

MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT



INTERNATIONAL

MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL, INC

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Annual Report 1992

This was the second year of activity for Media for Development International (MFDI). This report will tell of MFDI projects in 1992, its finances and administrative issues, and plans for 1993 and the future.

MFDI Projects in 1992 --

During the year, MFDI continued supporting Media for Development Trust (MFD) in Zimbabwe; completed the projects doing a film/video training needs assessment for UNESCO in southern Africa, the Neria 35mm blow up, the It's Not Easy French and Swahili dubbing, and supporting VHSS in Bangladesh to set up a video resource center. We started new efforts providing assistance to projects in Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, supporting productions of a feature film on AIDS for adolescents in Zimbabwe, and a documentary about a Maasai warrior, and a project distributing FHI/AIDSCAP's video The Faces of AIDS.

Project 1-01 -- Support of Media for Development Trust (MFD) in Zimbabwe

This year we provided \$3301.25 of support for the purchase of videos that MFD distributes in its region, and a couple other minor items. MFD earns money from this to support itself. We also provided many man-hours of US-staffer time supporting them. John and Louise Riber are posted in Harare, and provide support as well. We fax back and forth to them several times a week.

Project 1-03 -- Film and video training needs assessments in southern Africa

We completed this project this year. In 1991, John Riber visited ten SADC countries in southern Africa, assessing their film and video training needs. His report has been submitted to UNESCO, but is still not finalized by UNESCO. We hope that will happen soon, so we can share it with others.

Project 1-06 -- Blow up of Neria to 35mm

We completed the Neria 35mm blow up in early 1992, in time for the March World Premiere in Harare. We received funding from CIDA and SIDA for this work that covered almost all expenses. DSR paid in the remainder necessary.

The film has gone on to do very well. In Zimbabwe, it has become the biggest box-office success ever, beating Terminator II and The Gods Must be Crazy. Also, it was released in theaters in Kenya, Lesotho, and Uganda in 1992. It was entered into many festivals, winning several major awards -- in fact it has won a total of about US\$15,000 of prize money for its Producer, Director, Best Actress, and Best Musician. All awards were paid to the individuals. (More awards were won in 1993.) In early 1993 it was released in cinema halls in Zambia, Ghana, Australia/Oceania and South Africa. April 7th it premiered in the USA. We continue to work to increase its distribution. The video will be released in Zimbabwe and Uganda as well in early

1993. We are working also on Nigeria and Mozambique (in a Portuguese dubbed version) theatrical releases.

Project 1-07 -- Dubbing of It's Not Easy to French and Swahili languages

We completed this project in 1992, finishing up the Swahili version in the first half of the year. Both French and Swahili have been popular and many copies distributed and put to good use.

Project 1-08 -- The Faces of AIDS distribution

We initiated this project in 1992. It probably utilized more MFDI man-hours than any other effort this year.

We completed the production of film and video masters in English and French and an International Track version; video sleeve, flyer and Discussion Guidelines print materials in both languages; and made many dubs of the film/video for distribution. Then we did a mass mailing to 4,000 agencies world-wide, and entered the film into 13 festivals, got it reviewed in 18 newsletters, and got it shown at 21 workshops and conferences. We also were able to fund three mini-premieres of it to be held by our affiliate distributors Africa Consultants International in Dakar, Media for Development Trust in Harare, and DSR/Kenya in Nairobi. We are supporting URTNA to develop a Broadcaster's Guidelines in English and French, and then distribute broadcast-quality copies to all its membership of African national television stations at the November 1993 URTNA Screen in Nairobi. Also in 1993 we were able to fund six evaluation showings of it in Zimbabwe and Senegal.

As of the end of 1992, we had distributed about 1,000 copies, many at the price of \$19.95 plus shipping. All income from sales went back into the project. All together we expect this project will involve about \$100,000 in expenditures. (It was extended in May 1993 up to November 1993 and the production and distribution of a Swahili language version added.) This project has been able to pay for the time of Steve and Sally Smith and Doni Orndorff at their USAID rates. Also it has been able to pay MFDI overhead at 33%.

Project 1-11 -- Production consultancy in Ghana

John Riber spent a week in Ghana to help Johns Hopkins to complete a documentary on a family planning project there. We will not be distributing this video as it is simply a "this is our project" video, and will have no further involvement with the project. It was useful for John to meet the film community in Ghana though.

