



SOLA

IZO DROM

KORONAŠOLA



## 1. Name and description of the project

**Infodrom** is a weekly children's news show on the **Slovenian public broadcaster RTV Slovenija**, and our main goal is to be the main source of **news for children aged 9 to 14**. We broadcast the show on Fridays at 4:40 p.m. The show contains weekly **news reports** and describes **political events**, presents connections between the events, and **explains difficult subjects** in a way that children can understand them and find them exciting. The programme also includes reports on other children, the environment, web-related topics, sports, music, shows, intriguing items and the latest news from the world of celebrities. **Explanatory items** usually include graphic elements: covering explanatory items for complicated matters are described in a simple way, so that children can grasp them easily. Our aim is to **open public space for children's opinions** and make the world more apprehensible for them, to educate and empower them to become active citizens.



**Tina Antončič** is one of the creators of children's news format Infodrom which has been on the air since 2012. She has been editor-in-chief since 2016, and she also works as a journalist and a presenter. Additionally, Tina is a **member of Kids News Community** at the European Broadcasting Union; she is **vice chairperson** of the group.

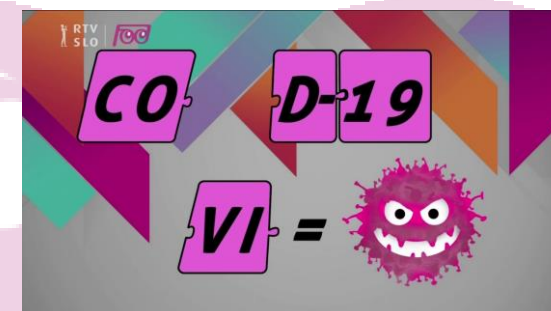


*Nik and Nika, presenters of Izodrom (educational part)*



## 2. INFO

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### 3. What did we do?

As Infodrom is a weekly children's news show, last year, when the officials declared an epidemic and schools got closed, our Children's and Youth Programme Dept. decided to broadcast an hour-long programme with children's news and educational contents every school day. **The show was called Izodrom**, and the news section of the programme was approx. 14 minutes long. The show was **on the air every weekday morning from the 16<sup>th</sup> of March until the 29<sup>th</sup> of May**. We produced 49 individual shows **plus two additional 30-minute shows** and we invited the Slovenian **Minister of Education to answer the children's questions**.



We decided to make this special show on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> of March (when officials declared a lockdown), and produced the **first live show on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> of March**. We knew that our education system would need some help with online schooling, so our educational part was made in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (various teachers covered several subjects each day). The decision to have news in the programme was important since **every day we received over a 100 questions and opinions from children on our social platforms**, so just to have a weekly news show was not enough. Even before the lockdown, we dedicated a large part of our news programme to explaining everything about the new virus and everything connected

to that (what it is happening abroad, explanatory items about viruses, preventive measures, anxiety about the unknown). For almost three months we provided **a daily report on the coronavirus, news rules, and above all we felt obliged to answer children's questions, report on other daily news, home schooling, how children abroad were coping with the lockdown and home schooling and add some light topics**. We had to use **different formats** since it was impossible to film children. We **created a special workflow, where children were filming themselves**, or with the help of their parents. We used a special platform that we ourselves created. The response of our audiences was incredible. We didn't just provide information for children via television; we also did that on all **our active social media platforms: Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter**.



**In one of the shows, we researched of the topics quoted below:**

- Why the platform that the children were using for online schooling didn't work and when it was going to be fixed.
- Two brothers got sick. What does it mean to have the coronavirus disease and how the family lives in isolation?
- Explanatory item with an expert: How long does the virus stay on physical objects?
- We answered children's questions about pets and the coronavirus (they were very interested in this topic): Can they be infected? Can they go for a walk? Etc.
- Music on balconies: two girls from different cities played their instruments on their balcony – a reportage.



A lot of children that are of Slovenian by origin but live abroad wrote to us that they watch the show and want to contribute; many prepared special reports on how they live and learn in the country they live in: **Italy, Belgium, Austria, Australia, Nepal, Serbia, Germany ...**

Since children's news formats under the patronage of the *European Broadcasting Union* is strong and tight, we had a lot of help from our colleagues from other public broadcasters in Europe (LOGO! LILLA AKTUELLT; NOS JEUGDJOURNAAL; ULTRA NYT); **we exchanged materials, stand-up appearances, how children**

**live there ...**



Because we were not able to film with our regular camera crew, we had to learn how to use a gimble with a phone, go-pro, microphone ... so **we did a lot of filming ourselves**, too. The experts that we invited to our show were either appearing live in duplex or via Skype, Zoom, Teams ... Some of them filmed themselves. They were cooperative and took time for us, since they felt it was important that children were informed.



