

TOWER HAMLETS - REPORT ON BLACK ARTS PROVISION

Over the last 10 years, there has been rapid growth within the arts sector of Tower Hamlets. However, this does not reflect the large black and ethnic minority population resident in the borough. Facilitating the cultural expression of black and ethnic minorities and promoting equal opportunities in the arts are just beginning to come to the forefront of debate. The current situation regarding arts policy, management and provision is outlined below.

I FUNDING

Local sources of funding are:

A) Tower Hamlets Arts Office, via the T.H. Arts Committee (This Committee consists of 22 elected representatives, 4 Council nominees and has the power of up to 6 co-options) This administers a budget, excluding salaries, administration, etc. of:

- i) £34,000 sessional funding
- ii) £38,000 grant-aid (see appendix 1)

Sessional funding is used to pay 'casual' staff, ie. those hired for short-term projects or those undertaking continuous work - but with no job security - within local arts institutions and organisations.

B). The Borough Council's Mainstream Funding via the Policy Committee Total amount dispersed; £600,000.

C) Tower Hamlets Inner Area Programme (THIAP). Urban Aid expenditure of £3-4 million, 70% capital spending.

It is clear from appendix II that black and ethnic minority arts groups have not been adequately funded by local authority funding bodies. (Only 7 in the list of GLC funded groups are black or ethnic minority projects and whilst the total amount granted by the GLC is £36,859, the local authority's total funding towards these black and ethnic minority groups is £564 for the previous financial year 1984/85). - See also footnote to Appendix I.

Neither the Council nor the Arts Committee has accepted an effective Equal Opportunities or anti-racist policy and strategy. However, the Arts Committee will be considering a draft paper on these issues for the first time at its meeting on 4th December, 1985.

Current black and ethnic minority representation on the Arts Committee is low: it consists of 4 Councillors, 22 elected seats and up to 6 co-options. Of these places, there are 7 black or ethnic minority elected representatives and 1 co-optee (with 3 co-opted places still vacant). Similarly management committees and staffing is equally lacking in black and ethnic minority representation with local arts organisations.

II EMPLOYMENT

There is a significant lack of black and ethnic minority arts workers in the borough. The Council's employees consist of:

- a) The Arts Office - 4 full-time posts (including one job-share). One black officer is employed on a 3 - year contract under section II funding.

- b) Island Arts Centre - 4 full-time posts, 4 sessional staff, one part-time clerical/admin post. One black member of staff has been appointed to start as part-time clerical/admin worker in November, 1985.
- c) Residencies - Appendix I shows the allocation for residencies at £9,500. This is spent on partial funding of salaries for:
- Full-time, borough-wide Community Dance Worker (Job share).
- Full-time, borough-wide Musician in Residence.
- Part-time Poet in Residence attached to a local school.
- Of these, one (the Poet in Residence) is a black artist.
- d) Sessional workers - From a total budget of £34,000, all workers funded from this allocation are based in all-white organisations, except in one instance, the Half Moon Young People's Theatre (which currently has 3 black actors and a GLC funded outreach worker).
- e) Entertainments department - This consists of 2 staff (with a vacancy imminent) and a third post to be applied for under section II.
- f) The Council - Tower Hamlets Council consists of a Labour ^{Party} ~~majority~~ majority of 30 seats, Liberal opposition holding 19 seats and one Independent seat. This Council has just agreed a policy on ethnic monitoring on a trial basis within two directorates (Social Services and Housing). It has not as yet run any anti-racist training courses for staff at any level and does not use the ethnic press to advertise vacancies except on an occasional basis. However, for the past three years, the Arts Office has advertised all posts in the ethnic press (i.e. 'Jananot' and 'The Voice' in addition to 'The Guardian'). Black arts workers are employed in the borough though in very low numbers.

III ENTERTAINMENTS PROGRAMME

The Entertainments Department works independently of the Arts Office and effective co-ordination between the two services does not exist. There is a blatant absence of black artistes in the entertainments programme and the content of some shows has been seen as actively racist and sexist. However, officers of the two departments are moving towards closer working practices including joint ventures (see footnote to Appendix III) and a future overall Equal Opportunities policy. A budget breakdown is given in Appendix III. Of the total £47,325 an estimated 5% has been spent on black artistes and the percentage is as low, if not lower, in the make-up of the audience, e.g. The high cost Celebrity Concerts consist of:

84/85 Jim Bowen; Xmas Pantomime by Alan Clements Productions.

85/86 Freddie Starr
 Keith Harris
 Gary Wilmott (black artist)

Variety Concerts also attract large audiences and take place in three Council venues. One of these venues is situated in the Spitalfields districts, which has approximately 80% Bangladeshi population. Only one of 15 shows used black artistes (this show consisted exclusively of black artistes) but was not publicised adequately. The audience was, therefore, 100% white, reflecting the regular clientele for this series of shows. The average total attendance figures for the variety concerts is approximately 5,750.

The smaller-scale Open Air Band Concerts, have occasionally promoted steel bands.

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These are the only instances within the entertainments programme over the last two years, where black artists have been included. The policy issues of black and ethnic minority artistes performing shows reflecting different cultures, and entertainment appealing to black and ethnic minority audiences have not yet been approached.

