

News from

ICCVOS

The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen

2000

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We welcome...

researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and interested individuals to the Clearinghouse information network. As a participant you will receive our publications (in English) with the contributions of other network participants from all parts of the globe. (Participation is free of charge.)

The value of the Clearinghouse as a forum rests in the breadth of its coverage and the commitment of its participants. In short: the more relevant information we gather, and the more who contribute from all continents, the better our services.

We are interested in research related to children, young people and media violence, children's access to media and their media use, media education, media for children, children's participation in the media, and in documentation of measures and activities of relevance to this field.

News briefs and short articles to our newsletter, "News from ICCVOS", will be greatly valued, as will notices of coming and recent conferences, seminars and other events; of new publications; and of active associations and organisations with children and media in view.

We are also grateful for receiving relevant publications and materials – if possible, two copies of each, please! They will be documented at the Clearinghouse into a growing knowledge base for overviews, compilations and bibliographies of interest to various groups of users.

As for publications and materials in other languages than English, French, German and Spanish, we kindly ask you for complementary translations of the titles.

We look forward to hearing from you, not least regarding any requests or suggestions you may have concerning Clearinghouse services. And we hope that you will appreciate our efforts – as a means of making your own work known in wider circles, and as a way to keep abreast of others' work.

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Outlook from Russia

Media Discourse on Children of Modern Russia

Within the framework of a larger research project,¹ I perform discourse analyses of material in Russian magazines. The approach aims at revealing the socially determined aspects of mainly visual material, seen in its textual and societal contexts. I examine the basic messages and stereotypes forming the public discourse on many topics. To reveal the public discourse, I look for so-called binary oppositions, and combine this method with linguistic and paralinguistic ones. Discourse analysis allows understanding of the structure of an image or a text – its idea – and also discovery of the alternative points of view conditioned by the context.

I have chosen to study five political magazines. In these magazines one seldom encounters photos of children or youth, and articles devoted to children are even fewer. Let us here, as an example, consider the longest article about children, entitled “Stanichniki” (Inhabitants of Cossack Settlements), which appeared in the well-known and popular magazine *Ogonyok*, No. 34, November 1999 (also published at <http://www.ropnet.ru/ogonyok>).

The Article

Binary oppositions in material about children often seem obvious and clear. Visual and textual material constructing children is more simplified and unequivocal than material about adults, at least we assume so, because education, influence and control of children have concrete meanings with little variation.

In the given article, there are two images of children (in the whole issue there are more than 15 depictions of adults). One photo is a portrait of two 6- to 7-year-old boys in military uniform, the other shows eight boys of the same age and dress, standing in a church, their caps in hand. The few photos of children in these kinds of socio-political magazines are mostly advertisements, or are related to possible problems in the future. If the text directly represents children, it is as a rule about certain groups: orphans, invalids, patients, the socially unsuccessful, etc. – seldom about average children. The article in *Ogonyok* is in one sense about average children, but they can be from socially unsuccessful, incomplete families. To send children to a military school for their education and to live is, namely, a rather common practice in today’s society, especially for children from military or socially deprived families, as well as for orphans. During the Soviet era, as well as before the revolution in 1917, the practice was more widespread, and the pupils had many privileges. After reorganisation of society, that is, during the Perestroika period of Gorbachev, studying in such institutions became

less prestigious. But recently the phenomenon has regained its prestige, with the consequence that admittance to military schools is no longer easy. When terminating these schools at the age of 16, the graduates, as a rule, enter the army or military institutes to become officers.

The article is about the situation of nationalism – a severe problem in Russia connected to violence and war. The two images of small boys in army uniforms soften a serious problem. Children instil hope that all will work out for the best. The military uniform is neutralised by cheerful and naive faces. There is, however, a difference between the portrayal of child cadets during the Communist era compared with these two contemporary pictures. Photos of organised child cadets were very typical of the Soviet era; thus the oath, holidays, and parades were represented. But, as mentioned, one of the two photos in *Ogonyok* represents uniformed children standing – non-organised but attentive – in a church. There is a discord, which gives rise to a patriotic feeling (among other things, the tradition of the early Imperial army is revived). It is a discursive contrast, as traditions of three Russian periods collide – the Imperial, the Soviet, and the Modern period.

Questions and Answers

What are the basic problems related to children that arise in the text, and what are the solutions?

The questions are: Is military education in institutional barracks necessary for children? Do children then grow up to be at war? How will they behave at war? On whose side will they be at war? Will our children be dangerous in the future or facilitate peace and cohabitation among peoples? How should children be brought up?

The author himself does not give the answers; he doubts if this education is good or bad. Nevertheless, when studied in-depth, the text answers the questions unequivocally.

The answers are: We prepare for war with the world and our children should be able to be at war. Cossacks (in former times hired for and educated in military estates) are unreliable and dangerous. It is better to send children away to military schools based on the traditional Soviet model.

What is underlying this material? Proposed oppositions are ‘girl’, ‘family’, and ‘individuality’. The boys are necessary for war. They are “gun meat” (Leo Tolstoy *War and Peace*). The politics for girls is another, they require special consideration. Boys are separate from girls. There are no common games, and their education differs.

The boy answers for acts of the father, bears for

by

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Note

¹The project, called “Comparative Time Tableaux 1999-2002”, is led by Professor Jan Ekecrantz, Stockholm University, and Associate Professors Tom Olsson and Patrik Åker, University College of Södertörn, Sweden.

The “time tableaux” approach has been developed for the synchronic empirical study of relationships between texts and contexts in different historical situations. This project extends the approach to encompass comparisons between synchronous media output and performance in different national systems. The material will be used for the study of discursive media practices, media intellectuals, constructions of ‘the Other’, mutual images between the countries, local news representations of major national events, etc., in all the countries involved in the project.

him the insults and violations of the past. "And you are a fool, and your father is a dirty dog!" So the extraneous old man swore and beat the boy. Family education is not meant for boys. They are given away to military boarding schools – to live there, be brought up and trained.

Their individuality is neither visible nor cared about. Children are perceived as having a (military) weight and value in the text. The text here deals with a group of children – identical in sex, age, social origin, physical and mental conditions. What can be seen of their individual features? That the soul is still pure, sinless, the mind is open, naive, but also a good ground for any ideology. Children have potential vicious bents (which are determined socially) – they can drink alcohol, smoke, and swear. The senior comrades sent to Chechnya

have betrayed their native land; they were drunk and ran up against the enemy on the first evening.

Conclusions

What basic messages follow? That children have a fragile body and a pure soul. That they are like clay – can be moulded into anything. They are weak and without will. Children answer for their parents. Children are silly and naive. They are vicious. Adults do not trust them. Children are dependent on adults. They can be manipulated and commanded, forced to do things. Children (one's own and others') can be offended and they fight, when they want. Children should be supervised.

It is necessary to be afraid of children, if someone has organised them. ■

Street Children and Journalists – Aspects of Co-operation

by
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The issue of street children is thought to be one of the most serious problems in today's Russia. Different structures, agencies and institutions are responsible for this issue, but their activities are insufficient. Mass media do not stay away from the attempts to solve the problem. However, the input of mass media has both good and bad points. Some specialists even think that projects aiming to help street kids would work better if media were not involved in them at all. According to them, mass media bring about an emotional explosion related to the issue that has mostly negative consequences. My research in Saint Petersburg would seem to support this opinion.

Articles or TV and radio programmes on the issue of street children are mainly of two types. One type is when the journalist emphasises the work of one or several social institutions helping street children (a shelter, drop-in-centre, children's home, etc.). Most articles of this type include hopes that the situation will improve for some children (scandal stories about certain institutions excluded). The other type is when major attention is paid to the whole situation, on the level of the city or region. These stories are mostly emotional and dramatic and include, simultaneously, many statistical figures. However, articles or TV and radio programmes of both types are, as a rule, also based on "human stories" about the lives of concrete children. And there are special difficulties associated with obtaining this kind of information.

Lack of Time, Business, and Diminishing Hope

The average journalist usually has little time to establish close relations with a street child, some-

thing that would encourage the child to be honest and open with this unknown adult. Taking into account the possible social and psychological characteristics of these children (they often do not trust adults, could have developmental disabilities, etc.), in all likelihood the child will provide the journalist with only a minimum of personal information. He or she will certainly try to keep secret information about involvement in prostitution or drug use. In order to obtain more personal information on the street child, journalists usually ask social workers or other children who are close to the child. The ethical question about increasing the amount of information through other channels without the street child's permission is solved by the journalists themselves.

In their attempts to draw public attention to the problem of street children, mass media often become an unsteady stone on the path towards solving this problem. For example, too much attention focussed on some street kids, and the hunt for trustful interviews with street children, is often the result of business transactions between the journalist and the street child. Street children try to make money by talking about their lives with a journalist, showing their shelters, allowing pictures, etc. Journalists, especially foreign ones, often provoke such behaviour by paying money for the information service. The consequence is that the children start to make up personal stories aiming to get more money. It also results in some children developing parasitic aspects of their character.

Feeling great attention from the adults, some street children, who do not get these warm feelings from their parents, start to believe that their pres-

ence on the street places them in the centre and makes them unique. Being taken to a shelter – where there are no “cameras and theatre lamps” – means, therefore, that these children return to their street adventures very fast. And afterwards it is harder for a social worker to get into close contact with them.

The third negative aspect is that after telling, say, for the tenth time the story of his or her life to different journalists, the street child begins to lose hope that journalists and adults in general can help

him/her. It is apparent to the street children with whom I talked, that adults are mainly trying to reach their personal aims with the assistance of street kids. This aspect does not at all help social workers dealing with street kids.

