

Children's TV programme producers win praise

The trainers at an ABU workshop on children's television programmes have praised the work of the programme producers who took part.

Hiroko Sakaue of NHK and her team, Bella Stjerne and Kalle Furst from the European Broadcasting Union and Karen Pringle of BBC, said they were happy with the quality of programmes produced and encouraged the producers to use more local content in their programmes.

The Children's TV Programme Item-Exchange Meeting and Workshop was held in Kuala Lumpur in July.

Hyunsook Chung, chairperson of the ABU children's working committee, said there was marked improvement in the overall quality. "This was attributed not only to more hands-on training and coordination, but to the creativity and determination of the producers themselves," she said.



Participants and trainers at the workshop

When asked how she felt overall about this year's event, Ms Stjerne said it was one of the best events among the four she has attended and complimented the work of producers.

Ms Pringle, attending the event for the first time, said she was in awe of

how various producers from different backgrounds came together breaching language barriers and culture to work together for children.

Thirty-five participants from 21 countries in Asia and the Pacific took part in this year's event, as well as the EBU, BBC and other observers.

Over the 17 years of its existence, this event has consolidated into a platform where children's programme producers in the region meet and exchange ideas to further develop their production skills.

A total of 158 items were viewed and discussed. A third were non-Asian productions for children.

In preparation for the launch of an ABU children's documentary co-production, a three-day workshop on the theme of children's documentary productions focused on basics such as storytelling, cinematography, sound effects and ethics as well as best practices from the EBU Documentary Exchange.



Participants enjoying a role playing session

Children's drama co-production moves from strength to strength

Producers at an ABU children's drama co-production meeting and workshop have been commended for the quality of their work and encouraged to continue contributing to the cause for more local content television material for children.

The 5th ABU Children's Drama co-production meeting and workshop was held in Kuala Lumpur in July.

The participants hailed from BBS-Bhutan, RTB-Brunei, RTPRC-China, RTHK-Hong Kong, NHK-Japan, EBS-South Korea, RTM-Malaysia and MNB-Mongolia.

The aim of the workshop was to improve the programme production skills in each participating Asian country and to promote mutual understanding of the cultures and societies surrounding the region's children through production and exchange of relevant dramas.

A full-day workshop on children's drama conducted by the NHK Sound

Design Centre's chief director, Yutaka Imai, gave participants an insight into putting sound onto visuals.

Mr Imai said: "Sound effects can be shaped by the sound designer. Good sound design is important to drama production as good camera work is. It brings texture to a drama production."

Children's drama co-production brainstorming and discussion training took place in the first two days aimed at improving the programme production skills in each participating organisation.

Feedback from participants on the workshop was positive. Some comments included:

Gladys Yeung (RTHK): "I have a clearer picture now on how to make stories more interesting."

Lee Ho (EBS): "This is a good opportunity for idea and concept sharing."

Haji Hassan Bin Haji Zulkifli (RTB): "It was a good meeting. I see a lot of differences in what we know and what we can learn from the ABU that can give me new and fresh ideas on improving children's programmes in Brunei."

Luvsantseren Ariunjargal (MNB): "I found the session on making good audio very interesting. To me it was a very fruitful three-day workshop as we also learnt about how the EBU produces their children's drama through the ABU/EBU drama exchanges."

Kesang Choki (BBS): "I understand why sound is an important element in making programmes. I am glad to be able to attend this training session and the opportunity to apply what I have learnt to my programmes back home."

Hisaaki Wakaizumi (Executive Producer, NHK): "This sort of training benefits producers. I saw a lot of enthusiasm among the participants. This is good as the message will get through to the masses." □



Yutaka Imai conducting a session on 'sound in visuals'



