

GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

Arts and Recreation Committee

COMMUNITY ARTS SUB-COMMITTEE

ETHNIC ARTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Report (19.10.84) by Director of
Recreation and the Arts

Item No

813

C/AR 351

Application for Grant towards
running costs

GLC FILM AND VIDEO:
PRACTICE AND POLICY

Prog.ref.A.23

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the policy be continued of substantial financial support for film and video workshops in London;
- (2) That when appraising requests for financial support from workshops, the requirements of the ACTT Workshop Declaration be taken into consideration;
- (3) That in the field of support for distribution and exhibition priority continue to be given to London's independent distributors and cinemas, as the complement to the policy proposed in recommendation (1) above;
- (4) That officers of the Department of Recreation and Arts continue regular liaison with the British Film Institute, the Greater London Arts Association, the Greater London Enterprise Board, the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians, and Channel Four Independent Film Department, regarding London's independent film and video sector;
- (5) That special priority continue to be given to the needs of London's women and ethnic minorities in film and video matters;
- (6) That in its contributions to the public discussion of cable, the Council promote the potential role of London's film and video workshops as sources and facilities for community programme production in London;
- (7) That officers investigate the feasibility of commissioning research into the needs of Londoners with disabilities regarding access to film and video production and exhibition facilities.

RA/GR/PM/1363

331/S138

GLC FILM AND VIDEO PRACTICE AND POLICY

A. Last year: 1983-84

A.1 Department of Recreation and the Arts

The bulk of the Council's film and video funding has been done through the Department of Recreation and Arts. Most of the grant recipients have been - logically, in terms of the cultural character of the work they perform - clients of the two Sub-Committees of the Main Arts and Recreation Committee, viz Community Arts or Ethnic Arts.

This line of approach was endorsed by the Arts and Recreation/Industry and Employment 'Cultural Industries' Conference at Riverside Studios last year, when it was strongly argued that the Council should concentrate on assisting the London 'independent'/community' audio-visual sector rather than propping up commercial exhibition on amenity grounds, or trying to aid the creation of the British end of an art-house Eurofeatures sector.

A.1.1 Production

A.1.1.1 The founding policy position for funding film and video in the sphere of production has been to assist the development of the infrastructure of the independent sector (the sector operating on cultural, community and educational criteria, rather than commercial imperatives), with an emphasis on affording facilities to socially disadvantaged Londoners (particularly ethnic minorities and women). The funding of film or video units, often termed 'workshops' by insiders, has been the main priority for production, in preference to the backing of individual script-based production projects. This policy corresponds to the main direction urged by the film-workers' union the ACTT for cultural policy on non-profit-distributing audio-visual production funding.

A.1.1.2 A 'workshop' is a permanent unit of several film or video workers carrying out a range of non-commercial film activities, on a basis of continuous employment in fixed premises. Each workshop has its own emphasis, mixing film or videotape production with film-showing activities, archiving, training equipment hire, facilities provision, or access work with communities and local groups, in its chosen permutation of associated activities. If such a not-for-profit unit can obtain adequate regular funding to pay a set minimum (and maximum) wage to four or more film-workers to carry out these kind of activities, then the ACTT will franchise it to work under the applicable agreement, the 'Workshop Declaration'. (Unfortunately, not all the 'workshop' units in London who wish to do so are sufficiently funded to be able to work under the agreement.)

In production funding policy, the Ethnic Arts and Community Arts Sub-Committees have tended to concentrate on contributing to the overheads - salaries and equipping of such groups. This then allows them to carry out a programme of activities and be enabled to raise money for specific film projects, either by being an affordable resource for local campaigns and community groups who wish to have films or tapes made, or by preparing scripts with a view to being funded to make them by cultural agencies (such as the British Film Institute, the Arts Council, the Greater London Arts Association or Channel Four's Independent Film Department).

A.1.1.3 In 1983-84 the Community Arts Sub-Committee awarded a total of £287,679 to 18 groups of this kind. The figures are listed in Appendix 1. This came largely from the Department's revenue budget, with about 60% going on 'overheads' and wages funding, and about 40% on non-recurrent revenue spending, mostly film and video equipment.

A.1.1.4 After consideration of report E/AR 106 of 22 July 1983, paras. 12-18, the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has given a central place to workshop funding in its support for London's black film and video culture. In 1983-84 the Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee awarded £112,749 four 'workshop' type units. About a third was for 'overheads' revenue funding, about two-thirds for equipment. Figures are listed in Appendix 2.

A.1.2 Distribution and Exhibition

A.1.2.1 In the field of distribution a related policy of concentrating on the independent sector was followed by the Department of Recreation and Arts. The Community Arts Sub-Committee awarded grants to the three main London-based distributors operating in the non-commercial sector. The Other Cinema distributing source of much of the available fiction and documentary material on the Third World, gay rights, labour movement and anti-nuclear issues, etc. - received £13,475; Cinema of Women and Circles - the two distribution groups devoted to the work of women film-makers - received grants, the former £13,597, the latter £18,800. The completed work of many of the 'workshop' groups funded by Community Arts Sub-Committee is handled by these distributors.