So, despite the active position of many media in their coverage of the problematic issue of street children, the methods used by journalists often do not improve the situation for real children, but instead give rise to additional problems for the social workers trying to help them. ■

Violence in Russian Films and Programmes

According to Alexander Fedorov, Professor at Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, Russia, violence in Russian films in the 1910s was most often found in detective stories, mystery and criminal drama, and melodrama. From the 20s, however, the most common violent genres have been war films, so-called historical and revolutionary drama, and adventure films. In broad outline, this was true until the mid-80s.

Then, from the beginning of “perestroika”, the Russian censorship gradually lost its power. Russian film creators began to turn to previously forbidden genres and topics. In the early 90s, the “reform period”, violence became a main element in Russian thrillers, criminal, horror and detective films (and exists in other kinds of drama and comedies, as well). A content analysis made by Fedorov of all feature films produced in Russia during the 90s (1,041 films) showed that 43 per cent contain violent scenes. And the kinds of titles had changed. During the 90s, 23 films contained the word ‘death’ in the title, the same figure as during the preceding seventy years.

Other aggressive words, such as ‘murder’, ‘to kill’, ‘war’, ‘enemy’, ‘to shoot’, are also frequent in Russian film titles in the 90s.

Most of the Russian films produced in the 90s were not shown in cinemas but aired on different TV channels, not infrequently during prime time.

Another content analysis of violence on Russian TV during one week in January 2000, made by the same researcher, indicates that serious, graphic violence in news and so-called reality-programmes (about murder, other crime and accidents) are aired around the clock. Fiction series and films with serious, graphic violence are more often broadcast only after 10 p.m., but relatively frequently also during prime time when children are watching. In Russia there is no regulation of TV with the aim to protect children.

Source

Alexander Fedorov: “Ungdom og russisk filmvold (Young People and Russian Film Violence)”, *Media i skole og samfund*, March, No. 1, 2000, p. 16-23.

Film Violence: Attraction and Repulsion

The entrance of Russian mass media into the market has radically transformed the spectrum of films offered. The professional consciousness of film practitioners has similarly undergone profound changes. Viewers, including children, are regaled with pictures filled with violence, cruelty, and gore. This is done out of a conviction that the audience likes such a spectacle, that the films meet its expectations. Is this really so?

The Views of Russian Teenagers

A questionnaire survey, conducted by the Research Institute of Cinema Art among 510 students from 9th to 11th grades (14–17 years old) of 30 Moscow schools (52 classes) in late 1995, showed that with respect to violent films the young viewers formed three groups. The first (55%) comprises “hyperactive” consumers of violent fare. Half or more of the

films they had seen in theaters or on television and video during four weeks prior to the survey contained violence. The second group (11%) includes “active” adherents to aggressive films. Violence is included in one-third of their chosen film repertoire. The third group (24%) constitutes young people with “moderate” attachment to movie mayhem, this group having watched “only a few” violent films during the four-week period.

As can be seen, young people expose themselves to a large amount of film violence. Yet, most of them are not very satisfied with it. Only about 5 percent “very much liked” the violent films they had watched during the period, and about one quarter “liked” them. Instead about 40 percent estimated them as “so-so”, 13 percent voiced their “dislike”, and 4 percent said that they “very much disliked” them.

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According to the viewers, the perception of violence in motion pictures engenders three kinds of emotions: positive (admiration, delight, amazement), negative (anxiety, alarm, fear), and neutral (indifference). Positive emotions most often accompany viewing of martial arts, such as karate, kung fu, etc. (among 62% of the youngsters). One-on-one fist fights prompt positive emotions almost as often. The third place (46% of the "votes") concerns destruction wrought by modern weapons. Viewers perceive the last kind of media violence as highly abstract, which may be why its influence on their positive feelings is less.

Negative emotions are most often experienced at the sight of cruelty on the screen (admitted by roughly half of the students). Among a similar number, negative emotions surface when watching consequences of violence such as gore, disfigurement, lethal suffering, etc.

A special note should be made about the 18-20 percent who, in contrast to most of their peers, experience positive emotions while viewing demonstrations of cruelty, gore, disfigurement, etc. This kind of response is more frequent among young viewers who do poorly at school, and those who are not interested in reading. Could this indicate a disposition to compensate for one's academic shortfall with a readiness to exercise brute force?

Neutral responses apply to all kinds of violence mentioned above, each type eliciting neutral reactions among one-fifth to one-third of the young audience. The reason for this indifference may be that these young viewers pay attention not so much to forceful resolutions of dramatic conflicts as to twists of the plot, relationships among characters, and the like.

Feelings Towards the Hero

As far as the violence inflicted by the hero is concerned, his skill at martial arts elicits positive emotions such as admiration, sympathy, and interest among 68 percent of the youths. About half of the juveniles cheer the hero's prowess in handling guns and side arms.

Concerning the hero's cruelty and hostility, half of the young viewers respond negatively, i.e., with indignation, disgust, etc. However, positive reactions to the hero's cruelty are not rare, but found among 20 percent of the students. What may weigh with this group is that the antagonist is often portrayed as so repulsive that cruelty toward him seems fairly justified to some viewers. Furthermore, there may be certain favors, great at times, toward the hero who resorts to violence for a good cause.

While watching Russian violent films, 11 percent of the young viewers "always" or "often" identify with the violent hero. For foreign films, such identification is more common (20% of the viewers). This is partly due to the youngsters' more regular consumption of imported film violence, and to the popularity of Jean-Claude van Damme,

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, and the like.

Identification with Russian violent heroes occurs "from time to time" for 22 percent of the youths. An equally large proportion identifies "from time to time" with protagonists of foreign violent movies. Only "seldom" do 60 percent identify with the heroes of domestic violent films, the corresponding figure for foreign violent heroes being 53 percent. These figures suggest that during exposure to violent films a certain mental distance may be created between the protagonists and the audience. Most young viewers may, thus, perceive mass-mediated violence in a detached way.

Identification with violent heroes is not always limited to instances of viewing. Violence may, as it were, step off the screen and become reality. After seeing any Russian violent film, a small number (7%) of the teenagers admit to wishing to be like the aggressive protagonist, even if only in certain respects. Foreign violent heroes evoke this wish among 17 percent of the students.

The Future

If there were less violence on the screen, would the influence of the film repertoire significantly shift toward repulsion or attraction? Young people's opinions on this vary. "Films would become more interesting" is the verdict of slightly more than one quarter. The opposite conclusion is found almost as frequently. Every fifth young person thinks that the change would not affect the appeal of films, whereas every fourth youngster is uncertain. These differences in opinion imply that should the stratum of violent films be amplified, the forces of both repulsion and attraction that the film repertoire exerts on young people would, at best, be equally strengthened.

To call for the expurgation of violence from motion pictures would be naive. Being prominent in human history and constituting one of its propellants, it did not appear by accident in the first films by Louis Lumière. However, the form in which he couched violence was harmless and blandly humorous as in, for example, *L'arroseur arrosé* (1895). If the picture of the world in film did not have any place for violence, it would be as mythological as that which cinemas, television, and video offer today. Instead, it seems more warranted to discuss the possibility of criteria for a reasonable representation of violence on the screen. ■

A Russian Web Site on Media Education

The first Russian web site on Media Education – www.mediaeducation.org.ru – opened in February 2000. It is both in Russian and in English. The creator, Professor Alexander Fedorov, welcomes visitors and viewpoints (e-mail: alex@fedor.ttn.ru).

Media Education in Russia: Past and Present

In Russia, most teachers in media education prefer to analyse the aesthetic and artistic values of films and TV programmes along with their audiences. Media educators are also working in close co-operation with cinema clubs. I will explain this situation from a historical perspective.

Cinema Clubs

The Russian Association of Cinema's Friends still existed in the 20s, as did film clubs and cinema education in schools and universities. However, almost all of this activity was liquidated under Stalin's regime.

After the country had passed from Stalinism to a gentler version of totalitarianism, a new history of Russian media and cinema education started at the end of the 50s, and the first new cinema clubs appeared in the 60s. Members of these clubs wanted to watch and discuss both classic silent films and modern philosophical and experimental films that did not appear on the mass screens. In the 60s and 70s, foreign films were a rarity in Russia, which is why cinema club members also eagerly attended the occasional week-long screenings of European and American films in the large cities, especially the Moscow International Film Festival which began in 1959.

Officials of the Ministry of Culture regarded the cinema club movement with great suspicion, considering such clubs an undesirable source of "uncontrolled thought" and a reflection of "the hostile influence of the West". The cinema clubs always felt the pressure of authoritarian censorship. They were long forbidden to join the European Federation of Cinema Clubs, to create their own federation, and to exchange films with Western countries.

A Federation of Clubs and an Association for Media Education

The changes began in 1988 when a federation of cinema clubs was founded in Moscow, uniting thousands of film enthusiasts from different cities. With that event we were delivered from the prohibitions of the cinema authorities and their dictatorship over the film repertoire. On this occasion, Dr. Gennady Polichko organised the Cinema Lycée in Moscow and a course for cinema teachers. Moreover, since cinema teachers had stopped hoping for governmental charity, the Russian Association for Media Education, now including approximately 300 members, was founded.

Media education is also developing in the Russian provinces, in cities such as Kurgan, Tver, Rostov, Samara, Voronezh and Novosibirsk. At the Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, a course in media and cinema education has been offered since 1981. Its future teachers are not only preparing lessons on media materials but also watching films.

To fulfil the diploma requirements some of them focus their theses on media education. Upon employment at the Institute after graduation, some of them organise the school cinema clubs, discussing classic and modern films with the new students.

A Languishing Audience

Today, the Russian economic crises determine the cinema clubs' conditions. A provincial cinema club can only infrequently allow itself the luxury of ordering from Moscow an expensive copy of a film by a famous director, not to mention paying for import and translation. The cinema club audience is diminishing. At the end of the 70s, these clubs showed films by Federico Fellini, François Truffaut and Ingmar Bergman in halls with 500 seats, and the "sold out" notice was always posted. But many visitors to cinema clubs of that time were also looking for something "banned", "erotic" or "scary" – and in the 90s there are great numbers of foreign, usually American, thrillers, horror films and erotic melodramas in public circulation. Most of the audience has switched over to TV, video, DVDs and Internet. Only true enthusiasts stay in the cinema clubs.

