

ARTS COUNCIL Press Release

ARTS COUNCIL LAUNCHES ETHNIC MINORITY ARTS ACTION PLAN 4% FUNDING TARGET OVER TWO YEARS

Wednesday
5 February 1986

The Arts Council today (Wednesday) launched an action plan in support of Ethnic Minority Arts and Equal Opportunities. It covers funding, employment, appointments of staff and advisors, and staff training. Secretary-General, Luke Rittner, has written to each of the Council's annual revenue clients asking them to participate in the action plan. The plan will be implemented from April of this year and responses from client organisations are requested by May.

The Plan calls for:

- ① A minimum of 4 per cent of Arts Council's expenditure to be committed to the development of Afro-Caribbean and Asian arts by the end of 2 years
- ② The development, implementation and monitoring of the Council's policy for Equal Opportunities in employment
- ③ The participation of all revenue clients
- ④ The appointment of external advisors on ethnic minority arts and the setting up of a monitoring group
- ⑤ The appointment of a full-time Senior Arts Officer responsible for Ethnic Minority Arts
- ⑥ The training of Arts Council staff to advise and support artists and arts administrators from the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities

The Chairman of the Arts Council, Sir William Rees-Mogg said:

"... It is clear that there are many fine Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists working in this country. They merit equitable treatment, and their valuable contribution to the creativity and vitality of the nation's cultural life is not yet fully exploited."

The Arts Council is also publishing the recommendations of its report on Afro-Caribbean and South Asian Music.

Copies of the Action Plan, the Equal Opportunities Policy, the Secretary-General's letter and the recommendations of the Afro-Caribbean and South Asian Music report are attached.

The Arts and Ethnic Minorities - Action Plan - February 1986

'There are many fine Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists working in this country and their valuable contribution to the creativity and vitality of the nation's cultural life is neither fully appreciated nor exploited.'

Sir William Rees-Mogg, Chairman

Introduction

At its meetings in December 1985 and January 1986 the Arts Council confirmed its assertion in its development strategy, The Glory of the Garden, that consideration must be given, as a priority, to the work of ethnic minority artists and arts organisations.

Further, it identified an urgent need to advance its own Equal Opportunities Policy in such a way as to encourage the employment of Afro-Caribbean and Asian artists and managers at all levels of the arts.

To help it achieve these objectives the Council resolved to pass on its recommendations to its own revenue clients and to ensure that effective monitoring procedures are implemented across the board.

The Council has agreed the following action plan to take effect from 1st April 1986 -

1 Establishment of Financial Targets

1.1 The Council agreed that by the end of two years a minimum of 4% of its expenditure will be committed to Afro-Caribbean and Asian arts, the employment of Afro-Caribbean and Asian people and the encouragement, through marketing, of audiences from these communities. A shift of a minimum of 2% could be achieved in 1986/87.

1.2 All of the Council's departments are formulating policies and identifying priorities to meet these target figures.

2 Equal Opportunities in Employment

2.1 The Council reaffirmed its commitment to Equal Opportunities in employment and instructed its senior officers to pursue vigorously the implementation, development and monitoring of its policy.

2.2 Similarly it requested the Secretary-General to invite supported organisations to propose policies appropriate to their own situation, and to outline ways in which these will be implemented and monitored.

3 Participation of Revenue Clients

- 3.1 The Council agreed that the Secretary-General, in writing to supported organisations, would request their co-operation in identifying the ways in which they might achieve similar financial targets to those outlined above.
- 3.2 In particular clients would be invited to consider the development and promotion of Afro-Caribbean and Asian art-forms; and the opportunities for the appointment of people from these communities to their arts staff and management bodies.
- 3.3 The attention of clients would be drawn to the possibilities of audience development and the importance of devising effective marketing and educational policies aimed at specific ethnic groups.
- 3.4 The Council expects an initial response from all its clients by May 1st 1986.

4 Advisory Structures and Monitoring Procedures

- 4.1 The Council agreed that membership of its advisory panels and committees will reflect and satisfy the need for increased knowledge of Afro-Caribbean and Asian arts; that external advisers on ethnic minority arts will be appointed as appropriate and that the attention of the Minister for the Arts should be drawn to the need for similar expertise amongst members of the Council.
- 4.2 A monitoring group will be established with membership drawn primarily from specialist advisory committees to monitor the progress of the Council's action plan, by both its departments and its clients.

5 Staff and Training

- 5.1 A Senior Arts Officer in the new Planning Section will be given full-time responsibility for Ethnic Minority Arts assisted by one other officer and appropriate support staff.
- 5.2 The training of Arts Council staff to advise and support artists and arts managers from the Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities will become a high priority of the Council's Personnel Department.

Conclusion:

In devising this Action Plan the Council is aware of the needs of the many ethnic communities in this country but believes that it is amongst those whose origins are non-Western that the case for development is strongest.

ARTS COUNCIL

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

- 1 The Arts Council is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices.
- 2 In particular the Council aims to ensure that no potential or actual employee receives more or less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability or religious beliefs.
- 3 Selection criteria and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- 4 It is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for the practical application of the policy but at the same time the Council acknowledges that specific responsibilities fall upon management, supervisory staff and individuals professionally involved in recruitment and employee administration.
- 5 To ensure this Policy is consistently applied co-ordinating responsibilities have been assigned to the Personnel Officer who will monitor the operation of the Policy for both employees and job applicants.
- 6 Any employee who believes that he or she has been inequitably treated within the scope of the Policy should raise the matter through the grievance procedure. Any job applicant who believes that he or she has been inequitably treated may write to the Secretary-General who will investigate the complaint.
- 7 The Council will not tolerate unfair discrimination against any members of its staff by any of its employees or other persons appointed to the service of the Council.
- 8 The Council is committed to making this Policy properly effective.