Project 1-12 -- Initialization of a project for a AIDS feature film in Uganda

World Learning, formerly The Experiment in International Learning, in Uganda, asked us to develop a proposal for a feature film on AIDS focusing on womens and childrens issues. John Riber visited Kampala and worked with WL staff and developed a \$600,000 project that they will try to get funded by USAID. World Learning covered the costs of this visit. We hope this project will be funded in 1993. The Riber family would move to Kampala for 4-6 months in late 1993 to shoot the film if it happens.

Project 1-13 -- Production of a video of an AIDS play in Zambia

Johns Hopkins supported the video taping of a stage play on AIDS in Lusaka by John Riber. John went to Lusaka and headed a very small crew that basically recorded the play on video tape. This was a fairly quick and easy production. We will not be involved in its distribution or in

any further capacity.

Project 1-14 -- Production of a AIDS and adolescents feature film in Zimbabwe
Media for Development Trust in Harare started a project to produce a feature on AIDS for adolescents in Africa. This project has its roots in a request years ago from the Government of Botswana for such a film. We feel strongly that this film is probably one of the best ways to reach this most important audience with messages that will have an impact on behavior. This film will save many lives!

MFDI procured all the film stock and supplies required and was instrumental in providing cash flow support. At one point MFDI had advanced up to almost \$90,000 towards the project to meet payroll and costs while MFD was shooting. Promised support from other donors was a bit slow in arriving. In fact, the SIDA contribution only arrived in February, 1993, and the Government of Botswana funding is still pending as of May. MFDI will be repaid all it has advanced into this project hopefully by the end of 1993.

Steve and Sally Smith visited Harare for some of the shooting of this project in November/December. This travel was paid for from other sources.

The completion of the film is not yet fully funded. We have enough money to make a 16mm print, but need about \$130,000 more to blow up to 35mm, produce videos and initiate distribution. MFDI and MFD in Zimbabwe have approached many donors requesting support for the remainder. We are confident it will come in 1993. We started production before all funding was in hand as we had to shoot before the rainy season began. The need for this film is too great to wait an extra six months.

Project 1-15 -- Assistance to the Zimbabwean Film and Video Association to hold an African film festival in Harare

The ZFVA asked us to help them handle the finances for their film festival held in November 1992. We received the funds from NORAD and then paid them to various agencies and individuals as per ZFVA instructions. The funds came right before the festival and ZFVA had no way to handle the international payments required, etc. We only charged them our costs in handling the transactions.

We are happy to be able to support local projects like this. It helped introduce Zimbabwe to films from other parts of Africa; and Zimbabwean film makers to film makers from the rest of the continent. Also it helped build the administrative capacity and reputation of ZFVA, and test market other African films in the Harare market.

Project 1-16 -- Development of a documentary on Mpeti Ole Surum, Maasai warrior

We began work in 1992 on the development of a film about Mpeti for the American market. We are working with Cliff Moskow, a close friend of Mpeti's and the producer of a video that we are distributing on USAID in Kenya, and Rhonda Richards, a Boston film maker that worked with Cliff on the Kenya video. We met with them in Boston in June 1992, and in Maryland in September 1992.

We started by working to organize performances for Mpeti at local Maryland schools in November. He came and stayed with us for two weeks and we got him organized to perform at the Smithsonian, and to do 14 other shows at local schools. DSR staffers volunteered their time to drive him to these shows and Sally Smith volunteered the hours spent setting up the bookings. His performances were always very well received.

We also arranged for Mpeti to return to Maryland in April/May 1993 for more performances. This second time around, we will have all payments for his talks come

to MFDI, and MFDI will pay his expenses and take the standard 25% commission as a booking agent.

We prepared a compilation video of available footage on him; and a booklet of articles and feedback from Mpeti's previous shows.

In 1993 we will develop a proposal for the production of this film and hopefully get it funded. (In March we submitted a completed proposal to ITVS, and will submit it to many others in May/June.)

Project 1-17 --Assistance to the development of the Zambian film industry

John Riber carried out a consultancy for the World Bank, providing advice to them on the development of the Zambian film industry. Basically he recommended that they close down the partially completed film lab and production facilities, and focus instead on video production.

Project 2-01 -- Seed grant to Bangladesh to establish a video resource center

We completed this project this year. Cheryl Groff visited our grantee: Voluntary Health Services Society, when she was there on other business. We found that they received the about 60 videos we sent and the about \$2,000 and had put them to good use in a resource center for their membership. We continue our relationship with them. Although they have limited use for videos from Africa, they have distributed copies of our Asian programs. They are able to get many thousands of viewers for our films.

MFDI finances and administration

In October we moved, along with DSR, to a new office that is much larger and nicer. MFDI pays a portion of the rent of this facility as it did before, although now it is a larger amount. MFDI now has its own phone lines and fax machine and we purchased our own computers and some office equipment.