While Moscow presents many class A films in the theatres, the provincial clubs nowadays mostly watch video cassettes. Yet, cinema clubs are becoming almost the only places where people outside Moscow and St. Petersburg can see European films, as these are forced from the mass repertoire by American productions. European films are deemed too boring and intellectual by young viewers, "educated" as they are on American B movies and, thus, seeking films including incessant action associated with murder, fighting and other violence.

Media Education Continues the Film Tradition

However, in spite of numerous difficulties, Russian media education is developing, and with this movement, the cinema clubs are surviving. Thanks to this, students and other interested people, even in the provinces, still have a chance to see the works of the screen masters. ■

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A Russian Book on Film Education

Alexander Fedorov: *Cinema Art in the Structure of Russian Modern Arts Education* (in Russian). Taganrog, Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, 1999, 68 p., ISBN 5-87976-162-2.

This book – the result of research supported by a grant from the Russian Ministry of Education, the Section of Basic Research of Humanities – is the first Russian book ever on the history, theory and methods of film education.

Children's Journalism in Russia

by

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Radio and TV for children and youth started in Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in the Soviet era during the 30-40s.¹ For example, at the Leningrad Studio of TV, an editorial board for such programmes with three staff members was established at the end of the 40s. In 1951, the first TV monthly magazine *Young Pioneer* was aired. In 1955, Leningrad TV started puppet shows with the popular anchor-doll *Televichok*. In the 60s, when the staff of the children's and youth department had grown to about 60 members, a great number of children's programmes were broadcast. In the 70s, *The Tournament SK* was considered the best programme. Today, St. Petersburg TV and Radio Company also air many programmes for children, including, e.g., *Bolshoy festival* (The Great Festival), *Kogda ya byl malenkim* (When I Was a Child), and *Tsvety zhibzni* (The Flowers of Life).

Newspapers and Magazines

However, press media for and by children also have a strong tradition in Russia. The first newspaper for children, *Kaleidoskope*, was founded in 1860 and existed for two years. The children's writer and translator Sofia Petrovna Burnashova was its editor and publisher.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were several small-scale papers for children in many regions of Russia. One example is a weekly newspaper in Moscow called *Gazetka dlya detey i yunoshestva* (Small Newspaper for Children and Youth), published from 1910 to 1915. Its first editor and publisher was A.P. Korokin, its second A.S. Panafidina. The content was diverse with sections such as "Chronicle of Russian Life", "Foreign Life", "Sports", "Science and Entertainment", "Aviation", "Theatre and Arts", "Post Office Box", etc.²

The oldest newspaper for young people in Petrograd (after that Leningrad, now St. Petersburg), *Smena* (Shift), was founded on the 18th of December 1919.

A special event took place on the 31st of August 1924, when the first issue of the newspaper *Leninskiye Iskry* (Lenin's Sparks) was published in Leningrad.³ This newspaper consisted of articles written by "detkors", children's correspondents – although famous Russian writers and poets were also published in the paper (e.g., Korney

Chukovsky, Samuil Marshak, Maksim Gorky, Arkady Gaydar, Boris Zhitkov, Vitaly Bianky, Leonid Panteleev, and Lev Kassil). In 1992, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the paper was renamed *Pyat Uglov* (Five Corners) according to the outcome of a discussion among its young readers. In September 1999, there was a large celebration of its 75th anniversary. The present editor-in-chief is Alexander Malkevich. The newspaper has, during its entire existence, taken many initiatives, such as mass sporting events, dining rooms for children, young talents' competitions, historical tours, etc. In spite of close ideological control by the Communist Party, the paper has always been interesting to and extremely helpful for several young generations.

Otherwise, there was a general system of children's newspapers in the USSR with *Pionerskaya Pravda* in Moscow as the leader.

During Soviet times, several magazines for children – such as *Iskorka* (The Small Spark) and *Kostior* (Camp-fire) in Leningrad, and *Veselye Kartinky* (Merry Pictures) and *Murzilka* in Moscow – were also introduced.

During the "perestroika" period (1985-1991), there were many new opportunities for children's media. But after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the serious political and economic crises in society caused numerous problems also for the media. However, by the end of the 90s, many educational institutions, school classes, hostels, children and youth organisations, authorities, companies and private persons have started publications of their own.⁴

Education for Young Journalists

At the Mass Media Center of the Faculty of Journalism, St. Petersburg State University, there are both preparatory courses and a "Maliy fakulter zhurnalistiky" (Small Journalism Faculty) for very young journalists and future applicants. The Faculty publishes a newspaper called *Dvazhdy dva* (Twice Two) containing stories by these young journalists. And in March 2000, the Moscow and Finnish offices of UNICEF, with the assistance of the Social and Information Youth Centre, arranged a press conference in St. Petersburg for journalists under 18 years of age. ■

Ynpress – Russian Youth Agency of News and Information

Since 1990, children and teens from all parts of Russia have their own agency of news and information called Ynpress. In the 80s, there were many groups of young journalists in different parts of

Russia. Teenagers wanted grown-ups to read about their problems through articles in newspapers and magazines. There was also a wish among the groups to start their own newspapers. Through the

Notes

1. B.V. Pavlova "Nekotorye napravleniya detskogo veshchaniya na LST v 40-60 gg.", M.V. Sytnik "Dlya detey – zhnachit luchshe (Khronologiya razvitiya veshchaniya dlya detey na Leningradskoy Studii Televideniya 1938-1975 gg.)", *Sredstva massovoy informatsii v sovremennom mire*, 1998, Sankt Petersburg, 1998, p.152-154, 156-158.

2. B.E. Skovorodnikova "Gazetka dlya detey i yunoshestva (1910-1915) – spetsializirovannoye izdaniye dlya detey", *Sredstva massovoy informatsii v sovremennom mire*, 1999, Sankt Petersburg, 1999, p. 104-105.

3. *Pyat Uglov*, 23 September, 1999.

4. Examples of such newspapers are *Shkolyar*, *Bolshaya Peremenka*, *Dvazhdy dva ravnyaetsya pyat*, *Kastalia*, *Kuryerchick*, *Novaya molodezhnaya gazeta*, *Pokoleniye*, *Tyapa*, *Chadushky*, and *Yuniy biolog*. Examples of such magazines are *Dlya talantlivykh detey i zabotlivykh roditeley*, *Zagadky i krosswordy*, *Sovenka*, *Model- kopiya*, *Optimist*, *Romanito i Syuzi*, *Sovenok*, and *Tik i Tak*.

efforts of Sergey Tsymbalenko, a journalist working at the *Pionerskaya Pravda*, this is now possible. To date there are more than 60 children's newspapers in Russia.

Open to anyone who is interested, the agency gives an opportunity to practise journalistic skills. Members of Ynpress write for their peers about youth news, facts, children's rights, etc., in their own newspaper *Ynosheskaya gazeta*, or *YG*, and in the literary journal *Nedorosl*. About ten adult co-workers, mainly professional journalists, help the young staff of about 50 children to gain experience and solve financial or organisational problems.

Ynpress is a public organisation; its projects are supported financially by government establishments and other organisations. It is also co-operating with representatives of UNICEF in Russia, the Department of Mass Media, the Ministry of Education, and the Moscow State University's journalism faculty.

Beside publishing its own newspaper, Ynpress is involved in different projects such as exhibitions, concerts and an annual festival called "Children for Children" where children perform. Another regular

event organised by Ynpress is the "School of the Young Journalist". On this occasion representatives from different youth press services in Russia and abroad meet and exchange experiences. In August 2000, the forum took place in Zvenigorod and was attended by about 350 teenagers. One result of the forum was the creation of The League of Young Journalists of Russia – a trade union for young journalists.

The most recent project of Ynpress is "Young People's Information Space on the Internet". This project aims to set up a web site to help young people find relevant social information and provide links to children's newspapers. The web site will organise a discussion forum where children and teenagers can exchange thoughts. It will also be possible to "meet" members of the Russian Government and ask questions.

