

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAINING - 2nd Meeting

Item 6

TRAINING NEEDS OF ETHNIC ARTS ORGANISATIONS

(Paper for Ethnic Arts Working Group by Assistant Training Officer)

It would seem that there are four avenues we might usefully pursue, to improve training opportunities for ethnic arts organisations.

1. Perhaps our initial move ought to be to ask the groups themselves how we can best help them, and why the existing provision is not sufficiently attractive or relevant. This could be done in two ways:
 - a) Asking selected Regional Arts Associations to convene Regional meetings of Ethnic groups (in eg. the North West, West Midlands, GLAA) in close co-operation with the Arts Council of Great Britain.
 - b) Inviting the Minority Arts Advisory Service to hold a "self-help" seminar at a London venue, for administrators/group leaders to discuss their problems, needs and possible solutions (with the co-operation of Arts Council Officers).

From such meetings, we should be able to formulate definite proposals to establish a training structure for 1983/84 onwards. This would also enable us to estimate the financial implications more realistically. Such fact-finding sessions should presumably be set up in consultation with any other interested organisations.

2. Training in the basic skills of arts administration appears to be a necessity, including persuading many groups that there is a need for efficient administration in the first place and that the skills are as important as the performing/creative aspects of a company's work.

This could be tackled in three ways:

- a) Providing short courses in basic skills (eg. finance, marketing employment/contract/licensing law etc.), perhaps supported by short secondments to professional arts organisations doing similar work, where possible.

Initially, these courses may have to be part of the normal provision replacing the One-Month Course at the City University; so priority would then have to be given to applicants from ethnic groups. Next year, funds permitting, separate courses could be organised to conform to ethnic arts requirements.

- b) An alternative system of long secondments for very few people on the pattern of the Art Gallery Traineeships, interspersed with attendance at relevant courses. The following paragraph

is a suggestion by Jo Beddoe, Drama Officer:-

"I am particularly interested in the possibilities for training administrators from ethnic minorities, and I feel that the City University concept is probably inappropriate. I would like to suggest a far more practical basis for training, in co-operation with certain theatres and touring companies, but with back-up from a day or block-release course. I would like to see four bursaries awarded (biannually) for a period of two years to allow aspiring administrators to work in companies where their needs would be accommodated and they would be trained (eg. Hampstead Theatre Club, Stratford East, Theatre Centre, M6). This could hopefully be supported by courses from the City University, and would operate on the lines of the recent Art Gallery Trainees. This is simply an idea which I would like to hear discussed."

c) Liaising with the City University about broadening the scope of the Practical Training Scheme, at the very least, to make it more accessible to ethnic administrators (this could be an area for positive discrimination). If this could be achieved, in time it could supplement or even replace such a scheme as (b).

3. Specific training projects are often presented to us, which are outside the terms of reference and financial limits for existing schemes, but which could provide unique opportunities for ethnic groups. Increasing the allocation to the Performers' Group Training Scheme and to the Joint Training Fund would be of considerable assistance here.
4. The existing schemes (eg. Directors, Designers, Performers, Technicians) will be thoroughly reviewed by Panels and the Training Committee, on a regular rolling programme. Such a review should take into account the particular needs of ethnic groups and the difficulties of making the training provision known and accessible to them. This programme of assessment will obviously not provide instant remedies; but in the long-term may well prove the most satisfactory solution, by incorporating ethnic requirements into the mainstream of Arts Council training provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) That Conferences or seminars are organised on the lines of 1 (a and b) within the financial year 1982/83.
- ii) That the steering group being set up to plan short courses in arts administration in general, incorporates the suggestion of 2 a) in its planning for 1982/83.
- iii) That the Training Committee takes account of the possible financial implications of training initiatives in the ethnic arts when discussing the overall training estimates for 1983/84.
- iv) That the Training Committee agrees to incorporate the problems of ethnic arts groups in its review of existing training provision.
- v) That the Training Committee agrees to keep the situation under regular review, with particular regard to new proposals eg. 2 b and c above.

Loretta Howells
14th July 1982