



GRIOT
FOUNDATION
TRUST

Promoting African centred approaches to developing people and communities

ANNUAL REPORT JULY 2001

GRIOT'S PHILOSOPHY

'We should go down to the grassroots of our culture, not to remain there, not to be isolated there, but to draw strength and substance therefrom, and with whatever additional resources and strength and material we acquire, proceed to set up a new form of society raised to the level of human progress'

Sekou Toure, First President of Guinea

SANKOFA AFAMFA

'A return to the past must be guided by critical examination'

GRIOT YEAR JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

MISSION STATEMENT

Research, develop and promote African centred approaches to developing people, organisations and communities.

SOLIDARITY

Griot aims to:

- Embrace the cultural distinctiveness, spiritualities and differences that reflect Africans everywhere
- Respect and affirm people in the ways in which we develop working alliances, organise and deliver our undertakings

GRIOT YEAR JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

Consultants	Dr Abiola Ogunsola Information & Communications
	Dr Magna Aidoo Strategic Planning
	Edith Nwangoro Legal & voluntary sector development
Trainers	Etse Ladjekpo
	Dr Abiola Ogunsola
	Menelik Shabazz
	Glenda Trew
	Ama Gueye
	Noreen Howard
	Athena Reid
	Karl Evelyn
	Bunmi Popoola
	Roger Steven
Volunteers	Iola Ashundie
	Terrence Baptiste
Project manager	Noreen Howard

GRIOT YEAR JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The last year has passed very quickly. It has been a full and taxing year with many rewarding moments. I would like to start by thanking the volunteers, Trustees, trainers and Project Manager for their solidarity, dedication and generosity.

A considerable amount of time has been spent on developing the skills and knowledge of the Board of Trustees and the framework of the strategic plan. This will enable the new phase of our work to develop. We envisage that with our new focus we will attract the resources required to offer the programmes of the plan.

We have continued to organise Discussion Forums and these provide a unique opportunity for Africans to share expertise and perspectives in a particular area and seek solutions. These forums provide inspiration, support and knowledge. They are informal and very interactive. Through these debates, Griot aims to advance the more serious agenda of building consciousness and solidarity within and between communities.

New people attend every forum and a core of regular participants has helped to identify how the forums can be better delivered through other networks

Griot's has made significant contributions to the Black voluntary sector in Greenwich through the development of a partnership forum of Black organisations. The Partnerships Forum has had training in business principles, developing partnership and lottery applications. Attendance has involved over 20 organisations. Organisational partnerships are the structure of the future and Griot is pleased to pioneer this process at this time.

We look forward to the next year's work which will concentrate on raising the funds for the core programmes of the Griot Institute and consultancy for the Trust.

In recognition of the numerous people who have supported Griot, we express our appreciation using the words of Jomo Kenyatta First President of Kenya:

'Our children may learn about the heroes of our past. Our task is to make ourselves architects of the future'

GRIOT YEAR JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

I am very pleased to report on the activities of the Trust over the past year.

The most significant work has been achieved in relation to developing a partnership forum of Black organisations. Unfortunately, grant applications made to support specific areas of work were unsuccessful. This did not deter the work, which has continued unfunded.

Lessons learnt have been to return to our more successful record of the past by ensuring sufficient time to make good applications rather than attempting to compete with impossible timescales.

We were however, successful in obtaining financial support from Lewisham Council to organise a workshop for women using creativity and Akan symbols. We were also successful in obtaining a small grant from the Millennium Team for the 'African's in Film' Dinner & Discussion Forum in October last year. We would like to express our appreciation to Annie and to Angela Rolle whose enthusiasm for our work has been encouraging.

We are also grateful to The Woolwich Simba Project for their active support in hosting the Partnerships Forum, Discussion Forums and more recently for preparing the meeting space and refreshments for the forum. These are examples of a constructive working alliance / joined up working that has enabled Griot to continue its work with very few resources in the bank but with many resources - information, networks, joint work and support.

We are currently preparing applications for projects around greater effectiveness in organisations, the Dinner & Discussion Forums and IT. In parallel, we are looking at a number of ways to raise funds to create a sustainable base for the Trust. We hope that everyone in support of Griot's vision will contribute to our direct debit scheme.

In closing, I would like to thank the many supporters, - they know who they are, -who have both shared Griot's vision and have helped it over the past year.

GRIOT YEAR JULY 2000 - JUNE 2001

REPORT FROM THE PROJECT MANAGER

The last year has been challenging and demanding.