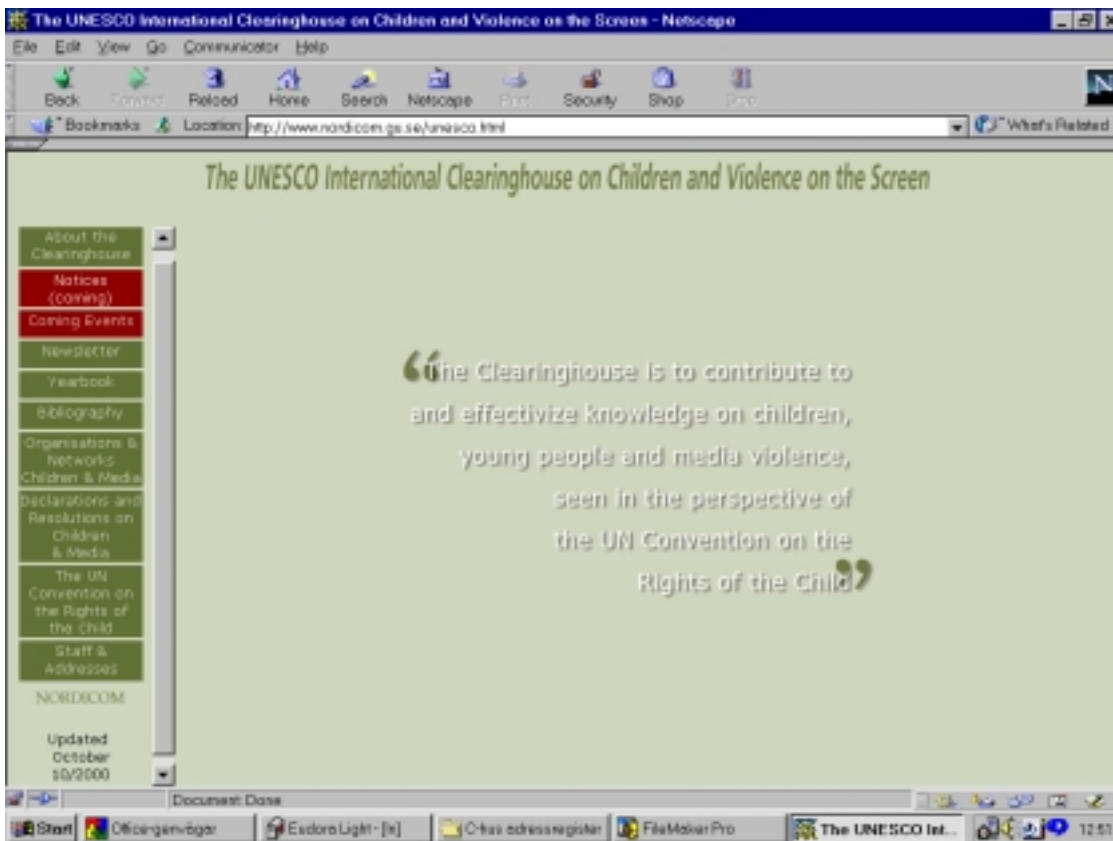
Source

Irene Ivanova, Editor-consultant RPO Ynpress
and the web site: <http://www.glasnet.ru/~ynpress/eng/index.html>

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Media Violence

Norwegian Parents Concerned about Soap Operas

by

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What are parents' opinions about violence on TV? Do parents limit their children's TV watching and if so, in what way? These questions were the starting point for a Norwegian study performed during Spring 1999 by Project Watershed¹ and financed by the Norwegian film regulation authority. 324 parents with children between the ages of 2 and 15 participated in the study.²

Role Models in Soap Operas

An unexpected finding was that 52 per cent of the parents in the study believe that the body fixation in many soap operas has a more harmful effect on children than TV violence has. One reason for this might be that the TV channels in Norway already practise certain self-regulation concerning TV violence within the watershed between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. (a period when programming should be suitable for all). Consequently, parents might feel more confident that their children are not influenced by harmful violence during this period.

The parents view the soap operas very negatively and think that they portray an unbalanced view of women. In addition, the parents say that the series focus on the body and sex in an unhealthy way. Thus, parents regard media violence as not only physical. Non-physical violence portrayed in the media can also be harmful, especially to children at an age when they form their identities. This argument is supported by other research, saying that children can find different ideals to imitate in the media. "They have a tendency to focus on those ideals they regard attractive and accepted in their real social environment." (Werner 1994)³

Due to the risk of imitation, particular care should be taken, according to the parents. Programmes that show a positive attitude towards life, human values, and non-violence should be given precedence in the schedule.

Violence on TV

67 per cent of parents with children between 2 and 7 years old think there is too much violence in children's cartoons on TV. And more than 80 per cent of all the parents asked say they want a violence-free zone before 9 p.m. on TV. The more children the parents have, the more they agree on this point. At the same time, the parents think there is a difference between violence in news programmes and violence in other programmes. 48 per cent agree on the statement that "violence in news can be accepted", and half think violence in news programs can be accepted to a certain degree.

A majority of the parents have more confidence in national public service TV (Norwegian Broad-

casting Corporation, NRK) than in the commercial stations concerning violence. Approximately 60 per cent agree with the statement that "there is less violence on NRK than on commercial channels". The more channels the parents have access to, the more they agree with this statement. The better educated parents agree most with the statement.

Pressure from Older Sisters and Brothers

The study revealed that many parents have problems setting limits for what their children watch, although 42 per cent mean that they do not have such difficulties. Parents with low education find it more difficult to set limits than those with high education. One reason why many parents feel helpless is that pressure from older sisters and brothers results in the younger children watching more than the parents wish.

The morning programs on weekends seem to be the most difficult period in this respect; here the parents have little or no control over what their children watch. Weekends are a time for relaxation, and therefore generally the most difficult time of the week to monitor what the children watch on TV. The more children the parents have, the more TV channels they have access to, and the more TV sets they have, the more difficult the parents feel it is to regulate children's TV viewing.

Whose Responsibility?

Though the parents admit that they have the main responsibility for preventing their children from watching TV programmes containing violence, they want help from the TV channels to filter out elements of violence in the programmes at times when children are watching. The parents find it important that the TV channels continue to practise a watershed between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. However, it is also of great importance that schools and parents co-operate in finding constructive ways to influence what types of programmes, and how much, children watch. ■

Notes

1. Project Watershed consists of the following organisations: Redd Barna (Save the Children), Norges Kvinne- og Familieforbund (Norwegian Association for Women and Families), Norske Kvinners Sanitetsforening (Norwegian Women's Public Health Association), Organisasjonen Voksne for Barn (The Organisation Adults for Children), Institutt for Kristen Oppseding (IKO) (Institute for Christian Education), Norges KFUK/KFUM (Norwegian Young Men's/Young Women's Christian Association, YMCA/YWCA), Kristelig Kringkastingsslag (KKL) (Christian Broadcasting Association), Norges Bondekvinneforbund (Norwegian Society of Rural Women), and Nordisk Forum for Barn og Media (Nordic Forum for Children and Media).

2. The study consists of two parts. In the first qualitative part there were focus group discussions with 20 parents. Later a combined qualitative and quantitative study, based on the findings from the focus groups, was performed through telephone interviews. In this part of the study the company Protinus/Norwegian Statistics conducted 119 interviews with parents of children between the ages of 2 and 7, 130 interviews with parents of children between 8 and 15, and 75 interviews with parents of children in both age groups.

3. Werner, Anita (1994) *Barn i fjernsynsalderen Hva vet vi om medienes innflytelse?* (Children in the TV Age. What Do We Know about Media Influence?). Ad Notam, Gyldendal.

Violence in Animated Films for All

Two researchers at Harvard University conclude that animated films determined to be acceptable also for very young children by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) – and obtainable for purchase or rental on videocassettes – contain a significant amount of violence. They believe that the MPAA should consider changing the current age-based rating system to one based on content, which, according to previous research, is what an overwhelming majority of parents prefer.¹

The study reviewed both the amount and kind of violence contained in all 74 animated feature films rated G (for the general audience), released in theaters between 1937 and 1999, recorded in English, and available on videocassette in the United States. The first film is Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the latest *The King and I*. All films contain some violence. Although the violent content in the films is highly variable, there is a statistically significant increase over time – on average the amount of violence almost doubled during the period.

Note

1. Joanne Cantor: "Ratings for Program Content: The Role of Research Findings", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 557, May 1998, pp. 54-69.

Source

Fumie Yokota, MS, & Kimberly M. Thompson, ScD: "Violence in G-rated Animated Films", *Journal of American Medical Association*, Vol. 283, No. 20, May 24/31, pp. 2716-2720, <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v283n20>

Joint Statement on the Impact of Entertainment Violence

At the Congressional Public Health Summit in Washington, DC, July 26, 2000, a joint statement on the impact of entertainment violence on children was signed by six groups representing the public health community in the USA. Among the groups were the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

According to the statement, well over 1,000 studies, including studies conducted by leading scholars within medical and public health organizations, point to a causal connection between viewing entertainment violence and aggressive attitudes, values and behavior in some children. The effects are complex and variable, but they are measurable and long-lasting, the statement says. Children who see a lot of violence are, for example, more likely to view violence as an effective way of solving conflicts and to assume acts of violence as acceptable behavior. Entertainment violence can also lead to emotional desensitization towards violence in real

life. Less research is done on the impact of violent interactive entertainment (video games and other interactive media). However, preliminary studies indicate that its negative impact may be significantly more severe than violence wrought by television, movies or music, why more research is needed in this area.

With this joint statement, the public health community hopes to encourage greater public and parental awareness and an honest dialogue about what can be done to enhance the health and well-being of children.

Source

Web site: <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jstmtevc.htm>

Online Victimization

A telephone survey of a representative national sample of 1,501 young people in the USA, ages 10 through 17, *who use the Internet regularly* (at least once a month for the past six months) was conducted between August 1999 and February 2000. The aim of the study, made at the University of New Hampshire and funded by the U.S. Congress, was to find out about online victimization. The results showed *that in the last year*

- 19 percent received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet (i.e., request to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or give personal sexual information that was unwanted or, whether wanted or not, made by an adult);
- 3 percent received an aggressive sexual solicitation (i.e., involving offline contact with the perpetrator through regular mail, by telephone, or in person, or attempts or requests for offline contact);
- 25 percent had an unwanted exposure to pictures of naked people or people having sex (i.e., without seeking or expecting sexual material, when doing online searches, surfing the web, opening e-mail or e-mail links);
- 6 percent were threatened or harassed (i.e., without sex being involved).
- Approximately one quarter of the young people *who reported these incidents* were distressed by them (i.e., youth rated themselves as very or extremely upset or afraid as a result of the incident).

Source

David Finkelhor, Kimberly J. Mitchell & Janis Wolak: *Online Victimization. A Report on the Nation's Youth* by the Crimes Against Children Research Center. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, 2000, 50 p. The report is also available at the web site: <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc>

Children and Advertising

Marketing of Violent Entertainment to Children

In June 1999, President Clinton asked the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Justice, USA, to undertake a study of whether the movie, music recording, and computer and video game industries market and advertise products with violent content to youngsters. Two specific questions were raised: Do the industries promote products they themselves acknowledge warrant parental caution in venues where children make up a substantial percentage of the audience? And are these advertisements intended to attract children and teenagers? The report, which was released on the 11th of September, 2000, found that for all three segments of the entertainment industry, the answers are positive.

