**THE NO EXCUSES CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT**

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

****

**BACKGROUNDER**

**www.noexcusescampaign.org**

Web-site: www.noexcusescampaign.org

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/NoExcusesCampaign

Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/No-Excuses-Domestic-Violence-Prevention-Campaign/202812699752287

Twitter: @culture\_shift

Web-site on Mr. Kharas: www.chocmoose.ca

Web-site on behaviour change communications: www.cultureshift.tv

**What is the No Excuses campaign?**

The No Excuses violence prevention campaign consists of a series of 11 animated spots called Public Service Announcements (Spots).  The animated spots, each 30 seconds, are comedic sketches featuring talking animated characters designed to prevent domestic violence and abuse through-out the world.  The campaign is directed primarily at the abuser.

The spots are available to any television broadcaster, radio station, non-governmental organization (NGO), human rights group, community group, university, school, educator or other user, free of charge, anywhere in the world.

The No Excuses campaign is the creation of acclaimed animation Executive Producer and Director Firdaus Kharas, working with a team of skilled professionals. Mr. Kharas has created several other global campaigns using his method of behaviour change communications he calls *Culture Shift*.  Please see [www.cultureshift.tv](http://www.cultureshift.tv) for more information about his campaigns or [www.chocmoose.com](http://www.chocmoose.com) for more information about him and his work.

The goal of the campaign is to enable a potential reach of 80% of the world's population, or over 5.75 billion people, in their own language.  The goals of the campaign are to be used in 100 countries and be seen by at least a billion people.

Each broadcaster or NGO or other user can choose to play selected or all the spots. Each spot plays individually.  In this way, the information can be tailor-made to suit each situation and audience.

The Executive Producer chose comedy to create messages that are non-threatening, non-authoritarian and broadly appealing across all age groups, social strata and cultural boundaries.  The spots are designed to be memorable.

**Why domestic violence and abuse?**

Domestic violence and abuse is a truly global problem, reaching into every country and community.  It knows no boundaries of race, colour, gender, economic or political status.

This campaign is targeted squarely at the abuser.  The primary target is the abuser.  The secondary targets are other individuals such as relatives and friends who may influence the behaviour of the abuser.

**What is the overall approach and what issues does the campaign cover?**

Most campaigns on domestic violence and abuse deal with post-violence education.  This campaign deals with preventing violence.

Many campaigns on domestic violence and abuse create unintended messages.  For example, some campaigns show the image of a battered person.  In the opinion of the Executive Producer, such images do nothing to create behaviour change by the abuser and instead serve to further stigmatize the victims of violence.

This campaign is unique.  It rests on eight pillars:

* animation
* comedy
* prevention
* targeted directly at the person requiring behaviour change
* free distribution
* multi-lingual
* global reach across cultures
* tackling the most difficult issues

The topics were researched and the scripts were written over two years.The topics covered are:

|  |
| --- |
| Preventing cultural justifications of violence |
| Preventing abuse within partnerships and marriages |
| Challenging the perceived right of men to commit violence |
| Preventing sexual abuse of women |
| Preventing rape |
| Preventing escalation of frustration into abuse |
| Breaking the inter-generational cycle of violence |
| Preventing violence by mothers against children |
| Preventing violence by fathers against children |
| Preventing verbal abuse of children and the elderly |
| Preventing rape by soldiers |

**Can individuals download the campaign or order tapes/DVDs for their own viewing pleasure?**

Yes, individuals can download the spots or view them on YouTube.  However, individuals cannot request tapes or DVDs for their own personal use.  Please consult the Ordering section for details.

**Is there any charge for downloading the spots or for the tapes or DVDs** **or for broadcasting or using The No Excuses Campaign?**

No.  Only for larger DVD orders a direct cost recovery charge is requested.

**What about promoting other prevention** **approaches?**

The Executive Producer feels strongly that all approaches should be used in combating violence against women and children. The Executive Producer salutes all those working on prevention of violence, regardless of their approach.

**Who are the target audiences****?**

The principal targets are abusers.  The secondary targets are relatives, friends, colleagues and others who may influence abusers' behaviours.

**Are the spots in English only****?**

The spots are already available in many languages.

Subject to funding, the goal of the No Excuses Campaign is to be available in 73 languages.  Adaptations are currently being carried out.  Please check the website for further updates.

The 73 languages when completed should provide a potential reach of at least 85% of the world's population or over 5.75 billion people in their own language.

