



The AIBs

2019

#theAIBs

**Winners and
finalists**



DAYS OF ILLEGAL
DETENTION..

#FreeMahmoudHussein

Sign the petition **now**
Visit freemahmoudhussein.com





The AIBs
2019

Daily journalism: single report

TV/video Radio/audio

Short documentary

Politics and business

Human interest

TV/video Radio/audio

Factual podcast

Science, technology, nature

International channel of the year

Daily journalism: ongoing reporting

TV/video Radio/audio

Investigative

TV/video Radio/audio

Domestic affairs

International affairs

Sport event coverage

Arts and culture

TV/video Radio/audio

Impact



ALJAZEERA

EVENT PARTNER



SPONSOR

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2019 *AIBs*. These are the 15th international awards organised by the Association for International Broadcasting that celebrate success and outstanding achievement in factual content.

The entries reflect today's world, showing us the good and the bad about the human race and how our actions affect our societies and the world we live in.

This year's shortlist is drawn from more than 400 hours of content that has been entered. We have 19 categories, and I can tell you that each member of our shortlisting team was moved to tears by some of the challenging subjects in this year's entries.

Our 60 judges in all parts of the world always face the hardest task – deciding who should emerge as the outright winner when more than one production could be deserving of that accolade. The moment on stage for the winners comes at the end of a long journey during which they have needed creative and physical energy, dogged persistence, courage and skill to make that programme, often at great personal cost and risk.

The programmes we see demonstrate the need for media freedom and for holding power to account. We applaud everyone who works to ensure that these stories are told, even against the challenging backdrop of restrictions to media freedom in many parts of the world.

We see the *AIBs* as a story that continues to evolve each year. We think that some chapters need to be revisited. In this book we have an update on one of the winners from 2011. Produced by SRG SSR, *Two Women, One Journey* covered the work of a project helping babies and children with cleft palates in Kyrgyzstan, where there is one of the highest occurrences of this deformity anywhere in the world. Sarina Arnold, one of Switzerland's top models, has continued to support the work for very personal reasons and we report on her recent visit to the Central Asian country to see how the project has developed.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the AIB cannot organise these awards without the support and involvement of the industry. So firstly, my special thanks go to our event partner, Al Jazeera Media Network, and to our sponsor RTI for their support of the *AIBs* in 2019. I also want to thank the media professionals who served on the judging panel and gave their time and expertise so generously this year. And I would like to thank our hosts for the evening, Caroline Hepker from Bloomberg TV and Rana Rahimpour from BBC Persian.

The 2020 *AIBs* awards season will open in April next year.

Simon Spanswick
Chief Executive, AIB

The AlBs event partner profile

Al Jazeera Media Network places press freedom and the protection of journalists as one of its highest priorities. Al Jazeera extensively covers stories in a region where the systematic suppression and silencing of freedom of expression is endemic. It is a region where journalists languish in prisons and where a great number of journalists have lost their lives. It is a part of the world where independent civil institutions have been silenced. Our Network attracts the most courageous of journalists as we strive to highlight the underreported stories and protect our editorial integrity.

Over the years, our journalists have experienced untold challenges, including imprisonment, torture and death. Simply being a journalist in the region carries numerous risks – be it for reporting from conflict zones or navigating with authenticity under dictatorial and despotic regimes. These dynamics place Al Jazeera Media Network

at the forefront of the fight against press freedom violations. We therefore unequivocally stand by the protection of all journalists, not just our own.

Our commitment to press freedom for all is demonstrated by critical partnerships with a great number of international media entities that have the same objectives. Al Jazeera is also part of the critical One Free Press coalition. We have spearheaded global campaigns demanding press freedom and have served as a platform to highlight the plight of journalists across the globe. It is worth noting that we are the only Network in the region with a centre solely dedicated to human rights and public liberties.

Today, Al Jazeera journalist Mahmoud Hussein has spent over 1000 days in arbitrary detention after being detained by Egyptian authorities in December 2016, while visiting family. Al Jazeera Media Network renews its call

for the immediate release of Mahmoud Hussein and strongly condemns the Egyptian authorities' decision to return him to Tora prison despite a court ruling on 23 May 2019 that he be released. Mahmoud's detainment by the Egyptian government is a flagrant violation of international law and an infringement of his fundamental rights.

Egypt continues its crackdown on press freedoms, maintaining its world ranking as a country with the highest number of journalists detained. Mahmoud Hussein has been robbed of 1000 days of his life, with no end in sight to the torment that both he and his family suffer. Al Jazeera continues to strongly condemn his unjust imprisonment and refutes all charges against him. We call on the international community, media professionals and human rights advocates to raise awareness and demand his immediate release.

We all need to stand together to reject and push back against the widespread crackdown on press freedom. At Al Jazeera we are committed to the universal and fundamental right of access to information and the protection of those who bring us this information. We condemn in the strongest terms all deliberate attempts to silence the truth. We believe that it is vitally important to support those who speak truth to power.

#FreeMahmoudHussein





About Al Jazeera Media Network

Launched in 1996, today Al Jazeera is available in over 150 countries with over 80 bureaux around the world and access to 380 million homes. The Network enjoys a global footprint, connecting with its wide audience via a wide range of satellites, cable and digital platforms.

Over the years, Al Jazeera has grown to become one of the leading media networks, comprising: Al Jazeera Arabic, Al Jazeera English, Al Jazeera Balkans, Al Jazeera Mubasher, Al Jazeera Documentary and AJ+ digital platform, and other expanding digital entities. In addition, the following specialist centres are part of the Network: Al Jazeera Media Institute, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, and Al Jazeera Center for Public Liberties and Human Rights.



The AIBs
2019



The Voice of Taiwan

Radio Taiwan International is the national broadcaster of Taiwan. RTI broadcasts to the world in 14 languages under the call sign "Radio Taiwan International". RTI's mission is to accurately report on Taiwan's democratic achievements, arts and humanities, culture and social developments, traditional customs, and infrastructure projects. With its diverse and lively programming, RTI remains the international community's premier window on Taiwan.

Taiwanese *German* *English* *French* *Japanese* *Korean* *Mandarin* *Cantonese* *Russian* *Indonesian* *Vietnamese* *Thai* *Spanish* *Hakka*

Rti
中央廣播電臺
Radio Taiwan International

www.rti.org.tw

Congratulations to the finalists and winners of the 2019 AIBs.

Our Town Films and BOLDE Communications
Producers, *In Money We Trust?*
Visit InMoneyWeTrust.org