According to the report, self-regulation by the entertainment industry regarding violent or explicit content, using rating or labeling, is most important considering the First Amendment protections which prohibit government regulation of content in most instances. After carefully examining the structure of these rating and labeling systems, the Commission studied how the self-regulatory systems worked in practice. The result was that individual companies in each industry routinely market to children products they themselves had given age restrictions, warnings or ratings due to their violent content. The companies' marketing and media plans showed strategies to promote and advertise their products in the media outlets most likely to reach children under 17, including television programs ranked as 'most popular' in the under 17 age group. To take just one of many examples mentioned in the report: Of the 44 movies rated R for violence and that the Commission studied, as many as 35 (80%) were targeted to children under 17. Marketing plans for 28 of the 44 movies contained statements that the film's target audience included children under 17.

Marketing of violent movies, music and electronic games to children, regardless of the industry's own regulation system undermines the credibility of the ratings and labels, the report says. It also frustrates parents' attempts to make decisions about their children's exposure to violent content. The Commission believes all three industries should take additional action to enhance their self-regulatory efforts by

- establishing or expanding codes that prohibit target marketing to children and impose sanctions for violations,
- increasing compliance at the retail level,
- increasing parental understanding of the ratings and labels.

It is underlined that self-regulatory programs can work only if the concerned industry associations actively monitor compliance and ensure that violations have consequences. Continuous public oversight is also required, and the Congress should continue to monitor the progress of self-regulation in this area.

Source

The whole report is available at the web site: <http://www.ftc.gov/os/2000/09/index.htm#11>

Commercial Activities in US Public Schools

As a consequence of the last ten years' tightened school budgets, there has been a growing visibility of commercial activities in US public schools – followed by increased concern about how this may affect students' learning and purchasing behavior. The Congress therefore asked the US General Accounting Office (GAO) to identify laws, regulations and policies that regulate commercial activities in schools, and to describe the nature and extent of these activities.

According to the GAO report, released on September 14, 2000, state laws and regulations in this field are not comprehensive. This means that in most states, local school officials are responsible for decisions related to commercial activities.

In the 19 elementary and secondary schools visited, the visibility, profitability and type of commercial activities varied, but the following activities were found in all:

- Product sales – mainly the sale of soft drinks.
- Direct advertising – appearing in school corridors, on school buildings, etc. (e.g., on soft drink vending machines and high school scoreboards in the sports facilities).
- Advertising through the media – some schools have, for example, contracts with Channel One, a company providing free television sets and videocassette recorders to schools that agree to air its news show. Other schools have signed up with the company ZapMe! that provides free computer equipment and delivers advertisements through the Internet.
- Indirect advertising – although on a subtle scale. For example, some schools used corporate sponsored educational material but only for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time.

The report concludes that in-school marketing has become a growing industry.

Source

Web site: <http://www.gao.gov> where the full report No. GAO/HEHS-00-156 is available.

Marketing to Children Harmful, Experts Say

Kathryn Montgomery, president of the Center for Media Education (CME), USA, has joined a prestigious coalition of more than fifty scholars and leaders in pediatric health care, education, child advocacy and communications¹ that sent a letter, dated October 12, 2000, to presidential candidates Al Gore, George W. Bush, Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan, urging the next president of the United States to take a leadership role to drastically reduce the amount of marketing aimed at children.

Coming on the heels of the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) report that media companies market violence to children and the General Accounting Office's report that marketing in US schools is a growth industry, the letter cites mounting evidence of the harmful effects of intensive marketing, from childhood obesity to family stress. Children have become big business in the United States. Corporations now spend over \$12 billion a year marketing to children, almost double the amount spent in 1992. Today children influence purchases totaling over \$500 billion a year.

Stating that "parents need help from policy makers to protect children from this unprecedented and unethical assault", the signers ask the next administration to take steps such as convening a White House conference on corporate marketing and its effects on children; allocating research funds from the National Institutes of Health to investigate the psychosocial and health consequences of intensive marketing to children; and working with congress and state governments to designate schools as ad free zones.

Other industrialized democracies have laws to protect children from the attempts of adults to influence them in this way. For example, Sweden and Norway prohibit television advertising directly targeting children below twelve years of age. In Greece, commercials for toys are banned until 10 p.m., and in Belgium it is forbidden to broadcast commercials during children's programs as well as during the 5 minutes before and after them.

Note

1. Led by Harvard Medical School faculty, Susan Linn and Alvin F. Poussaint of the Media Center of Judge Baker Children's Center, the letter is also signed by, for example, Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund; T. Berry Brazelton, author and pediatrician; Roald Hoffman, Nobel laureate; Howard Gardner, psychologist, education innovator and recipient of

a MacArthur fellowship; Peggy Charren, founder of Action for Children's Television; George Gerbner, Dean Emeritus, The Annenberg School for Communications, University of Pennsylvania; Todd Gitlin, Ph.D., Professor of Culture, Journalism and Sociology, New York University; Sut Jhally, Professor of Communications, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Bob McCannon, Executive Director, New Mexico Media Literacy Project; and Robert McChesney, Ph.D., Professor, Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois.

Sources

Press Release on October 18, 2000, and full text of the letter (including references to research literature), Center for Media Education, USA, <http://www.cme.org>

Perceived Influence of TV Advertising in Children's Lives

A pan-European opinion poll on parental perceptions of key influences in children's lives was commissioned by the Advertising Education Forum (AEF). Data were collected in late 1999 by a private research institute, GfK, by means of telephone interviews in half of the selected 20 European countries, and face-to-face interviews in the other half. Sample size per country varied from 112 to 416 parents of children aged 12 or under, making the database too small for detailed comparisons between countries. In total, 4,885 interviews were conducted. In the published summary report, nothing is said about how samples were selected, the non-response rate, and the like.

The parents' spontaneous unprompted responses were, not surprisingly, that parents, school, the child's friends and other family members (e.g., grandparents), that is, personal influences, are most important to their child's development. However, children's TV programmes, other TV programmes and TV advertising occupy the fifth to seventh places in a ranking of 18 different influences mentioned spontaneously. When responses were prompted, TV-advertising is also rated as the seventh most important influence. Although parents across the different countries do not have the same point of view on TV advertising, on average 34 per cent mean that it has a great influence on their child's development, 36 per cent that it has a medium-level influence and 29 per cent that it has little influence.

Source

Web site: <http://www.aeforum.org> – search for: Advertising Education Forum: Pan-European Study on Parental Perceptions of Influences in Children's Lives, May 2000.

The Advertising Education Forum (AEF) is a non-profit organisation for all parties interested in issues relating to advertising and children in Europe. AEF provides academic and scientific data on advertising and children and serves as a centre for research on the issue.

Media for Children

Standards for Children's Television Programs TV Professionals More Liberal about TV Violence than Kids and Mothers

by

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Violence on the screen is often used as a measure to separate children's programs into the categories 'good' and 'bad'. However, instead of looking at how harmful a program might be, one may also take the suitability of a program as a measure. Parents are not only interested in which programs they should protect their children from, but are also looking for children's programs they could recommend. Producers, too, want their programs to be viewed with enjoyment. Violence may be a program element that attracts viewers, or at least some viewers, but it is not a sufficient condition for popularity among children. If that were the case, all popular programs would be violent and all violent programs would be popular. Thus, other program attributes are also important as determinants of good programs that children like to watch.

Research on Quality Standards

The question of 'good' and 'bad' in children's television programming is often debated – especially when violent productions like *Power Rangers* are broadcast – but has rarely been investigated. In cooperation with Leiden University, the Netherlands, I performed a systematic study of the standards that a good children's television program should meet.¹ In this dissertation, four separate studies were conducted among distinct groups of judges: children and their mothers, respectively, in their capacity as consumers of children's programming, and program makers and critics, who are professionally occupied with the production and evaluation of children's television.² The standards each group applies when evaluating the quality of a children's TV program were determined, not only for children's programs in general, but also for two types of genres: fictional children's programs (cartoons and dramatic programs) and non-fictional programs (educational and news programs for children).

Seven Common Standards

No less than 19 different types of quality standards were found that are applicable to children's TV programs. Of these standards, seven were shared by mothers, children, professionals and TV critics. One of these seven standards was labeled 'innocuousness', meaning that a children's program should not frighten children, make them sad or contain violence or foul language. The other standards used by all four groups when evaluating the quality of

children's programs were: 'comprehensibility', 'aesthetic quality' (e.g., beautiful images, high production standards), 'involvement' (i.e., winning the child audience's dedication to the program), 'entertainment', 'credibility' and 'presence of role models'. In addition to these common standards, several other quality standards were distinguished. Children, for example, also expected programs to be 'thought-provoking', whereas among program makers a standard like 'originality' emerged. Among critics additional standards like 'informativeness', 'attunement to the child's world of experience' and 'appeal to adults' were found, the latter meaning that a program should not only be attractive to children.

Diverging Views of Media Professionals and the Audience

It appeared that each of the four groups had its own view on the importance of the seven shared standards. Significant differences were found particularly between producers and critics, on the one hand, and children and mothers, on the other. For example, children and mothers foremost expected a program to be 'comprehensible', whereas professionals ranked this standard only fourth, after 'involvement' and 'credibility'.

All groups assigned the standard 'innocuousness' a middle ranking. Apparently, when these groups are deciding whether a children's program is 'good' or 'bad', attributes such as frightening scenes, violent acts and foul language are relatively less important than other program attributes. More importance was attached by all groups to, e.g., 'involvement', 'aesthetic quality', and the 'entertainment' value of a program. Also, within each group, no significant differences were found between the importance of 'innocuousness' for different types of programs. Cartoons, for example, were expected to be just as 'innocuous' as children's news programs.

