

MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT



INTERNATIONAL

MEDIA FOR DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL, INC

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Mechai Viravaidya, Population & Community Development Association, Thailand; *Batilloi Warritay*, UNICEF, Sao Tome

ANNUAL REPORT – 2003

In 2003, MFDI's main activities were 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 2003, MFDI has worked on a number of projects:

1. **Yellow Card film project** activities this year included the Pidgin English version completion and release. With this, all funded activities are now accomplished. A Chinese version production and release is almost done, and we continue to pursue broadcasting opportunities and distribute videos. We met with Pathfinder International in Boston, but found they were not interested in funding additional activities related to the utilization of the much-visited Yellow Card website, nor of any evaluation activities. MFDI worked with grad student Debra Buenting helping her produce an evaluation of the website without outside funding.
2. **HIV/AIDS Radio Serial Drama project – Mopani Junction**, was continued from last year. MFD/Zimbabwe is the main agency with MFDI as a subcontractor, handling personnel, logistics and financial matters. MFDI is continuing to provide a loan covering bridging needs and up-front capital costs that will be paid off at the end of the project in mid-2004. The project was cut off the air due to political issues in Zimbabwe from 1 August 2003, but MFD is continuing to produce episodes. It is anticipated that this project will run until mid-2004, completing all 104 episodes in English, Shona and Ndebele.
3. **Homeboyz television series project** -- This year we have 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, edited into a short program and will be shared with others producing social message motion picture projects. Also we recorded songs to be used in the series, and developed the final production proposal. Due to political / economic problems in Zimbabwe, we are unsure where we would be able to do this production. The project 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's web site at www.mfdi.org**, is continuing with the pro-bono services of Outdare in Rotterdam, Netherlands whom we visited in March 2003. 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, and streaming video of the complete films of two of our early titles, *Consequences* and *It's Not Easy*.
5. MFDI has now turned over the moderation of the **African cinema conference** ("Afcin") email list server after 6+ years. As of mid-2003 Sade Turnipseed has taken over moderation responsibilities.
6. Steve and Sally Smith attended **FESPACO** in February / March 2003, and met with the Ribers there as well as many other African film experts. This was the fifth time we've attended the bi-annual festival, and probably the last, as we feel the costs are too high in relation to the benefits.
7. **Video distribution and sales** continues to be the main programmatic activity for MFDI. We hold inventory of about 1,000 VHS at any time, valued between \$5-6,000. During the year 2003, MFDI grossed \$40,717 in income from video sales, and broadcast and theatrical royalties received, and had \$13,900 in direct costs, and about \$385 in catalog printing and marketing costs. MFDI sold 276 videos and gifted 111 videos (mostly to FilmAid International), and paid \$4,219.85 in royalties to African filmmakers in 2003.
8. **Social Entrepreneur Project** – MFDI is acting as the fiduciary agent for David Bornstein in the promotion of his recent book, "How to Change the World – Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas." \$58,084 has come into MFDI from three donors. Five percent of the total will be paid to MFDI for overhead and administrative costs.
9. **FilmAid International Project** – MFDI has worked with FAI for 4-5 years now, assisting them in planning and equipment procurement. Also we donated 39 videos to them last year and sold another 34 at cost price. This year, after review of their evaluation report, we donated an additional 60 videos, and other materials, so now they have at least one of each of our titles. We anticipate that we will assist them further by procuring and donating additional videos for use in their work in Kenyan and Tanzanian refugee camps. .
10. **Tumbuka Project** – MFDI is working to assist this Zimbabwean dance troupe to tour the USA, possibly in 2004 or 2005.
11. Other than the above costs, MFDI spent \$12,535 on phone, postage, copying, office supplies and equipment (finally paying for borrowed shelves, etc), licenses, and banking and credit card costs. This was MFDI's second full year of a payroll for its four previously volunteer staff (John and Louise Riber, Steve and Sally Smith). Office space continues to in the Colorado home of the Smiths.

In 2004.... MFDI expects to help MFD/Zimbabwe complete the production of the *Homeboyz* TV series in an African country, but not in Zimbabwe as originally planned. We also expect to continue to provide logistic and financial support for MFD/Zimbabwe's Radio Serial Drama project, which is expected to end in mid-2004. We will continue to work on the social entrepreneur book support, and hope that we'll be involved with a Tumbuka USA tour, although that may not come until 2005. Also, we will procure additional video programming for use in FilmAid's refugee camp showings and we may visit FilmAid in NY and Kenya in 2004.

We continue with four full-time paid staff, and two full-time consultants (provided to the radio drama series project); a fine web site; and a viable distribution business with about 100 titles of top-quality African social message videos. Financially we are stable, but payroll will be reduced in 2004.

Our work in African social message media started almost 20 years ago and we've spent \$4,719,249 as MFDI, a non-profit film production and distribution agency, plus what we spent as DSR in the 1980s for the first few films. But now we have evolved into radio, and TV efforts with no active film productions in the pipeline, in part due to the political / economic crisis in Zimbabwe. We have added new projects this year working on supporting Zimbabwean artists to tour the USA, and increasing our relationship with FilmAid getting hundreds of African social message videos to hundreds of thousands of African viewers.