
A Brazilian TV Show Brings Together Youths from All Over the World

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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"Letters in the Wind," a cultural TV show from Brazil, aims to create an exchange of ideas and experiences among peoples by means of youths of different nationalities. The program was created by Brazilian television channel Futura, which is seeking foreign partnerships for developing the show.

So far, it remains to be known with how many countries the Brazilian channel will be able to close partnership deals, but the presence of young Palestinians in the show is already a given. This is so because recently, Arab production company Alarz, based in the city of Nazareth, in Israel, will co-produce a show with the Brazilian channel.

According to the foreign relations coordinator at Futura channel, Renato Wilmersdorfer, the Arab company is very much interested in participating in the project and should sell the show to local channels further on.

The project for exchange between Brazilian and foreign youths has been going for five years now. According to Wilmersdorfer, shows have been produced which featured Cape Verde and the United Kingdom, but those followed a different model.

"By the old model, a Brazilian would send a question to a youth in another country, and the kid would reply and ask another question. Now, the aim is to increase the number of countries involved in the show," said Wilmersdorfer.

According to him, the youths who will ask and learn more about one another's countries will be students aged 14 to 17 who are not attending higher education courses. Subjects for the questions may range from sports to cuisine, from music to religion.

"We want plurality of information," stated Wilmersdorfer. The show should also provide a cultural identity overview, showing that countries have more in common than they appear to.

According to Wilmersdorfer, the show's format will allow for any country to become part of the project and trade information, because each production company will shoot in its own country and then send the footage to Brazil. "It is low-cost inter-country bonding," he asserted.

The name of the series, "Letters in the Wind," comes from the fact that each student will write a question in a piece of paper and place it in a bottle. Through graphic computing, the bottle will then be cast into the ocean, after which it will travel across the globe headed toward the other country.

Based in the southeastern Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, the Futura channel was established in 1997 with the objective of bringing more education to the Brazilian people, and not just the type of education one obtains from school, but rather a type of education that covers all fields of knowledge. The channel broadcasts to more than 60 million people by means of parabolic antennas, subscription and free-to-air TV.

Futura's TV shows are also used in schools, nurseries, prisons, hospitals, healthcare centers, universities, libraries, NGOs, unions, companies and public organizations. The shows' contents are also used as working material by youths and community leaders in all of the places mentioned above.

Futura counts on the partnership of various companies and associations, which, in addition to contributing funds, operate actively in the channel's management and the development of its shows and social actions.

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