us by BFI?

Jenny (Circles) asked how COW sees a merged group: could see two struggling groups as offering less choice. Spread too thinly and unable to do the many things we attempt well. Want to see more active distribution, with positive projects, outreach work, informing work. Maybe links with production companies to fill in gaps in market - eg a tape around black women's health issues which we know there is a demand for. Would like to have more links with industry - C4, Europe. Would like to be seen as viable and important resource. Some of these areas might be more usefully got by being approached jointly rather than separately.

Jenny (Circles) sees issues such as education work being absolutely crucial, and in danger of being 'dropped' by BFI. All agreed that we must make any consultation show that all areas of our work are intertwined. Show the uniqueness of the work we do in this area (and other areas). Exploration of video publishing, cable, public broadcasting, building relationships with industry might be areas we could work at more effectively in some kind of alliance.

Abina asked how Circles see merger. Generally, more as a negative thing - less choice. Also, as a capitulation to the BFI. Want to keep the arguments for two groups going.

Agreed that we should see consultancy as way of looking at what we ideally want. Liane pointed out that any agreed Business Plan must have enough flexibility to allow for changes to be made.

Cinema of Women assured Circles that the Glenbuck issue was not a crucial one. COW would be willing to look at other means of distribution. Glenbuck suit them at the moment, but the area is open to exploration. Could look at other groups - **Women Make Movies** for instance has a dispatch service.

Agreed there was much to discuss, and that we should meet again next Monday at 11 at Circles offices. Would be best to discuss and agree certain issues before we start research.

MEETING CLOSED 1.15 p.m.