



PJ 2016- MODERATORS REPORT

In the PRIX JEUNESSE experience, discussions are an endless source of inspiration as powerful as the programmes themselves. Though sadly we can't share the long and rich debates in detail, we can offer you here ideas on what went on in the breakout rooms.

Often, a good discussion before voting can completely change an entry's perception. We discover aspects we hadn't thought of, and understand much better the reasons why shows were conceived the way they were.

It may be precisely in that moment of discomfort (when we wonder how come THIS programme reached the final list or why did they do it this way) when we receive the right answer, the context that helps us understand a certain programme much better. Even if we still don't find the answer satisfactory, we've had the opportunity to ask ourselves: how would I do it differently? This question will continue to chase us in our minds – not just about this entry, but about every show we consider.

DIVERSE AND IMPORTANT

All kids who open their hearts in front of a camera deserve a place to make their voices heard, but does the general audience necessarily need to know their stories the way the directors decided to tell them? Children in the audience cannot solve the BIG problems of society, so why do we tell them?

Ubuntu is an African term meaning "I am because you are." PRIX JEUNESSE has always adopted this philosophy, helping children learn about others around them, whether across the street or around the world. Never before, though, has there been more need or importance to introducing children to others unlike themselves. Countries worldwide are dealing with immigrants and refugees, but also simply with an increasingly complex world in which we are all dependent on one another. In other words, we are living "Ubuntu" on a global and daily basis.

Still, introducing children to others whose lives are unlike their own requires great care. It's very easy to focus so much on the differences that children see the others as "weird" or "unapproachable." To do so risks adding to the mistrust and discrimination that already plagues us.

To balance what's different with what's similar, though, can establish openness and life-long appreciation for diversity. Usually, the trick is to offer a handhold of familiarity – even something small – a common thread even as they uncover big differences.



At PRIX JEUNESSE, we've seen unique approaches to making introductions and connections, some more effective than others, but the effort is necessary and worthwhile.

NO ADULTS ALLOWED (EVEN WHEN IT'S ABOUT SEX OR DEATH)

This year, we saw many strong stories where kids are in the lead. In some shows, we felt their power, and they push the story forward. These are the ones we identify with, the ones we cheer for, and the ones who make us cry.

As usual, some other shows are instead ABOUT children rather than by or for them, and we never really got to know them. We saw them do stuff, but they didn't get to show us who they are, what they love and what bothers them. When we don't come to care so much for them, their stories become flat and less interesting.

Sometimes, shows are apparently for children, but the adults take the lead. The adults have fun, they make a great plan (with a TV company's money to support it), but they are big and loud and leave the kids in the shadow.

We know that reflecting children's lives is crucial for the shaping of kids' identity, so here is a challenge: the next time you develop a show, see what happens if you take all the adults out. Then, one by one, put back only those you really need, and focus on giving them strong, vulnerable, funny, sad, crazy, caring, capable kids.

At PRIX JEUNESSE 2016, we saw real teenage vaginas & dancing animated penises. We saw teeth being pulled out, a 10-year-old get married, and even the death of a cat, with and without adults involved.

These shows always spark discussions about whether or not it could be shown in one country or another. In 2016, though we were struck by how little shock there was over these themes, and how many delegates from diverse cultures felt it was important to have space for these topics on TV.

Is it our own adult self-censorship that makes us usually avoid them?

If so, the challenge is then to be braver, to give kids more of what they actually want, how they want it! If we don't present difficult topics, they'll find information somewhere else, perhaps not as reliable.

SIZE MATTERS – the shorter the better

The shows we saw at PRIX JEUNESSE 2016 varied from four to 42 minutes.

It's not right or fair to say that a show should be short; it should be as long as it takes to tell the story in the most engaging and clever way.



Instead, we discussed how to tell stories efficiently. Does it take too long for us to get the central idea? Is the storyline strong enough, or do we fill time with unnecessary digressions?

If we feel it's too long, we believe the kids feel the same.

In many countries, kids have the world at their fingertips. They can choose content from anyone they want, wherever it comes from, whenever they want. They don't sit patiently and wait for a more engaging show on a linear channel.

Kids don't care about our linear issues or about us not being able to kill our "darlings" while we produce. All they care about is being engaged and entertained, and if we don't do that we'll lose them.

So: size matters. Long can be great. But short can be even better.

HOW REAL ARE THE REAL KIDS?

We saw many programmes in the non-fiction category that brought us close to real kids in an authentic way. But what about real kids playing fictional characters? Do we see a realistic mix, or did everyone have to be special in terms of their identity and their social background?

What about playing with gender roles? Did it always have to be either the stereotype or the extreme opposite? What about characters in between, characters that offer a range of ideas and possibilities to the real kids in front of the television?

STOP TALKING (AND SAY SOMETHING)

This deliberately controversial title reflects some of the most interesting discussions in all the rooms. When do words matter and when should we let the pictures do the talking?

There were times when we watched content where there were so many words they almost tripped over themselves. The excessive dialogue left us gasping for air.

Words can be the easy way out, compared more visual ways of representing emotion or a moment.

We saw wonderful examples where so much happened with so few words, but sometimes the words spoken were the most important thing. After all, we do talk a lot at PRIX JEU-



ESSE about giving children a voice! The issue is how. Our suggestion: think carefully about storytelling, about making every word count.

To what extent does our own identity as TV makers shape our programmes? We all have our own “glasses” through which we see the world, and need to be conscious of this all the time. We are responsible for empowering kids on the screen and in front of the screen at the same time.

Our worlds expand in concentric circles. Once we discover that we, ourselves, exist, we begin to expand our world beyond our own reach, and find our family, then later our neighborhood, our city, our nation, our world. So, it's natural to expect that in the youngest categories, we might meet others closer to home and then expand our view as children get older.

In any case, at PRIX JEUNESSE we celebrate our opportunity and privilege to keep thinking and working for what is the best for children, our aim when we have in our hands the power to tell them stories and to deeply involve them in what they deserve to know, to discover and to enjoy.

THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE DISCUSSIONS!
See you in 2018 to keep on growing!

By 2016 the Moderators' team

Moderator of the Moderators:

Aldana Duhalde, Medio Mundo, Argentina

Moderators:

David Kleeman, PlayCollective, USA

Monika Gröller, BR, Germany

Hildri Gulliksen, NRK, Norway

Kez Margrie, CBBC, United Kingdom

Hernán Rodriguez, Aceituna, Uruguay

