

OUR STRATEGY

IBT's mission is to use broadcasting to further awareness and understanding of people's lives in the developing world and the issues which affect them.

Our vision is that UK broadcasters should produce a range of imaginative, inspiring and innovative high quality programmes and online content, across all genres, which enable a mass audience to learn about and engage with the developing world and its people, and to discover the ways in which all our lives are interconnected.

To achieve our vision we focus on three key areas of activity:

- Lobbying Government, regulators and broadcasters
- Research on broadcast coverage of the developing world
- Dialogue with the main public service broadcasters

INTRODUCTION

Television is the main source of information about the wider world for most people in the UK. But television news is, of course, dominated by negative stories and images. For several years, IBT has been urging broadcasters to be more adventurous with their programming about the developing world. In the battle for ratings, it's easy for broadcasters to play safe and avoid taking risks, but to reach and engage new audiences and to challenge stereotypes, innovation, experiment and ambition are essential.

Drama is especially challenging so it's refreshing to be able to praise the BBC for screening *The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency*, the first drama on peak time television with an all black cast. The high ratings demonstrate that there's a genuine audience appetite for stories about ordinary people's lives in developing countries.

Other broadcasters also broke new ground. Channel 4's *Millionaires' Mission* was a genuine attempt to find a fresh and populist way of tackling development on prime time television. BBC3's *Blood, Sweat and T-shirts* was an attempt to reach younger audiences, by following six young people on a trip to Delhi to find out exactly how cheap clothes are made.

Experiments don't always succeed but we would encourage broadcasters to keep looking for new ways of reaching audiences. Television has a unique ability to inform and engage a mass audience with what's happening in the wider world, but broadcasters should also search out for programmes which present stories that are richer, deeper and more authentic.

LOBBYING

A recent independent report praised our lobbying work and noted that IBT has had a significant impact on broadcasting policy in recent years. As a result of our lobbying, we have achieved several notable successes:

- Ofcom, the communications regulator is mandated 'to promote the interests of citizens and consumers.'
- The BBC has as one of its five main purposes 'to bring the world to the UK.'
- Channel 4 has, as one of its four new purposes 'to challenge people to see the world differently.'
- Ofcom's definition of public service broadcasting includes 'increasing our understanding of the world through news and analysis.'

We have made a number of submissions in 2007-8 on behalf of our membership to Government, Ofcom, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee and the BBC Trust.

We have argued that a key element of public service broadcasting is its international content and if people in the UK are to become global citizens, they need access to high quality information about the lives of people in other countries.

RESEARCH

Research is a central and increasingly important aspect of our work. Copies of all our research reports can be downloaded from the IBT website www.ibt.org.uk

In September 2007 we published *Reflecting the Real World 2* which looked at how well UK television and new media covered global issues and stories. By interviewing broadcasters, commissioners and new media specialists, the report helped to promote transparency and accountability, and encouraged a more strategic approach to international content and audience impact. The report also included audience research about young people and which media they used to find out about the wider world.

In June 2008 we published *Screening the World* which examined the international content of three key genres – children's, factual and news – all central to the future of public service broadcasting. For the first time we measured the nature and volume of children's programming – to have a clearer understanding of what information about the world is available for children watching television in the UK. We also published the latest instalment in a unique longitudinal study, first commissioned by IBT in 1989, which has tracked the changing nature of international factual programming on UK television. The news study included in the report explored some of the issues raised by the coverage of the post-election violence in Kenya.



21UP South Africa, ITV1



Millionaires' Mission, Channel 4



Paul Merton in China, Five



DIALOGUE WITH BROADCASTERS

In 2004 we held our first joint event with the BBC. *The Real World Brainstorm* has become a regular occurrence. It has given us the opportunity to bring together a wide range of experts – academics, writers, business executives, policy makers and grassroots activists – to work with senior BBC executives and independent producers. One of the aims of the seminars is to encourage both groups to think creatively about how broadcasters can improve their international content.

We've also been in frequent contact with other broadcasters – Channel 4, ITV, Five, ITN and Sky – and hope to develop closer partnerships in the future.

In 2007 IBT joined the Save Kids' TV campaign and we're now involved in a number of initiatives, working with broadcasters and regulators, to help secure the future of high quality UK made children's programming.

THE FUTURE

The changing media landscape and the growing importance of online content present a number of challenges and opportunities for IBT. However, all our research indicates that television remains – and will continue to be for many years to come – the main source of information about the rest of the world for most adults and children in the UK.

The role of the public service broadcasters will come increasingly into the spotlight in the next few years as the UK moves towards digital switchover. It will be essential that IBT articulates a clear vision for public service broadcasting and where its international content should be. This will require a detailed understanding of the impact of broadcasting on UK citizens and the way in which different audiences engage with a range of programmes.

Every UK citizen is entitled to expect that our public service broadcasters reflect the world we live in with high quality programming which is imaginative, innovative and inspiring. IBT will be arguing that case, on behalf of its membership to Government, broadcasters and regulators.



FUNDING

In 2007-8 we received core funding grants from ActionAid, British Red Cross, CAFOD, Care International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide (UK), Help the Aged, Oxfam, Plan UK, SightSavers, Tearfund, UNICEF UK, VSO, WaterAid, World Association for Christian Communication and World Vision.

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We are very grateful to all the above organizations and to IBT's many individual donors and supporters.

A full set of accounts for 2007 is available on the IBT website www.ibt.org.uk

ABOUT US

The International Broadcasting Trust is an educational and media charity working to promote high quality broadcast coverage of the developing world. Our aim is to further awareness and understanding of the lives of the majority of the world's people, and the issues which affect them.

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ANNUAL
REVIEW
2007/8



Mission Africa, BBC1

Blood, Sweat and T-shirts, BBC3

Photo: BBC/Mirage/TWC/Keith Bernstein

