

MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT



INTERNATIONAL

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ANNUAL REPORT – 2002

In 2002, MFDI's main activities were the ramp up of the CDC funded HIV/AIDS radio serial drama, and the completion of the scripts for the Homeboyz TV series project (previously called the Yellow Card TV project).

In 2002, MFDI has worked on a number of projects:

1. This year we pretty much wound up all funded **Yellow Card film project** activities. The long-awaited South African release happened in August 2002. The Pidgin English version is almost done now and is expected to be completed in early 2003. A Chinese version is still in the works after a couple problems, and we continue to pursue broadcasting opportunities, with big sales to Finland, Switzerland, and Austria this year. A lot of videos were distributed as well, a Video CD released in Nigeria, and the film won another award in Morocco.
2. Our biggest effort this year was the submission of the proposal in January of the **HIV/AIDS Radio Serial Drama project**, which was then awarded in June by the Centers for Disease Control to MFD/Zimbabwe with MFDI as a subcontractor, handling personnel, logistics and financial matters. During the second half of the year, we purchased about \$165,000 worth of capital goods – mostly sound equipment, and sent it to Zimbabwe, where it was installed, setting up three state-of-the-art sound studios. MFDI was able to provide a loan for the bridging and up-front capital costs that we anticipate will be paid off in mid-2003. A set of accounts and financial procedures were set up for safe cash flow to Zimbabwe and we hired two full-time consultants to the project (as well as John and Louise Riber, already on MFDI payroll). MFD/Zimbabwe has now established a process for script development and recording, doing twelve scripts at a time, with fourteen ready to start in February 2003, when the project will begin the weekly airing of the series throughout Zimbabwe in English, Shona and Ndebele. It will be called the Mopani Junction radio program. It is anticipated that this project will run at least two more years.
3. Previously Ford Foundation provided MFDI \$250,000 towards a **television series project**. This year we have virtually completed the six one-hour scripts involving a unique two workshop process (held in Zimbabwe in November of

2001 and 2002) that has been video taped and will be shared with others producing social message motion picture projects. In early 2003, MFDI plans to complete this first phase of the project and develop a proposal to carry out the final production phase. Due to political / economic problems in Zimbabwe, we are unsure where we would be able to do this production. The project is now called the Homeboyz Project, as it is based on events and issues faced by members of a rock and roll band called Homeboyz. The messages will focus on teenage sexuality and responsibility issues.

4. MFDI completed our own **web site at www.mfdi.org**, with the services of Outdare in Rotterdam, Netherlands. This builds on the two previous web sites provided at no cost from DSR. It includes the full African social message video catalog and facilities for buying on line, as well as sections on recent news, documents and links (so visitors can download MFDI documents and connect to a selection of key African cinema sites), sponsors, and how to contact MFDI. In January 2003, we will enlarge it, adding more documents, streaming video of the complete films of two of our early titles, *Consequences* and *It's Not Easy*. These parts are now completed, and will be added in January 2003.
5. Our long standing **Peace Film Project** is back on hold unfortunately. Last year we set up a co-production agreement with Norwegian non-profit Media19 and Jonny Persey in London. The first step was placing a Norwegian in Zimbabwe for a year to get the project going. But with political problems in Zimbabwe, the Norwegians don't feel safe placing someone there, and there is no way we could ever get a Zimbabwean visa for someone to work on a conflict resolution film project. So we await the resolution of the political situation in Zimbabwe, and then we can re-start the project.
6. MFDI's **Project ARUP** was completed this year. This project was the production of a video on solar heating and cooling in Zimbabwean architecture, made for an appropriate technology engineering firm.
7. MFDI also completed the **updating of an animated African video** now entitled *Seven Methods of Family Planning*, adding a section on Norplant contraceptives as the seventh method. The new video will be released and marketed in 2003.
8. MFDI has continued operating the **African cinema conference** ("Afcin") which is a six year old email list server, free to about 200 subscribers worldwide. Costs are about \$7 a month. This is the most senior list server / email newsletter on the subject and was started (in the early days of email list servers), as a result of a meeting of distributors at a FESPACO hosted by MFDI. We continue to get positive feedback from subscribers.
9. **Video distribution and sales** continues to be the main programmatic focus for MFDI. We hold inventory of about 1,000 VHS at any time, valued between \$5-7,000. During the year 2002, MFDI grossed \$40,680 in income, and had \$14,262 in direct costs, and about \$1,636 in catalog printing costs. Thus we had \$24,782 in net profits (excluding labor and overhead). This is by far the largest profits ever. This year we added a few new titles, and our biggest

progress was the new website with a complete catalog and online buying facilities, and starting to set up streaming video for free distribution online.

10. Other than the above costs, MFDI spent \$10,366 on phone, postage, copying, office supply and banking costs. This was MFDI's first full year of a payroll for its four previously volunteer staff (John and Louise Riber, Steve and Sally Smith). They are being paid about half of what is "good salary." In the past all have been volunteers, although the Ribers were paid as consultants on many specific jobs. Office space, furnishings and some equipment continues to be donated by Steve and Sally Smith. At the end of 2002, MFDI returned the computers loaned from DSR a few years ago, and purchased two new Toshiba laptops for our office.

In 2003.... MFDI expects to complete the proposal and secure funding for the Homeboyz TV series production. We also expect to continue to provide logistic and financial support for MFD/Zimbabwe's Radio Serial Drama project. The political / economic situation in Zimbabwe, where our colleague Media for Development Trust and many of our operations are based, continues to be unstable, but we are hopeful of a resolution this year.

We continue with four full-time paid staff, and two full-time consultants (provided to the radio drama series project); a beautiful new web site; and a viable and active distribution business with about 100 titles of top-quality African social message videos. Financially we are stable, but it is unclear if we can continue staff payroll at the current level throughout 2003.

We will attend the bi-annual FESPACO again this February / March for the fifth time over the last ten years, and look forward to making contact with colleagues there as well as in New York and Europe on the return trip. We will see Outdare in Rotterdam to review options for distribution of many more videos online, as that would lower costs and increase viewership greatly. Currently web access in Africa is limited, but growing fast. We want to be ready when more schools and groups are able to download entire videos.

We also have proposals submitted in 2002 to Maasai Educational Discovery and the Firelight Foundation for unique video distribution efforts in training in the utilization of videos within African projects, and a new way to supply quantities of videos to many agencies at once.

Our work in African social message media started 20+ years ago and we've spent \$4,200,000 as a film production and distribution agency. But now we have evolved into radio and TV productions with no active film productions in the pipeline, and as radio and TV distribution is relatively simple, there are no new distribution efforts there. Our original VHS video distribution focus remains strong, with some additional broadcast sales, and 35mm film rentals. We realize that our unique skills and niche is getting videos to African viewers, and we plan to build on that with new faster, easier, cheaper methodology. As time goes by, our customer base, number of quality titles and total sales are increasing, and we look forward to building even more with the new modalities of on-line buying, and actual distribution over the internet. Also we hope projects in training and bulk distributions will happen in 2003 also growing our distribution focus.