In each country or region of the world where the Spots are used, the user can work with the Executive Producer to obtain local languages. The Executive Producer will work with any broadcaster, NGO or other user to obtain local languages.

The Spots are designed to be adapted and dubbed into all the languages of the world. The dialogue tracks and M & E tracks are separate to facilitate dubbing.

Broadcasters and NGOs may request fully dubbed versions, funds permitting. They may also request the dialogue scripts and work with the Executive Producer to create local versions.

**What are the goals of the campaign****?**

The overall goal is described by the Executive Producer as the "100, 100 million, 1 billion goal":

* 100 countries use the campaign;
* $100 million worth of free air-time is donated by broadcasters;
* 1 billion people see the spots.

**How is the series funded and how can individuals or foundations donate****?**

Most of the cash-out funding required so far has been provided personally by Firdaus Kharas. Mr. Kharas pays for all the on-going costs including distribution.  Therefore, without fund-raising the campaign will be severely limited.

Many individuals have wholly or partially donated their time and talent to this effort to prevent domestic violence and abuse. However, there are still many costs in order to create and distribute an animated campaign of this magnitude.

Further funding is being urgently sought. Please see www.noexcusescampaign.org

Funding will be used for:

* versioning the spots into languages;
* distributing the spots via tapes and DVDs;
* marketing the spots via publicity, articles, blogs, conferences and other means;
* launching the spots in countries, in partnerships with broadcasters and/or NGO's;
* creating new spots on other topics related to preventing violence.

**What are the durations of the spots****?**

Each spot is 30 seconds. The total running time is 5.5 minutes.

**What is the format of the spot****s?**

3D Animation. The animation is entirely created by computer in 3DStudioMax software.

**Why choose animation as the medium****?**

Animating the characters and personalizing the information related to domestic violence and abuse creates the type of suspension of disbelief required for a shift in mindset. Through the genre of comedy, and the medium of animation, viewers of both sexes, irrespective of age or culture, are presented with information that will prevent violence.

Animation also has the advantage of being non-threatening, translatable into various languages and accessible cross-culturally. Animation has not been used specifically to make the spots appeal to children.

The Executive Producer has created animated media for international campaigns for many years.

**How many spots will be created****?**

One of the most difficult tasks facing the Executive Producer and his team was selecting which topics to cover.  The team has a lost of over 100 topics they believe should be addressed to comprehensively prevent domestic violence and abuse and to provide a wide range of spots to users to choose from.

However, limited funding meant that only 11 spots could be created in this first batch.  If funding is raised, more spots will be created.

**Where were spots created****?**

The No Excuses Campaign was conceived in Ottawa, Canada.

The Producers are Canadian, South African and Swiss.  The head writer is South African.  The backgrounds and animation were done in Holland with additional animation in South Africa. The music and post-production were done in Canada.

Versioning is happening all over the world.

**Who is the Executive Producer and Director****?**

Firdaus Kharas is the Executive Producer and Creative Director.

Firdaus Kharas is an acclaimed director and Executive Producer of mass communications to better the human condition.  His work has been seen in over 150 countries by over a billion people.  In the last two years alone, his work has received over 60 international awards.   Further information on Mr. Kharas can be found at [www.chocmoose.com](http://www.kharas.ca/).

Firdaus Kharas is the Executive Producer and Director of *The Three Amigos* HIV/AIDS Prevention Programme, currently in use in over 150 countries.  Please see [www.thethreeamigos.org](http://www.thethreeamigos.org/).

Mr. Kharas is also the creator of the *Buzz and Bite* malaria prevention campaign, in use in over half the countries with malaria.  Please see [www.malariacampaign.ca](http://www.malariacampaign.ca)

*The Three Amigos* is a series of purposely-varied animated Spots that use humor to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS.  The series was adapted under Mr. Kharas' supervision into 45 languages, thereby enabling a potential reach of approximately 80% of the world’s population in their own language.  The *Buzz and Bite* malaria prevention campaign consists of 30 animated spots in 39 languages.

*The Three Amigos* and the *Buzz and Bite* campaigns have been used intensively in a wide variety of countries.  Broadcasters have donated millions of dollars worth of free air time to air the series, in some cases up to 20 times a day.  Thousands of health clinics, hospitals, non-governmental organizations, schools and universities across the world currently use the two series.

Both series has received multiple international awards including the prestigious Peabody Award, and hundreds of articles in many languages have been written on their creation and impact.

Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu is the principal supporter of both series. He has called the HIV/AIDS series in an open letter “a powerful communicating tool” and has written "in creating the *The Three Amigos* Spots (you) have made an outstanding contribution to the campaign against HIV infection in providing material that can be easily understood by most people irrespective of language or culture".  Hundreds of testimonials from around the world have been received from every walk of life, from powerful government officials to AIDS educators to ordinary people who's behaviour has been influenced by both series.

Tapes and DVDs are sent out free of charge upon request by Mr. Kharas.

**Who created the** **spots?**

A consortium of highly talented individuals and leading companies were committed to creating these spots.

This series was produced entirely by volunteers in Canada, Netherlands, South Africa and Switzerland. Versioning was done by volunteers around the world.

**Executive Producer and Creative Director**

Firdaus Kharas

**Concept**

Caitlin Delaney

Firdaus Kharas

**Producers**

Jesse Cressman-Dickenson

Caitlin Delaney

Jasmine El Mulki

Firdaus Kharas

Brent Quinn

**Writers**

Firdaus Kharas

Brent Quinn (Head)

**Music and Sound Design**

Andrew Huggett

**Mix**

GAPC

**Animation**

CGToons

**Co-Executive Producer**

Arnold Krechting

**Animation Supervisor**

Dirk van Straaten

**Animators**

Lesly Timmer

Erik van Elven

Additional animation in South Africa.

**Initial Voice Recordings**

Bartmart

Voix Off Agency

Ecole de Langues Eagle

**Sound Engineers**

Wayne Bartlett

Ray Gould

Ronald Magaut

**Transfers**

RELYmedia

GM Records

**Web-site**

Marc Contois

Jasmine El Mulki

**Interns**

Emna Bouneb

Luke Quinn

The Executive Producer and Creative Director wishes to thank the many people who assisted in the creation, production, versioning and distribution of this series.

The Executive Producer and Creative Director dedicates this series as a thank you for his years of support and encouragement to:

**The Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu**

**How were the scripts written****?**

The script-writing process was executed carefully and with wide consultation.

The first drafts of the scripts were written in English by Brent Quinn in South Africa and by Firdaus Kharas in Canada.

After a process of revisions, the original scripts were commented on the other producers.  Once the producers had agreed, the scripts were sent to experts in both media production and in domestic violence and abuse for input.

The English scripts were then adapted (not translated) into multiple languages.  Most of the written adaptations were done in the country of the language.

**Why are the characters blue****?**

The characters have been designed to travel around the world.

Obviously, no real humans are blue, so the skin color was chosen to get around the differences in skin tone human have. Similarly, the characters have no hair for the same reason.

**Who wrote the music****?**

Andrew Huggett of Canada wrote all the music. The music is universal, written by a composer skilled at creating cross-over music that can travel around the world.

**Who did the animation****?**

The animation was done by CG Toons in Mijdrecht, Holland and at a studio in Johannesburg, South Africa. The series is in 3DStudioMax software.

**Is there a large staff working for the project****?**

The entire staff consists of the Producers Firdaus Kharas, who work as volunteers part-time on the No Excuses campaign.  There is no formal office or other staff.

**What is the formal name of the project****?**

The project is formally called The No Excuses Campaign to prevent domestic violence and abuse.

**What are the copyright restrictions****?**

There are no broadcast or use restrictions. The tape or DVD may be played, in whole or in part, without cost and without requesting permission.

There are no repetition or time period restrictions.  Broadcasters, NGOs and all other users may use the tapes or DVDs as often and for as long as they wish.

Neither the tape or DVD nor the contents (including any images) may be duplicated or extracted without permission. Please request additional tapes or DVD's if needed.

The Spots must be played as they are and cannot be edited or altered in any manner. No changes, editing, logos or names are permitted including at the beginning and at the end. Each spot must be played in its entirety.

The Spots may not be played or placed on the Internet without permission.  Links to this site may be placed on any other site without permission.

All elements are © copyrighted.

The nationality of the series for international copyright purposes is Canada.  The Creator, Executive Producer and Director credits for copyright purposes is Firdaus Kharas.

**Can broadcasters, radio stations****, NGOs and other users edit the Spots or put their logo on them?**

No, they cannot. While broadcasters and NGOs can pick the Spots they wish to play, they may not alter, edit or modify any spot or attach their name or logo to any spot. The spots must be played individually, as they are.