A.1.2.2 As regards exhibition, the Rio Cinema, Hackney, was awarded £10,900; The Other Cinema £12,000 towards its cinema project. Cinema Action and Four Corners, two workshops who have received financial support from Community Arts, run small cinemas as part of their activities. For a further discussion of exhibition policy, see B.1.3 and B.1.4.

A.1.2.3 Also, as traditionally, the British Film Institute's London Film Festival received funding from the Main Arts and Recreation Committee. Before 1982, the LFF regularly received a grant from the Council; from 1982, this became a guarantee against loss. The guarantee to the 1983 LFF of £26,000 was fully taken up.

A.1.2.4 The Third Eye Festival of black and Third World film held in 1983 and organised through the Council's Ethnic Minority Unit was a significant achievement, and an important inspiration for black film-making in London.

A.1.3 Appendix 3 lists the overall Arts and Recreation amounts awarded for film and video in 1983-84.

A.2 Other Council Departments

The Department of Recreation and the Arts is the only Department to award grants on a systematic basis for film and video work. However, other Departments do disburse monies for film and video work if it is appropriate to their sphere.

A.2.1 Most such payments are for the making of individual films or videotapes on issues relevant to the Department's area of work. For example, in 1983-84, the Archway Road Movie Group received £51,000 from the Transport Committee; the International Broadcasting Trust received money from Industry and Employment's Popular Planning Unit. Other individual project payments in 1983-84 were £10,000 to Visual Connection Ltd., £25,000 to the Institute of Environmental Health Officer; £7,000 from Industry and Employment and further £21,600 from Industry and Employment to the New Girls Network.

A.2.2 The value of the Community and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees' approach to production funding is well illustrated when the workshops that have been overheads funded and/or equipped are thus enabled to take on commissions from other GLC Departments for films on specific topics. In 1983-84 Parallax Pictures, a group that had received grants from the Community Arts Sub-Committee, was paid £7,000 by F & GP for a commissioned production. Sankofa, a client of Ethnic Arts, was paid £2,085 by the Policy Committee similarly. These examples highlight the effectiveness of Arts and Recreation's policy on film and video funding.

A.2.3 Through different Committees, several of the main London-based representative organisations in the audio-visual field received funding in 1983-84. The Black Media Workers' Association received a grant of £26,000 from Industry and Employment; the Independent Film and Video-Makers' Association £988 from Community Arts Sub-Committee; the Women's Film and Television Network £5,706 from the Women's Committee. The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom has also been awarded grant-aid.

A.2.4 The Cinema of Women feminist distribution group also received £6,029 from the Women's Committee, presaging further joint funding initiatives between Arts and Recreation Committees and the Women's Committee in 1984/85.

B. This Year: 1984-85

B.1 Department of Recreation and Arts

B.1.1 Production

The Arts and Recreation Sub-Committees is following a similar policy to last year in its funding for the broad production field - grants to 'workshop' units. Demand stands very high in both the Community Arts and Ethnic Arts fields.

B.1.1.1 For Community Arts, requests in the 'workshop' field from high priority applicants alone amounts to around £1,110,000 for 27 groups. The tendency in the overheads/equipment ratio is what one would expect in the present climate. Last year's ratio of 60% overheads and waging to 40% equipment and premises is roughly reversed in this year's demand. Even allowing for over-ambitious and extravagant requests, Community Arts could spend three-quarters of a million pounds this year wisely on 'workshop' groups.

B.1.1.2 A pattern of increased demand is also to be found in the Ethnic Arts field. This reflects the very success of last year's policy of giving major assistance to black and Asian film-workers trying to lay the foundations for a solidly rooted long-term black film culture in London. A quarter of a million pounds is required to begin to meet the needs of black film and video in London this year.

B.1.1.3 A particular consideration in the funding of non-commercial production units should be the meeting of union requirements. If groups can secure adequate funding and income to become franchised by the ACTT to operate under the Workshop Declaration, then films and videos produced under this concessionary agreement are eligible for purchase and transmission by broadcast television (usually Channel Four), provided topping-up payments to the crew are made. It is obviously desirable for cultural reasons that the fruits of London's Independent film culture be given national or regional broadcast. It is also desirable for financial reasons, to aid the income and long-term survival prospects of progressive production units. Indeed, at present under consideration is the notion that the Workshop Declaration become the union agreement covering production of community material for cable services. The annual salary level under the Declaration is £9,037 in the current year, which sets the level for all salary elements in film-video grants made by the Council. A minimum of four full salaries must be being paid by a production group to work under the Declaration, which - along with employers' NI obligations and adequate monies to carry out activities - means the minimum total income from all sources for a film group to be able to work within the agreement is in reality around the £100,000 mark. The requirements of the Declaration should be borne in mind when discussing funding and revenue budgets with film-video groups, as was argued in the advisory member's report C/AR 43 of 19 January 1983. All salary elements in grants to film or video groups are set in accordance with the Workshop Declaration rates.

