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Call for applications

Soaps and Society: Making Broadcast Drama for Development

Course dates:	September 12 th – December 2 nd , 2011 (12 weeks)
Media:	Radio and Television
Type of Diploma:	Certificate
RNTC application deadline:	15 th January 2011
NFP online application deadline:	1 st February 2011 (NB deadline paper applications: 1 st January)
Deadline non fellowship applicants:	July 1 st , 2011
Procedure:	Click here

Course Aim

To strengthen the capacity of broadcast drama writers and programme-makers and of the organisations they work for to design, write and produce broadcast drama serials which can help to raise public awareness and change attitudes on issues to do with the development of their societies.

Harnessing the power of popular drama

Some of the problems facing societies around the world today require a change of attitude and ultimately of behaviour in people within those societies if they are to be surmounted. Issues to do with health and the environment are cases in point. Domestic violence is another. Worldwide the rising incidence of violence in the home and the number of deaths from unsafe water, from alcohol, drugs, smoking and AIDS are evidence of how prevailing attitudes and patterns of behaviour are an obstacle to attempts by experts and educators to persuade people to change.

Raising awareness by giving clear and accurate information about the risks and consequences of certain behaviour is a start but is not enough in itself. The reasons and the underlying emotions which determine why and how people act as they do have to be addressed as well. And this is notoriously difficult to do. Attitudes are deep-seated. Well-established habits die hard.

Used effectively – often in collaboration with specialists and educators - the broadcast media can make a contribution to the development of societies by raising awareness and changing attitudes. And there is perhaps no more effective means for them to do so than the long-running serial drama such as the ‘soap’. It is a form of drama with a proven ability to attract and retain a wide audience; it enables viewers and listeners to identify with characters and situations taken from daily life; and it speaks to them more directly than informative programming because it addresses the underlying motives and emotions that universally determine human attitudes and behaviour. In many parts of the world the ‘soap’ has shown that it can be a powerful means not only to attract and entertain large audiences but also to educate and to engage them on issues of importance to the development of their societies.

Methodology: learning by doing

Apart from strengthening the participants’ understanding of drama theory, special attention will be given to developing and putting into practice the appropriate knowledge and skills for developing ideas and storylines and for writing and producing long-running serial drama. Radio and television



participants on the course will learn how public education and social action programming can be effectively designed and tested with specific target audiences in mind and how its impact can be evaluated. Participants will further be exposed to successful examples of existing practice and come into contact with programme-makers, drama script-writers and educators who have experience of using drama in this way. Attention will be given to encouraging partnerships of complementary expertise between broadcasters and others working in this field with a view to improving the effectiveness of efforts to bring about beneficial societal change.

Target group

The course is designed for mid-career programme-makers, drama scriptwriters, with at least three years experience in the field of educational broadcasting. Its aim is to devise, develop and make long-running broadcast drama serials with the objective of raising awareness and changing attitudes on issues affecting specific target groups in their societies.

Information

To find out more about other requirements, visit our website www.rntc.nl. You can find the [selection procedure here](#).