**Will more spots be created****?**

The team came up with a list of over 100 topics that should be covered in a comprehensive campaign to prevent domestic violence and abuse around the world. However, the lack of funding meant that only 11 topics could be chosen. Therefore, subject to demand and funding, further spots may be created to cover other subjects on the prevention of domestic violence and abuse.

**Why are there 11 visual spots****?**

The Executive Producer has created 11 visual Spots in each language in order to provide a selection and to convey a variety of information.

It is not expected that all the spots will be effective in every country or in every language or that all the information will need to be imparted to every potential audience.

The Executive Producer has used a variety of comic situations to convey a serious message. The Executive Producer is cognizant that the spots have to be appreciated by people all over the world and has created a variety of spots to ensure that the comedy is varied enough to reach audiences in every country of the world.

Not all spots are appropriate or necessary in all cultures or situations.  The user takes on the full and sole responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of the material.

**How can broadcasters, NGOs, community groups, hospitals, doctors, educators and other users get tapes or DVDs?**

The spots are placed on YouTube and can be viewed and downloaded for free at the Spots by Languages section of the web-site.

Tapes for broadcasters and DVDs for other users may be obtained free of charge simply by writing to order@noexcusescampaign.org.

Only broadcasters receive tapes, usually BetaSP tapes. DigiBeta are available upon request but a tape cost might be requested.

All other users, including NGOs, community groups, hospitals, women's shelters, educators and other users receive DVDs or are requested to download the videos if they have broadband.

**How should broadcasters, NGOs and other users use No Excuses?**

Broadcasters should spread out the spots over several months, playing them frequently.  Broadcasters should roll them out, like an episodic series, playing a few at a time.

NGOs and other users can download and play all of the spots or select any combination of spots according to their needs.

**Is there any charge for downloading or the tapes/DVDs or for broadcasting or using No Excuses?**

No.

**Do broadcasters, NGOs and other users have to report anything?**

It is very useful for the Executive Producer to know how, where, and when the spots are used.  However, there are no formal reporting requirements.

Broadcasters are requested to send an e-mail to info@noexcusescampaign.org with transmission details, including number of spots used, duration, time and dates of transmission and estimated viewership.

Other users are requested to send in pertinent information regarding the use of the campaign materials.

All users are requested to forward comments from themselves or from audiences, whether favourable or unfavourable.

There is a Testimonial section of this web-site.  Comments received may be posted there at the discretion of the Executive Producer.  No further permission will be requested to post comments received.

**Can any NGO, community group, women's shelter, doctor, educator or other user download the spots or get tapes or DVDs?**

Yes, by downloading the spots or by writing to order@noexcusecampaign.org.

The Executive Producer places no restriction on who may request the No Excuses campaign. Any organization, group or individual that may find the Spots useful in preventing malaria infection is welcome to request a tape or DVD.

There are no geographical limits.  Tapes or DVDs will be sent to any address anywhere in the world.

**Can individuals order DVD's for their own personal viewing pleasure?**

Individuals can view and obtain the spots through YouTube or via the No Excuses site, www.noexcusescampaign.org.

Unfortunately, due to limited supplies, DVDs cannot be sent to individuals for their personal viewing pleasure. This is a volunteer-driven activity designed to prevent domestic violence and abuse.

**What are the copyright and use restrictions?**

There are no broadcast or use restrictions. The spots may be played and used without cost and without requesting permission.

There are no repetition or time period restrictions.  Broadcasters, NGOs and all other users may use No Excuses campaign, including tapes and DVD's, as often and for as long as they wish.

Neither the tape or DVD nor the contents (including any images) may be duplicated or extracted without permission. Permission is usually granted to legitimate users.

The spots must be played as they are and cannot be edited or altered in any manner.

No changes, editing, logos or names are permitted including at the beginning and at the end.

Each spot must be played in its entirety.

The spots may not be played or placed on the Internet without permission.  Links to this site may be placed on any other site without permission.

The Creator, Executive Producer and Director credits for copyright purposes is Firdaus Kharas.

All elements are © copyrighted.

www.noexcusescampaign.org

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FIRDAUS KHARAS

www.chocmoose.ca

Firdaus Kharas has been referred to in the media as a “world renowned” director and producer of animation, documentaries, television series and film.  His current work focuses on innovative solutions to global issues by creating various types of media to effect societal and individual behavioural change through mass communications spanning across many cultures and countries to better the human condition.