**IN MONEY
WE TRUST?**

**BOLDE
COMMUNICATIONS**





JUDGES

Tesso Akander - CEO - Strix Sverige, **Nashwa Al Ruwaini** - CEO & Board Member - Pyramedia, **Salim Amin** - Chairman - Camerapix Ltd, Chairman - Mohamed Amin Foundation, Founder - Africa 24 Media, **Ato Anderson** - Head of Production and Acquisitions - ABN TV UK, **Anna Averkiou** - International Media Consultant, **Tim Ayris** - Sales Director, EMEA - Conviva, **Said Bacho** - Broadcast Media Technology Leader, **Steve Bailey** - Managing Director - Plan A Productions, **Klaus Bergman** - Director International Relations - Deutsche Welle (DW), **Al Brown** - Consultant, **Paul Bushnell** - Auckland Manager - Radio New Zealand, **Fernando Calviño** - Director - Inteliagency, **Eugen Cocjocariu** - Head of Radio Romania International, **Elena Cosentino** - Director - INSI, **Deborah Davies** - Investigative Journalist - Al Jazeera Media Network, **Jean Di Marino** - Independent Broadcaster and Producer, **Gregory Dray** - Director, Kids/Family and Education, EMEA, Google/YouTube & MD, International, YouTube Kids, **Henrik Eklund** - CEO - Newstag, **Leo Faber** - Executive Producer - ABC, **Lisa Fairbank** - Managing Director/Executive Producer - Factory Films, **Walter Fernandez** - Editor-in-Chief - Mediacorp, **Rajen Garabadu** - Chief Executive Producer - News18 Network, **Mihai Gidea** - CEO - Antena 3 TV, **Wuan-ling Guo** - Acting Director, International Department, Public Television Service, Taiwan, **Ching Ching Hai** - Section Chief for World News, News Department - Radio Taiwan International, **David Hallam** - Co-Founder/Creative Director - Three Arrows Media, **Sarah Head** - International TV News Consultant, **Carlson Huang Chia-shan** - Vice Manager Programming Department - Radio Taiwan International, **Kenneth Igbomor** - Market News Editor - CNBC Africa, **Will Jordan**, Reporter, Al Jazeera Investigations - Al Jazeera Media Network, **Julia Karmo** - Executive Video Producer and Senior News Editor, **Amy Katz** - Senior TV Executive Producer - Voice of America, **Naomi Kerbel** - Global Head of TV and Radio Scheduling and Special Projects - Bloomberg, **Parisa Khosravi** - News Executive, Global Speaker, **John Lippman** - Deputy Director for Programming - Voice of America, **Rozita Lotfi** - Editor - BBC Persian, **John Maguire** - Director of International Relations and Cooperation - France Médias Monde, **Kristina Millman** - Launch Director - DMA Media, **Izak Minnaar** - Media and Elections Consultant, **Christopher Mitchell** - Documentaries Editor - BBC Arabic, **Greg Moyer** - CEO - Blue Chalk Media, **Paul Myles** - Multimedia Journalist and Head of Editorial - On Our Radar, **Murray Needham** - Sports Broadcast and Media Consultant, **Alexey Nikolov** - Managing Editor - RT, **Rosie Parkyn** - Director of Programmes - Internews, **Kate Pearcy** - Deputy Manager - Radio Australia and Radio National - Australian Broadcasting Corporation, **Angela Robson** - Creative Director, Journalist and Lecturer - Pearl Works, **Alan Rook** - Managing Director - BlackRook Media, **Sanjay Salil** - Managing Director - MediaGuru, **Juan Señor**, President of Innovation - Media Consulting Group, **Peter Shevlin** - Director/Producer - BlokMedia, **Sonia Singh** - Editorial Director, NDTV, **Joanna Spiteri** - CEO - Malta Broadcasting Authority, **Kirstine Stewart** - Head of Shaping the Future of Media, Entertainment and Information, Member of the Executive Committee - World Economic Forum, **Alistair Thom** - Managing Director - Freesat, **Will Thorne** - Executive Producer, Al Jazeera Investigations - Al Jazeera Media Network, **Dinara Toktosunova** - CEO - Ruptly, **Ebenazar Wikina** - Editor/Project Coordinator - NDLINK

HOST



Caroline Hepker anchors Bloomberg Radio's *Daybreak Europe* programme. Caroline launched the programme in 2015 and today it is broadcast on DAB in London.

Before joining Bloomberg in 2015, Caroline spent 15 years at the BBC as business presenter and reporter for BBC News and BBC World News, seven of them as New York-based Business and Economics Reporter.

Caroline covered the 2008 financial crisis, the bail-out of US auto-makers, financial markets and institutions including the IMF and World Bank.

Caroline is a graduate of the University of Bristol and is based in London.



Daily journalism: single report - TV/video

ITV News



ITV News wins for ***Ebola***, covering one of the great under-reported stories of the moment. The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest in history and has claimed almost 1,800 lives, threatening neighbouring countries to an extent that it has now

been declared a global health emergency by the WHO. John Ray and Andy Rex from ITV News' Africa bureau were among the first journalists to travel to the strife-torn centres of the outbreak in Beni and Butembo to report on the impact of the disease on the communities. Using Go-Pro cameras, their report took viewers closer to the appalling reality of Ebola than ever before and sought to explain how it is that despite enormous advances in medical science, doctors and health workers are losing the battle to control the outbreak. "Compelling spot journalism", said our judges, "really well done from all angles, conveying a real taste of what it felt like to be in the midst of the epidemic".

Highly commended

AFPTV

Baghouz, The end of the caliphate

The judges praised *Baghouz: the end of the caliphate* from AFPTV as "insightful". The report charts the downfall of so-called Islamic State. Having overrun swathes of Syria and Iraq to declare its caliphate, by February this year IS had lost all but a tiny patch of land in the village of Baghouz.

CNN International

Yemen: US-supplied bomb used in school bus bombing

40 Yemeni school children were killed when a Saudi air strike hit their bus in August last year. But the 500 pound laser-guided bomb that struck the bus was US-made, as CNN International's Nima Elbagir discovered. The judges commended the report for its precision, execution and high news value.

Daily journalism: single report - Radio/audio

BlokMedia for BBC World Service



The new Chinese Mombasa - Nairobi railway has finally overturned over 100 years of history by replacing the British-built Uganda Railway - the most strategically important conduit in the scramble for Africa. Inaugurated as Kenya marked the 54th anniversary of independence,

the journey time has been reduced from 10 to 4.5 hours. ***Raha: The Joy of the Train*** by **BlokMedia** for **BBC World Service** takes a closer look at whether the new service is benefiting the Kenyan population or simply advantaging China. The judges thought this multi-perspective report was a worthy winner, balanced in its approach and painting a lively picture with words and ambient sound, with high production values. They said it was rich in content and made the listener think profoundly about the issues raised.

Highly commended

Radio Television Hong Kong

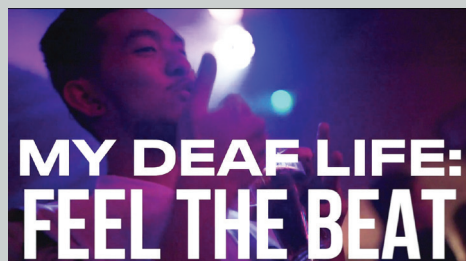
Before the Trio on Trial

RTHK's *Before the Trio on Trial* brings the listener in-depth interviews with the three men who were behind the Hong Kong civil rights movement of September 2014. They were arrested on public nuisance charges and RTHK spoke with them before they were sentenced in April. The judges said the production had depth and painted powerful and deeply moving portraits, with a mood-setting soundtrack that adds context.



Short documentary

7digital Creative for BBC Radio 1 iPlayer



In *My Deaf Life: Feel the Beat*, three deaf YouTubers take on the challenge to perform at the UK's biggest deaf club night. **7digital Creative** gives them a platform to tell their own stories, in their own language, and show that deaf youth culture is vibrant and

exciting, not isolating and quiet. Jessica, Jazzy and Benny find hearing people make some seriously wrong assumptions about them: that they can't be deaf because they don't "look deaf"; that deaf people can't drive; and, one of the most annoying, that deaf people can't possibly appreciate music. With the help of deaf rapper SignKid, they're going to prove them wrong. While preparing for the challenge he has set them, the three take us into their lives, correct some common misconceptions about deafness, give us a crash course in how British Sign Language works and introduce us to deaf culture in all its complexity. Judges felt this was a deserving winner. They praised the dynamic shooting style to reflect the drama of sign language and said it was a lively, fun, action-packed piece that highlighted the point of view of a little understood community effectively. "Playful, profound, highly original, inspiring" were some of their comments.

