

Workshop 5: Entertainment media: Engaging Audiences in Intercultural Dialogue

Panelists:

Pascale Thumerelle, Vice President of Sustainable Development Vivendi

Jonathan Shen, President of Shinework

John Marks, President of Search for Common Ground

Susan Coulder, President of Global Film Initiative

Moderator:

Malu Viana Batista, Executive Director, Television America Latina

Workshop Summary

Films can be used to create an interconnected community and remove the barriers of nations and cultures that separate people from each other. According to Jonathan Shen programmes like Shinework which supports the set-up and the promotion of foreign film festivals in China and of Chinese film festivals all over the world open a window to the world and help people understand different cultures. Pascale Thumerelle stressed that everyone should question the entertainment media's responsibilities, especially since there are not many well organized stakeholders who control its quality. Asked how to address young people and involve them rather in the small and culturally diverse entertainment production companies than in the big and popular ones, she stated that the youth does not have to decide for one of the two sides, but could take an important role in both kinds of companies. Susan Coulder is sure that narrative films can create global understanding, respect and cultural empathy. However John Marks stated that media is able to reach a wide audience, but has its limits for having a certain impact.

The panelists agreed that media have a certain extent of power to inspire people, to debate social issues and to perform as a powerful instrument in engaging audiences in intercultural dialogue.

Quotations:

John Marks:

„We can't change the fundamental structures of the society by a radio programme, but what we can do is to change their behaviour and attitude.“

Susan Coulder:

„We are story-telling beings. Stories can shape the way we see and are seen by the world.“