



PRESS RELEASE

Documentary on child labour in the Philippines wins 2015 Asia-Pacific Child Rights Award for Television

Bangkok, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, 28 October 2015 – ‘Reel Time: Bamboo’, a documentary produced and broadcast by GMA Network, has won the 2014 Asia-Pacific Child Rights Award for Television. The programme follows the lives of three boys who earn a living by cutting down bamboo poles on the mountainside and carrying them back home.

RJ, one of the three boys, was hit by a motorcycle when he was eight years old. Although he survived the accident, he lost his hearing. “We cut down the bamboo, then walk a long way back home carrying heavy bamboo poles on our shoulders,” RJ, now 15, says in sign language. “We do this so we will have money for food. I envy other kids who can play all day but I can’t. I need to go up the mountain to get bamboo.”

Almost every day, RJ and his friends Daniel and MJ brave the dangerous mountains of Rizal province to cut down bamboo. Although the bamboo poles are nearly four times their height, the boys manage to cut them down and carry them back home on their backs, where they are sold for \$0.20 USD per piece. This small amount helps them put food on the table for their families and go to school.

‘Reel Time: Bamboo’ was praised by the jurors for telling the story of the three boys in their own words without narration. “This gives the children a voice and makes the message stronger,” they said. “The rhythm is nice and the filming and editing are very effective. The children’s effort and courage to help their families is very touching.”

The Reel Time production team described positive feedback they received from viewers. “People were touched and inspired by the kids’ stories,” the team said. “The Department of Education pledged to set up a special class in the nearby school to help children with special needs living in remote areas, although we are still waiting for more comprehensive plans for sustainable livelihoods.”

The Child Rights Award for Television was established by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), CASBAA and UNICEF in 2001. It recognizes the efforts of broadcasters and

producers in pursuing high quality children's television and better coverage of children's issues, and is given each year to the best programme on children's rights produced in the Asia-Pacific region. This year's award was presented during the CASBAA Convention in Hong Kong, on 28 October 2015.

"We congratulate GMA Network for producing 'Reel Time: Bamboo', a documentary about childhood poverty, hardship and courage in the Philippines," said Christopher Slaughter, CEO of CASBAA. "It is encouraging to see our medium being used to tell such a moving story, one that highlights children's issues in the Asia-Pacific region. 'Reel Time: Bamboo' is an excellent example of what the Child Rights Award for Television is intended to highlight, and CASBAA is proud and privileged to single out this film for distinction."

"'Reel Time: Bamboo' is a highly thought-provoking documentary. It shows that child labour is closely linked to poverty and in many countries around the world children are engaged in hard and at times inhuman work to earn some money for their family's sake," said Dr Javad Mottaghi, ABU Secretary-General. "The ABU is proud of the Asia-Pacific's region successful participation in this contest. Broadcasters have once again proven to be a catalyst in bringing about social change to improve the status of children."

"A powerful piece of television, 'Reel Time: Bamboo' shows the incredible energy and vitality of children, and hints at how much children with very little could achieve if we provide them with support," said Christopher de Bono, Chief of Communications for UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific. "It is also testimony to the value of television as a tool to motivate governments to meet their responsibility to protect the rights of all children, including the right to an education."

For more information about the Award, this year's finalists, and a Q&A with the winner, please visit: www.childrightsaward.org

The winning and shortlisted documentaries can be viewed here: tinyurl.com/childrights2015

For media enquiries, please contact:

- Hanizah Hamzah, ABU (Kuala Lumpur), + 603 22822480, hanizah@abu.org.my
- Kevin Jennings, CASBAA (Hong Kong), + 852 3929 1730, kevin@casbaa.com
- Kritsada Jirathun, UNICEF (Bangkok), +66 2 356 92 49, kjirathun@unicef.org

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