Highly commended

Blue Chalk Media Minidoka

President Trump's immigration policy is severe, but not without precedent. Blue Chalk took Joseph Shoji Lachman on a pilgrimage to Idaho's Minidoka concentration camp to understand what his family endured during World War II. Judges praised the beautiful edit and sound design, tying the past and present together in a poignant and powerful way.

Politics and business

Al Jazeera English



Plastic permeates almost every aspect of our lives, and as it does, the tide of plastic pollution continues to rise. Growing awareness of the issue, however, has revealed a true determination by many to resolve it. In *earthrise: Reimagining Plastic*, Al Jazeera

English looked at ways people are imaginatively tackling the problem around the world. The team head to Douala in Cameroon where a local entrepreneur is building eco-boats for local fishermen using plastic bottles removed from the city's rivers. In the UK *earthrise* meet another environmental entrepreneur who is spearheading an initiative to keep the streets free of chewing gum and paving the way for a new type of recycling. Both are examples of a circular economy and show that green entrepreneurial efforts are not just an idealistic concept but an important step for the health of our future environment. Judges called this an "extremely insightful and engaging" production that "tackled a topic that is often in the news in a refreshing and inspiring fashion", with high production standards and clever use of animation and graphics. They also commented that the hands-on approach of the presenters added to the quality of the final product.

Highly commended

GMA Network Reporter's Notebook: Batas ng Karagatan (The Law of the Sea)

The fishing ground of Scarborough Shoal has become a flashpoint in Philippines-China relations. GMA Network revealed that Filipino fishermen face illegal blockades and having their catch taken by the Chinese coast guard as they earn a living in their traditional fishing waters. Our judges praised the boldness of the investigative approach which brought these incidents to light.

Peddling Pictures for CNA Deciphering the Philippines: Women in the Era of Duterte

Despite the Philippines being in the top ten of the world's most gender-equal nations, there's a sense that President Duterte has encouraged a feeling of "toxic" masculinity, as *Peddling Pictures* investigated for CNA. Judges called it "illuminating" and praised the seamless flow of this beautifully bookended production with its different peaks throughout the film.



Human interest - TV/video

BBC Sport



Over the last fifty years, the Special Olympics have changed lives. And it's all down to one woman's fight for the acceptance and understanding of people with disabilities, as ***The Kennedy who Changed the World*** from **BBC Sport** showed. It revealed the emotional story of how people

with intellectual disabilities found a place through sport and it also shows what life is like today for sporting youngsters with autism, Down's syndrome and other learning difficulties. Made on a small budget, the entire programme was conceived, produced, written, filmed and edited by just two people, Stuart Pollitt and Phill Smith. They tracked down key interviewees and persuaded famous celebrities and politicians to be interviewed for no fee, including members of the Kennedy family and President Bill Clinton. What is even more remarkable, they made this programme at the same time as doing their day jobs in regional TV news in Manchester. The judges found this programme about the global legacy of Eunice Kennedy Shriver "outstanding in every way", "stirring, inspiring and thought-provoking". They praised the story arc, the incredible access, superb editorial and production values and the fact that the story was simply and sensitively told with minimal commentary.

Highly commended

IFA Media for CNA Against the Elements

When 12 boys and their football coach became trapped in a flooded cave in northern Thailand, a massive international rescue mission was launched to save them. *Against the Elements* from IFA Media told the stories of the people who came to the boys' rescue. Judges commented on the powerful head camera footage, the superb sound editing and narrative structure which left the viewers on the edge of their seats.

True Vision Productions for Channel 4 Child of Mine

The UK has one of the worst stillbirth rates in the developed world. Parents who experience the trauma of stillbirth often feel isolated and alone. *Child of Mine* from True Vision showed the impact of stillbirth and efforts being made to help couples recover. Judges called it an "outstanding documentary with a noble purpose – effective in lifting the taboo around the subject", "superbly produced and emotionally engaging".

Human interest - Radio/audio

RTÉ Radio 1



In 1946 a group of men in Listowel, South West Ireland, forced open the locked gates into the parish church. Behind this act of defiance lies the story of a young unmarried woman named Peggy McCarthy, whose tragic death in childbirth resulted in the local clergy refusing

to let her body lie in the church overnight before her burial. **RTÉ Radio 1's *Documentary on One: In Shame, Love, in Shame*** looks at the events behind this story and the devastating impact on three generations of the McCarthy family. The judges felt this was an exceptional piece of work with superb storytelling which made excellent use of field and archival audio to create energy and momentum. "A seamless soundscape of music and narration", said one judge, "which reflects the full historical and social context of the time".

Highly commended

Falling Tree Productions for BBC Radio 4 A Sense of Quietness

A Sense of Quietness by Falling Tree Productions follows a line of connection between four women to explore the unexpected consequences of talking about abortion in Ireland and lets the listener discover the quiet power and hidden dangers of speech itself. Judges called it "dazzling" and "powerful storytelling in a sophisticated structure" as it creates a sense of a real conversation with the audience.

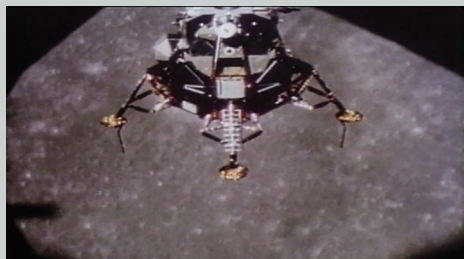
CTVC for BBC World Service After Suicide

Every 40 seconds, someone somewhere in the world takes their own life. Mark Dowd hears the stories of people affected by the suicide of a loved one in *After Suicide* by CTVC. Our judges commended the programme for its "reliance on the power of talk", saying it was "powerful, considered many different perspectives and explored beyond the expected". The presenter's connection with the subject added an extra dimension.



Factual podcast

BBC World Service



Minutes to the Moon we hear from the men and women who saved the Apollo 11 mission. Listeners are taken step by step through the full 13 minutes and the knowledgeable enthusiasm of presenter Dr Kevin Fong proves infectious. The judges called this a “monumental series” and said it used the ‘audio moments’ in the best possible way for the podcast storytelling. They praised the tremendous scope and ambition of the project and its innovative use of restored audio and special effects. Labelling it “superb work”, they particularly singled out the fact that it made an incredibly complex scientific and engineering subject not just accessible but compelling. “An out of this world experience” – a deserving winner.

It was one of the greatest achievements in human history – the first moon landing on 20 July 1969. During the final 13 minutes of the descent to the moon, the mission teetered on the edge of failure – or worse. In **BBC World Service's** 12 episode podcast **13**

Highly commended

Sky News StoryCast

The Hunt for the Brink's-Mat Gold

It's a story with larger-than-life gangsters, international drugs cartels, policemen in disguise and superglued suitcases of cash dropped from aeroplanes. *The Hunt for the Brink's-Mat Gold* from Sky News StoryCast created an immersive experience, said the judges, and impressed them with its crisp and conversational presentation and exceptional supporting soundscape.

BBC World Service

The Food Chain

Why do we choose certain foods? How is food produced and what is the effect on humanity and our environment? *The Food Chain* from BBC World Service took a fresh and unusual look at the subject. Judges praised the sensitive, yet probing reporting and excellent production which shifted seamlessly between facts, perspectives and emotions, with great use of sound.

