

WORKSHOP 5:

Entertainment media: engaging audiences with intercultural dialogue

PANELLISTS:

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President, The Global Film Initiative, United States

MODERATOR:

Malu Viana Batista,

Television America Latina, Brazil

The panel discussed the question of the responsibility of entertainment media in reducing cultural and religious bias and polarizations. Panellists agreed that entertainment media can play a significant role in the development of a more harmonious world view, aiming at providing positive and engaging media representations of various cultures and people.

Several concrete examples were pointed out as possible references to build upon. For instance, “The Team” is a television series that uses soccer as a leitmotif for the creation of awareness of differences and similarities between individuals of different backgrounds living within the same community. It has been produced locally in over 15 countries around the world, proving to be an excellent entertainment media platform to dispel tensions in culturally stressed environments. Other panellists presented the work done by entertainment media programmes in facilitating better understanding of the past and thus allowing better communication in the present between individuals of different countries.

Films were highly praised as engaging sources for the understanding of other culture, particularly for individuals who have little possibilities to travel and thus are able to get a first-hand experience of the other. Special attention has to be paid that this type of entertainment media should not be patronizing young people or further cultivate cultural or religious stereotypes. The entertainment industry must provide different narratives to the same story and thus avoid the deepening of prejudices that ultimately constrain individuals into incomplete world visions. Entertainment media should be a force that facilitates knowledge and understanding, ultimately moving societies forward. Cultural literacy, particularly for youth, was identified as a substantial element for the development of more peaceful societies. Entertainment media, including digital platforms, is a main component for the cultural enrichment of individuals.