

The Shrinks

The Shrinks was produced by RTE – Radiio Tekefis Eireann based in Ireland. *The Shrinks* features a group of kids aged 9-13 who give advise to adults on how to solve grown-up’s lifestyle problems. They may be small but no problem is too big for them to solve! Issues from ‘I can’t sleep’ to ‘I need to find love’, from ‘I spend too much’ to ‘I need a makeover’ – no problem (or person) is too big for the team of intrepid teeny trouble-shooters as they attempt to show the grown-ups that youth is no barrier to wisdom. *The Shrinks* also encourages young viewers to discover that there are ways to deal with their own problems – giving the viewers clues about finding their feet in a complicated world, just by watching others having a go at solving things in some really surprising situations. After all, a problem shared is a problem shrinked!

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

International experts’ opinions



Figure 1: Problem-solving group-Shrinks.

Almost all the international experts liked the program for various reasons. Many liked the narrative of the program: “In this, we could see a visible result, which pushes this genre to a feature, in some way, in a perfect way: it has a beginning, middle, and an end, with a visible result, and also empowered children – not only doing something, but also they tackle the problem of an older generation who close the door, but they can open it with the young fresh eyes of children. So, it is inspiring for all generations.

It was very beautiful, yes” (female expert, Slovakia). They liked the execution of the program. “They say: we solved the problem, and there was no real problem, I think; it was very well executed. I thought it was funny” (female experts, Netherlands).

Few liked the show because it showed the perspective of both adults and the kids. “I loved the show, not just because it was good and funny -Irish shows often are-, but because it broke rules. It broke all rules we tell: “You mustn’t make your central character a featured character, and an adult must feature the children.” Actually, if we follow that rule by law, then we are never going to see grandparents. They are only going to be on the edges. They are going to be the man helping to hold the chainsaw. It is terribly important that we feature children, their perspective on the world and their lives, but their lives are bound up with adults – and a 55-year-old boring man who tells them to be not so boring” (male expert, UK).



Figure 2: Every member has a distinctive character.



Figure 3: The school principal who needed their help.



Figure 4: His only hobby is playing drum.



Figure 5: He met them at their head quarter.



Figure 6: The Shrinks try to provide a solution by changing his personality.

Many international experts liked the kids that were part of the program. “The kids were really good also, like the small red-haired boy who was with the clown. He was so funny” (female expert, USA). Many experts loved the spirit of the program. “It won my heart. It was really cheerful to see how the children got the child in the principal again up there. I liked his reaction, and I think that most grown-ups would have that same reaction. Not to do something on their own, but with the child’s help. I thought it was an amazing show” (female expert, Macedonia).

In spite of liking the program, many experts thought that the real actor in the program was the principal rather than the kids. “I really liked this program, but I think it is a pity that the actor or hero of the program was the adult and not the children. I would have liked to have seen more action of the children – to get him there, to really put pressure on them: “you have to do it now, come on ...” More of the children are really doing it, actually, because this was quite a good guy. He stole the whole show, actually” (female expert, Germany).

Many experts thought that the children would really appreciate the program. “Kids can really like this kind of show, because the kids are very happy when they are smarter than the adults, and they can help and advise the adult – especially when it is the director of the school” (male expert, Poland). Many experts thought that the kids would like to switch roles with the adults and hence they would appreciate the program a lot. “They are getting the power and children are telling the grown-ups what to do. This is something that is highly attractive to children. We had a docu-soap where 14-year-old boys lived together for a month and had roles in the families where the children became the boss, and they had to tell their parents what to do. This is the same principle. I think it works: children love it” (female expert, Germany).



Figure 7: The surprised everyone.



Figure 8: This is the happiest day of his life.

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