## 4. How we did it?

We tackled the project with **strong will and dedication**, realizing that we had to do something for the children whose whole world turned upside down and who had many questions and anxieties, but having at our disposal nothing but a weekly news show, making daily news shows was something new entirely. **Me as editor and two more journalists** (the three of us were also presenting on the live shows) plus a graphic designer were the core team from the beginning, and we created all of 49 shows plus two extras as well as our usual airtime show on Fridays (in March and then again in June). Some days we had **help from three more researchers**, and during three weeks **three more journalists** helped as well (but not the whole time).



*Infodrom team*

*Presenters of Infodrom (Tina, Neža, Mateja)*



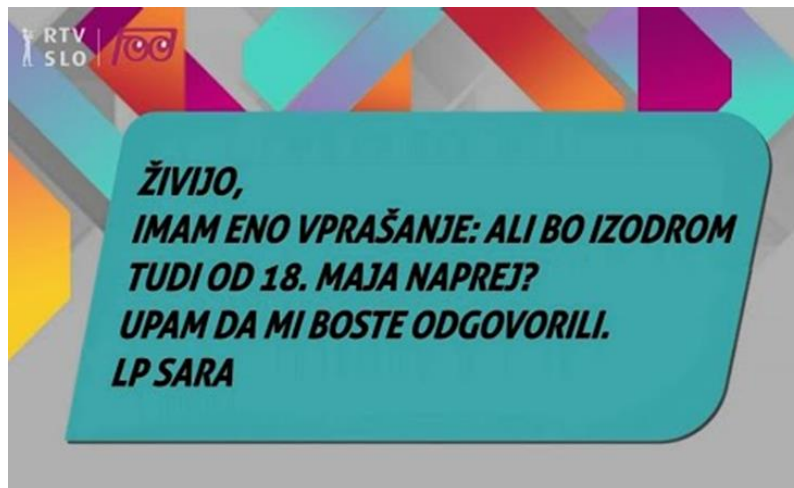
the rest of the Izodrom show (the educational part), deliver content. But I would gladly do it all over again

With the exception of one (part time) journalist and a graphic designer (funding for both came from the budget of our regular Infodrom show), we all have full-time jobs at RTV Slovenia, in the Children and Youth department. Two journalists that were helping us out worked in the Educational Department of RTV Slovenia. We also had one editor in the editorial room, working three hours a day. Of course, we also had all the technical staff of the live show (director, sound recordist, graphic technician, assistant director, cameraman, etc.).

**We worked non-stop for almost three months**, but since the adrenalin was working, we managed to prepare high quality shows. Especially for me as editor-in-chief as well as journalist, researcher, and presenter it was quite demanding. I had to plan ahead (personnel and content), be on top of the informative topics, coordinate with editors for

## 5. Why we did it?

It was the fact that children had to stay at home. Home schooling was not yet established, and we received **numerous questions from children who needed answers. We wanted children to be informed.** By providing children with information in the right form we brought a much greater sense of security into their world rather than by leaving them in an anxious silence. The more children learned about the world around them, the better they could make sense of everything they heard and saw in their everyday lives. We tried to explain complicated matters in a simple way, so children could understand them. We did not operate with numbers; we focused on the positive sides, but also **provided them with knowledge and introduced actual people who could help them when they were scared, living in non-safe households; we addressed mental health problems and explained where to look for help ...**



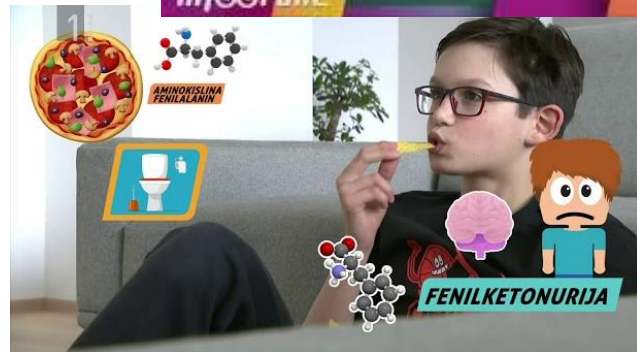
We wanted them not to feel alone (many of them were alone at home during the lockdown); they could ask us anything and we answered all their questions (even just to say happy birthday to their grandparents or a friend they had not seen for a long time).