However, there is a move towards a more coherent provision of arts and entertainments and the first joint promotion is to be 2 anti-racist concerts at the Half Moon Theatre, billing predominantly black performers. This will be funded as follows:

Entertainments Department	£1,000
Arts Office	£1,000
Ethnic Minorities Committee	£1,500

IV SUMMARY

Tower Hamlets has a poor record of Equal Opportunities in its arts provision. However, steps are now being taken to identify and redress this imbalance, both within Council services and Council-funded projects.

SO/CT December 1985

APPENDIX IBUDGET(GRANT AID ALLOCATION)

<u>Arts Committee Budget 1985/86</u>		
	<u>1984/85</u>	<u>1985/86</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Sub-committee Assistance to Local Arts Organisations	9,000.00	8,000.00
" " Events and Exhibitions	5,750.00	5,000.00
" " Commissions, Residences and Public Art	10,000.00	9,500.00
Publicity	4,000.00	1,500.00
What's On (Monthly) 10 issues, 6,000 copies	2,250.00	1,700.00
Awards to Artists (Individuals)	2,250.00	2,000.00
The East End Festival (TEEF)	1,500.00	1,500.00
Equipment (Hire for groups)	1,000.00	500.00
Picture Loan Scheme	250.00	300.00
Touring Exhibition Circuit	2,500.00	1,500.00
Arts Research	-	1,500.00
To Sessional Allocation	-	5,000.00
Bubble Theatre	1,200.00	-
	£39,700.00	£38,000.00

NB From the total 1984/5 Arts Committee grant aid budget of £39,700, an estimated £6,000 was granted directly to black and ethnic minority organisations.

Also in the previous financial year, the Arts Committee allocated grants to two London-wide agencies as follows:

Greater London Arts£2,675

Artsline £ 200

From this financial year's budget, a third London-wide organisation has been funded:

Minorities' Arts Advisory Service £200

APPENDIX II

GLC FUNDED GROUPS 84/85

BOROUGH: TOWER HAMLETS

GLC £	ACGB £	GLA £	BOROUGH £	OTHER £	TOTAL £	NAME	NOTES
11,583	-	-				Amora Ko Jona	
3,000	-	15,615	7,764			Basement Comm. Arts Project	
2,873	-	-	-			Berner Estate	
1,000	-	-	150			Berner Fair	
4,214	-	-	200			Bow/Old Ford & Mayday Group	
17,733	-	-				Campaign for Democracy in Dockland	
40,300	54,000	1,865	425			Camerawork	*
16,500	8,000	650	-			Chisenhale Dance Space	
30,555	-	-	-			Circles	
13,558	-	-	-			Dishari Shilpi Gosthi	
46,243	-	6,130	2,000			Docklands Comm. Poster Project	
5,250	-	1,500	2,325			East End Festival	
24,872	-	9,900	11,874			Four Corners	
120,342	99,500	3,000	53,046			Half Moon Theatre (incl.YPT)	*
17,115	-	-	73,000			Island Arts Centre	
2,850	-	-				Island History Project	
3,000	-	-	414			Mela Multi-Cultural Festival	
1,720	-	-				National Interest Band	
8,050	-	-	41,865			National Museum of Labour History	
12,522	-	-	-			Options Theatre Group	
2,310	-	-	-			Original Mixture	
55,652	-	4,340	4,626			Oxford House	
1,200	-	-				Scnali Womens Assoc. (HIRWO)	
3,645	-	-				Steelpan Project	

APPENDIX II (2)

BOROUGH: TOWER HAMLETS

GLC £	ACGB £	GLA £	BOROUGH £	OTHER £	TOTAL £	NAME	NOTES
4,100	-	-	300			Stepney Regardant	
33,552	-	21,145	22,799			Tower Hamlets Arts Project (THAP)	
2,000	-	-	250			T.H.Arts Committee: Picture Loan Scheme	
2,533	-	4,650	1,200			Community Dance Workers	
2,800	-	4,000	4,000			Musician in Residence	
3,613	-	-	250			T.H.Senior Citizens Film Group	
9,098	-	-	31,500			T.H.Youth Music Workshop	
4,234	-	-	190			T.H.Womens Mural Team	
37,000	73,000	6,000	12,600			Whitechapel Art Gallery	X
545,017	234,500	78,795	270,778			SUB-TOTAL	
	-	19,503				Other Grants	
	234,500	98,298				TOTALS	

NB The column headed 'Borough' includes all local authority funding committees and does not, therefore, relate specifically to Arts Committee spending. (The latter is detailed in Appendix I.)

TOWER HAMLETS ENTERTAINMENTS BUDGET 1985/86

	£
Variety concerts	5,700
Cabaret nights	6,000
Ballroom dances	775
Children's Summer Fun	5,000
Concerts for the elderly	2,000
* Celebrity concerts	14,700
Children's Saturday club	750
Open air band concerts	600
Publicity and printing	6,800
Hire of Halls	3,000
Equipment hire	1,000
Miscellaneous	1,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>47,325</u>

* In conjunction with the Arts Office and Ethnic Minorities Committee, the Entertainments Department has allocated £1,000 from this particular budget heading, towards the cost of 2 anti-racist concerts.