

Children's Rights Award

Dispatches: Orphans of Burma's Cyclone

The prize winning entry not only met all the judging criteria, but was also a beautiful and revealing portrayal of life in Burma under the military junta, together with the devastating effects of the cyclone. In filming undercover, this documentary showed British audiences the stories of children whose voices would otherwise have not been heard, because at the time of the cyclone the Burmese government refused aid and international reporters. The orphans were forced to witness atrocities, and their stories were tragic in so many ways, but the filming presented their resilience, hope and humanity in a way that all could relate to. The stark contrast between the life of the governing elite and the reality in which their people lived engaged broader development issues. The more intimate focus on children deprived of their rights effectively and movingly depicted the difficulties and injustice that this corrupt system inflicted. This was an inspiringly brave yet steadfastly sensitive piece of filmmaking and it made us all want to know more and do something about the situation.

The First Movie

The most important aspect of 'The First Movie' is the alternative viewpoint. With the word 'Iraq', the images that come to mind are uniform in their portrayal of misery, injury, dead bodies and tragedy. The First Movie inverts this perception through a visually stunning and poetic description of children's lives in a countryside village, and it succeeded in showing that no matter where in the world you are, children will always have their imaginations.

Indeed, this was perhaps the most unusual of all the entries. In a category where most entries consisted of shocking images and harrowing tales, this film was truly innovative. And yet, this film was by no means inconsequential – it was frequently surprising and thought provoking. Alongside the more 'everyday' stories of cows and sheep, the children's referral to Saddam's genocide brings the Iraqi predicament sharply into focus. This was a superbly made film, very personal and rich in the beauty of childhood.

A Step to A Brighter Future

We found this article honest and inspiring. The images and stories of the children who have been disfigured by the war in Iraq were sensitively portrayed and deeply effective in provoking a desire to change. Through telling the lives of three specific children, it also portrays bigger issues such as the effect that war has had on these children's families, and the impossibility of hospital operation in Iraq itself. The article maintained a focus on giving a voice to the children featured, helping us to see that they are heading towards a better future. This kind of portrayal is hugely important for Children's Rights and the representation of children in general.

One World Youth Jury 2010

Mya Goschalk
Mikel Iriarte
Megan Pennell
Helen Parker