B.1.1.4 In May 1984 an officer was appointed within the Arts Grants Section of the Department of Recreation and the Arts to deal specifically with film and video application to all committees within the Department. To meet the needs of London's film and video groups large branches of additional money are required by the Community Arts and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees.

B.1.2 Distribution

The three main London-based distribution groups operating in the non-commercial sector - the Other Cinema, Cinema of Women and Circles - have again applied for grant-aid this year. The Sub-Committee may especially wish to see women's distribution groups (CoW, Circles) receive strong financial support this year.

B.1.3 Exhibition

B.1.3.1 The Other Cinema has been awarded £230,000 by the Main A & R Committee to install, decorate and equip a new two-screen cinema in the Trocadero entertainment complex near Piccadilly Circus. (See B.1.4.4)

B.1.3.2 Several existing cinemas have approached the Council for financial assistance. The Rio Cinema, Hackney, has been awarded £109,100 for its restoration and refurbishment.

The Ritzy Cinema, Brixton, is requesting a large sum for a major re-roofing.

The Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, is requesting £41,500 for interior improvements which if accomplished would guarantee a deal with Channel Four on access to programming material and necessary equipment.

The Phoenix Cinema, East Finchley has applied for funds to carry out a major conversion which would furnish two auditoria and a small video production facility for local use.

The Electric Screen has applied for £35,000 for repairs and restoration.

Many of these applications encounter the restrictions on prescribed expenditure, though grants for renewal and refurbishment are more possible. The above ordering represents a suggested ranking of priority. All such applications are to the Main Arts and Recreation Committee. For further comments, see B.1.4 below.

B.1.3.4 To mark Anti-Racist Year, two impressive film initiatives have been launched. In an extensive organisational feat through the Ethnic Minorities Unit film programmes mixing drama and documentaries on anti-racist themes, varied according to audience age-group, are being offered for showing in ILEA schools or in community venues, with accompanying tutor's notes. In addition, a major conference on the theme of 'Racism in the Cinema' is to be mounted in spring 1985.

A group of media workers from London's Irish community wishes to mount an Irish Film Festival as a cultural contribution to Anti-Racist Year, but details have yet to be finalised.

B.1.4 Policy on Exhibition and Distribution

B.1.4.1 As part of the Cultural Industries Conference held by Industry and Employment/Arts and Recreation at Riverside Studios in December 1983 a report was prepared and published on 'Film and Video Exhibition and Distribution in London' which contained a number of recommendations for strategic intervention by the Council. Progress on these so far is tabulated in Appendix 4.

B.1.4.2 The field of distribution and exhibition is undergoing a rapid technological switchover. Previously, the prevailing method of exhibiting audio-visual material (leaving aside broadcast television, for this is outside the Council's possible area of intervention) has been public projections of films, either in cinemas, or in halls/community centres/student unions, etc. But a rush to videotape is undermining this. More and more, the production units that the Council funds are moving to tape, if for no other reason than that it is cheaper. There are mounting predictions that 16mm film will have all but vanished within five years. Yet there is no satisfactory method of publicly exhibiting tape. Showing on individual monitors is only appropriate for tiny groups; yet no cinema could be devoted solely to video-projection when the quality of the large video image is still so poor. So tape distribution has been burgeoning first for domestic use, but the economy scales have not permitted 'independent' product to get a look in.

B.1.4.3 The distribution groups funded by the Council are switching piecemeal to tape. As laid out in para. G of this report, the Greater London Enterprise Board is planning interventions in the field of distribution of cultural products. The Committee may wish officers of the Department of Recreation and Arts to monitor the potential impact of such interventions on the distribution groups in the independent sector presently in receipt of funding from the Council.

B.1.4.4 The Community Arts Sub-Committee's Film Policy paper (C/AR 43 of 19 January 1983) argued that there:

"needs to be a high visibility showcase for the screening and discussion of progressive work. The screening of such work in the localities - by community cinemas such as Four Corners and Cinema Action, by film societies, and through the use of films by party, union and campaigning groups - needs to be maintained and fostered but a cornerstone of this work is missing at present: a Central London forum where the initial presentation of a new film and new programming ideas can through its activities, and its press coverage, come to the attention of activists, amateurs and organisers throughout the Greater London area, and thus revitalise the whole network".

In the light of its consideration of this statement, the Arts and Recreation Committee made a grant of £203,650 to The Other Cinema Ltd., towards the conversion of a site within the Trocadero complex off Piccadilly Circus. The venue will have two auditoria. One of around 200 seats equipped with 35mm projection, devoted to open-ended first-release runs of new foreign and domestic features, with all the attendant promotion; the second of about 80 seats, with 16mm and video-projection, devoted to repertory programming, special seasons and festivals, one-off events, illustrated seminars, presentations by visiting film-makers, etc. This affords an ideal centrepiece for distribution/exhibition for a non-commercialist film culture.