In 1992 MFDI received registration from USAID as a Private Voluntary Organization. This PVO registration took us six months to organize, but it makes us one of about 300 PVOs able to receive USAID funds. So far we've not received any money directly from AID, but PVO status has been helpful for us to receive funding from agencies that are funded by USAID, such as Family Health International (The Faces of AIDS distribution) and World Learning (Uganda AIDS feature film production).

We held the 1991 Annual General Meeting by phone and fax with the Board members. A quorum participated. We also elected an Executive Committee of Ayo Ajayi, John and Louise Riber and Steve and Sally Smith to handle most Board member responsibilities.

We continued with Orndorff Enterprises doing our books, and were audited for 1992 again by our CPA Dr Cheryl Troff in February/March of 1993. The audit again proved that our books are kept in conformity to accepted standards.

We continued the employment of John and Louise Riber at the salary of \$8,000 per year, and with the only benefit of a bi-annual home leave. They made a home leave trip in 1991 and plan their next in mid-1993.

At long last we were able to hire a consultant, Cheryl Groff to work on a daily basis. Due to her busy schedule she was only able to give us a couple weeks of her time in

September. We paid her \$150/day. This amount is below her value to MFDI. Since January 1993 she has been able to work about 3/4-time on a continuous basis. We hired her as a full time staff in mid-1993.

Development through Self-Reliance, Inc. (DSR) was able to convert \$50,000 of its interest free loan to MFDI to a donation in 1992. DSR continued to provide MFDI with interest free loans. As of the end of 1992, DSR had advanced MFDI \$49,800. We hope to be able to repay most of this loan from DSR once we receive payments promised from the Governments of Sweden and Botswana for the AIDS and adolescents feature film.

We had gross revenues in 1992 of \$265,694.14, and ended the year with a small difference of negative \$1,811.56 between assets and liabilities. Basically we are quite happy with that financial position. We have handled significant moneys in 1992 and pretty much covered our overhead administrative costs. We have about a 33% overhead rate as per USAID standards, which is quite reasonable.

The future for MFDI

In 1993, we will complete the AIDS and adolescents feature film. We plan pretesting a rough cut in May, finalizing the 16mm print and videos in August, and making the 35mm blow up by the end of the year. We have to find the balance of funds necessary, but have many potential sources.

We hope, too, to get the Uganda AIDS feature film funded by World Learning and get that project started. Also the Maasai film we hope will get some funding and get started.

The Faces of AIDS distribution project will be completed in November of 1993, although we will continue to distribute it indefinitely.

We will continue to support Media for Development Trust in Zimbabwe to do their important work. They are working on the establishment of a Resource Center and we hope to help them both with funding and technical support.

The Mennonites have asked us to help them produce and distribute a feature film in Zimbabwe that would focus on ethnic conflict and reconciliation. We met with key Mennonite media people in March, 1993 and plan to draft a concept paper soon, and then we anticipate script development funding from the Mennonites. With luck we'll produce this film in 1994.

John Riber will do several small consultancies for Johns Hopkins University again this year. That will bring in some money.

We anticipate funding from the Ford Foundation for a Swahili dubbing of Consequences (which came in May 1993). John Riber will visit TDS in Tanzania in June/July 1993 to initiate the Consequences and The Faces of AIDS Swahili dubbing. Also we will make a Portuguese version of Neria. John will initiate that in July 1993 in Mozambique.

Also in August/September 1993, John and Louise Riber will come to MFDI head office on their biannual home leave.

We will hold another Annual General Meeting in September 1993. Unfortunately, again it will have to be by phone and fax. The Executive Committee will provide most of the guidance required during the year.

In summary...

MFDI has completed its first full year of real activity in 1992. We got in about a quarter of a million dollars in support from about 15 different donors. We finally got USAID PVO status, a paid staff person, and moved to a new facility. We finished up several projects and started new ones. We are now beginning to develop a reputation for quality work, and agencies are coming to us for assistance.

Much needs to be done in 1993 for us to feel "permanent" but we are on track and need only to keep going as we are and we'll get there. DSR has supported us with a \$50,000 donation and an interest free loan of about that again. We think we'll be able to pay off most of that loan in 1993 and look to financial independence by the end of the year. The overhead we've received from The Faces of AIDS project has made a considerable contribution to our stability. If one or two of the major projects we have pending at the beginning of 1993 get funded and do as well as we hope, we will be in a wonderful position.

We must remember that what we are doing has no precedent. Trail-blazing is never easy or quick. But we are confident that we are on the right track and will get there eventually.