One explanation for the relative unimportance of 'innocuousness' may be that the study dealt with children's programs. Generally, violent acts in children's programming are presented in a rather unreal and sometimes humorous situation (especially in cartoons and dramatic programs). Such acts in typical children's programs can hardly be taken seriously and are therefore seen as relatively less important. In children's news programs real violence is sometimes portrayed, because that is what

Notes

1. Peter Nikken (1999) *Quality in Children's Television*. Dissertation at Leiden University, the Netherlands (151 p).

2. Samples and methods: 427 children in grades 4-6 (9-12 years old) in five primary schools filled in questionnaires. 357 mothers with children aged 3-12 years were interviewed via telephone. 163 television professionals at international conferences and in the Netherlands filled in questionnaires. As for critics, 441 television reviews of children's and youth programs in Dutch newspapers and magazines were content analyzed.

the news should report. However, the producers of such programs take into account that their audience may have difficulty in fully understanding images of real violence and therefore carefully present and explain them. This may be the reason why 'innocuousness' is not the most important standard for non-fictional programs either. If my study had been aimed at finding standards for programs intended for a general audience, other results might have emerged. Violence and frightening scenes in television programs or movies/videos for adults can have stronger influences on children. A standard like 'innocuousness' would undoubtedly have emerged for such media, too, and it seems reasonable that it would be seen as rather important.

Although no relative differences were found between the four groups of judges with respect to the 'innocuousness' standard, significant differences were found between the absolute importance each group attached to it. Mothers expected children's programs to be free of violence and frightening scenes significantly more than children did, whereas program makers were the least concerned about violence, foul language and frightening scenes. One explanation might be that television professionals find it difficult to anticipate how a given category of children will react to their program. In contrast to a theater performer, the television producer does not receive immediate feedback from the audience. Moreover, since television programs are not watched by a clearly defined group of children in terms of age, social background and cognitive development, it is difficult to tailor a program's content to the children watching.

Nevertheless, the diverging views of professionals and the audience on the 'innocuousness' of children's programs should give us cause to worry, because as long as television professionals are less convinced about the possible harmful attributes of their programs, they may continue to contribute to negative media effects. This result is particularly significant when combined with the finding that professionals also find children's full 'comprehension' of a program less important, making negative effects such as imitation and approval of portrayed violence more likely.

In Sum

As stated above, when discussing 'good' and 'bad' programming for children, it is important to take aspects other than violence into account. The study shows that consensus exists among several groups of judges that 'innocuousness' is only one standard among others. For children's programs there are at least six other standards that are used by mothers, children, television professionals and TV critics. If these groups are to exchange views on the quality of children's programming, these seven standards can be used as a point of departure.

The study further suggests that it is important to recognize that the four groups did not find these standards equally essential, and that in terms of these standards, consumers and producers of children's television do differ significantly in their views. Television producers in particular ought to be made more aware of the importance of standards like 'innocuousness' and 'comprehensibility', which are specific to children's programs. ■

Nashe Maalo – Kid's TV for Violence Prevention

A consortium of television and conflict-resolution experts recently debuted an educational project that encourages intercultural respect and understanding among the children of Macedonia. After only one brief season, research shows that a children's television series has begun to make real inroads into overcoming deep-seated prejudices and stereotypes.

Developed for kids ages 7-12, *Nashe Maalo* ("Our Neighborhood" in Macedonian) is a dramatic TV series first produced during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, and broadcast as eight half-hour episodes starting in October 1999. Now in its second season, *Nashe Maalo's* producers are striving to balance clearly researched curricular goals with the elements that make a children's TV series successful: that it grabs kids' imaginations, is entertaining, and makes the kids want to see more. Co-produced by Search for Common Ground in Macedonia (SCGM)¹ and Common Ground Productions (CGP),² and developed in association with Sesame Workshop,³ the series is the product of a collaboration between experts in children's television pro-

duction and a team of research and content specialists with extensive experience in the Balkan region.⁴

While Macedonia is the only component of former Yugoslavia that has not seen blood-shed within its borders in recent years, conflicts such as the recent war over Kosovo have dealt a hard blow to Macedonia's economy and its internal inter-ethnic relations. Two-thirds of Macedonia's population is ethnic Macedonian, with the remainder comprising ethnic Albanians (23%), Turks (4%), and several smaller groups, including Roma, at 2% each. They tend to lead lives rigidly, if voluntarily, segregated by language, residence, and education, and interact with each other only on a superficial level. *Nashe Maalo* is a central element of SCGM's systematic approach to building tolerance and understanding across these barriers in this emerging democracy.

The Show – Grounded in Research

The show features five children of Albanian, Macedonian, Roma and Turkish backgrounds who live in an imaginary apartment building in Skopje.

by

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Notes

1. Search for Common Ground in Macedonia, based in Skopje since 1994, works to promote multi-ethnic dialogue and aims to prevent violence through a broad set of programs involving Macedonian television, newspapers, and schools (web site: <http://www.sfcg.org/macedonia.htm>).

2. Common Ground Productions, the media-production division of Search for Common Ground, aims at creating television, radio, and Internet programming for the reduction or prevention of conflict (web site: <http://www.cgonline.org>). Search for Common Ground, based in Washington, DC, USA, and the European Centre for Common Ground, based in Brussels, Belgium, established in 1982 and 1995 respectively, are partner NGOs that work together to prevent violence and transform conflict in the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the USA (web site: <http://www.sfcg.org>).

3. Sesame Workshop (formerly known as Children's Television Workshop, CTW) is a non-profit production organization that uses media as an educational force in the lives of children. Its products include television, online, CD-ROMs, magazines, books, film, community outreach, and licensing. Best known as the creators of *Sesame Street*, the Workshop produces programming that has been broadcast in 148 countries, including 20 co-productions reflecting local languages, customs, and educational needs (web site: <http://www.ctw.org>).

4. *Nashe Maalo* has been financially supported by the United States Agency for International Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the British Department for International Development, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Swedish International Development Agency, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United States Institute of Peace, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

These kids share a secret that binds them together – the building they live in is alive! Her name is Karmen and, in addition to being the kids' confidante and friend, she possesses a power: She can magically transport them into their neighbors' cultural and psychological milieus. These scenes open the eyes of our characters to other people's ways of thinking and living.

While this is one of the first enterprises of its kind – a television series for children aged 7-12 designed specifically to promote tolerance among children in a multi-ethnic society – it is based on Sesame Workshop's experience in creating children's programming during the past 30 years. Measurable research of the series' impact is central to the project design. In formative stages of the series, researchers and conflict-resolution experts outlined desired outcomes for the series. A curriculum emerged that was used for both pre-broadcast base-line research and for summative research documenting children's responses to the pilot season of the series.

Children's Responses

A pilot study of one episode of the series showed that children demonstrated a high level of engagement with the program (Najchevska & Hall, 1999). A viewership survey during the first broadcast season of *Nashe Maalo* showed that the program was very popular among children, both with respect to the viewership rate (75% of all children in the country) and positive response rates: the overwhelming majority of children watching rated it as good or excellent (Najchevska & Cole, 2000).

To examine the impact of the series over the course of several months, researchers interviewed 240 children at eight schools in the Skopje region – sixty 10-year-olds from each of the four ethnic groups – before and after viewing videotaped versions of the series. This study began before the TV series went on the air. Prior to viewing, many children demonstrated negative, stereotyped perceptions of members of other ethnic groups than their own. After viewing, more children showed positive perceptions. For example, there was a significant increase among ethnic Macedonian children who after viewing said they were willing to invite a child from the ethnic Albanian, Roma, and Turkish groups to their home. Another finding was that after viewing, recognition of minority languages had improved across all ethnic groups, and most dramatically among ethnic Macedonian children (the ethnic majority group) (Najchevska & Cole, 2000).

Wider Implications

The implications of the series go far beyond the borders of Macedonia as a potential tool to complement violence-prevention efforts by international peace negotiators. Common Ground Productions is now investigating ways in which the model can be used in Cyprus and in Lebanon.

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Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting ratified by URTNA and CBA

The Africa Charter on Children's Broadcasting – adopted on October 11, 1997, at the first All Africa Summit on Children's Broadcasting in Accra, Ghana¹ – was ratified at the general assembly of URTNA (Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa) on June 21-22, 2000, in Algiers. This important step was made possible thanks to the hard work and efforts of Mr. Solomon Luvai, Director of Programme Exchange, URTNA, Kenya.

Slight changes to the original Charter are per the African process that URTNA engaged in. This process asked all African broadcasters to make necessary amendments. The final Charter² was then completed according to these recommendations.

The final Charter was further adopted by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) on October 13, 2000, at its 23rd general conference in Cape Town, South Africa. This was thanks to the efforts of Ms. Elizabeth Smith, Secretary General of the CBA.

Source

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Notes

1. Reprinted in the Clearinghouse Newsletter No. 1, 1998, and the Clearinghouse Yearbook 1999.
2. Available on the Clearinghouse's web site. The italics show the slight variation to the original Charter.

West Africa Regional Summit on Media for Children

A West African Regional Summit on Media for Children was held in Abuja, Nigeria, May 24-27, 2000. It was co-ordinated by Glorious Diamond Productions and Children and Broadcasting Foundation for Africa (Nigeria Chapter) in collaboration with UNICEF for the organisers, African Children Broadcasting Network (ACBN). The Summit focused largely on the forthcoming Third

World Summit on Media for Children in Greece, March 2001.

The host country was represented by members of the ACBN drawn from the major broadcasting establishments in Nigeria. Other West African countries represented include the Republics of Togo and Benin. The print media were also represented, as were non-governmental organisations such as Communicating for Change, Child to Child Network, and Child Care Network. Moreover, an expert from Polish Public Television, Mr. Andrae Malaga, engaged producers of children's programmes and child artists in sessions on animation. In all, there were 119 adult and 22 child delegates.

