

# *My Dream Bike*

*My Dream Bike* was produced by TRT Istanbul, Turkey. The program is about a young boy, Abdullah, who is 11 years old. He lives with his parents and his 11 siblings in Hasankeyf, a very historical and touristic town in East Turkey. Abdullah has a dream. He wants to have his own bike. He knows his parents cannot afford to buy one for him. So Abdullah decides to earn his own money. He takes up his initiative and makes up his mind. He wants to become a tourist guide. Step by step he thinks he is coming closer to his dream bike but things are turning out to be different than he expected. It is a really hot summer. No tourists are coming to the town. He waits with patience. Can he realise his dream?

*My Dream Bike* was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2010 finalists in the 7-11 Non-Fiction category.

## International experts' opinions

Almost all the international experts loved the character of the protagonist. "I really loved the one about the bike. I absolutely loved it!" (female expert, UK). Another commented, "Nice story, and there is a strong character. It was really well cast. The boy was very strong, and the story was very good. You felt good of him, and I think it was really nice" (male expert, Germany). They admired the natural acting of the character. "They are very good quality and also the format, and the balance between the voice-over and voice-in, and the acting of the hero. This Turkish man was just – it was perfect, because the boy was himself. The natural activity of a child, which is coming out from reality, not like some documentary that is just pretending. Also, the insight from children from other countries to see: 'look, he did it; he bought it himself.' So, it is a good film" (female expert, Slovenia). They admired his passion and determination to fulfil his plans. However, "I did think that it sort of ran out at the end – the little bit about that he got a part in a movie, and he was supposed to be earning some money, but then when he went to get the bike: you haven't got the money. I wasn't quite sure about the end. But, his desire to do something: I just thought it was such beautifully done" (female expert, UK). A Turkish expert explained the way they selected the protagonist. "The team met there, and they made a huge interview with 100 or 75 kids. She chose this kid, and he was the most appropriate kid for this kind of documentary" (male expert, Turkey).

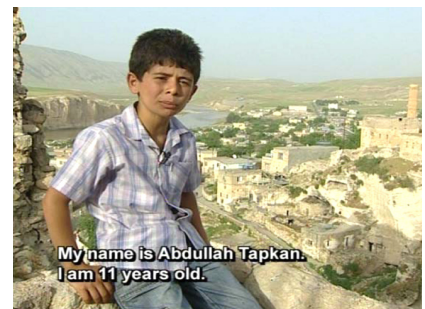


Figure 1: Abdullah.



Figure 2: Abdullah's family.

Many experts admired the production of the program. "I thought also that the camera was very well positioned into the scene. It wasn't like an aggressive kind of shooting. It was always observing; it was always somewhere around. I really liked it" (female expert, Brazil). They appreciated the narration of the program. "I thought that it was a very effectively told story. It was very simple – to the



Figure 3: Abdullah acts as a tourist guide.



Figure 4: Abdullah attends the school.



Figure 5: Abdullah attending the training session to act as a guide.



Figure 6: Abdullah counting money to buy a bike.

point. It made a great impact, of course, because of the custom of this specific boy too. It was really simple, but so effective” (female expert, Norway). There was a further elaboration by an expert, “There was a really great shot of him when they were saying: ‘do you want this?’ When he was going: ‘No, I don’t like it.’ He was like – you just really felt for him, because he was hoping he could get a decent second-hand bike, and they were rubbish. You could just see it on his little face. It was captured really beautifully” (male expert, Qatar).

Almost all the international experts liked the theme of the program. “I liked it; I thought the target audience was right. I saw some children in that boy. So, I thought they would like it, because if you come from a home where you find it difficult to get things, you would understand what that boy is going through, especially when the father is not working and a mother who has to. They have quite a large family too. I thought it was good” (female expert, Ghana). “I agree; it almost won my heart” (female expert, Germany). They liked that the program was targeted at the kids. “I thought they were great. I am a big fan of child-led stories, where the child is facilitated to tell a real story. I actually think it was found in a lot of those, but where there wasn’t a presenter; it was much more satisfying to watch” (female expert, Ireland).

There were discussions among the experts if the program was promoting child labour. Each expert pointed out his or her point of view as grounded in their cultural perspective. In general, experts from North America accepted the fact that the protagonist was working to follow his dreams as it was fairly common for the kids to work in that part of the world. In South America and Asia, the situation is different. “With the European context, maybe this show works very well. He is a fantastic character and he has a glow. The glow was authentic. The Latin American context, we have all these child labour issues. It is very important. Showing this, maybe you are just encouraging children to work or to work in a way to find money to buy something” (female expert, Cuba).

“I don’t think that the point of the show was that the child was working rather than going to school – Kids run lemonade stands; kids do all kinds of things: sell cookies, do things; I don’t see why that is so objectionable – for a kid to be entrepreneurial. He wasn’t working to help support the family – he wanted something” (male expert, USA). “For me, it is the big difference between if you collect money and give it to your parents, or if you collect money to fulfil a dream. Children do this: they work a little bit for it in the backyard of the neighbour or something like this” (male expert, Germany). “In New Zealand, you would expect children to have these other

jobs. I think maybe just watch where their program is played. But, they deliver papers; it is a part of growing up. Maybe it is because the country is safe” (female expert, New Zealand). “It was aired in Japan also. We had a good reaction from parents as well. Not really is the labour a problem” (female expert, Japan).

“We have this program with the children that have to work and don’t have to be in school. This was kind of like: it is ok that the child works. It is ok that in the house that the father taught him – ‘you cannot ride on a bike.’ The children could have the money, and go for a bike – So, it is like: your father says no, but if you have the money you can do it” (female expert, Columbia). “I think that was like a weird message – no public context for what they want to say. We have these problems in these countries, as I am from Argentina also, and children work in our countries. For us it is a big problem” (female expert, Argentina). “It is the same in the Philippines. Child labour is a very big issue. However, it entered my mind, when I was watching this program, I forgot about it for a while. I was thinking: why? Maybe it is because of the child, or maybe it is because of how they treat them there. You forget the political situation. For a while it was very neutral” (female expert, Philippines).

“I have to say that it is interesting, because you are showing it in a country where there is a child labour problem, and this kid does go to school, and this is his dream. But, the kind of message you are sending out to another kid is that: ‘Oh, you want a bike, well you should work for it, and then maybe you don’t go to school.’ I think it is just interesting that it is in a country where there is a child labour problem. I think it is an interesting image to show” (female expert, USA).

*Prof. Dr. Dafna Lemish and Namrata Bansal*

*(Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)*



Figure 7: Abdullah a buying bike with the help of his friend.



Figure 8: Abdullah riding his own bike.