B.1.4.5 At the other end of the distribution/exhibition scale entirely, there are tentative ventures into the video-cassette field being mooted by GLEB, and undertaken by GLC-funded groups such as Other Cinema distribution, Cinema Women, Tower Hamlets Arts Project, plus research into the topic, part-funded by the GLC, under the aegis of Albany Video Deptford. GLEB, particularly, is seeking ways to promote the acquisition and loan of video-cassette material by the public library system, on similar terms to the present arrangements for records.

B.1.4.6 But what of the zone in between the West End and home use? What role for local public exhibition in London? In this officer's view, the future in this respect should ideally lie in 'media centres' serving a borough, or 'community cinemas' as an increasingly popular term puts it. Converted cinemas, discarded by the commercial industry, with preferably two auditoria, equipped between them with 35mm, 16mm and video-projection. Run on a not-for-profit basis, and showing the best of commercial and art-house releases, with programming for children in schools breaks, afternoon showings for pensioners and the unemployed, and morning screenings for local schools for media studies and other curricular purposes. Also able to hold special events and lectures, or serve as a venue for meetings with film-shows by local organisations and campaigning groups. Showing the material produced by the local workshop units and other independent producers from around the country. Offering historical or thematic seasons, or using video-projection to encourage critical public discussion of broadcast TV. A place for benefit-screenings. Possibly offering a retail facility for book and videocassette hire, etc, or containing an access facility for community video production, and so on.

B.1.4.7 This kind of model, with different local emphasis and variations, is the one beginning to emerge in Inner London, and the one the Council is either funding or being asked to fund in the cinema field. The Rio, Dalston, is a 'community cinema'; the Ritzy, Brixton, approaches it, and wishes to advance further long those lines with its conversion plans, which Lambeth Borough are sponsoring for Inner City Partnership money; the Phoenix, East Finchley, wishes to turn itself into something of this sort. The necessarily

ad hoc approach the Council has been adopting does have a policy direction.

B.1.4.8 The Council may wish to set about elaborating an overall policy along these lines for film distribution and exhibition in London. But implementation of such a policy would be faced with the problems of the availability of funds and the restrictions on prescribed expenditure.

B.2 Other Departments

B.2.1 The Women's Committee is co-funding three groups with the Community Arts Sub-Committee this year: WEFT Women's Media Resource Group, Women in Sync, and Women's Film and Television Network. (See para. H.2)

B.2.2 Again, several film and video productions are being supported or commissioned by other Committees of the Council in the current year.

B.2.3 The Department of Recreation and Arts Film and Video Officer is increasingly being approached by officers in other Departments of the Council for assistance in budgeting film or video productions. It is hoped that any Committee contemplating commissioning a film or video will also consult through officers with the Department with a view to considering the suitability of any willing 'workshop' production unit funded by the Council to carry out the project.

C Censorship

C.1 The GLC has the statutory power to ban or demand cuts from any film shown in a publicly licensed cinema in the Greater London area. In the past the GLC, like other local authorities, has mostly followed the decisions of the British Board of Film Censors on matters of classification and cuts, though not always.

C.2 But following concern expressed by the Women's Committee and by Women's groups in London about the representation of violence against women and the associated depictions of such violence with the erotic or would-be erotic, in some publicly exhibited films in London, the Council set up a Working Party to review its position on film censorship and received representations from many individuals and organisations on the matter. The report to the Council, with much of the submitted written evidence attached, comprises AR 1340, 29 November 1983.

C.3 Following completion of the Report, a half-day conference on film censorship was held at County Hall on 30 May 1984, which was attended by an invited audience of GLC members and officers, and representatives from Women's groups, other interested organisations, and local authorities. The meeting was addressed by the Secretary to the BBFC, and there was a discussion session with members of the Board.

C.4 The Council's rules of management attached to any cinematograph licence have been amended to include "No film shall be exhibited at the premises which is likely to promote sexual humiliation or degradation of or violence towards women". The Council will not be setting up machinery for the regular review of films for public exhibition in Greater London, though meetings between the Council and the BDFC will continue to be held.

D Training and Access

D.1 Training and access for film and video has been a recurring consideration of the recent past. As the discussion in E/AR 106 of 22 July 1983 (paras. 23-26) brought out, the purpose of skill training must be determined before the appropriateness of provision of particular kinds of training and resources can be assessed. There are three distinguishable kinds of access and training.

D.2 Firstly, the professional aimed at fitting people for employment in the film and television industry. In this regard, the Greater London Training Board has made two grants in 1984/85 towards schemes for the training of film and video technicians in London.