Deliberations as to the views and visions of the West African sub-region in relation to the global concern over media for children took top priority. A few examples of selected issues concern regional integration of children's programmes, such as the need for networking, co-operating and co-production at economic, political, multi-cultural, linguistic and religious levels. Against the present backdrop of marginalisation of children's programmes, ACBN provides a uniting forum and shall work for a redefinition of the priorities of broadcast organisations so that adequate recognition will be accorded to children's programmes in terms of funding, scheduling, equipment, transport procurement, etc. Concerted and concentrated efforts are required to address the plight of African children. They need to be encouraged, to be given hope for survival today and for a better tomorrow.

The Children's Participation

In addition, thought-provoking papers were presented on "Violence in the Media", "The Internet as a Useful Tool in Communication", and "Writing For and About Children". The most interesting aspect of the Summit was the interaction between media delegates and children. The children want a workshop, enabling them to produce animated folktales and stories on Child Rights issues. The children also presented "Our Hopes and Aspirations" to the media professionals, i.e., children would like the media to:

- improve the quality of productions
- stop immoral programmes on children's time slots
- train children to be producers
- speak out on Children's Rights to survival, development (education), protection and participation
- speak out against child prostitution, early marriages, child labour, hawking, etc.
- establish a children's TV and radio.

On the last day of the Summit, the Children's Day in Nigeria, a parley was held with President Olusegun Obasanjo.

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Media Literacy and Children's Participation

Networks of Children's Participation in Brazil

In July of 2000, Brazil commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Statute on the Child and Adolescent. Brazil is one of the few countries in the world to have introduced such an all-encompassing legal instrument designed to protect all rights of children and adolescents. Partly as a result of the Statute and partly due to dramatic social changes over the past 15 years, much discussion about children's rights has taken place at all levels of government and civil society. One result has been the development over the past decade of projects aimed not only at providing basic services for children, but at working to ensure that all rights of children are fulfilled, including the rights to information and to participate in decisions affecting

their own lives. While many countries give a token acknowledgement to child and youth participation, Brazil is home to dozens of projects whose major players are children and adolescents.

Dozens of Communication Projects

One example is the "Fundação Casa Grande", or "Big House Foundation", located in the city of Nova Olinda in the north Brazilian state of Ceará, 584 long, arduous kilometres from the capital city of Fortaleza. Working in a renovated old house, children of all ages at one time, a few as young as three years old (!), produce videos, newsletters, magazines and radio programmes for children and youth. "Casa Grande" has established a "communi-

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education school” for children, helping youngsters to become active in their families and communities. Among the products of “Casa Grande” are a bi-weekly newsletter called *Youth Awakening*, a daily radio programme, and special programmes for television. Children and youth are also educated in local and Brazilian history and culture.

Far to the west of Nova Olinda, another group of children work in the Amazonian city of Manaus in a project called “Uga-Uga”. Youth from the outskirts of Manaus participate in workshops and debates on education, sexuality, family, employment and other issues of interest to themselves. They produce a newsletter distributed to 15,000 students in the public schools in Amazona. The experience in the late 1990s was so enriching that “Uga-Uga” became a news agency run by young people themselves, with support of local journalists. “Uga-Uga” is a member of the national network co-ordinated by ANDI, the National News Agency for Children’s Rights – one of the few such agencies in the world that concentrates on generating and improving the coverage of children’s and adolescents’ issues in the mass media.

Between Amazona and Ceará is the northern state of Maranhão, where adolescents are the target audience for a twice weekly 45-minute radio programme on their rights. Further to the south, in the large state of Bahia, whose population is largely of African descent, the organization Cipó involves adolescents in its education and information activities, which include workshops and debates on children’s issues.

In Brasília, the capital city of Brazil, a group of 150 adolescents in the public school system participate in a “Radical Group” network that organizes extra-curricular activities such as chess, producing a school bulletin, photography, environment, storytelling in schools and hospitals, and prevention of drug abuse.

International Co-operation and Further Progress

Through one of the coincidences that UNICEF’s international character brings to all its activities, the “Casa Grande” network in Nova Olinda is working with a group of youth in the northern Mozambican city of Quelimane. The Communication Officer in UNICEF’s Fortaleza office was transferred to Maputo, Mozambique, where he immediately began establishing links between the “Casa Grande” group of children and youth and a group of youth in Zambézia province far north of Maputo. The first subject youth chose to address in the two countries was AIDS.

With a total Brazilian population of 168 million, of whom 60 million (36%) are children under 18 and about 25 million between 12 and 17 years old, projects with children and adolescents as key players in developing and implementing activities are still too few. Great progress is being made, however, throughout this immense country. ■

International Recommendations on Media Education

At the international conference “Education for the Media and the Digital Age” in Vienna, Austria, April 18-20 1999 (arranged by the Austrian National Commission for UNESCO and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in co-operation with UNESCO), the 41 invited participants – mostly media educators and researchers – from 33 countries developed and unanimously approved the “Recommendations Addressed to UNESCO”. The Recommendations, which are included in the conference report along with all papers presented at the conference, are also available on the Clearinghouse’s homepage (<http://www.nordicom.gu.se/unesco.html>).

Following the Recommendations, the Executive Board and the General Conference of UNESCO in 1999 agreed to integrate into UNESCO’s 2000 and 2001 programmes activities concerning Media Education both in the field of the Communication and the Education Sector.

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Summit 2000 in Toronto

Much has been written about the probably biggest international event in media education ever, “Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media – Beyond the Millennium”, which took place in Toronto, Canada, May 13-17, 2000. Canada was especially qualified to be the host country, as media education is well developed there. At the same time, co-operation between media educators and the media branch is closer in Canada than in many other countries, something that aroused debate on both the benefits (e.g., access to resources) and risks of not being able to preserve the independence and critical character of media education.

About 1,500 participants from the media, media education, and the academic sectors participated in a great number of well-organised plenary sessions and parallel seminars. Participants’ personal reports found in newsletters and journals world-wide reflect many kinds of individual interests. An overview from the organisers’ point of view is given in *Clipboard – A Media Education Newsletter from Canada*, Vol. 14, No. 1-2, 2000, edited by John J. Pungente, SJ, Jesuit Communication Project, and also chairperson of the Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO).

Of special relevance from a researcher’s viewpoint is the fact that almost thirty academic papers from all over the world and written for the Summit

2000 are available on CD.

In connection with the Summit, The World Council for Media Education (WCME) held its third international meeting.

The Media Education Research Section of IAMCR

The International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) held its 22nd general assembly and annual conference on July 15-20, 2000, in Singapore. The event was jointly organised by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) and the School of Communication Studies at Nanyang Technological University.

In the Media Education Research Section, 12 papers from around half a dozen countries were read. The majority of papers read focused on education and the new technologies, especially computers and the Internet. Other subjects dealt with included 'mediation' in school and at home, media audiences, and the mushrooming of communication courses.

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Youth Education in the Information Society

From July 14-18, 2000, a summer university in Tunis, "Euro-Mediterranean Meetings 2000", was organised by Club UNESCO Alecco de Tunis (CUAT-TUAC). The aim was to bring together UNESCO associates and non-governmental organisations, representing particularly the Arab and European countries, to exchange experiences and views on issues of common interest, and to facilitate and enhance inter-cultural dialogue among young people.

The main conclusions of the meeting centre on

the theme "think globally, act locally" and stress the importance of counteracting the existing imbalance in new information and communication technology between provided and developing countries. The participants made a list of recommendations for strengthening young people's participation in inter-cultural exchange using information technology, with a view to developing a culture of peace and mutual understanding among peoples. Great importance was attached to education – among youth as well as teachers and parents – and to the creation of different platforms for dialogue.

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An Indian Web Site for Media Educators

Welcome to: <http://www.mediaedindia.com> – possibly one of India's first web sites exclusively dedicated to media education.

The site was inaugurated on August 23, 2000, by Fr. C.M. Paul, SDB, president of UOI, the Indian wing of the International Catholic Communication Organisations Unda (for radio and television) and OCIC (for film). The inauguration concluded a three-day seminar on "Media Education: Relevance in a Media Culture", sponsored by UOI and hosted and organised by Tej-Prasarini, Don Bosco Communications, Mumbai – the owners and creators of the web site.

The site contains basic information about media education, what it is, how it is implemented, what issues matter to a media educator, who and where are the media educators, centres, publishing houses, what are world-wide media education links, and much much more. The site is open to receiving news and views from media educators across India and the world.

Source

E-mail dated September 2, 2000, from Peter Gonsalves, Tej-Prasarini, tej@vsnl.com

Possibility to Receive News from ICCVOS Electronically

Beginning with the next issue, No. 1-2001, it will be possible for you to receive an e-mail message as soon as the newsletter is available, including a direct link to the publication in .pdf format on the Clearinghouse's homepage. You will thereby be able to download or print out your personal copy, or as many as you wish, or just read it on-line.

To help us set up a subscriber e-mailing list, please fill in and return the enclosed form at your earliest convenience.

Regulation and Self-regulation

NICAM – a Dutch Solution for Protecting Young Viewers from Unsuitable Media Content

by

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The European Commission has asked its member countries to ensure that young viewers are protected from violence, pornography and other violations in all audio-visual media. In the Netherlands, a unique system is being developed to reach this goal. The government has decided that media content producers and distributors may decide for themselves which products are suitable for young viewers and which are not. A new institute, NICAM, which should be fully operational in 2001, will co-ordinate this system of self-regulation.

NICAM – Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audio-visual Media – was launched in November 1999. Three ministries, responsible for Justice, Welfare, and Culture, respectively, are involved in the institute. In addition, NICAM is run by the Dutch public and commercial broadcasters, as well as by producers and distributors of cinema movies, videos, and video/computer games. Finally, scientists and other child and media specialists will be involved in NICAM as part of advisory committees and independent complaint commissions.

