

Operation X for kids

Operation X for kids was produced by Bastard Film, Denmark. Operation X has for many years been a highly successful investigating journalistic programme for the general audience. Now the team behind this programme has created a children's version. Children have to put up with conditions that grown-ups would never accept. Now *Operation X for kids* puts an end to this, kicking in the door of the adults who make all the big decisions about the state of things in the lives of children.

Operation X was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2010 finalists in the 7-11 Non-Fiction category.

International experts' opinions



Figure 1: Sara, the anchor of the Operation X.

The international experts really liked the character of the girl. "For me, I was impressed with her, but she is obviously very mature and has done this before. How much was scripted? I am not quite sure. I thought she was very good in the moment. I really liked that about her" (male expert, Germany). They particularly liked the way she handled the Prime Minister. "I thought the girl did a really good job in trying to push a petition trying to get politicians to hand out some money. It was really interesting to see how the adults reacted to her, especially the Prime Minister" (female expert, Germany). "I thought Sarah, the

girl in *Operation X*, was really compelling. I thought out of this group, she was kind of a very strong host and very interesting. I really loved the scene at the end when she got hold of the Prime Minister. I thought that was pretty good" (female expert, USA). They admired the mature nature of the girl. "She was very creative. She actually made them play football, and found that one child ended up with a face full of mud. I thought she was a very good talent – charming. I was totally entranced by it. I thought that she handled herself very well. She didn't insist on arguing a point. She just put it there and it showed itself. I thought she was very generous" (female expert, New Zealand).

The international experts were concerned about the way adults behaved in the program and they were apprehensive about the future of the school. "The adults were a horror – I think it must be embarrassing for them to be shown like that – unbelievable. It was a shame that we didn't know how it is going – if it is working" (female expert, Germany). There was a sense of pessimism as well as optimism among international experts at this approach of adults. "But it is very sad that the children watching or the adults learn that



Figure 2: The operation is to collect money to repair a school that sucks.



Figure 3: School children imagining how to make the school beautiful.



Figure 4: The principal of the school.



Figure 5: The school mayor whose hands were tied.



Figure 6: The politicians came to inspect the school.



Figure 7: Sara met the Prime Minister of Denmark.

to go; but I also thought it was interesting that they didn't even attempt to maybe clean up the schoolyard by themselves in any way" (female expert, USA).

there are things that need changing, and everyone knows that they need changing. You go around and around, and everybody says it is someone else's job to do it" (female expert, UK). Another more optimistic viewpoint presented was: "This is realistic. So, they didn't create a false optimism to it – so the children would discuss from then on. So that would be good" (female expert, UK). "At the same time she said: 'if there will not be a change, they will go back – and they will get them'" (female expert, Norway).

The international experts were astonished at the character of the politician. "I was also very struck by another thing that was unusual – that the politician in the end didn't even for the photo opportunity, sort of say, 'We can do something about that.' I thought that was really interesting. It made me wonder: does he even know this program?" (female expert, USA). "I thought that this is only happening in Pakistan – that obviously a politician avoid to face the journalists – think about that – the same thing is all around the world" (male expert, Pakistan).

Many experts admired the concept of having a child host the program. "I liked it that she was young. I liked the child host in the one about the school. Most of the other hosts were adults or young adults and it distanced me from it" (male expert, Canada). However, there were contradictory opinions among the international experts on this point as they found that the child was acting like an adult. "In this case there is a leader – and only one, but it is very patronizing the West, analysing the situation and offering solutions – all by herself. This one is more of an adult perspective – the way he or she is watching the school as if she were an outsider – analysing and facing the adults with an adult speech. I feel that it was too scripted in the first one" (female expert, Argentina).

Many experts however thought that the program could have ended on a better note especially with respect to solving the problems. "It just struck me as interesting that there was no attempt to solve the problem by themselves in any way. I just thought that was interesting that it was all kind of trying to find the person responsible, which is a good way



Figure 8: Sara tried everything to get the school repaired.

*Prof. Dr. Dafna Lemish and Namrata Bansal
(Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)*