Science, technology, nature

Radio-Canada



Only 40 facial transplants have been completed worldwide. **Radio-Canada's** **Découverte** documented the first facial transplant in Canada in ***The Face of a Stranger*** by following Dr. Daniel Borsuk and his patient Maurice Desjardins every step of the way. In January 2011, Maurice accidentally blew his face off with a hunting rifle. Despite four reconstructive surgeries, he remained disfigured and in constant fear of choking. When surgeons propose the radical intervention of transplanting the face of a brain-dead man onto Maurice's head, his answer is that he has been waiting for this for a long

time. But it's not an easy or quick process. Extremely risky, it demands total commitment on Maurice's part and will affect his partner too. *Découverte* takes the viewer through all the various and many stages in the lead-up to the operation and the 30-hour procedure itself. The report ends with Maurice discovering his new face for the first time – he will have to remember that he can now close his mouth and do many things he wasn't able to do before. To everyone's relief his trademark wink still works – so behind the new face, his old personality is intact. Judges called this an “engrossing, powerful, memorable” production, beautifully shot with no intrusion, sensitively handled. They commented on the science element being skilfully embedded in the human interest so it never felt didactic.

Sponsored by



中央廣播電臺
Radio Taiwan International



International channel of the year

CNN



CNN International's news gathering and programming throughout a busy and difficult news year has been powerful and compelling – an outstanding combination that our judges recognised in awarding the global news organisation the title of International channel of the year for the second consecutive year.

Our judges noted the wide range of absorbingly edited stories that were told with passion and commitment, wherever they were set across the world. From the most challenging frontline reporting in the world's most dangerous

hotspots to detailed forensic investigations into stories where light needs to be shone – such as the horrific murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi – the teams at CNN International brought audiences the right balance of information to enable them to make their own mind up about major news events. The ability of journalists working for CNN to get to the heart of stories was apparent throughout the year, and the channel remains committed to long-term investment in telling complex, difficult stories.

Judges noted the extensive use of different formats and platforms, such as Facebook Watch, that enabled the channel to increase engagement with audiences that have migrated away from traditional TV viewing.

Away from hard news, CNN International offered its audiences a remarkable range of social stories, from gospel choirs in Soweto to the history of Soviet Russia's avant-garde film posters.

Against all this positivity, CNN International has faced continuing challenges from those in power in a number of territories who have sought to undermine the channel's reputation for reliability and lack of bias. This award is testament to the channel's continuing determination to hold power to account.

Daily journalism: ongoing reporting - TV/video

CNN International



The judges thought that **CNN International's *The Disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi*** was an example of “stellar reporting” and a deserving winner in this category. As the mystery of Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance deepened, CNN International kept the story alive across its bulletins, shedding

light piece by piece on what really happened to the renowned journalist and on Saudi Arabia's role. In a number of exclusive reports, CNN revealed the existence of a Khashoggi body double, was the first to report that Turkish authorities briefed key allies on audio and video evidence of Khashoggi's killing, and broadcast a world exclusive that Saudi Arabia was preparing to admit that Khashoggi was killed by its operatives in a botched attempt to interrogate and abduct him. Days later, CNN was the first network to carry details of the Saudi announcement admitting that Khashoggi was dead. CNN's Nic Robertson was able to reveal details of Khashoggi's last moments and obtained an exclusive interview with his sons. Finally, CNN shed light on why the Saudi leadership wanted to silence the journalist. It was, said our judges, “outstanding forensic reporting, thoroughly researched and with exclusive access to sources”. “CNN's coverage remained factual at a time when unverified information and speculation was circulating in the media.”

Highly commended

VTM Nieuws

Inside Northern Yemen

It took VTM Nieuws 18 months to gain a visa to report from Yemen. Robin Ramaekers and cameraman Jo Verstichel witnessed how the ongoing war is affecting ordinary people and fuels the continuing humanitarian crisis. Judges praised the excellent camera work and the space given to human stories with sensitively handled interviews.

CNN International

The final battle against ISIS's 'caliphate'

The final battle to defeat ISIS in its self-declared caliphate in a remote corner of Syria was expected to take only a few days. But it turned into a fifty-day operation. CNN International reported from the front line. Our judges were impressed by its frontline footage, creative filming and powerful scripting.



Daily journalism: ongoing reporting - Radio/audio

Radio New Zealand



The terror attacks in Christchurch in March 2019 were one of the biggest news stories in New Zealand's history. As the tragedy unfolded, **Radio New Zealand** provided live coverage and analysis of the fundamental issues the attacks brought to light. **Christchurch Terror Attacks** traces the story from

the key moments during the first 24 hours of coverage to the concluding audio from the national service of remembrance which took place in Hagley Park two weeks after the tragedy. It is the work of hundreds of RNZ staff – over two-thirds of the organisation – who were determined to provide context for the listeners, viewers and readers. The judges felt this was an immersive piece of work, extremely professional yet deeply moving. One said: “A variety of voices and perspectives command the listener’s attention whilst presenters calmly and professionally navigate us through the day’s events”.

Highly commended

Bloomberg Radio

Boeing's Grounded 737 Max

The second crash in five months of the Boeing 737 Max prompted Bloomberg Radio to investigate issues surrounding the flight control feature on these new planes. Judges commended the piece for being a “well-rounded story of constructive journalism with an interesting array of perspectives”.

Investigative - TV/video

BBC Africa



Imagine a country where dodgy doctors and crooked chemists steal life-saving anti-malarial drugs destined for the sick – that is exactly what **BBC World Service** series ‘Africa Eye’ exposed in **Stealing from the Sick** when it went undercover in Uganda where malaria claims 10,000

lives every year, mostly among children. Medicine to treat malaria is given out free by the Ugandan government but stocks and access to vital medication are limited. Africa Eye journalists posed as foreign businessmen wanting to buy stolen Ugandan government drugs on the black market, while NBS TV anchor Solomon Serwanjja shadowed them. The team exposed pharmacists and healthcare workers across Uganda – the journalists were offered stolen Hepatitis B vaccines destined for refugees in northern Uganda and could have bought many more stolen medicines. Despite the Ugandan Minister of Health saying that the thieves need to be exposed and shamed, during their last covert filming three of the Africa Eye team were taken by Ugandan military intelligence to ‘safe houses’ and then thrown into jail for three days. Was the team’s cover story too good or had they inadvertently stepped on the wrong toes? Judges thought this shocking exposé was a true eye opener and a deserving winner.

Highly commended

GMA Network

The Atom Araullo Specials:

Babies4sale.Philippines

In the Philippines, so-called adoption pages on Facebook offered babies for sale for as little as seven hundred dollars. It’s an illegal practice, yet widespread, as GMA Network’s *Babies for Sale* discovered. With the help of a middleman, a Birth Mom will rather sell her newborn than raise the child on her own. Judges called this a “brilliant piece of journalism”.

Al Jazeera English

Fault Lines: Targeted by a Text

There is no regulatory framework for cyber weapons – this includes surveillance spyware like Israel-developed Pegasus. It’s being used against dozens of activists, journalists and lawyers around the world, as Al Jazeera English’s *Fault Lines - Targeted by a Text* revealed. The judges were impressed by the boldness of this important investigation.