London prepares of a momentous

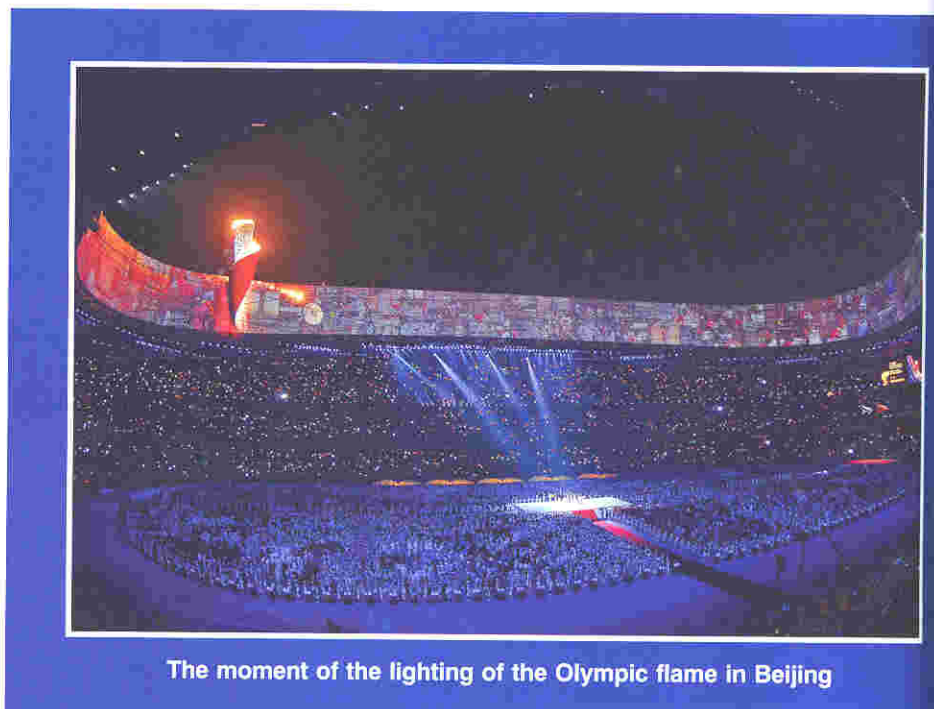
*By John Barton,
ABU Director of Sport*

London Olympic officials charged with delivering the Summer Games in 2012 are already thumbing through the intelligence reports and briefing documents as they try to piece together television coverage to surpass Beijing 2008.

They have a lot to live up to.

In almost every respect Beijing achieved or surpassed the expectations of broadcasters and their most important constituents, the viewers.

Ratings for the opening ceremony, variously described as beautiful, breathtaking, a 'pyrotechnic masterpiece', were the best for any Games, reaching an estimated 4 billion people across the five continents.



The moment of the lighting of the Olympic flame in Beijing

Host broadcaster, Beijing Olympic Broadcast (BOB), with strong support from China Central Television (CCTV), pulled off a masterpiece of live television.

Together they brought to the world the Games' central themes of peace and harmony through an intricate television mosaic of its history, art, and China's many contributions to mankind: gunpowder, paper, printing and the compass.

BOB navigated its way through a complex series of cultural and artistic performances which left the 91,000 people in the iconic 'Birds Nest' stadium spellbound. And throughout China's vast land nearly 900 million people were glued to the coverage, one that set a new standard for a Games opening ceremony. London watch out!

Complementing the artistic elements was a dizzying array of high tech equipment geared to give some of the more complicated routines added visual effect. Taken together they gave to the



Representatives of the London 2012 Olympic Games visit a CCTV studio

in the afterglow Beijing Olympics



Games a springboard that fulfilled one of the three missions of the organisers: a high-tech Olympics.

The other two, a 'Green Olympics' and a 'Peoples Olympics', were achieved to varying degrees, though the weather and Beijing's notorious poor air quality sullied its ambition for a Games "under bright blue skies."

But it was in the heady world of broadcast engineering where the Games was to make its Olympic mark

In the final days, BOB unveiled yet another piece of technology; a wire-cam running one kilometre high above the Olympic Common Domain (OCD), and revealing stunning images of the aquatics

(cont'd on next page)



Broadcast staff take a break to catch up on the action in the IBC foyer



Foreign fans show the Olympic spirit at the Water Cube swimming venue - Photo: Lydia Astley



A production meeting in session at the Doordarshan-India facilities



RTM broadcasts a live interview with Malaysia's Minister of Sport



Production staff hard at work in one of the edit suites of IRIB-Iran

(from previous page)

venue (the 'Water Cube'), the 'Bird's Nest' stadium, and the splendid backdrop of Pangu Plaza.

It capped a technological gamble that paid off for the organisers and the International Olympic Committee whose Olympic Broadcast Service (OBS) and its no nonsense CEO, Manolo Romero, were responsible for coordinating the production of all events.

London will now be breathing a lot easier knowing that Beijing was able to successfully manage the first 'high definition' games, something that was regarded as a very risky venture only a few years ago; a step into the unknown!

But it was quite a task, further complicated by BOB's decision to augment the visual elements with an audio model never deployed before at a major multi-sport event.

