

TRAINING PROGRAMME (DRAFT)

--Publications and Research.

We suggest Medu Art Ensemble develop a training programme along the lines of the Open Schools run by the Institute of Race Relations in South Africa. These are highly community-oriented youth programmes, covering a whole variety of cultural fields -- graphics, writing, drama, music, etc. The Open School offers highly structured courses in given subjects, ranging in length from short workshops to 2 or 3 month classes.

This approach has several clear advantages:

1. It is much easier to find volunteer staff to commit themselves to teaching for a firmly limited period (whether that be one week or three months), than for an indefinite time. We could use not only Medu members but also "experts" from outside Medu as teaching staff.
2. By offering a structured, short-term course, we will solve the problem of a continual turn-over of students with different levels of knowledge. Instead students will be able to feel they have made a definite amount of progress on completing a course: that they have acquired a skill or technique or a body of knowledge.
3. Students, while offering a pool from which Medu members could be recruited, would not see themselves as a sort of second-class Medu members: their relationship to Medu would be clearly defined, as students in definite classes. They would gain this training from us whether they joined us more fully or not; we would be seen to be benefitting the community in very concrete ways.
4. By offering a structured programme, we would have more success in relating our efforts to other community and Botswana organisations, and we could begin to fit our teaching programme more successfully into the needs of the community around us.

(Although we believe such courses would be "structured", we would like to emphasise that we do NOT wish to recreate the "teacher-student" situation common in formal education today. Courses would be rather seen as directed discussion groups and workshops,)

The Open Schools have aimed at teaching adults and secondary school students. In order to do this, classes are taught in the evening or late afternoon. Programmes can also be offered during school holidays (during the day) and short workshops can be run over weekends.

Such a programme would appear most likely to succeed if offered simultaneously in a number of fields, and would require a fair degree of co-ordination. We would recommend a full-time project co-ordinator (possibly funded or provided by a volunteer agency), to arrange ~~arranging~~ schedules, space, community contacts, etc.

Space for such a programme would of course be a priority. Obviously it would be far the best to have an Art Centre from which the programme could be run. Until then, we would suggest several community organisations which might be approached

for temporary class-room space: k the YWCA, non-formal Education, GSS, UB, the Polytechnic are some of these. There might also be space at the Anglican Cathedral.

An example of one aspect of such a programme: P and R's contribution:

- a) a 2 or 3 month "introduction to writing" course, in the evenings. Topics could include writing poetry and short-stories, an introduction to Southern African poetry, etc.
- b) Depending on the response to this introduction, a second course could be offered on a higher level, for those ~~already~~ who already have some knowlege and experience of writing.
- c) A short workshop (one to three days) on poetry in Southern Africa, aimed at acquainting people with the kind of work being produced and to discuss the direction of poetry in Southern Africa.
- d) a course on the mass media (newspapers, TV, etc) and how these attempt to direct culture in the region.
- e) A course on the history of Southern Africa with emphasis on cultural and social development.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate that such a programme could only be successful if it is organised in conjunction with the community with whom we wish to work. This means particularly that people should learn about the programme through schools, community organisations, etc: it is simply not sufficient to put up an announcement about coming classes in the Mall. After the programme is underway we should try to get feedback from students and participants as to the direction they would like the programme to take.

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