

Mtg with Irene Whitehead BFI 2-11-81

Present: Irene (BFI) Gill Henderson + Jenny Holland (for circles)

Irene explained situation / reshuffle at BFI; there will be no funding + development Dept - instead a new Planning Dept. will be established with Irene at the head - The Dept will look both externally at future developments (ie putting together a 'London Package' and internally at ^{the} corporate identity of the BFI (presumably meaning additional fundraising and the dev. of a cohesive BFI instead of 'warring departments')

The overall budget will be split btwn. The Planning Dept, Production dept (Steve Brooks to move there - along with Colin McCabe + Ben Gibson) and The Distribution dept (ie Ian Christie, programmers etc.)

Irene is not happy with proposal (from Wilf Stevenson) but has very little choice but to go along with it. She's trying to promote a London package to secure some kind of strategic funding for the next three years. She is not certain what will happen with current distribution clients (ie: circles, cow, TOC + LFMCP) - 2 possibilities: (1) She'll be able to keep hold of circles, cow in London package (she's not concerned with continuing to fund TOC and thinks the ~~LMA~~ ~~will be~~ LFMCP will be safer with Ian Christie anyway) (2) Distribution clients will be handed over to Distribution Dept. this is more likely option. She's concerned about the competitive nature of this arrangement + clash of interests ∴ inappropriate relationship. Already, Dist. dept acts as a direct threat to ind. distributors and this can only get worse. If Irene maintained control - she would be committed to securing funding for dist. from overall budget although its unlikely any groups will continue to be given revenue funding - she did acknowledge that revenue-type grants had to be given to certain org. to continue any equal opportunities policy as the Black workshops and hopefully women's org.

We pressed the equal opp. issue as clearly this is one Irene feels personally committed to; stressing the knock-on effects of no funding for circles continuing role as ~~informa~~ a (free) information resource & network.

Also, the film/video that circles is bringing into dist. is material which otherwise would not be available in the UK.

There was no mention whatsoever of merger with Con. (we decided not to bring it up either) and no mention of IR. Debt. (ibid)

I ran through what circles is doing at the moment - mentioned, healthy turnover, placement, marketing strategy (inc. P.C. idea, cat supplement with donations (special print) scheme, TV sales, video sales strategy (ie mass duplication, promotion of selected titles for retail market), joint project with MOMI (educational package development) - international profile - (Madrid circles invite) and Acquisitions (range + extent of new titles taken on recently)

She felt it all sounded very positive.

Plan of action.

We should organise strategic mtgs. with key figures in the BFI to explore European funding possibilities and to ~~get~~ get them familiar with archives.

suggested: Miff Stevenson
Leslie Hardcastle
Barrie Ellis-Jones
tel: 852 5271 - Lori Keating (Media '92)
Ian Christie

All of whom have considerable knowledge of ^{potential} European sources.

plus: Marquet Gallagher
Florence Mtg - contact June Gwanni/Laura Mulvey.

We should go ahead with consultancy as soon as possible and at most within next 3 months. She thought our emphasis/brief as we presented it was fine.

We should go ahead with MOMI screenings project as a means of researching + developing further packages.

We should get out a typed supplement a.s.a.p. of the 40 or so new titles taken on since catalogue and promote these (part. important that Irene + Ian Christie aware + familiar with what we're taken on)

We should set-up a mtg. with Cow to find out what exactly their position is + what their plans are.

Irene will know fairly soon if we will go to distribution Dept. or stay within her remit (ie within the London package) she will let us know + then we should set quickly to set up a mtg. with Ian Christie. She suggested that Cow + CIRCLES should ~~also~~ jointly attend (I don't think so)

PTD

Put in our application to BFI as usual -
(one's faced with 3%, 7% and 10% cuts to current
standstill budgets). Instead of laying our
application out as a REVENUE budget we
should, as far as possible, draw it up as ~~is~~ under
specific project headings and gear it towards
the style of funding that will be available
(ie: educational, resource, equipment, marketing,
information (equal opportunities))