Each HD feed from a competition venue would carry stereo surround sound. It was another bold move which necessitated the acquisition of seven audio vans and 16 extra audio flight packs.

And while we are talking about mobile broadcast equipment, no one was more pleased than Mr Romero when a giant freighter arrived from Italy carrying on board 55 HDTV outside broadcast vans, especially built for Beijing, and four HDTV flight packs.

Another challenge was to provide an extensive network of fibre to transmit signals within venues, due to the adoption of HDTV and the long cable distances within the venues.

The 700 fibre-optic based circuits used in the broadcast contribution network were nearly double the 440 used in Athens.

These circuits were configured to carry a varying set of broadcast signals linking

the IBC, competition venues, RHB studios, the radio frequency switching centre for outside races and beauty cameras.

In short, a gigantic and complex exercise which, from the on air perspective worked like a Swiss (Omega – the official games timekeeper) watch!

It needed to.

The opening ceremony amply showed the necessity of this technological game plan and how, without it, the world would not have been able to be so transfixed by the 15,000 entertainers and artists, the 2,000 drummers, the high flying kites, and the spectacular countdown from 60, all choreographed to pyrotechnics along a route from the Forbidden City to the 'Bird's Nest'.

Confucius could not have foretold of this sort of theatre. But he was prescient about one thing: "Friends have come from afar, how happy we are!"

Photo credits:

Apart from the photo credited on page 21 and the photo below, all of the Beijing photos in this issue were taken by our Secretary-General, David Astley. His magnificent photo of the opening ceremony on the front cover was taken with a 10.5 mm fisheye lens.



A live telecast of a 7 pm news bulletin from NHK-Japan's IBC studio



Technicians monitor signals in SBS-Korea's master control room



TPT staff jump for joy when Thailand wins its first Beijing gold

Photo: John Barton

Beijing brings out the best in ABU members

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, has praised the ABU Olympic nations for their coverage of the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing.

He said the standard of production was outstanding, as was the commitment by the broadcasters to a comprehensive free-to-air schedule.

"Once again we have demonstrated our ability to reach the biggest television audience in the world, and for that I am sure the International Olympic Committee will be delighted," he said.

Mr Astley was speaking at a reception for ABU members hosted by the IOC's Director of Television and Marketing Services, Timo Lumme, at the Olympic Club in Beijing during the Games.

"We had free-to-air coverage in all our 26 markets reaching our biggest television audience ever for a sporting event," Mr Astley said.

He said he was particularly pleased to see the smaller nations coming to the fore in Beijing: countries such as Timor Leste, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

into those countries at an affordable cost to those members,"

He said that underlined one of the great strengths of the ABU: the benefits that derive from a collective approach to the acquisition of broadcast rights and the distribution of the signals.

"The power of our sports pools is evident from the take-up of the Beijing Games which also included more pay/cable members," Mr Astley said.

The games had been broadcast in Pakistan by GEO TV, a free satellite and cable provider, in Singapore by StarHub, and in Indonesia by Aora TV, as well as by the national broadcasters in those countries.

The ABU had also for the first time acquired new media rights – mobile telephony, mobile exhibition, and Internet – and this had proved to be a great success in key markets such as Singapore and Malaysia.

"Our members in both countries – MediaCorp and RTM – had successfully deployed those media assets into the marketplace through partnerships with telcos and mobile phone operators, and

the early results are very encouraging," Mr Astley said.

Mr Lumme thanked ABU members for their active participation in promoting the Olympic spirit and for ensuring that the broadcast coverage reached all countries in the Asia-Pacific, no matter how small.

"The ABU plays a key role in the Olympic movement bringing to diverse people the thrills and excitement of an Olympic Games. For many it is an uplifting experience, one that drives even more young people to take up sport and become Olympians," he said.

The ABU's Director of Sport, John Barton, said Mr Lumme could not have been more prescient as he described how important the role of the ABU was in developing the Olympic games among smaller, poorer nations.

"Within 48 hours Afghanistan had become an Olympic medal winner for the first time through a 21 year old martial arts expert Rohullah Nikpai," he said.

"Against all the odds, and with little help other than his own determination, the young man from the war-ravaged country climbed the highest sporting mountain by winning a bronze medal in taekwondo by taking out the world champion Juan Antonio Ramos of Spain.

"Rohullah's exploits and achievements were seen live throughout Afghanistan via the ABU multi-channel service.