So instead of just having a weekly children's news show, **we were there every day; we also put a lot of contents on our social media platforms; and we are especially proud because we managed to answer numerous questions and develop a workflow and a platform where children could send us their footage, so we could turn it into news stories or just create a quote.**

We already have a long tradition in children's news programmes so many children already knew the format. However, children also had a chance to discover that politics is not just boring people talking. The politics can have a strong direct influence on the children's lives. Therefore, children were happy when experts and rule-makers took the time to answer their questions.



As I already mentioned, we also produced **two special half-hour shows about the new corona rules just before children went back to school in June, and in August**, before the new school season started. Our guest in the studio was the Slovenian Minister of Education, Dr. Simona Kustec. She answered children's questions, explaining the new rules (some of them were heard for the first time in a children's show, even before all the adult news programmes had that information). Children were grading her answers on live Skype interaction. We also prepared a report on how children abroad were coping with home schooling and what were the rules for them. We had lovely responses from the children, and we implemented the format, which we are going to use this year for the special *30 years of Slovenian Independence*.







## 6. Did it work out?

We immediately received many responses on our social media platforms, many questions, e-mails; parents wrote to us about how grateful they were for our efforts; also, the number of TV viewers was **higher than ever**. We received a great response on our digital TV platform, so that Children's and Youth Programme decided to create a special digital page where all the contents from the shows were immediately available both for children and teachers, and parents. This content is still in use. Since we are now broadcasting just a weekly show again, **we continue to produce daily children's news on our social platforms**. During the autumn lockdown, we only had daily children's online news shows.

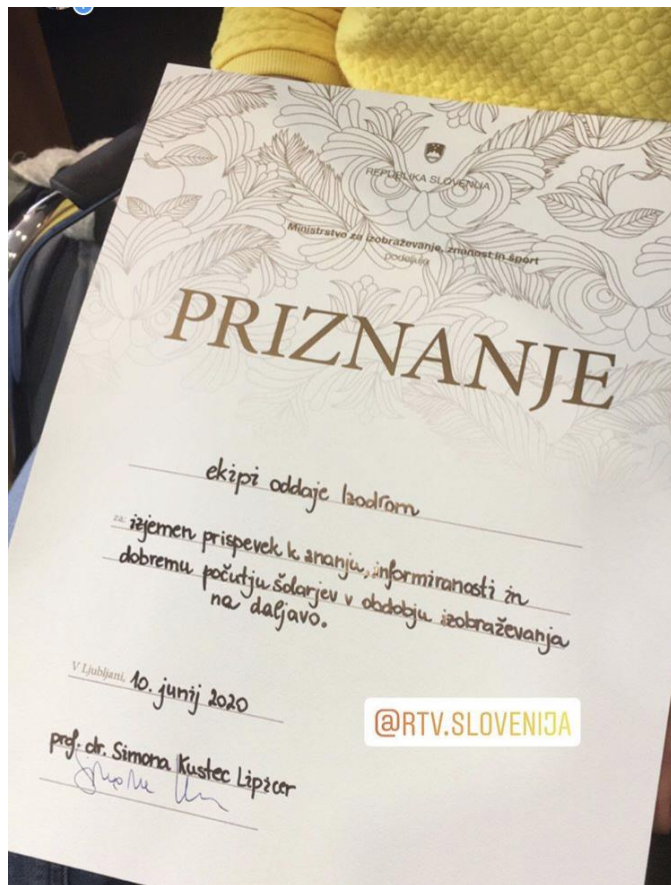
The whole team is more united than ever; we got acquainted with new (filming) equipment which we can use whenever we do not have a camera crew or when the situation is critical.

