



## Revisiting Public Service Broadcasting

Within the framework of its international Cross-cutting theme project: "ICT-enhanced Public Service Broadcasting: Contributing to the development of human rights, peace, tolerance and the fight against discrimination" (**ICT@PSB**), in 2004 UNESCO launched a call for television and film professionals to submit production proposals for a series of audiovisual productions on human rights, peace, tolerance and the fight against discrimination. Some 200 production proposals were submitted for consideration from television and film professionals all over the world.

The selection criteria were based on the analysis of the treatment of the main themes to be addressed, as announced in the "call for proposals", (human rights, peace, tolerance, the fight against discrimination, the UN Millennium Development Goals, particularly poverty alleviation, gender equality and women's empowerment, freedom of expression and intercultural communication) as well as other considerations, such as the diversity of production genres and geographical balance.

One of the project's objectives was to avoid the reproduction of conventional formats and approaches to development and social issues, some of which are over-exposed, and instead aimed to explore new, challenging and creative ways of encouraging reflection and debate on development through an innovative use of the audiovisual language.

At the end of this initiative, UNESCO produced and is distributing now the series on DVD.

### Revisiting Public Service Broadcasting:

1. **The box**—*Curiosity killed the cat but made humans intelligent...how a low-budget animation can tackle an abstract issue such as freedom of thought and expression.*

**Topic:** The concept of the global village implies communication among all peoples and cultures on the planet.

**Genre:** Animation

**Country:** Pakistan

**Length:** 8 minutes

**Directed by:** Zabreen Hasan, Sumaira Latif, Muhammad Farooq and Rabia Mahmood

**Synopsis:** All too often people all over the world are afraid to reach out to other cultures, fearing that contact with people radically different from themselves will result in

the dilution of their customs and traditions. Yet, in order to truly meet other peoples and experience the joys of sharing together, one has to accept "the box".

## 2. **The children of Darfur**—

*The untold stories...how public service broadcasting can contribute to raising international awareness and mobilizing support.*

**Topic:** The everyday life of children in Darfur's refugee camps.

**Genre:** Documentary

**Country:** Denmark

**Length:** 24 minutes

**Directed by:** Camilla Nielsson

**Synopsis:** This youth documentary film focuses on the children's version of what is happening in Darfur. Some of the strongest testimonies on the life in the refugee camp are told by the children and etched in drawings made in the support centres that have opened throughout Darfur.

## 3. **-Cualquier ciudad**— *In the darkness of the night...*

**Topic:** The critical situation of young people in Cazuca, afraid to become the victims of blind violence.

**Genre:** Fiction

**Country:** Colombia

**Length:** 8 minutes

**Directed by:** John Jairo de los Rios Echeverri

**Synopsis:** The sector of Cazuca, located within the limits of south western Bogota, represents cultural diversity and exchange. People from all parts of the country, brought together for different reasons and suffer the same scourge: the lack of opportunities and the trauma brought about by war.

Threatened by social conflicts, the young people of Cazuca try, however, to find a way to express themselves, to show their potential and attitudes. Around them, friends and other people are murdered, so the kids of Cazuca are frightened of taking risks and go on with their daily activities. They have become prisoners in their own home.

## 4. **-Village Nomade**—*When the environment becomes the enemy...a poetic look at a village's fight against nature.*

**Genre:** Documentary

**Country:** Niger

**Length:** 24'30"

**Directed by:** Mahaman Souleymane

**Synopsis:** In the middle of the sand dunes, in an African desert landscape, a man is standing, his face serious. He looks down at a broken box, dead palm trees and an abandoned well: the remains of a village. This man is Zeinami Maltam Boukar, a peasant

from the remote area of Manga. His village, Gonidi, 25 km from Goudoumaria on main road n°1, is in danger of disappearing, like most of the surrounding villages. The desert is moving nearer every day, nature is threatened and life becomes more and more unbearable. The men of Zeinami's village fight. They erect barriers of branches trying to stop the sand that the wind blows in from the dunes. But there are no more fields, no more branches and the wells are dry because the dunes soak up the water they contained. The men of the village then decide to send a scout to find a new place to live... in the west. In his desperate plight, on the brink of utter despair, the man finds a way of salvation. But how long will it last?

5. **-The place I call home-** Of home, of land, of souls...

**Topic:** What circumstances, what desires lie beneath the decision to leave one's own country? .... Egyptians speak about their dreams and tell their story.

**Genre:** Documentary

**Country:** Egypt

**Length:** 49 minutes

**Directed by:** Tamer Ezzat

**Synopsis:** The film investigates the fears, dreams and future plans of Randa, Mohamed and Darah. Randa wants to move to Canada, and yet she fears a possible identity crisis for her four-year-old son after watching a film about Arabs in New York post- 9/11. Mohamed failed to become a famous singer in Cairo and wants to try for a new beginning in Australia. Darah was raised in Canada but pressured by her mother, she returned to Egypt. Throughout the film, a question is raised: where is the place called home?

6. **Mothers on wheels** - *Motherhood and handicap: a new perspective...Public Service Broadcasting at the service of minority issues.*

**Topic:** How do disabled women cope with the daily activities that motherhood requires?

**Genre:** documentary

**Country:** Argentina

**Length:** 52'

**Directed by:** Mario Piazza

**Synopsis:** Monica became ill with poliomyelitis at the age of seven, during a national epidemic in Argentina. Illness confined her to a wheelchair, with great difficulty in moving her arms and legs. In 1981 she met film maker Mario Piazza, and they got married. Some years later, in spite of her physical limitations and confronting serious risks, Monica gave birth, at the age of 39, to their daughter, Maria Victoria.

The family films that Mario Piazza has been shooting throughout their life together are a document of Monica's activities, both before and after the birth of their child: her housekeeping tasks, her pregnancy, the nursing of the baby, the baby's growth as time goes by.

After she gave birth, Monica felt the need to make a documentary about her 'colleagues', other mothers with similar physical conditions. The result is a film, by Mario and Monica, about "mothers on wheels".

7. **Meena** - *Or how education leads children into a new universe...television for education can work.*

**Topic:** Through Meena, Rohan is introduced to another world that is far beyond his own.

**Genre:** Fiction

**Country:** India

**Length:** 21 minutes

**Directed by:** Jasmine Kaur and Avinash Roy

**Synopsis:** Rohan, a 12-year-old boy, has skipped school. He hates homework and, once more, has possibly not done it today. In general, he seems to be fed up of taking instructions from everyone, so he decides to take a break. Accidentally, he meets Meena, a girl who picks rags, and her brother. Through Meena, Rohan is introduced to another world far beyond his own, that he tries to explore in his own innocent ways. But Meena's eagerness to learn to read and write makes Rohan realize the worth of his own education. He will therefore try to pass on some of his knowledge to her...