D.2.1 GLTB is putting £49,800 to meeting the first year costs of an office and secretariat for 'Jobfit' (Joint Board for Film Industry Training), the new three-year training scheme for film industry entrants. The scheme is agreed between the film workers' union the ACTT and the employers' organisation for the industry the BFTPA, and will otherwise be financed through a small percentage levy on every film with a budget above £50,000. It will furnish fifty training places a year.

D.2.2 GLTB is also providing £57,400 for short course top-up and retraining for freelance film and TV workers under the National Short Course Training Programme. This too is a joint union-employer scheme, based at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield. Specific emphasis has been placed on contributing to the equalisation of opportunity. £21,700 is for training women and £19,700 for ethnic minority courses. The remaining £16,000 back-up is for an administrator and placement officer.

D.2.3 The film and television workers' union, the ACTT, has worked closely on these training initiatives, and has publicly congratulated the Council on its role in the establishment of these schemes. (Indeed, relations between the Council and the ACTT have been excellent in this and other fields, most notably that of 'workshop' funding. At its Annual Conference in April, 1984, the ACTT passed a resolution declaring its opposition to the Government's declared intention to abolish the Greater London Council).

D.3 Secondly, the professional aimed at enabling those disenfranchised from the existing mainstream media corporations to use the means of cultural expression in film or video. This area has a number of distinguishable but overlapping objectives. Preliminary training for those who wish to prepare for a career in film or television, and need to discover appropriate areas of specialisation. First-level training, particularly for those excluded by the racism and sexism of the corporate institutions. Access to the means of film and video-making for those who already have professional or college training, but are denied other social access to the capital or technology required.

D.4 Thirdly, leisure-based, where the object is to enable those who do not have, expect or wish to have, full-time occupation in the film or television industries, opportunities to make statements in film/video, or learn how to make such statements. In practice, this area crosses traditional recreational or adult-educational objectives of provision for the individual citizen, with the concern to enable organised groups in the community to record aspects of community life or articulate statements of public import.

In an age when increasingly the public messages people receive are carried by film, video or television a democratic society could be expected to incorporate opportunities for those of its citizens who so wish to join with others in the making of such messages. The conditions for this are the gradually spreading availability of access to the technology, and opportunities for introductory instruction in its use. In the field of literacy, a long road has been travelled from the days when reading and writing were the sole preserve of an ecclesiastical caste, through the invention of printing and the introduction of universal public education, to contemporary declarations from UNESCO that the opportunity to acquire and exercise literacy is a right to which all are entitled. The growth of media studies within the ILEA, and the programme of financial support for film and video workshops carried out by the GLC, can be seen as contributing to the opening of analogous avenues in the direction of eventual universal visual 'literacy'.

D.5 With regard to the second and third areas of access and training mentioned above, a variety of kinds of courses, workshops and instructional sessions and the furnishing of a variety of equipment and facilities, are provided by film and video workshops in London that have received financial support from the Council. All the groups listed in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report participate in some aspect of provision of this kind, and this has been a central factor in the decisions approving grants to them.

E London Film and Television Liaison Office

The Council may contribute to the cost of a Film and Television Liaison Office in London. This is designed to help production companies arrange London location shooting, which is otherwise often hindered by the complexity of the network of permissions required. The detailed tasks of the Office are being developed by a Working Party, largely composed of industry professionals. If effective, it will encourage film and TV production companies to use London as a location by making it easier to do so which will contribute to increased employment for London's film and TV technicians. The appearance of London locations in films and programmes will also help unofficially - and thus more powerfully - to promote the city in the eyes of viewers elsewhere in Britain and abroad.

F Cable

F.1 In December 1982, the Industry and Employment Committee produced its report 'Cabling in London'. The Council joined in an initiative with Sheffield City Council to conduct public hearings on cable in Sheffield and London in July 1983, and produced as a background three cable Working Papers: 'Cable Television: a Voluntary Sector issue', 'Capital and Cable', and 'Cable and Community Programming'. Forty-six organisations and individuals gave verbal evidence at the hearings, and a Report on the cable hearings was produced.

F.2 The recommendations of that report are attached as Appendix 5. The report articulates consistent opposition to Government's cable policy, and recommends concentrating on "supporting and developing audio and audio-visual production resources and distribution networks alternative to cable to serve the local community and minorities, both locally and nationally whose voice is not at present adequately represented on existing media". Much of the Council's funding practice in the field of independent film and video in London can be seen as contributing to the practical implementation of this policy direction through support for the beginnings of such an infrastructure.

F.3 The Council's report also recommended co-operation with other local authorities and interested parties such as trade unions, voluntary sector organisations, and community groups, to press for certain provision in the forthcoming Cable Bill. The Government has since published its Bill, incorporating very few of these points, but as the Bill follows the route of public and parliamentary discussion, pressing for their incorporation remains the Council's policy.