Investigative - Radio/audio

Radio New Zealand and Stuff



Gail Maney's case is considered one of the biggest potential miscarriages of justice in New Zealand. ***Gone Fishing***, a joint production between **RNZ** and **Stuff** (which runs New Zealand's largest news website) re-investigated this 30-year old case. The team

tracked down dozens of people involved, gained unprecedented access to the accused, key witnesses and the lead detective and trawled through thousands of pages of court and police documents. The material was crafted into eight episodes that were released as a podcast and for broadcast on air. Maney served 15 years for murder, but says she never met Dean Fuller-Sandys, the man she is meant to have ordered a hit on. RNZ and Stuff's investigation exposed major inconsistencies in the evidence and the shaky police investigation used to convict Maney. As a result, lawyers are now examining grounds for appeal and other news organisations in New Zealand have begun to look into the case. Judges said the programme was strong on detail and an example of innovative production techniques used to great effect – unsettling the listener and sowing doubts in his mind as to what really happened and who to believe.

Highly commended

BBC Radio Current Affairs

Crossing Continents:

Norway's Silent Scandal

In an extraordinary twist, a psychiatrist used as an expert by Norway's child protection agency was convicted of downloading thousands of child pornography images. In 2016 the agency itself had attracted an international storm of protest over its policies. *Norway's Silent Scandal* tried to find out why child protection in one of the world's wealthiest countries appears to be in crisis. "An important piece of investigative journalism", said the judges.

Domestic affairs

Brinkworth Films for Channel 5



In Britain two women are murdered every week by their partners and domestic abuse is a daily reality for millions. ***The Abused*** from **Brinkworth Films** for the UK's **Channel 5** is a shocking and powerful documentary that follows two women, in real time, from their first

999 call all the way to court. The judges found the programme hard to watch but compelling in every frame. This is what they said: "This film, intending to provide forensic documentary evidence of the roots, dynamics and impact of domestic abuse, succeeds at every level. The access is extraordinary and so is the director's commitment to Kelly and Hazel's horrific stories from their first 999 call through to their emancipation from their abuser. The story-telling is breath-taking and, without the need to rely on any voiceover, expertly weaves together exclusive police audio and video evidence, harrowing actuality and candid interviews with two traumatised yet courageous women. No viewer can be left in any doubt as to why it is so difficult to escape domestic abuse and why, in the current system, the odds are still heavily stacked against the abused." The judges said *The Abused* is a worthy winner.

Highly commended

RT

My Forever Family

Across Russia, thousands of children with mental and physical disabilities are abandoned in residential homes. Many are in remote regions lacking proper health care facilities and qualified staff. In *My Forever Family*, RT reported how one charity is working to help change these children's lives. Some of the judges' comments: "riveting", "rarely have I been made to care more how a story will end", "an hour that lived in the memory long after viewing".

Rogan Productions

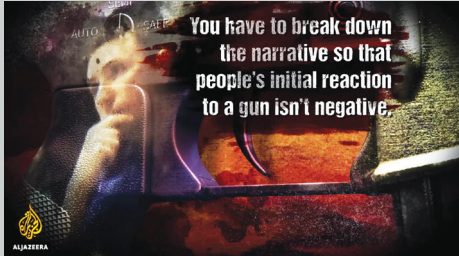
Stabbed: Britain's Knife Crime Crisis

Knife crime is getting worse across the UK. It's not a new phenomenon, as Duwayne Brooks knows. 26 years ago, he witnessed his friend Stephen Lawrence being brutally stabbed to death. Duwayne met victims, their families and the perpetrators in *Stabbed*, by Rogan Productions. "Engaging, sobering, powerful", said the judges who praised the stylistic flair of the production and the presenter's authentic voice.



International affairs

Al Jazeera Media Network



America's National Rifle Association works hard to counter public outrage after mass shootings. Could the same techniques work to soften Australia's firearms laws? Australia's right-wing One Nation political party wanted to find out and tap into NRA funding, as **Al Jazeera Media Network** discovered

in **Al Jazeera Investigations: How to Sell a Massacre**. The investigation which resulted in a two-part film involved a three-year undercover infiltration of the NRA which exposed damning internal deliberations within the organization. Al Jazeera followed Australia's One Nation party as it travelled to the U.S. to meet the NRA and secretly filmed as the gun lobby coached One Nation on how to mobilize a campaign to soften Australia's firearms laws. The investigation exposed the NRA advising One Nation on how to counter public anger in the event of another mass shooting in Australia and on how to manipulate Australia's media to generate stories demonstrating that more Australians need to carry guns. Judges said this was an "outstanding investigation into an important topic, stylishly executed", demonstrating great undercover work and resulting in a gripping, powerful story.

Highly commended

Nutopia in association with Livedrop Media for Channel 4

The Hunt for Jihadi John

Mohammed Emwazi was an ordinary boy from London – until he became "Jihadi John". Nutopia and Livedrop Media explored the shattered lives of his victims and the families of those he barbarically murdered in *The Hunt for Jihadi John*, for Channel 4. Judges said this was a very thorough investigative piece which got to the heart of how Jihadists are being recruited, with perceptive and surprisingly honest contributors.

Sport event coverage

BBC Sport



BBC Sport is the winner in this category for its coverage of the **FIFA 2018 World Cup**. With 33 live games, 12 highlights programmes and a multitude of multi-platform options BBC Sport attempted to cover every twist and turn of a spectacular tournament, all delivered from their virtual reality studio and production hub in Moscow. Coverage included creative openings and montages, insight, match analysis and commentary from across Russia. Creative features offered a flavour of authentic Russia while the "Origins" strand took an in-depth look at some of the world's best players and their

upbringing. As England's journey to the semi-final dominated the headlines, BBC Sport's coverage retained an international perspective on the tournament, with the likes of Cesc Fabregas, Juergen Klinsman, Pablo Zabaleta and Didier Drogba all joining the studio panel. 45 million people tuned in to watch the World Cup on the BBC – 74% of the population. Judges said the content produced demonstrated "substantial advance editorial planning, highly crafted and clever storytelling, plus a high degree of production excellence both in the studio and out in the field". They singled out "strong presenters" for their praise who had good rapport with commentators, and applauded the use of humour and some risk taking. Overall, they said it was an impressive blend of creative, innovative and diverse elements across a wide range.



Arts and culture - TV/video

Yeti Television for Channel 4



Willard Wigan's micro-sculptures amaze and fascinate both art lovers and scientists – nobody knows how he is able to produce such tiny masterpieces on this molecular level. He has exhibited all over the world and collaborated with watchmakers, jewellers and other artists, achieved

two Guinness World Records and been honoured with an MBE and honorary doctorate in recognition of the significant contribution he has made to art and sculpture. In **World's Tiniest Masterpieces**, Yeti Television for Channel 4 gives us a glimpse of how Willard is pushing the limits of the possible ever further. The judges said the piece really took them into the artist's world and as close as possible to the painful creative process. A fascinating and inspirational production, enhanced by the clever visual narration – a worthy winner.

Highly commended

Media Stockade China Love

In *China Love*, Media Stockade explores contemporary China through the lens of pre-wedding photography. Now that China is allowing romantic love, pre-wedding photography in particular is a booming industry. Couples can live out their dreams in photos – even older couples recreate pre-wedding shoots that they missed out on during the Cultural Revolution. Judges praised the editorial concept and the clever use of graphics to highlight changes between then and now.

Peddling Pictures for CNA
Into the Vault: Finding Miss Fadillah
Miss Fadillah was a popular singer in Malaya and Singapore during the 1930s and 40s. In *Finding Miss Fadillah*, Peddling Pictures unearths interesting aspects of Singapore's history while investigating the singer and a mysterious Hitler song she recorded. "A compelling tale with engaging presenting", said the judges.