It has been a re-learning of the lesson on the need for independent financial sustainability for Black-led organisations and in particular for access to safe, violence-free meeting space.

I hope that the efforts of Griot's Trustees to set up a direct debit to secure a home for the organisation will be enthusiastically supported.

Dinner & Discussion Forums

Forums have discussed the Digital Diaspora & the need for involvement, Oware as a means to raising achievement, poetry and communication, conflict and co-operation in the African world, the work of Blacknet on the internet. Forums have taken place in the Buzz Brasserie in Catford and in the Woolwich Simba.

We have had a lot of demand for a workshop on internet surfing and hope to offer a programme next year. Our current series of forums is on health and we will be covering cultural arts and learning in early 2002 followed by African centred adult learning later in the year.

The forums have proved their need and would benefit from high quality and culturally appropriate marketing. A worker and programming resources have to be raised.

International Women's Festival in Lewisham

Griot ran 'Sankofa in Clay' a workshop for African women who wanted to know more about the Adinkra symbols of the Akan in Ghana.

Ama Gueye, the facilitator presented the origins and meanings of the Adinkra symbols and a potter helped participants to create a work of art in clay. Lots of laughter, networking and sharing of experiences. The work produced was exhibited in Catford Library for a month.

Participants were very surprised to learn that the Akan symbols were originally used at funerals and continue to be used in this way in Ghana. In the Diaspora, the symbols have become very popular and in general, very disconnected from their original context.

We were very fortunate to be sponsored by Margaret Williams, a potter and Director of her own African-run ceramics business in Ladywell.

The workshop was oversubscribed and Griot has received a steady stream of requests similar workshops. Griot intends to fundraise for a creativity programme. In the meanwhile, Margaret runs workshops in ceramics for small groups.

Partnerships Forum

The Partnerships Forum, which began in 1999 has grown from strength to strength and has attracted a wide range of Black-led organisations.

The common difficulties faced by organisations include significant under-funding, a need for improved governance skills and considerable difficulties in accessing funding in general and in particular from the major grant making and regeneration bodies.

Griot worked with Businessworks, the Waterfront Community Development Forum and the National Lottery to run seminars on Business principles for the voluntary sector, Successful Funding Applications and Developing Partnerships, respectively.

Over 20 organisations have been involved in over 15 meetings over the year. For this work to be sustained, a paid development post needs located in the community needs to be established. Griot is working on this.

Black History Month

Griot's main event was a presentation on representations of Africans in Film. As a leading Black Filmmaker, Menelik Shabazz was able to share his experiences, perspectives and offer some insight on how to influence what gets to the screen. 'Catch-a-fire' - the story of Paul Bogle was filmed.

The general feeling in the forum was that Black Filmmakers wanted more control over representations of Black people in film as did people in the community

who are in general unhappy with the stereotypes that persist in the media. More forums on the place and role of media and new technologies in our lives were recommended to Griot.

Capacity development

Griot is receiving a regular trickle of interest in the course in Evaluation systems for organisations. Increasingly, funders require organisations to show how they measure their work, are user-led and are accountable to the community.

Continuing our work on Leadership, we have publicised a course for Trustees. We hope to start to run this later in the year. Our research showed that there is considerable interest in developing working alliances across the differences of culture and political perspective. Equally, prioritised were clarifying the difference between management and governance, trustee roles and worker accountability.

Griot's immediate priority is to raise funds to resource its priority projects. The Institute has benefited from the outstanding and exemplary support from its committed trustees. A number of significant people from all sections of the community have helped, advised and supported Griot.

Griot is unique as an organisation that has attracted strong and committed people. Many new approaches using the African centred tradition have been trialled. We are now at the stage where, in order to survive, work must be funded and the organisation's future securely underpinned by its own independent means.

I hope that more people who support the idea and practice of African centred approaches will be attracted to support the work so that the variety of approaches used in Griot can begin to truly reflect the complexity of the cultures across Africa and the Diaspora.

GRIOT ACCOUNTING YEAR APRIL 2000 -
MARCH 2001

DRAFT ACCOUNTS

Income	
Balance brought forward	4212
Lewisham council	500
Greenwich council	500
Donations	100
Course fees	100
Interest	31.05
Total	<u>5443.05</u>

Expenditure	
Rent and phone	331.74
Postage	38
Printing	17
Training	22
Staff costs	1173
Misc	200
Total	<u>1781.74</u>

Balance **3661.31**