Uniform Classifications of Age and Content

NICAM has made its primary goal the development of criteria for the acceptability of violence, pornography and other excesses in the audio-visual media. These criteria should enable broadcasters or distributors to decide what time of the day and for which age group it is appropriate to view a certain programme, film, video or electronic game. Internet will also be handled by NICAM as far as possible. Regardless of the medium used, such classifications should be uniform. In other words, a movie shown in a cinema and later distributed on video and broadcast on television will in all cases be classified for the same age group. Up to now, each medium has had its own type of classification.

A recent study among parents, conducted for NICAM by the Audience Research Department of the Dutch Broadcasting Organisation (NOS-KLO) found that 11 per cent of the parents preferred an age indication, whereas 83 per cent gave preference to information about the content of a media product. A secondary goal of NICAM is therefore the promotion of 'objective' information about the content of television programmes and films, videos or electronic games, besides the age classification. According to the study, information about violence, racism, fear-provoking scenes and the like was the most desired (over 80%). In addition, parents particularly wanted to be informed about scenes with dangerous behaviour (70%) and nudity (48%). More than half of the parents felt it important that the classification of television broadcasts be applied to TV movies, police series, cartoons or other children's programmes, as well as reality programmes. NICAM hopes that with their informative descriptions, the consumer – parents and children themselves – will be able to make a conscious decision about the suitability of a given media content for young viewers.

A Successful System of Self-Regulation?

NICAM will take shape in distinct phases. First, a system of uniform criteria will be developed. Then these criteria will be introduced to media professionals. The professionals will have to practise the new system. Meanwhile, present legislation will be adapted and the Dutch Film Classification terminated. NICAM's task of informing the audience will also be handled, and finally, a complaint commission will be established. It is very important that consumers are pleased with the new system of self-regulation. If parents do not agree with NICAM, the Dutch government will interfere after all. ■

Asian Seminar on Children and the Internet

At the 9th annual conference of AMIC (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre) on “The Digital Millennium: Opportunities for Asian Media” in Singapore, June 29 - July 1, 2000, one session focused on children and the Internet. Susan Sridhar, India, described the cyber culture, its benefits and pitfalls for children, as well as safety options and what parents can do to protect their children. Finally she presented research from India.

Since the Internet is a fairly new phenomenon in India, there are not many studies published as information to the public. Moreover, personal computers and Internet are widespread only among the elite or upper middle class. One study on Internet use among 336 students in nine Indian cities, published by The Mudra Institute of Communication in Ahmedabad,¹ indicates that Internet, unlike television, cinema or radio, is used for instrumental rather than ritualistic purposes. For example, e-mailing is the main reason for usage. Another study, conducted by the lecturer, addressed Internet use among 150 children in their late childhood and early adolescence in the city of Chennai. A subsidiary part included the parents of the young net users. A surprising result was the poor knowledge among parents about the easy access to violent or pornographic content on the Net. Most parents assumed the biggest threats of the Net were related to hardware problems.

Note

1. Matthew Vinod, *Business Line*, December 27, 1999.

Source

Susan Sridhar, Department Head: “Children & Internet”, paper for the AMIC 9th annual conference “The Digital Millennium: Opportunities for Asian Media”, June 29 - July 1, 2000, Singapore. M.O.P. Vaishnav College for Women, Viperiy, India, 14 p.

Coming Events

Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, FEBRUARY 4-7, 2001

An Asia-Pacific Television Forum on Children and Youth is being organised by the Korea Educational Broadcast System (EBS), the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Forum will provide television practitioners from across the region a unique opportunity to discuss television's critical role and responsibility in promoting the understanding of and helping to protect the rights of the region's children and young people. The Forum, the first follow-up meeting in the region to the Asian Summit on Media and Child Rights held in Manila in August 1996, will feature the participation of top television executives, senior producers, journalists and commentators from the region's major broadcasters. The Forum will address how television can fulfil its role as a catalyst for positive change for children and youth through its news, entertainment and education programmes. The recommendations of the Forum's participants will be taken to the Third World Summit on Media for Children to be held in Greece in March 2001 (see below).

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Link Up – an On-line International Event

Link Up is an on-line international event, designed to showcase the multimedia creativity of young people. The project, initiated by Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), will culminate in a Link Up Virtual Forum at the Third World Summit on Media for Children in Greece, March 2001 (see below). The participants in the Virtual Forum, between the ages of 10 and 17 from all parts of the world, will represent their country on-line in a dialogue with the international media industry. It is an opportunity for young people to share ideas and discuss their work and experiences with television and on-line producers. Before the Summit, participants present themselves and media issues that concern them, using the Internet as a medium for expression. Their work and ideas will be displayed on-line on sites hosted by a range of countries around the world. The children will also prepare an agenda to be discussed in the Virtual Forum.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/children/linkup>



Third World Summit on Media for Children

THESSALONIKI, GREECE, MARCH 23-26, 2001

The Third World Summit on Media for Children brings together audio-visual professionals from around the world and aims at the creation of an audio-visual policy supporting the rights of children. The main themes of the Summit are:

- Going global – policies and decision making, shaping the audio-visual future.
- Media for all – promoting cultural diversity in a global world.
- New technologies – presenting promising new technologies and their impact on children's media.
- Children have a say – children's audio-visual rights, audio-visual education.

There will also be special events: Shaping the Future; Cinema; Animation; and Children's Event.

Sign up on the web site to receive *The Media Talks on Children Newsletter* and to keep up to date with all the latest developments for the Summit!

Contact: European Children's Television Centre (E.C.T.C.)
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E-mail: summit@childrens-media.org
Web site: <http://www.childrens-media.org>



Childnet International Awards Ceremony

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, APRIL 19, 2001

For the fourth year, Childnet Awards will reward children, and those working with children, who develop outstanding interactive Internet projects that benefit other children world-wide. The competition, which is now closed, was open to individuals, schools, non-profit organisations and government-funded strategic initiatives. The judges are interested in rewarding innovative projects, including those developed with limited resources. Childnet Awards are administered by the UK-based non-profit organisation Childnet International which works to make the Internet a better place for children. More information about the awards, and previous winning projects, can be seen on the web site below.

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E-mail: stephen@childnet-int.org
Web site: <http://www.childnet-int.org>



Media Education Research Section of IAMCR

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, JULY 9-13, 2001

The Israel Communication Association (ISCA) will host the 23rd general assembly and annual conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). The main theme of the conference will be Communication and Peace. The organisers plan to bring together politicians, journalists and academics to analyse topics from both participatory and research angles.

Delegates who would like to present papers in the *Media Education Research Section* may send their abstracts by March 15 to:
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Web site of the IAMCR conference: <http://www.humfak.auc.dk/iamcr>



United Nations Special Session on Children

NEW YORK, USA, SEPTEMBER, 2001

Ten years after the World Summit for Children (1990), and eleven years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN General Assembly has decided to convene a Special Session on Children in September 2001. Heads of State and Government are invited to review achievements of the World Declaration and Plan of Action of the 1990 World Summit, and to renew commitments and consider future action for children. Accredited NGOs will also attend the Special Session, which will be convened for three days between the first and second week of the general debate of the General Assembly.

Source: <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession>



Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, DECEMBER 17-20, 2001

A Second World Congress on commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation of children will be hosted by the Japanese Government in association with the Prefecture of Yokohama, in cooperation with ECPAT International, UNICEF and the NGO Group on the Rights of the Child.

The First World Congress took place in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1996. Three elements of commercial sexual exploitation of children was brought into focus: child prostitution, trafficking and sale of children for sexual purposes, and child pornography, including on the Internet. The primary purpose of the first congress was to draw international attention to the problems of commercial sexual exploitation of children and to promote the development of national policies and programmes to combat all forms of such exploitation in the specific contexts in which they occur. To this end, 119 countries together with non-governmental organisations and other agencies at the congress considered and adopted a Declaration and an Agenda for Action (available in full on the web site of

Swedish Save the Children: <http://www.rb.se/engindex.htm>).

The main objective of the Second World Congress is to review progress on the implementation by states of the Stockholm Agenda for Action. The congress should also identify the main problem areas in implementation of the Agenda, identify new manifestations of the issue, and share good practices in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Contact: ECPAT International (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes)
328 Phayathai Road
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Tel: +662 215 3388, Fax: +662 215 8272
E-mail: ecpatbkk@ksc15.th.com
Web site: <http://www.ecpat.net>

New Literature

THANK YOU FOR SENDING PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION

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The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen

In 1997, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom), Göteborg University, Sweden, began establishment of The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, financed by the Swedish government and UNESCO. The overall point of departure for the Clearinghouse's efforts with respect to children and media violence is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The aim of the Clearinghouse is to increase awareness and knowledge about children and media violence, not least in view of the newer channels of communication such as satellite television and Internet, thereby providing a basis for relevant policy-making and contributing to a constructive public debate. Another goal is to point out initiatives aiming to enhance children's competence as users of the media. Moreover, it is hoped that the Clearinghouse's work will stimulate further research on children and the media.

The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen informs various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organisations and interested individuals – about

- research on children, young people and media violence,
- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- media literacy and children's participation in the media, and
- regulatory and voluntary measures and activities in the area.

Fundamental to the work of the Clearinghouse is the creation of a global network. The Clearinghouse publishes a yearbook and a newsletter. Several bibliographies and a world-wide register of organisations concerned with children and media have been compiled. This and other information is available on the Clearinghouse's web site: www.nordicom.gu.se/unesco.html

THE CLEARINGHOUSE IS LOCATED AT NORDICOM

NORDICOM is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

NORDICOM is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

NORDICOM uses a variety of channels – newsletters, journals, books, databases – to reach researchers, students, decision-makers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

NORDICOM works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

NORDICOM also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

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