Arts and culture - Radio/audio

RTÉ Radio 1



RTÉ Radio 1's **Documentary on One** told the story of one of the greatest albums of all time: ***The Summer of Astral Weeks***. As 1968 began, Van Morrison was at his lowest ebb: he found himself penniless, facing deportation from the United States. As 1968 drew to a close, he had

transformed the sound of his music, signed to Warner Brothers and recorded 'Astral Weeks' – now regarded as one of the greatest albums of all time. RTÉ Radio 1's programme reunited all those that were central to this dramatic turn-around in Van Morrison's career. "Really exceptional sound design and engineering", said our judges who were impressed with the nostalgic and wide-ranging mix of words and music and the production team's efforts in tracking down all the key players of this story.

Highly commended

Resonance for BBC Radio 4 In Tooth and Claw

Writer, philosopher and vet Charles Foster examines a conundrum: how can someone with a rapport with nature also enjoy killing things? *In Tooth and Claw* by Resonance for BBC Radio 4 teases out the threads of violence which run through so much nature writing and asks why we find solace and peace in places haunted by competition, destruction and death. "Difficult issues handled in a thought-provoking way, beautifully engineered", commented the judges.



AIB IMPACT AWARD Sponsored by **ALJAZEERA**

Down the Road – a Roses Are Blue production for Eén (VRT)

Down the Road is a documentary about six young adults with Down syndrome who go on a three-week road trip through South Africa with their companion Saar. In an environment completely new to them, they are challenged to work together, show initiative and define their independence. The series was a smash hit in Flanders, with the highest appreciation ratings ever measured by Flemish public broadcaster VRT. Here production company Roses Are Blue talk about the genesis and the impact of the programme.



The concept for Down the Road (DTR) was not an easy sell: an entertaining human interest programme for a broad audience about a group of young adults with Down syndrome. Without a gameplay element or a clearly defined research question, the goal was to give an unfiltered insight into life with Down – a perspective foreign to most people. With only a travel schedule to hang on to and a host to keep

the conversation going, the outcome was uncertain. Flemish broadcaster VRT took a leap of faith when ordering the first season from Roses Are Blue, for a prime-time slot on its biggest entertainment channel Eén. Eén is a broad channel that wants to reach everyone in Flanders, young and old. It offers entertainment with the power to connect and move its audience.





AIB IMPACT AWARD

Sponsored by **ALJAZEERA**

Down the Road – a Roses Are Blue production for Eén (VRT)

After the first episode aired, the ratings and reactions were promising. After two seasons, the show has had a significant impact on the visibility of, interest in and knowledge about Down syndrome in Flanders. But most notably, a shift in attitudes and behaviour towards people with disabilities seems to have taken place which was measured in a recent VRT impact study. With international praise for the programme continuing to

grow and a third season scheduled to air in Flanders in 2020, the positive message of inclusion will continue to resonate through public debate and influence disability-related political agenda setting.

Disabilities and Flemish media

Flanders has no news anchors, chart-topping musicians or influential politicians that have a disability. So while Flemish media try to show people with a mental or physical disability on prime-time television, they remain underrepresented. This changed in 2018, when *Down the Road* became the surprise TV hit of the year, exposing Flanders to six young adults with Down syndrome for eight 45 minute episodes.

The 2019 season of DTR reached 71% of Flemish people through TV (65%), social media, print articles, news or other platforms. With an average market share of 34,2% (live), DTR was the market leader at the time of broadcast. Since then, the participants have been asked to comment on current affairs in the press, have featured in fashion shoots for magazines, played parts in music videos and were able to raise awareness and funding for several charities.

“Down the Road matches perfectly with the DNA of our channel: Eén offers entertaining programmes with that little extra something and doesn’t shun away from difficult themes. We make programmes you love to watch together, that make you laugh or cry, but most of all programmes that move people. The image of people with Down syndrome has truly changed since DTR. That an entertainment programme can have this much of an impact has blown us away.”

Olivier Goris, network manager Eén





Appreciation and acceptance

With an average appreciation rating of 8,9/10, DTR's second season breaks the record of the first season. It also received the most direct positive feedback from viewers according to the 2018 official VRT complaint report, as well as a massive amount of positive feedback via social media. The love for the programme and its cast also seem to affect more deeply rooted attitudes towards people with a disability and their place in Flemish society.

"We hoped *Down the Road*'s story would reach and move a large audience. But we never dreamed that so many people would make it their own. This AIB award recognizes the potential impact of entertainment that is authentic and has integrity – which is a brave sign from AIB and a confidence boost for creatives worldwide."

Gijs Polspoel, director DTR

Jurgen Pauwels, board member of Down Syndrome Flanders and father of a daughter with Down, says DTR has changed people's behaviour towards his child. In an opinion piece for the newspaper *De Standaard*, he describes the difference since the show aired: stares and whispers have turned into smiles and kind remarks. The VRT impact study results confirm this: 22% of all Flemish people say their attitude towards people with a disability has grown more positive because of DTR. They are more likely to speak to someone with Down syndrome.

Information and influence

DTR has proven to be both a direct and indirect source of information about Down syndrome. Directly, 17% of Flemish people say they've learned something from the programme and 14% said it made them think.

Online, initiatives surrounding the programme were a huge success as well. Eén organized an online campaign for World Down Syndrome Day: the six DTR travel companions made a video asking everyone to share a picture of their feet with two different socks (the symbol for Down syndrome) via social media with the hashtag #steunkousen. This hashtag was coined by Eén and in one day, on World Down Syndrome Day, 32.000 posts were shared using the hashtag – a colossal success.

"The six young adults in *Down the Road* show us the possibility of human interaction without judgment or prejudice. Of love, unfiltered. Of friendship, unconditional. The impact of the programme on the attitudes and actions of its audience prove our willingness to accept, respect and learn from another point of view."

Dieter Coppens, host of DTR

DTR shows six individuals with varying degrees of independent working and living skills. Some of them have (unpaid) jobs, most dream of living alone some day, all of them went to school and have skills. The momentum created by the show during its first broadcast was used by NGOs to push the rights of disabled people on the political and corporate agenda. 2020 will see Belgium moving towards more inclusive policy and legislation regarding disabled persons' working and living conditions. ■

This is a programme whose impact goes far beyond the number of platforms it has been on. Everyone who has watched it will have experienced a change within themselves – and will not see people with Down syndrome in the same light thereafter. From now on, they will be just people like you and me. This change in perception will ripple out into family, friends, colleagues and the wider world. It has delivered significant impact across ever-widening circles – a fantastic achievement and a deserved recipient of the AIB's Impact Award 2019.

The AIB judges





IN CONVERSATION

Dr. Willard Wigan MBE

His is a tale from childhood torment to adult fulfilment. His micro-sculptures continue to amaze and fascinate both art lovers and scientists – nobody knows how he is able to produce such tiny masterpieces on this molecular level. He has exhibited all over the world and collaborated with watchmakers, jewellers and other artists. He has achieved two Guinness World Records and received an MBE and an honorary doctorate in recognition of the significant contribution he has made to art and sculpture. Pushing the limits of the possible ever further, Willard says his main aim is to infect people with happiness and wonder

Imagine your teachers ridiculing you at school and telling you that you will amount to nothing in later life. Simply because you find it difficult to learn to read and write.

This is what happened to Willard Wigan, growing up as a young boy with undiagnosed autism and dyslexia on the Ashmore Park Estate in the West Midlands, UK. So one day aged around five, he couldn't face the daily torment and played truant from school, hiding in the garden shed at home. Seeing the ants crawling around his feet, he wondered 'What if I built them some small houses?' And promptly set about doing just that: making tiny ant apartments and tiny ladders and see-saws. And guess what: the ants moved in!

