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Report

By

Victor Valbuena

SEMINAR ON TV URGES MEDIA EDUCATION AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN

Television will continue to be a pervasive influence in the lives of millions of children in the Asia-Pacific Region. It must be used to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and cultural development of children. It must be harnessed to educate children as citizens of the world who have a strong sense of national identity but who can also live in harmony with people of all races, creeds and backgrounds.

Children must be inoculated against the potentially negative impact of television on their lives. Children must be exposed to media education programmes to help them develop a critical and discriminating attitude towards television and other media. There must be more quality children's programmes on television, not just more programmes for children to watch.

These points were reiterated in a **Declaration on Children and Television in the Asia-Pacific** by participants in the Seminar on Children and Television held at Cipanas, Indonesia on 11-13 September. The seminar was organized by the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC) and the Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation (ICWF), with support from the International Children's Centre (ICC), France and The Asia Foundation (TAF), Jakarta.

The declaration listed specific recommendations to promote cultural development via children's television; implement media awareness and literacy programmes for children, parents and teachers; develop standards for production, distribution and exchange of children's programmes; and harness opportunities and challenges in developing quality children's television in the region.

The objectives of the seminar were 1) To understand the various roles and meanings of television in the lives of children in the region; 2) To explore the status, problems and prospects of children's television in the region; 3) To determine the impact of children's television in the region; and 4) To develop guidelines for further development of children's television programmes in the region.

The seminar was officially opened by Mr. Dewabrata, Head of the Indonesian Information Research and Development Board on behalf of Mr. Harmokō, Minister of Information, Republic of Indonesia. The opening ceremony was held at Hotel Indonesia evening of 10 September. Welcome addresses were delivered by Dr.

Lily Rilantono, Vice President of ICWF and Chairman of the seminar's organizing committee, Dr. Eric Chevalier, Chief of Mission, General and Scientific Direction, ICC, Mr. Vijay Menon, Secretary General, AMIC, and Ms. K. Umar Wirahadikusumah, President, ICWF.

The seminar sessions were held at the Surya Indah Hotel in Cipanas, East Java. The seminar featured paper presentations followed by discussions, video showings of sample children's programmes, and workshops on specific topics. The video presentations included "The Water Trolley" (Australia) and "Batibot" (Philippines) two children's programmes that won the prestigious Prix Jeunesse in Europe.

Dr. Victor Valbuena, AMIC Senior Programme Specialist, delivered the overview paper on "Children and Television in Asia". Dr. Valbuena reviewed children's television programming in the region, identified some of the major problems and issues facing children's television production, and suggested specific measures to address them. These measures included production training using local resources and facilities, regional programme exchange, collaborative production workshops, media education, and integration of children's television in mass communication education programmes in the region.

In ensuing paper presentations, children's programme producers, academics, researchers, consumer activists, and representatives of child advocacy groups explored specific concerns in children's television. Against the background of each of their own country's cultural heritage, colonial history, and stage of media development, they painted a broad picture of children's television in the Asia-Pacific. They discussed studies on television usage among children, impact of TV on consumer behaviour of children, and effectiveness of educational TV for pre-school kids. They described problems and opportunities in producing quality children's programmes with meager funds and facilities. They proposed alternatives to Western-oriented children's programmes flooding Asian television, and suggested measures for monitoring and regulating children's TV programming in the region.

Participants who presented papers were Mr. Zulkarinen Nasution, Lecturer, Department of Communication, University of Indonesia; Ms. Claire Petre, Chairperson, Children's Programme Committee, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal; Mrs. Parvati Menon, Film-maker, Children's Film Society of India; Ms. Feny delos Angeles-Bautista, Research and Curriculum Director, Philippine Children's Television Foundation; Dr. Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand; Mr. Wagiono Sunarto, Commu-

nication Designer, ICWF; Ms. Hye-Gyong Na, Senior Producer of Children's Programmes, Korean Broadcasting System; Ms. Mary Assunta, Media Officer, Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia; and Associate Professor Nisar Zuberi, Department of Mass Communication, University of Karachi; Mr. Suyadi, Art Director and Script Writer, National Centre for Film Production, Indonesia; Ms. Sachiko I. Kodaira, Researcher, NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute; and Ms. Ng Sin Yue, Assistant Director for Educational Television, Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore.
