

TVer in Brazil

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THE WORD "TVer" is composed of TV and the Portuguese "ver" (to see, to watch). Thus, TVer means "watching TV", in the sense of "keeping an eye on it". It was Dr Marta Suplicy - a Federal Deputy for the state of São Paulo - who got the idea of creating Tver after having heard - personally and through mail - complaints from thousands of people about the quality of Brazilian TV programmes. In June 1997, Dr Suplicy invited a group of professionals: psychologists, psychoanalysts, doctors, journalists, pedagogues, philosophers, writers, lawyers and judges. The main objective of this group - Tver - was to create a public space where Brazilian citizens could debate, analyse and, consequently, participate in visual media, mainly television. TVer proposes to carry on discussions on public and social responsibility in relation to TV contents. Since TV is public property, we understand that viewers and citizens do have the right to demand through their elected representatives improved programming quality.

DISCUSSING THE RESPONSIBILITY of TV in Brazil also means analysing the role of TV in Child-adolescent development. According to TVer, any attempt to create a sense of citizenship - discussing violence, pregnancy in adolescence, sexual and work exploitation of children, disrespect for women, discrimination of any kind (colour, religion, sexual minorities, etc) - must take TV participation into consideration. This is of vital importance, as children sometimes spend more than 3 hours daily in front of TV, that is, in some cases about the same amount of time they spend at school.

IN AUGUST 1998, TVer became a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Such a political decision was taken in order to implement a strategy of social responsibility, as well as to create what TVer calls "The Rights of the Viewer". As an NGO, TVer can more easily express its members' opinion, whenever Brazilian citizens feel that a television broadcast, or a particular subject, may be harmful. However, TVer does not intend to engage in "TV criticism" - that is efficiently done by other means of communication. It is also important to point out that TVer was not created to defend censorship of any kind.

TVer hopes to stimulate the creation of many similar groups around Brazil - and the world - to discuss television and "The Rights of the Viewer". May this contribute to ending the present monologue between TV and society!

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