MINIATURE WORLD

His mother – who like any loving mother wanted to see her son do well and be happy – encouraged him. Go even smaller, she said. She was the first to see his unique gift: the ability to build a miniature world that we can't see with the naked eye. Painstakingly building objects from the tiniest fragments, Willard had found his calling. He was proving to himself and the world that where most people think there is nothing, in reality there exist the most exquisite creations.

So exquisite that scientists are baffled how he does what he does, as no machine would be able to produce anything remotely similar on this molecular level.

IN THE EYE OF A NEEDLE

Have a look at the photos to get a sense of his achievements. There is the Last Supper in the eye of a needle made of nylon and gold – you can even see the straps on the sandals of Jesus and his apostles. The Skateboarder is balancing on a human eyelash – this piece is roughly the same size as a full stop in a newspaper. When Willard had fashioned it out of gold and Kevlar, he painted it with a hair from a Dalmatian dog and placed it on the sharp end of a pin. The First World War biplane is made of gold and uses fibres for rigging, set upon a 2mm diameter pin head. This piece, which was commissioned by a collector, was one of Willard's more difficult pieces as the 3D object had to be viewed from all sides.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Where most people would use a brush to paint, Willard uses a hair. No cutting edge technology for him – his tools are all purpose-made: tweezers fashioned from a hairclip, the end of a needle shaped into a blade, microscopic shards of a diamond used as carving tools for sand and glass. His materials

“

If you can't see something it does not mean it's not there. The little things can be the biggest things

”

are equally diverse: grains of sand, glass fragments, nylon tags from a shirt, fibres of a teddy bear, wood, gold. And most magical of all: spider webs and the fibres that you see floating in the air.

Typically, a finished micro-sculpture which can be as small as 0.005mm is placed in the eye of a needle, or on the head of a pin, or even inside a hollowed out piece of hair. Can you even imagine cutting a hole in one of your hairs? For Willard, it's normal. It's what he does. It's what he loves.

BREAKING RECORDS

When you see him work, he hardly moves. It needs perfect stillness – just an intake of breath at the wrong moment and the fragment that he is working on might flutter away. He says he slows down his nervous system and works between his heart beat, holding his breath. Fibres and materials behave differently and unexpectedly on the molecular level, so it can take many attempts. Bent over the microscope for up to seven weeks during the creative process, it's both physically and mentally exhausting. He often works through the night where there is minimal disruption.

You won't be surprised to hear that Willard has got two world records under his belt. The first one was for the smallest ever sculpture made by human hand: a 24 carat gold motorcycle placed





within a human hair. Then in 2009 he beat his own record by placing a sculpture made from Kevlar within a hollowed out section of beard stubble – so tiny it would fit into a human embryo.

COLLABORATION

Some of Willard's most intriguing creations have come about in collaboration with others who are masters of their craft – artists, jewellers, watchmakers. When he teamed up with master forger John Myatt for 'Mona Lisa: Secret in the Eye' the world took note. Myatt painted a perfect copy of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa which then had a 1 mm high miniature replica of the painting inserted into the pupil of her left eye – this miniature had been painted by Willard with an eyelash.

Willard's collaboration with the jeweller Theo Fennell resulted in an 18 carat gold fantasy ring. When you open the 'Empty Quarter' ring it appears to be an empty desert with sandy dunes yet when you look through its accompanying magnifying glass adorned with diamonds



– to be worn around the neck – you see the three miniature camels crossing the desert, exquisitely crafted by Willard. With watchmakers Robert Greubel and Stephen Forsey, Willard created 'Art Piece 1'. This Greubel Forsey 30 degree double-tourbillon watch also houses a Wigan micro-sculpture of a three-mast galleon on a blue support – and at precisely 9 o'clock it can be admired through a magnifier in the crown.

RICH REWARDS

Willard's life story is one that has a happy ending on many levels. Having been paraded at school as an example of educational failure and laziness, he was able to create his own miniature world where his autism and dyslexia are assets, not burdens. His exceptional gift was discovered and now his unique creations are collector's items. In 2007 Queen Elizabeth II honoured Willard with an MBE for his services to art and in 2018 an honorary doctorate followed in recognition of the significant contributions he has made to art and sculpture.

He says he wants to make people happy with the wonder of the small things – and he certainly does that, judging by the expression on people's faces when they peer into the microscope to discover his world.

While creating micro-sculptures is a solitary business, the effects of Willard's work are rippling out into wider society as his work takes on a new social dimension. Touring schools with a roadshow of microscopes and age-relevant sculptures gives him the opportunity to talk openly about his life story and experiences and to encourage a younger generation to focus on what they are good at and make this the basis of their success in life. Find something within yourself to celebrate, he tells them, and be amazing at what you can do best. By doing what he does Willard is changing perceptions about people with learning disabilities – dyslexia and autism are no bar to success. Willard the boy who was told he would amount to nothing in later life turned into the man who made 'nothing' into a mesmerizing, unforgettable experience for us all. ■



The AIBs 2020

We're looking forward to our 16th annual competition for factual television, radio and online productions.

Here are the key dates to note

2 April | The *AIBs* launch

27 June | Closing date

July-August | Shortlisting

Mid-September-October | Judging

4 November | Awards night

If you would like to **support** the *AIBs* 2020 or be one of our **judges** then please contact us to discuss further.

Full information will be available on the dedicated website **theaibs.tv**



The AIBs



The AIBs





AIB FOUNDERS AWARD UPDATE

Sarina Arnold – Changing faces

In 2011 AIB awarded its Founders Award to Swiss Television for Helen Stehli Pfisters's documentary 'Two Women - One Journey' which traced the story of Swiss top model Sarina Arnold as she undertook a very personal journey to Kyrgyzstan to support, alongside paediatric surgeon Brigitte Winkler, the work of a charity that helps children born with severe facial deformities. Ever since her own daughter was born with a cleft lip and palate, Sarina has been an active ambassador for this cause close to her heart – so how have things moved on since 2011?

Winning the Swiss Elite Model Look Competition at 16 years old signalled the start of a successful modelling career for Sarina Arnold. She travelled the world shooting campaigns for top brands and gracing the covers of magazines, combining consummate professionalism with a down-to-earth personality.

So when the press reported in 2008 that Sarina was pregnant her fans eagerly awaited news of the birth. However, for Sarina life was taking a different turn and showing its darker side. She knew before the birth that something was very wrong and when her daughter Felice was born with severe malformations on lip, palate and uvula, her world fell apart. But living in Switzerland proved to be the element of luck in her misfortune – today, after successful operations and aftercare from a team of orthodontists and speech therapists, you would hardly notice that anything was ever wrong with Felice.

A SAD STATISTIC

Children born with similar facial deformities in Kyrgyzstan are, on the whole, not so lucky. It is a sad statistic that more children are born with a cleft palate in this country than anywhere in the world – in a population of just over six million, there

are up to 500 new cases each year. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, this Muslim republic continues to be heavily dependent on international aid as it transitions to a market economy. Divided into north and south by the Tian Shan mountain range, Kyrgyzstan boasts stunning scenery but remains one of the poorest countries in the world. With a health system constantly on the brink of collapse, it's not a good place to be if you are born with severe facial deformities.

The Swiss-based charity Stiftung Zuversicht (Confidence for Children Foundation = CFC) has worked in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek since 1997. It had a vision to establish the first interdisciplinary treatment centre for children with facial deformities in Central Asia – a centre which would provide the full range of modern cleft treatment. Every year, Swiss doctors travel to Kyrgyzstan to assist the local team of doctors with complicated operations and knowledge transfer, with the expectation that they will one day hand over completely to the Kyrgyz team.