Name	Size	Modified
20201015_235206.mp4	84 MB	8 hours ago
IMG_7028.HOV	34.9 MB	10 hours ago
VID_20201015_213124.mp4	71.4 MB	11 hours ago
VID_20201015_193113.mp4	19.1 MB	13 hours ago
VID_20201015_192647.mp4	25.7 MB	13 hours ago
VID_20201015_192620.mp4	20.4 MB	13 hours ago

It is a challenge for all public broadcasters to attract young audiences, and this project was a big step into the right direction. We discovered that children want shows with outstanding presenters; **they want to feel included, heard; immediate interaction is very important, too**. Some people used to think that children did not need a special news show; **today they are convinced that public broadcasters ought to have such shows**. Today, Infodrom is an established TV brand (more than ever); it brings a safe environment to children; parents know that their children get quality information; and we always work with children and not just for them (there's a big difference).



We received a special recognition from the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport,

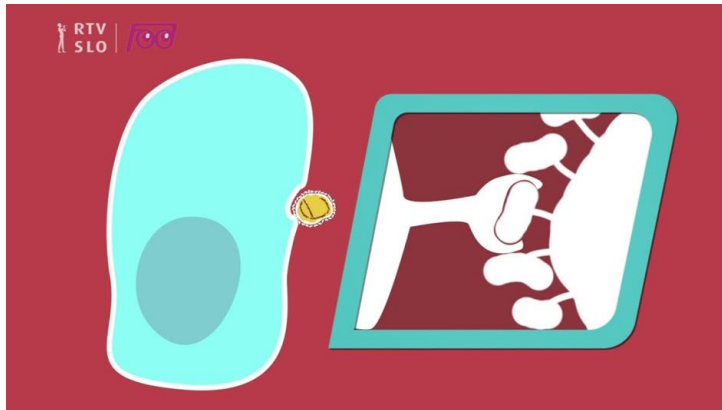


and a special award for outstanding achievements in the past year from RTV Slovenija.





## 7. What next?



We continue to deliver all the important news items to children every day via our social media accounts, and nobody is questioning the fact that this format is what our public broadcaster needs. **Children's news shows** were the only shows on RTV Slovenija (of all the children's shows) **which were able to adapt to the situation in such a short amount of time**, and then continue its production even in lockdown times. Together with other members of the Children and Youth Department, we managed to create a show that children needed in tough times; that is probably also one of the reasons that **people in Slovenia put a lot of trust in the public broadcaster and its services.**

It would be wonderful if we were able to have a daily children's news show, but that would mean more staff and a bigger budget. Right now, it is not possible. 3 people were mostly doing everything for almost three months, which was tough and exhausting. It is not the way to continue when the situation changes.

If somebody wants to start children's news shows, my advice is the following: call or visit a newsroom that is already producing such a show. We did not start overnight; it meant a lot of researching, auditioning, observing others; we had a long tradition of

children's news shows; all in all, we put a lot of effort into building trust and interact with our audience.



Link to one of the shows:

<https://www.rtv slo.si/4d/arhiv/174682993?s=tv>

Summary:

Presenter:

Hi, April 2nd is the right day to explain what wasn't true on April fool's Day. On Instagram, most of you correctly guessed that Mateja didn't cut her hair, she just wore a wig.

Unfortunately, we were also visited by a technical sprite, so you kept looking at the picture of Lidija, the teacher in the announcement, for which we apologize. Today, however, is World Autism Awareness Day. Autism is not a disease. It is a neurological developmental disorder: people who have it perceive the world differently than most other people; they find it harder to communicate, focus and empathize with the emotions of others, which often leads to problems in interpersonal relationships. Home schooling is therefore a big challenge for them and their parents.

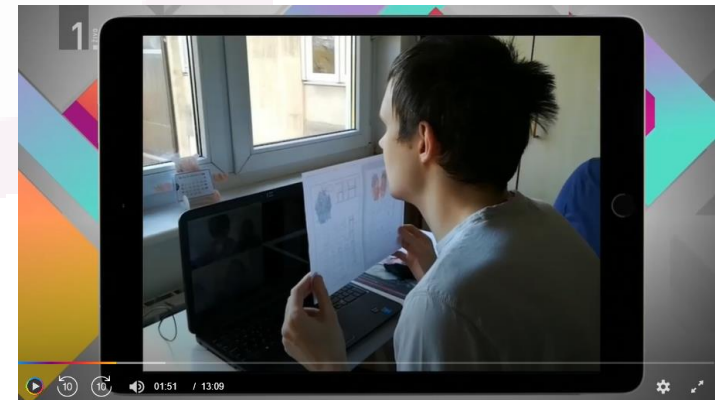
First, a report about the boy Tadej who is struggling with home schooling:

Tadej is in contact with his classmates and teachers every day via a video link: autistic children remember data more easily if they see and hear them. These days, when classes are held at home all over the world, we showed how video contents come in handy for other children as well.