"We are extremely proud to have been able to be part of this historic occasion," Mr Barton added. □



Timo Lumme of the IOC addresses ABU members at the Olympic Club

Over 100 nations take TVNZ Beijing coverage

From the Hindu Kush to the azure seas of the South Pacific the ABU's far flung members did not miss a single thing at the recent Summer Olympic Games in Beijing.

"We delivered our biggest coverage of any Olympics by far," said TVNZ General Manager of Sport, Murray Needham.

"I don't think any other broadcaster was able to cover as much of the globe as we did, nor come up with as many hours of programming," he said.

TVNZ's sports production team put together 3,500 hours of Olympic events, most of it live. It was seen throughout Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Central Asia and was seen in more than 50 percent of Olympic nations.

As well as the 30 countries that the ABU took the multi-channel programming package into, TVNZ



The TVNZ control room for the ABU multi-channel programme feeds

supplied programming feeds that were used in 75 other countries – a total of 105.

"The demand for our multi-channel product has grown enormously since we first introduced the concept, along with the ABU, SuperSport and the South African Broadcasting Corporation

at the 2000 Sydney Olympics," Mr Needham said.

Now others were following the idea which, through the advent of multi-channel pay television and free-to-air digital platforms, enabled broadcasters to provide total coverage of a multi-sport event. □

Signal piracy still a problem

Broadcasters pirating the ABU's multi-channel feeds, or stealing post-produced signals off ABU members, kept the ABU staff busy during the Beijing Olympics.

ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, said that right from the start of the Opening Ceremony, reports were being received of coverage being pirated by non ABU-members in Pakistan and India.

"With the support of the regulatory authority, PEMRA, we were able to put a stop to it in Pakistan, but in

India pirating of the signals by cable operators continued right throughout the Games," he said.

"We also had problems in other countries with broadcasters illegally using the CCTV international feed to produce coverage in competition with our members – coverage for which they had paid no rights fees.

"Our Legal Counsel, Fernand Alberto, was kept busy writing cease-and-desist letters to the broadcasters concerned, and we are currently working with the IOC lawyers to decide

on what follow-up legal action needs to be taken," he added.

Mr Astley said there were also issues with members not complying with restrictions on display of sponsorship logos during studio links and superimpositions over live coverage.

"We addressed these problems as we went along with the members concerned, but there is clearly a need for more education on the IOC sponsorship and advertising restrictions, particularly in the developing countries," he said. □

Forum casts spotlight on media's peace role

Discussion of the media's role in conflict prevention has to be international to be effective, an international forum in Bonn has heard.

The Director General of Deutsche Welle, Erik Bettermann, made the remark at the DW Global Media Forum on Media in Peace Building and Conflict Prevention held at the World Conference Centre in the former German capital in June.

Mr Bettermann said that in the 'global village', nothing was local any more.

"Under certain conditions, events on one side of the world could have unexpected implications somewhere else completely. The Internet and satellites transmit images and message to every corner of the world – as quick as a flash and around the clock," he said.

"Therefore any debate on conflict prevention and peace building has to be conducted at an international level.



David Astley

It needs to cross borders, cultures and languages to involve all of the different sides and perspectives."

Mr Bettermann said the media could and must play a deciding role with regards to globalisation challenges. He felt this role was too vaguely defined at present.

He said that, and a desire to develop more liberal, independent journalism,

were the main reasons why Deutsche Welle had decided to organise the Global Media Forum.

Behavioural changes

Translating this dialogue into behavioural changes at the day-to-day working level is a key challenge facing broadcasting unions and other capacity-building organisations, the ABU Secretary-General, David Astley, said.

He expressed concern that industry conferences and forums held on topics such as peace journalism were attended mainly by people at management level, and not the practitioners who were working on a daily basis behind the camera and behind the microphone.

In his keynote speech on 'The Role of Broadcasting Unions in Peace Building and Conflict Prevention' he asked: "Are we achieving any outcomes from talking about these issues at events like this forum, or are we preaching to the converted?"

"Are we reaching the journalists, editors and producers who are responsible for what goes to air? They are the people who need to be educated about the background to the conflicts that they are covering so that their reports can be objective."

Mr Astley said that he was not criticising the need for industry dialogue and forums, and congratulated Deutsche Welle for its initiative in organising the Bonn conference.

"There is certainly a need for these issues to be debated at this level – where we can bring together industry professionals and decision-makers

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Erik Bettermann