F.4 Of particular relevance in this context is the policy of pressing for realisation of the policy that "all cable operators must provide at least one local community channel and one educational channel to be managed by a non-profit local broadcasting trust and funded by a levy of 10% of the operator's gross revenue". Were this to be realised, many of the London film and video workshops presently in receipt of grants from the Council might well form the core of the programme - producing resources and technical personnel for such local community channels. Within the ACTT a discussion is underway over the merits of rendering the Workshop Declaration the applicable union agreement under which such material might be produced.

F.5 As cable franchises are awarded covering various areas within Greater London - a process already underway - the Council may wish to press for a 'community quota' of material if full community channels are not provided for. Again, the workshops may prove central to the generation of such material.

G Greater London Enterprise Board

G.1 In December 1983 the Council's Industry and Employment and Arts and Recreation Committees mounted a Conference at the Riverside Studios Hammersmith on 'Cultural Industries/Cultural Policy'. Taking note of the proceedings of this Conference, the Greater London Enterprise Board has since established the beginnings of a Cultural Industries Investment Fund, and appointed an officer to head it up. Film, video and television are seen as one of the few certain growth areas for employment in London into the 1990s. GLEB wishes to help develop the economic base of those distributors and producers independent of the multinationals and the majors. Rather than aiming at aiding directly the creation of employment in the production sectors of the Cultural industries, GLEB is looking to support the development of distribution and other infrastructural facilities. If successful, this will contribute to protecting and fostering employment, partly in those sectors directly, and partly in the production sector indirectly, through the increased turnover or reduced costs brought by infrastructural facilities.

G.2 GLEB Cultural Industries section wishes to pursue a number of initiatives which have relevance for film and video:

- (a) a study into the distribution of cultural products, including video-cassettes, to explore the feasibility of intervening to enhance the culture and breadth of distribution. In particular, bookshops and public libraries are being investigated as key potential outlets;
- (b) to develop new markets for independently-produced film and video by aiding the emergence of an agency offering common services for overseas sales;
- (c) investigation of the possibility of helping establish facilities which can provide post-production and high-band editing services at below prevailing commercial rates;
- (d) contributing to the development of a permanent central London 'media fair' site, to showcase London's alternative cultures in close linkage to initiatives in distribution and export;
- (e) a part-time appointment has been made at GLEB for liaison with London's independent film and video-makers.

H Equal Opportunities Considerations

H.1 In line with the prevailing policy of the Council, grants awarded to groups in the film and video field containing support towards any salary element carry the condition that the recipient: "demonstrate, if required, that all possible and reasonable steps are taken to ensure that equal opportunity and good employer policies are implemented similar in intent to those operated by this Council to ensure that no job applicant or employee, in relation to pay, terms and conditions of employment and recruitment, interviewing, promotion, training and career opportunities, suffers direct or indirect discrimination and receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sexual orientation, age, trade union activity, political or religious belief and that applications received from disabled persons who have the necessary attributes for the post are welcomed".

In addition, the Community Arts and Ethnic Arts Sub-Committees have sought to meet the particular needs of groups of socially disadvantaged Londoners in the field of film and video through support of the provision of resources for their cultural expression and its dissemination, Community Arts with particular regard to women and Ethnic Arts to black Londoners.

H.2 Women

The Community Arts Sub-Committee has joined with the Women's Committee in the funding of three major resource groups for women in 1984/85. WEFT Women's Media Resource, who are setting out to provide a major audio facility suitable for music recordings and the preparation of sound-tracks for films and videos, combined with a small cinema, have been awarded £36,847 by Community Arts and £26,699 by Women's Committee. Women in Sync, a group providing training and resources in video production for women, have been awarded £31,645 by Community Arts and £29,970 by Women's Committee. Women in Film, Television and Video network, a women's information resource on the audiovisual field, have been awarded £33,769 by the Womens' Committee, plus £2,903 towards their training sessions from Community Arts.

Two groups devoted to the distribution of women's work have also been supported. In 1984/85 Circles has been awarded £17,905 by Community Arts and £33,368 by the Arts and Recreation Committee. Officers are also recommending that Cinema of Women, who were awarded a grant of £13,597, in 1983/84, receive substantial support in 1984/85.

H.3 Ethnic Minorities

The Ethnic Arts Sub-Committee has supported the development of an infrastructure for black independent film-making in London. In 1983/84, £112,749 was awarded to black film/video workshops. In 1984/85, a grant of £60,157 has been made to Retake Film and Video Collective, and a gross grant of £38,300 to Star Productions. Officers will be recommending further support to other black film workshops during 1984/85. The Ethnic Minorities Committee has supported the Irish Video Project.

H.4 Gays and Lesbians

In 1983/84, the lesbian group Peephole Pictures was awarded a grant of £4,346 towards a production. In 1984/85, Peephole Pictures and the Lesbian and Gay Video Project have both made applications to Community Arts for substantial support towards the purchase of video equipment. The fact that there is currently no resource centre in London to enable gay and lesbian cultural expression in the audiovisual field is expected to have bearing on the Sub-Committee's consideration of these applications.

H.5 People with Disabilities

Considerations in the film and video field with regard to people with disabilities have two aspects: access to exhibition, and to production.

