

# Vitamin News

*Vitamin News* (Thai Public Broadcasting Service, Bangkok, Thailand) is a 10-minute weekly series for 7-to-11-year-olds. This live action and animated series with a celebrity host is the first and only news program for children in Thailand. It serves as a model program by encouraging children to build immunity and to use discretion in interpreting news (cf. illustration 1). The breaking news topic on this episode, sexual harassment, is introduced by the host (cf. illustration 2). A boy and a girl demonstrate the concept of borrowing from a person, as a voiceover of the host asks whether we can borrow another person's body (cf. illustration 3). The host goes on to explain children's rights and responsibilities for safety concerning the body. He identifies the concept of private space. The boy talks about respecting girls and the girl talks about protecting herself (cf. illustration 4). Together, they demonstrate saying no and shouting help if sexual harassment occurs (cf. illustration 5). Interesting sound effects help to bring home the messages. They play a game with pictures to identify situations that create good and bad feelings. Then the host plays a ukulele and sings a song to help children understand the difference between self-protection and being considerate to one another (cf. illustration 6). He explains that children should ask themselves three questions to distinguish whether a person's intentions are good or bad (cf. illustration 7). At the conclusion, onscreen information points viewers to the program's Facebook page (cf. illustration 8). Consultants for this program include the Thai Health Promotion Foundation and the Center for the Protection of Children's Rights Foundation.

*Vitamin News* was a finalist in the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014 in the 7-11 non-fiction category.

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS' OPINION

International experts shared their opinions about *Vitamin News* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014. Experts were all in agreement about the importance of the subject matter. They debated whether this program offered the most appropriate way to communicate the very serious and challenging topic of sexual harassment, especially when it happens with people who children might now and trust otherwise. Some experts thought the program is for younger children. Some experts thought there are cultural differences that explain the treatment of the subject.

"Sexual harassment is an issue and it is a touchy issue. In the Phillipines I have not seen a show like this and it is treated in a light manner. It is kind of sweeping when they said the old people try to touch. They didn't explain the issue." (female expert, Phillipines)

"I don't think it's possible to broadcast this kind of stuff in Japan because it's a more conservative society." (male expert, Japan)

"They're simplifying the theme a little bit." (female expert, Dominican Republic)

"Usually the abused person is close to the violence. The message must be simple and clear and can't confuse children." (female expert, Cuba)



Ill. 1: Title screen for the *Vitamin News*



Ill. 2: A host presents the breaking news topic: sexual harassment



Ill. 3: Child actors interact with graphic images to explain this complex subject

Screenshots from *Vitamin News* © Thai Public Broadcasting Service



III. 4: The girl explains a way to protect herself

“They might have something there from a tone point of view. They weren’t trying to scare kids, they were trying to make an important point to kids.” (male expert, United States)

“Target is younger. Not for 7. In my country, they don’t talk to children in this way if they are older. This is for younger kids.” (female expert, Taiwan)

“This is a question about culture. It is very hard to address this subject. We wouldn’t have made it this way in Europe. This is their way of dealing with it.” (male expert, Norway)



III. 5: Together they say “no” and shout “help”

“I thought it was hard to get the message across....They tried really well and it was constructed for children but hard to get that message. I thought it was more a preschool program.” (female expert, Australia)

“What I thought was good was that they pushed their online information.... it would have been impossible in a TV show to look out for dad or uncle really....I wouldn’t be brave enough to put on a show like that.” (female expert, United Kingdom)



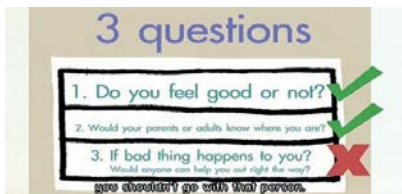
III. 6: Animated sequences support understanding of the subject matter

Everyone agreed that the three questions were very relevant to support children’s action to oppose sexual harassment.

“I liked the three questions to test whether it is okay. Do you feel comfortable? Do your parents know where you are? If a bad thing happens would anyone help you out immediately? One ‘no’ answer means you shouldn’t do it.” (female expert, Norway)

“The three points—if it doesn’t feel right or good to me—is an important try.” (female expert, Netherlands)

*Elizabeth Spezia, PhD student, Southern Illinois University, USA*



III. 7: Three questions to determine if what happens is right or wrong



III. 8: Viewers are encouraged to use the program’s online resources

Screenshots from Vitamin News © Thai Public Broadcasting Service

Target Audience 6.23	Idea 7.52	Script 6.27	Realization 6.42
Average Score per Category by experts’ voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2014			