

REPORT ON TRAINING

1. At the 1984 National Conference, the BFI was charged with setting up "a representative committee with the aim of producing...a systematic policy for training in all aspects of cultural work in the independent sector..." The consultative working party on training, formed as a result of that resolution, has, at various times, included representatives from the ACTT, WFTVN, BMWA, IFVA, CORAA Film Officers & the Regional Consortium, together with officers of the BFI. This paper, then, constitutes a report of its year's deliberations.
2. Policy: The working party sought to re-affirm and extend the basic policy principles outlined in A Policy for Training which went to the 1984 National Conference:-
 - 2.1 An underlying aim of training should be to change the pattern of employment within the sector. In effect, this means that training must be linked to a positive equal opportunities policy. Where resources are scarce, priority must be afforded to socially disadvantaged groups.
 - 2.2 All training should be conducted within a cultural framework to give participants knowledge of the history of debate and an understanding of the current issues within media culture. To be effective, training must also pass on to participants a high level of technical skill.
 - 2.3 Training should aim to consolidate the professional base of the cultural sector. To this end, organisations involved in the funding or implementation of courses should be mindful of the need to construct a training ladder - from familiarisation to advanced - to ensure that training is properly conducted at all levels, and that these levels are interlinked.
 - 2.4 There should be a high degree of correlation between training initiatives made internally within the BFI and those taken on behalf of non-BFI personnel.
3. Identifying the Needs: The working party was made increasingly aware of the staggering size of the problem around training within the independent film and video sector. The factors which tend to exacerbate this problem could be characterized as follows:-
 - 3.1 - despite worthwhile initiatives e.g. by ACTT, production courses, on the whole, remain fragmented, unstructured and unco-ordinated. There exists no "national plan" or even, in many cases, a "regional plan".
 - apprenticeship or secondee schemes are few and far between.
 - people currently conducting training courses are not, themselves, receiving adequate training. The problem of "who trains the trainers" is real and growing.

3.1 (cont/d)

- disadvantaged groups, particularly women and blacks face "point of entry" difficulties often caused by institutionalised sexism and racism.
- qualitative and quantitative information on the range of training courses is inadequate.
- there is a absence of proper lines of communication for information to reach disadvantaged elements of the potential constituency (ie. those "not in the know") who have commitment but are not within a formal group.
- investment in the independent film and video sector through grant aid is often being wasted by people holding executive positions without proper training. Courses do not exist to meet the specialist administrative needs of the sector.
- financial resources, specifically designated for training, are meagre and inconsistent.

3.2 Over the past year, positive steps have been taken to alleviate the situation in the areas of information, administration and co-ordination.

3.2.1 Information: The need was defined to produce a bulletin which would not only draw together information on courses provided by and for the independent film and video sector, but also forward debate on training by the inclusion of articles on current issues and practises. Titled Directions, the first issue appeared in July 1985 and will be published quarterly, produced by the Funding and Development Division. Initial production problems already perceived include the difficulty of assembling accurate information and providing qualitative assessment of courses.

3.2.2 Administration: Two pilot short courses on administration for workshop co-ordinators have been planned with Leicester Polytechnic. These will take place in December 1985 and March 1986, covering "Management Structure and Legal Aspects" and "Finance" (budgeting, cash-flow, grant applications) respectively. Some bursary assistance will be available from the Funding & Development Division, priority being given to women and black groups.

The Regional Consortium, also, has organised a short course on marketing for film theatre administrators, with Leicester Polytechnic, scheduled for October.

3.2.3 Co-ordination: In response to a recommendation from the consultative working party, a Training Co-ordinator post will be created in April 1986. Based within the Funding and Development Division, the main responsibilities of this post will be:

- to continue the regular publication of Directions;
- to initiate, organise and ensure the evaluation of administration courses for workshop and exhibition personnel;

3.2.3 (cont/d)

- to investigate the possibility of apprenticeship schemes;
- to investigate sources of finance of training courses;
- to give advice on training for external organisations;
- to liaise with BFI Personnel, ACTT Training Officer, Job-fit officers, etc.

4. Conclusions: Whilst it is essential that the new Training Co-ordinator is given the opportunity to develop her/his own strategies and contacts, it seemed important to the working party that the following guidelines for the future be generally acknowledged:

- 4.1 The Training Co-ordinator should be provided with a budget adequate to render her/his work effective.
- 4.2 An advisory group, which should include external representatives, should be retained as support for the new post.
- 4.3 The Training Co-ordinator should be asked to sit on Committees of the BFI to which a training component would give a useful dimension.
- 4.4 The policy outlined in 2. above should be adopted by the BFI and its regional partners and should form the basis for positive action.

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