H.5.1 Without having done a detailed survey, it appears 'prima facie' that access to independent cinemas for people in wheelchairs is poor or impossible, and the provision of appropriate toilets is low. Few cinemas have an induction loop system to meet the needs of the hard of hearing.

H.5.2 As far as this officer is aware, no grouping of people with disabilities wishing to gain access to the resources, facilities, equipment and training necessary for undertaking cultural expression in film or video has approached the Council for support. This is in contrast to the position in the field of drama in London, and may be a reflection not of the lack of need, but of pessimism about its fulfilment.

H.5.3 Given the apparently low level of awareness within the Council of the needs and possibilities for people with disabilities in the field of film and video, the Council may wish to commission a piece of research to ascertain such needs in London, in the dual aspects of exhibition and production.

Appendices Attached

Appendix A : Film and Video 'Workshop' Groups funded by Community Arts, 1983-84

Appendix B : Film and Video Groups funded by Ethnic Arts, 1983-84

Appendix C : Department of Recreation and Arts Grants to Film and Video, 1983-84

Appendix D : Progress summary on recommendations in 'Film and Video Exhibition and Distribution in London' report.

Appendix E : Recommendations of the Report on GLC/Sheffield City Council Hearings of July 1983.

RA/GR/PM/1363

Concurrent report (19 October 1984) by the Director of Finance

GLC Film and Video Policy

- 1 The Committee's attention is drawn to Appendix 1 which sets out Film and Video 'Workshop' groups funded by Community Arts Sub-Committee during 1983/84. The total financial aid of £287,679 includes £15,130 awarded in 1982/83.
- 2 The Community Arts Sub-Committee also funded ancillary film and video projects in 1983/84 which could not be strictly interpreted as 'workshops' (as defined within the body of this report). The total Community Arts funding reported in Appendix 3 of the main report is made up as follows:-

	£
Workshops	287,679
Other	15,721

£	303,400
	=====

for the Director of Finance
FN/C3/AWFB/8934

APPENDIX 1

FILM AND VIDEO 'WORKSHOP' GROUPS FUNDED
BY COMMUNITY ARTS SUB-COMMITTEE, 1983-1984

<u>Name</u>	<u>£</u>
Albany Video	15,855
Aphra Video	7,485
Cinema Action	37,124
Connections - Hammersmith and Fulham Video Project	7,196
Faction Films	20,966
Fantasy Factory	7,067
Film Work Group	17,540
Four Corner Films	22,306
London Film-Makers' Co-op	19,637
London Video Arts	7,530
Lusia Films	15,000
Newsreel Collective	9,107
Parallax Pictures	4,125
Peephole Pictures	4,346
Sound/Video Archive	27,135
WEFT Women's Media Resource Project	6,430
West London Media Workshop	25,000
Women in Sync	33,800
	£287,679

Plus funds from
F and GP Committee

Plus £7,900 from A & R

APPENDIX 2

FILM AND VIDEO GROUPS FUNDED
BY ETHNIC ARTS SUB-COMMITTEE, 1983-1984

<u>Name</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Black Audio Film Collective	10,892	
Ceddo	63,139	(including £16,985 for a film production as Kuumba)
Retake Film and Video Collective	14,145	
Sankofa	24,573	
	<u>112,749</u>	

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND ARTS, 1983-84
GRANTS TO FILM AND VIDEO

Main A and R

Revenue:	16,625)	39,525	(Excluding London Film Festival guarantee against loss of £26,000)
	)		
	)		
	)		
	)		
Prescribed:	22,900)		

Community Arts

Revenue:	280,266)	303,400
	)	
Prescribed:	23,134)	

Ethnic Arts

Revenue:	80,249)	112,749
	)	
Prescribed:	32,500)	

Totals

Revenue:	372,423
Prescribed:	78,534

TOTAL total:	455,674	(" ")
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RECOMMENDATIONS IN REPORT
'FILM AND VIDEO EXHIBITION AND
DISTRIBUTION IN LONDON'
(NOVEMBER 1983)

