

ARTS COUNCIL

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The Arts Council of Great Britain
Registered Charity no. 212210

The Arts and Ethnic Minorities

As part of the implementation of its Equal Opportunities policy and in line with its stated objectives in the Glory of the Garden, the Arts Council wishes to encourage the employment of people from Britain's ethnic minority communities in the arts and the development of opportunities for ethnic minority art forms, artists and audiences. The Council would wish to put particular emphasis on the needs of people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origins.

I am writing to signal the Council's expectation that the organisations which it supports will adopt a similar view and to ask you what policies your organisation has adopted in this field and how far they have been implemented.

At its meetings in December 1985 and January 1986 the Arts Council approved a plan of action. This will be applied, in the first instance, to its own operations. The Council will also expect arts organisations which it subsidises to adopt parallel plans for their own operations. The measurement of these plans and their implementation will form part of the future evaluation of all client organisations.

Policies are seldom implemented without financial consequences. Our plan of action identifies the prime need to shift financial resources. As a first stage the Council has resolved to ensure that by the end of two years 1986/7 and 1987/8 not less than 4% of its turnover will be spent on: the employment of Afro-Caribbean and Asian people, the promotion of Afro-Caribbean and Asian Art forms and the encouragement, through marketing, of audiences from these communities.

The Arts Council will be able to achieve this objective only if it attracts the co-operation of supported organisations who it will expect to indicate a shift in policy and in related expenditure which is measurable and can be monitored over the next two years. I hope that your organisation will be able to accept and work towards the Council's target.

I recognise that such simply stated financial targets will not be so simply achieved. It would be wrong to apply a national strategy uniformly across the arts. A flexible interpretation of the Arts Council's aims will be necessary. Each art form and arts organisation will require a different approach according to size and type, and multi-cultural arts policies will necessarily vary in different parts of the Country. It must be acknowledged that while much can be achieved within a few years, some developments may take longer than others to realise satisfactorily. It will be for each organisation to propose its broad objectives and to

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far as the Arts Council is concerned) is that a real contribution in terms of the development of the arts by and for Asian and Afro-Caribbean people is expected from all.

In your reply to my letter you may wish to consider some or all of the questions in the attached checklist which has been compiled with the development of all supported organisations in mind.

I would be grateful for a comprehensive statement on these matters before May 1st 1986. I know this will impose yet another burden on an already busy organisation, but, in our view, the Arts Council and many arts organisations have under-estimated the importance of developing multi-cultural and equal opportunities policies. The Afro-Caribbean and Asian communities are impatient to receive fair access to available opportunities for the experience of, and participation in, the arts. What has always been an important issue, has become an urgent one.

I also enclose a copy of the Arts Council's plan of action and its Equal Opportunities Policy statement. These papers illustrate the Council's determination to set its own house in order but may also provide useful ideas which arts organisations may wish to exploit. I am aware that some of the Council's clients have already undertaken much valuable and useful work in this area and I would urge those of you who have fully developed policies and practises to make your expertise and experience available to colleagues in similar organisations. Similarly officers in the Council would appreciate a thorough understanding of your achievements and difficulties in order that mistakes need not be repeated.

I should also signal my intention of writing to you within the next few weeks about the implementation of a code of practice on arts and disability, which also invites a positive response from our clients, though to a later deadline. This will represent the next stage in the development by the Council of an equal opportunities policy to help redress the disadvantages faced by specific sections of the community in relation to arts access.

If you wish for any advice or information or to discuss and develop your ideas please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your reply in due course.

Luke Rittner
Secretary-General

The Arts and Ethnic Minorities - CHECK LIST

Employment Practice

The Arts Council's own Equal Opportunities Policy is available. Organisations are encouraged to consider the adoption of similar policies appropriate to their own situation.

Financial Targets

What percentage of the total budget in the following areas is devoted to Afro-Caribbean and Asian employment and practice?

Programming - including new work
Marketing
Salaries/administration
Training
Education

How might these percentages be improved in 1986/87?

General Artistic Policy and Practice

Consideration should be given to the following:

Is there scope within the work of the organisation for the promotion of the arts of other than European cultures?

Are opportunities given to artists/exhibitors/performers from the Asian and Afro/Caribbean communities?

Does the organisation operate a policy of integrated casting/performing membership?

Is the work presented, advertised and marketed in such a way as to encourage Asian and Afro/Caribbean audiences?

Does the educational policy of the organisation take into consideration the needs and aspirations of Asian and Afro/Caribbean people of all ages?

Is the organisation aware of the cultural traditions and art forms of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, and does it encourage their development and promotion?

Does the organisation provide training opportunities for artists and arts administrators from the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities?

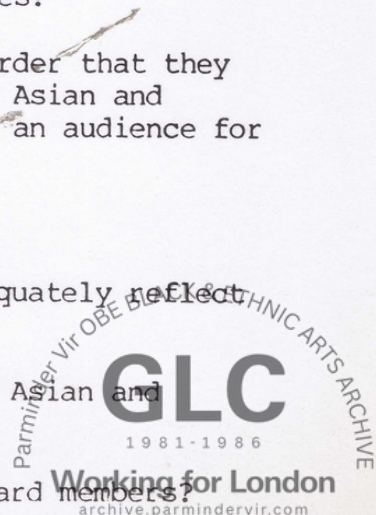
Are training opportunities available to all employees in order that they may enhance their understanding of the difficulties facing Asian and Afro/Caribbean people who wish to participate in or become an audience for the organisation's work?

Management Structure

Does the racial composition of the Board of Management adequately reflect the multi-cultural diversity of the community?

If not, has consideration been given to the recruitment of Asian and Afro/Caribbean Board members?

Do training opportunities, as outlined above, exist for Board members?



The Afro-Caribbean and Asian Communities are populous and face particularly grave social and cultural problems. The Council believes it has a vital responsibility to encourage their artistic activities and to promote their employment opportunities in the arts.

The Council has also taken into account the uncertainties created by the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils and the Greater London Council who have spent considerable sums on minority arts development and support.

With this in mind the Council will be giving early consideration to the creation of effective support and advisory services to complement the increased activity which will be generated by the implementation of its Action Plan.

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