As Sarina battled with her own demons back home in Switzerland, asking 'Why me?' about the blow that fate had dealt her, the charity asked her to become its ambassador. She said 'yes' straight away.

“The young patients in Osh now have a much brighter future”

Sources: www.stiftungzuversicht.ch
'Hoffnung trotz Fehlbildung', Migros Magazin 9/2019

Photos: Thomas Buchwalder + Alex Beaton

And in her role as ambassador she wanted to do more than just pose for a photo. She needed to see first-hand what the children in Kyrgyzstan were faced with.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In 2010 she made her first trip to Bishkek in the company of paediatric surgeon Brigitte Winkler who since 2006 has made this journey twice a year. What she found in the children's hospital there was a far cry from what she had experienced in Switzerland. Long queues of patients and their relatives waiting in the corridor, having travelled long distances. Seven beds to one room; no nurses to look after the children, instead mothers or grandmothers caring for them day and night. But on the upside, there was now a new operating theatre – very good news since the lights kept going out in the old one.

News that the foreign doctors were arriving had spread and Sarina saw both despair and hope etched on the faces of the mothers. CFC only operate on the most severe cases, and ideally that needs to happen before the child is one year old. It is difficult even for experienced surgeons to make the most severe cases look good. They have to close up both clefts, reconstruct the nose and fill in the lips. At the next op they will close the child's palate and then he or she will need more corrective surgery. It is a slow process. And for the child it's a continuing learning curve: learning how to suck, drink, eat, breathe, swallow and speak.

A LIFELINE

Watching closely during consultations, operations and recovery, Sarina was taken back to the time of her daughter's operation. She knew what it felt like so despite the language barrier she was able to comfort mothers and patients.

For her, one of the most upsetting aspects of this first trip was the realisation that many children born with facial deformities are simply abandoned by the parents, left on the doorsteps of orphanages. Families are not prepared for the shock at birth of a child with a cleft palate. They are ashamed



and afraid. With parents unable to pay for an operation, such a child will become a social outcast. CFC is throwing a lifeline to these children and it's not surprising that the hospital in Bishkek is overrun with patients when the foreign doctors are in town.

Sarina, just like the Kyrgyz mothers, had asked herself many times over: 'Why was my child born like this?' The medical explanation is that during the embryonic development parts of the mouth area do not form as they should. Nobody quite understands why. The reasons could be congenital. Alternatively, external factors such as malnutrition, infection or environmental contamination could be the cause. In many parts of Kyrgyzstan, the beautiful landscape hides a deadly secret: highly toxic waste from mining uranium for Soviet nuclear weaponry was simply tipped into shallow holes in the ground and covered with earth. Many workers and their families lived in the areas where these dumps were sited.



GOING BACK

It would be an understatement to say that her first encounter with the charity's work on the ground in Bishkek left a deep impression on Sarina. She promised to come back. And she has kept that promise. Recently she travelled to Osh, Kyrgyzstan's second largest city, the so-called 'capital of the south'.

She saw and heard how the intervening years had delivered huge progress. The children's hospital in Bishkek is now able to provide a complete range of modern cleft treatment – it has a patient admission area, fully equipped treatment

stations, an orthodontic laboratory and its own X-ray equipment. A similar centre was set up in Osh in 2013, also facilitated by CFC, so that patients from the southern part of the country won't need to travel long distances to receive treatment.

The centre in Osh now has a new operating theatre and gradually the hospital's supply of medical equipment for the treatment of children is being expanded. But when Sarina visited, there were still glitches. During the follow-up operation of 18-month old Umutai, a hand pump had to supply the patient

with oxygen – the problem with the anaesthetic machine had still not been fixed. And there were other challenges too: sometimes there was no fresh water for days or the electricity supply failed.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Orthodontics specialist Dr Marcel Frei is one of the team of physicians working for CFC in Osh. He, like all the other visiting Swiss medics, is giving his services for free and hopes that the children's treatment centre will eventually be self-financing without the need for outside help. Affluent Kyrgyz citizens can use the centre to have their teeth fixed – the income from this subsidises the treatment of cleft children above and beyond what the state provides. Frei says the lack of dental hygiene is a great problem – too much sugar and not enough brushing means many teeth are already lost. There is still much to be done in terms of preventative education.

But much has already been achieved. In Osh, Sarina was re-united with some of the young patients whose first difficult operation she had witnessed. They now have a much brighter future, eating easily and speaking well. Sarina, as ambassador, is determined to be active in her support – not least with her jewellery collection which donates a portion of every item sold to CFC. While her professional life is all about beauty, working with the charity has made her face society's judgement of cleft children in its rawest form and allowed her to fully appreciate the special beauty of an imperfect smile. ■



About the AIB

The Association for International Broadcasting is the only global alliance of media companies that deliver, or support the delivery of, cross-border and multi-platform international broadcasting.

The Association was founded by the broadcasting industry in 1993 and today continues its mission of supporting, sustaining, promoting and protecting its Members, wherever they are in the world, via a range of specialist services.

Our Members – located from North America to New Zealand – operate television, radio and online services in multiple languages that, each week, reach well in excess of one billion people in almost every country on the planet.

The Association's work is entirely centred on, and devoted to, the needs of our Members. We draw on more than 25 years of knowledge gathering, intelligence sharing and understanding across the international media market to deliver outstanding support to our Members.

The AIB has a range of key priority areas covering important sectors such as media freedom, cyber security, sustainability, licensing and programme collaboration. Our market intelligence and online briefings ensure that Members are briefed about the constant changes occurring in media markets globally.

In media freedom, we are working to help our Members share information on threats to their operations and to their staff. We respond to issues as they occur, providing a voice that speaks with the collective weight of the AIB's Members across every continent. The AIB has collaborated with the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office on its global media freedom campaign and is working with Global Affairs Canada as it takes this campaign forward into 2020.

We are developing a broadcasting cyber security research centre in conjunction with Royal Holloway University of London that will benefit all AIB Members and the wider industry.

The Association celebrates success through this competition for international journalism and factual productions, the *AIBs*.

With an unrivalled range of expertise and support services, now is the time for your organisation to become a Member of the AIB.

Key Staff



CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Simon Spanswick
simon.spanswick@aib.org.uk



**COORDINATOR, AIB SECRETARIAT
AND AIB MEDIA AWARDS**
Clare Dance
clare.dance@aib.org.uk



**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**
Gunda Cannon
gunda.cannon@aib.org.uk



DIRECTOR, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Tom Wragg
tom.wragg@aib.org.uk



RESEARCH & PROMOTIONS
Diane Davis
diane.davis@aib.org.uk



CONFERENCE & RESEARCH ANALYST
Anjuli Shere
anjuli.shere@aib.org.uk

AIB | PO Box 141 | Cranbrook | TN17 9AJ | United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 7993 2557
contactaib@aib.org.uk
www.aib.org.uk



The Only 24 Hour Persian News Channel

Shortlisted for Best International Channel of the Year

Satellite

Hotbird 13B-13C
Eutelsat 7A-7B
Astra 2G
Yahlive
Arabsat Badr-6
Galaxy 19

Contacts

Volant Media UK Ltd
1st Floor, Building 11
566 Chiswick High Road
London W4 5YS
+44 20 3911 3000
hello@volantmedia.com

www.iranintl.com

Iranintl
 iranintlvtv
 +447830007000

Volant Media owns and operates Iran International