PROGRESS AT OCTOBER 1984

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 The Council should make an explicit commitment to policy and funding designed to develop the structure of independent film and video distribution and exhibition in London.</p> <p>2 In the light of such a policy, the Council should consider:</p> <p>a. The possibility of setting up a cinema investment fund, to support selective measures of refurbishment and equipment renewal in the independent sector.</p> <p>b. The possibility of setting up a single co-ordinated publicity and promotion system for all independent venues in London.</p> <p>c. The possibility of setting up a distribution investment fund. This should cover a review of the scope for mechanisms for assisting with the costs of:</p> <p>i. Sub-titling non-English language films and videos</p> <p>ii. Film to tape transfer, both for broadcast and VHS uses</p> <p>iii. Film print and tape purchase and renewal, the production of catalogues and indexes of work available.</p> <p>3 The Council should make a policy and funding commitment to the London based aspects of the research project on video distribution which is being organised by Albany Video.</p> <p>4 The Council should fund:</p> <p>a. A feasibility study into the setting up of a new exhibition venue for film and video in the central London area.</p> <p>b. A feasibility study into the setting up of women's media research/resource centre and cinema in the London area.</p> | <p>1 Suggested as recommendation in main report.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>a. Cinema refurbishment is being approached on a case-by-case basis by officers, with recommendations to A & R Committee for grants where appropriate.</p> <p>b. No action.</p> <p>c. No action on a distinct distribution investment fund, but:</p> <p>i. No action</p> <p>ii. Grants to individual distribution groups have included funding for activities of this character where appropriate.</p> <p>iii. Ditto.</p> <p>3 A grant of £3,500 to the Deptford Fund, which is funding this research, has been made as a contribution to the costs.</p> <p>4</p> <p>a. A grant of £203,650 has been made to assist in the conversion and equipping of a new exhibition venue in the Trocadero complex, off Piccadilly Circus.</p> <p>b. The activities for which WFTVN and WEFT have been supported by the Women's Committee and the Community Arts Sub-Committee impinge on this area.</p> |
|---|--|

5. The Council should examine the possibility of establishing an 'independent forum' type festival. This should be pursued in consultation with the organisers of the 3rd Eye Festival, the LFF, and the Berlin Independent Forum.

6. The Council should fund a detailed research report into the audio-visual policy and funding process at EEC level.

7. The Council should fund a research programme on the implications for the independent sector of technical change in the audio-visual industry, including such questions as the future of 16mm film, video projection, 'electronic cinema chains', video discs, and so on.

8. The Council should look closely at the scope for computerisation investment in the work processes and promotional activities of distribution and exhibition.

9. Since the key purpose of film and video production is to communicate with an audience, intervention in support of production has to go on in parallel with intervention in support of distribution and exhibition. The Council should therefore investigate how best they can assist the integration of these areas, including perhaps in the 1st instance, by support for a full time worker to help co-ordinate the distribution and exhibition activities of film and video production groups and workshops in London.

10. To assist the implementation of the above recommendations the Council should itself appoint at least 1 full-time film and video officer - to help co-ordinate the policy making already going on in its various committees, and act as a focus for information and advice in the GLC's relations with the independent film and video sector.

5. No action.

6. A&R Committee has funded the Independent Film and Video Makers Association with a grant of £6,000 to carry out this research.

7. No action.

8. In consultation with Central Computer Services, grants have been awarded to The Other Cinema Distribution and Circles for computerisation, and officers are investigating the appropriateness of recommending grants for similar purposes to Cinema of Women and the London Film-makers' Co-operative distribution service.

9. No action before completion of research mentioned in 3. above.

10. This appointment was made within the establishment of the Department of Recreation and Arts in May 1984.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT ON THE GLC/SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL HEARONG OF JULY 1983

Recommendations

In conclusion therefore we recommend that our Councils:-

- (a) Should not involve themselves in cable consortia or in the financing of cable systems even were they allowed to do so.
- (b) Should not, at this stage, provide financing for any cable programming services.
- (c) Should concentrate on supporting and developing audio and audio-visual production resources and distribution networks alternative to cable to serve the local community and minorities, both locally and nationally whose voice is not at present adequately represented on existing media.
- (d) Should set up Communication Committees of our councils to monitor the existing media and any future cable services, to fight for equality of coverage, access and employment opportunity and for local democratic control of the media.
- (e) Should collaborate with other local authorities and other interested parties such as trade unions, voluntary sector organisations and community groups:
 - 1. to ensure that the interim franchises are not awarded and that existing operators are not released from their must carry obligations without full public local consultation and without appropriate safeguards;
 - 2. to ensure that the forthcoming Cable Bill includes the following provisions:
 - (i) strong local authority and trade union representation on the Cable Authority;
 - (ii) the creation of local cable councils to include significant local authority representation, to be responsible for the award of local cable franchises within guidelines laid down by the national Cable Authority. Such councils to conduct their business in public;
 - (iii) a 14% quota of non EEC material to be mandatory for each separate programme service offered by a cable operator;

- (iv) joint ownership of programme providers and cable operators to be forbidden;
 - (v) non-EEC participation in ownership of programme providing and cable operating companies is forbidden.
 - (vi) multiple system ownership to be strictly controlled. We would suggest that in the present stage of development participation in franchising covering more than 10% of the potential households for which franchises have been granted should be forbidden;
 - (vii) all cable operators must provide at least one local community channel and one educational channel to be managed by a non-profit local broadcasting trust and funded by a levy of 10% of the operators gross revenue;
 - (viii) the cable operator shall be forbidden to disclose to a third party any information concerning subscribers to their system.
- (f) Should in collaboration with other local authorities explore the feasibility of using existing local authority owned cable systems as the basis of an MATV system for reception of satellite or micro wave delivered programme services.