Presenter:

A few weeks ago, when someone mentioned politics, you probably rolled your eyes and hoped the conversation would be over quickly, but it is at a time like this that we all feel how strongly politicians' decisions affect our lives.

Today, for example, our Parliament is deciding what measures to take to make life easier for those who are now unable to work and do not receive pay-checks. The decisions adopted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport are also very important for you, for they decide on everything related to school lessons and, together with the Institute for Education, give instructions to all the schools.





That is why the secretary from the above-mentioned ministry, Dr. JURE GAŠPARIČ, is our guest. Hello! The title of secretary means something like an assistant to the minister. You certainly know the answers to many of the questions asked by our young viewers, so I suggest that we conduct this conversation just like a school questioning: straight up. Ready?

One of the most common questions is, "They give us a lot of material at our school. Can the state command how much to send?"

You have said many times that you are satisfied with the distance learning process, and we are interested in how you check this. We get different information; teachers, parents and students have many problems.

What about grading? Is it possible there won't be any at all? What about the national knowledge test?

Yesterday you started delivering computer equipment to children or families who do not have it. Will all the kids have computers by the end of the week? Where else can everyone who hasn't yet applied get it?

Children are interested in when they will go to school again. What conditions will need to be met before you reopen schools?

So you will not take away their summer vacation, which worries them a lot!

Thanks for the answers and we hope to see you again in the coming weeks.

Students in Serbia are at home as well. Zala is calling us from Belgrade, their capital; she has put herself in the shoes of her parents, our correspondents. She informs us that the city is now unusually empty all the time. There are no more traffic jams on the roads, but there are queues wherever a facility opens up. These days, the hardest thing to do is get yeast and protective masks. Let the correspondent Zala tell us more herself.

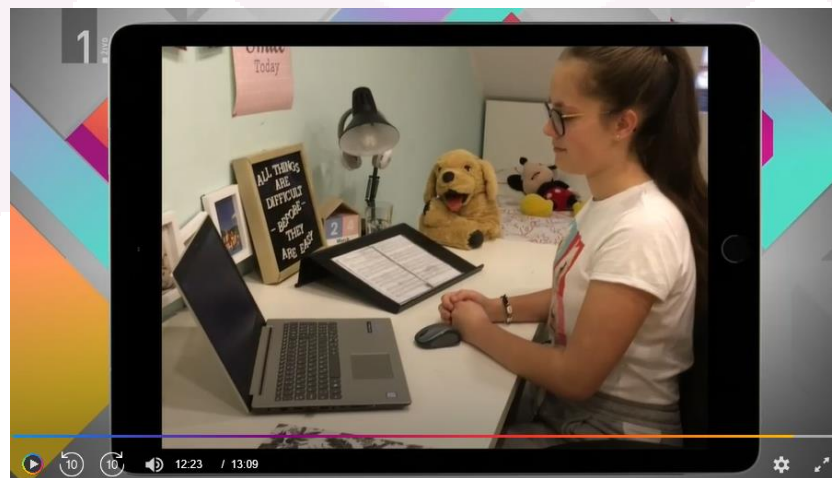
Zala's report on the corona situation in Serbia.



One of the members of the largest wild cat family in Europe - the lynx – broke out of quarantine this week. The lynx, whose name is Katalin, was brought to Slovenia from Romania. He stayed in the enclosure for three weeks to get used to the environment and not to stray too far later, but now he will look for his chosen mate in nature. We keep our fingers crossed they have puppies. By bringing the lynx to Slovenia, we hope to make sure that the species is preserved. All animals have collars so that experts can monitor their movements and whether they are socializing with other members of their species in the woods.



Several thousand competitors competed online at the St. Petersburg Astronomical Olympiad. Tomaž Holc from the Breg Ptuj Primary School won a gold medal in the competition; the tasks were solved online, and the competition lasted a week. Other children excelled as well, they won silver and bronze medals. Well done, everyone! Mentors, too!



Mentors are important everywhere because they help us learn more easily and faster. They warn us of our mistakes and make sure we do not repeat them; it even goes for teachers in music schools. We have already learned that you can be connected to them via screens, and today we will take a look at some more recordings sent to us by the students of the Rogaška Slatina Music School.