

# Dr. Karin's Stethoscope

**Dr. Karin's Stethoscope** was produced by Sveriges utbildningsradio (UR) based in Sweden. The giraffe had an accident as it fell off of a tree. Maybe, the best solution is to go for an X-ray in the hospital. But how does the skeleton work? And how can it heal? A real doctor, a kid and a cuddly toy were shown in the hospital. There was hardly a written script as everything was so spontaneous and had a natural flow. Everyday, they were given the theme for the day and there was a new problem on a daily basis: belly pain, broken leg, tooth ache and so on. Then various situations came up and the doctor had to handle the questions. The doctor took the discussion further and explained the working of the human body and handled the kid and the young viewer all at the same time.

**Dr. Karin's Stethoscope** was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2010 finalists in the "up to 6 Non-fiction" category.

## International experts' opinions



Figure 1: The patients waiting for Dr. Karin's examination.

The program was well received by international experts who found it to be simple and interesting. "It was really good. I really liked it. I thought it was very honest" (female expert, USA). The program was able to explain the functioning of various body parts to kids employing a special format. "It was sort of empowering for a little kid to go and all the stuff was explained in a really clear way" (female expert, USA).

The program had ten episodes each with different kids and a different stuffed toy with a new disease. The female expert from Sweden who was one of the producers gave her perspective on the use of a stuffed toy to appeal to a younger audience: "Our programs are used for education as well; so they are used for preschoolers."



Figure 2: Dr. Karin asked what was wrong with Leon's Giraffe.

Some international experts also thought that the program attempted to make kids less nervous about going to a hospital. By showing things like stuffed toys, the program was perceived as an effective way of dealing with the fears of kids. "I think it is a nice idea to take a stuffed animal as the one who goes to the doctor; it takes the fear from the kid probably when they go to see a doctor" (female expert, Germany).

The boy-protagonist was much appreciated by the international experts. They liked the boy as he

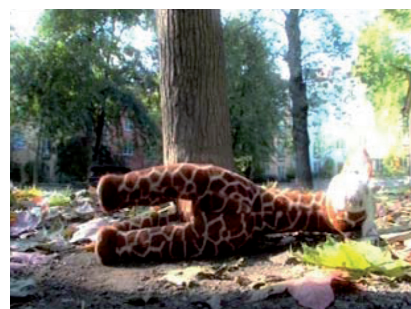


Figure 3: Leon told her that the Giraffe fell off the tree and hurt its leg.



Figure 4: Dr. Karin explained to Leon about sprained and broken bones.

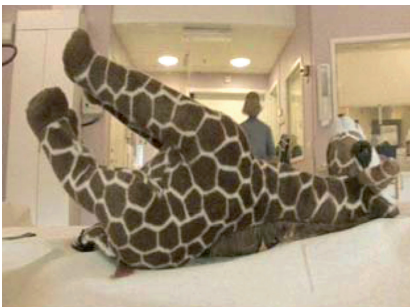


Figure 5: The Giraffe was sent for an X-ray.



Figure 6: The X-ray found that the Giraffe's bone is not broken.



Figure 7: Dr. Karin and Leon put the bandage on the Giraffe's leg.

talked about his experiences freely with the doctor without taking too much time. They felt that this behaviour would also encourage kids to talk to their own doctors in a frank and open manner. "It was cool. I thought it was just kind of simple and good- in and out. It didn't dwell too long" (female expert, USA). Some international experts appreciated the end of the program which showed the caring as well as the responsible attitude of the kid. "It was really the empowering moment, even though the doctor had authority, you get to care and do things for your own health – in this case your animal friend. I thought it was very subtle and nicely done" (female expert, Israel). The nurturing and caring attitude of the boy towards his pet was also a departure from the stereotypical portrayal of boys as macho and fighters.

The character of the doctor was also liked as she treated the boy as her equal and listened to his problems with compassion and care. "She handled these questions very sensitively. I think you could really steer into inappropriate science and the wrong messages. But instead, it came together really well; I was very impressed" (male expert, UK).

The program was successful in reaching its target audience because it provided them with age-appropriate information, using simple dolls. "I enjoyed the show, because small children like that kind of approach; because they personalise that kind of doll and they can understand the situation" (female expert, Korea). "They can relate to something that is a great idea, combining the toys, and really answering some questions" (female expert, Israel).

The make-believe approach of the program was a major component that was well cherished by the experts. "It was playful, and we were imagining that there were bones, and the bones were apparently all right - and you and I have a bandage" (male expert, UK). This approach actually made the program completely kids oriented, a central principle in creating a children's program. "There is no harm in that in a preschool show, making it funny for adults too, because they add the idea of people watching together. Disney has made a billion dollar business out of it" (male expert, UK).

However, some international experts thought that the program stretched their imagination a little too much. "I think that would work better for me if it were a fiction show. You could take a little bit more liberty then. But because it is non-fiction, I would prefer to stick a little bit more to the showing of a real X-ray of a foot and not a stuffed toy" (female expert, USA). "Then we had this x-ray, I just thought: how much pretend should it be at that point?" (male expert, Canada).



Figure 8: The Giraffe needs a few more days to fully recover.

There were some questions raised about the directing of the program. For example, showing the X-ray of the neck of giraffe though his leg was injured left some international experts confused (female expert, Japan). Additionally, the doctor was talking about a skeleton but a stuffed animal does not have one. This really bothered some international experts. “There was a kind of disconnection” (male expert, USA).

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