In 1995 Mr. Kharas founded **Chocolate Moose Media**, a hybrid social enterprise to undertake both for-profit and non-profit media activities.  Mr. Kharas describes himself as a social innovator focusing on some of the world's toughest issues.

Mr. Kharas creates innovative media specifically to create society-level and individual behavior change across the globe via a process he calls **Culture Shift**.  Please see www.cultureshift.tv for more information about his media that positively influences audiences’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Mr. Kharas creates global communications programs to confront and overcome the many fault-lines that separate human beings:  languages and cultures; religions and ethnicities; traditions and histories; stereotypes and stigmas; racism and prejudices; hatreds and fears.

Among other topics his media have dealt with are: **governance**: universal values, human rights, children's rights; literacy promotion; **education**: early childhood education, middle children's education, street children, children at risk, training in mass communications; **migration:** refugees, child refugees; **health:** dementia, suicide; **disease prevention:** HIV/AIDS prevention, malaria prevention; Vitamin A deficiency; **violence:** rape within families, rape in a situation of conflict, various forms of sexual abuse, violence against children, using culture as a justification for violence, perceived rights to commit violence within families**,** gender-related violence; **culture:** the preservation of cultures especially in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

An article on Mr. Kharas in a university publication said, "individuals can make a difference.... He is living testament to it".  Canada’s national newspaper, The Globe and Mail, captured Mr. Kharas' philosophy well in a headline:  “I’m just trying to make a small contribution”.

His main avenues are short- and long-form animation, documentaries and television programs. In particular, Mr. Kharas has created, directed and produced 2,2395 animated behavior change communications shorts in 6 series, used in over 150 countries, after adaptation into over 90 languages with a potential reach of over 5.5 billion people in their own language. The campaigns are on children's rights, universal values, HIV/AIDS prevention, malaria prevention and domestic violence prevention.  Mr. Kharas assembles and directs volunteers to create these campaigns.  Mr. Kharas pays for all costs for producing, marketing and distributing these campaigns, which are sent free of charge to any requester anywhere in the world.

In long-form television series, Mr. Kharas has produced:  the first pre-school animated series in Arabic; the first animated series based on African culture; the first animated pre-school series in Holland; the first English-language daily hour-long drama in Asia and other pioneering series seen across many countries.  In documentaries, Mr. Kharas has produced several documentaries related to human rights, in particular on children's rights.

Mr. Kharas has received several awards personally, including the United Nations Peace Medal from the UN Secretary-General, the medal of the World Federation of UN Associations, an Honorary Doctorate and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from his alma mater, an Honorary Fellowship from a university in London, the Global Development Award and the ReelWorld Trailblazer award.

His work in mass communications has garnered over 70 international awards in just the last few years.  These include the prestigious Peabody Award, CINE Golden Eagle, Telly, Platinum Remi, Chris, Hugo, Golden Reel, Davey, Gold World Medal in New York, Grand Festival Award (Berkeley), Accolade, Silver Globe and First Prize at the Chicago International Children's Festival.  Mr. Kharas' work has been strongly publicly supported by Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Mr. Kharas is currently the subject of a documentary being made by an independent production company, which will be released in the spring of 2011.

Over 500 articles have been written in the international media about his work.  His work has been profiled in various media, from The New Yorker magazine to Rush Limbaugh on his radio show.  Both graduate and under-graduate students in several universities have written theses and essays on his work.  Academics have written refereed articles on various aspects on his work, especially on his methodology of linguistic adaptations and his ability to create mass communication across cultural boundaries.  His work has been profiled in university-level textbooks with a print-run of over 50,000 copies

Mr. Kharas’ work encompasses the world.  On a daily basis he works with people in dozens of countries.  He has been instrumental in strengthening the media industries in Holland, India, Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa, creating original television series in each of those countries and training thousands of media professionals on his projects.

He travels frequently and extensively around the world and has been to 140 countries in every major region of the world, from the cold of the High Artic to the heat of the Sahara Desert.  He has conducted field research for his projects on behavior change communications in dozens of countries, from talking to mass rape victims to children's rights activists to torture survivors to doctors in small villages coping with epidemics.  He has been to animation studios in the Far East, war zones in Central America, refugee camps in South-East Asia, and many hospitals, community health centres, non-governmental organizations, and youth centres in Europe, Africa and Asia.

He has participated in Canadian trade missions to several countries led by the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Trade and has discussed broadcasting and content policies with Ministers and senior government officials in many countries.  He was instrumental in pushing for film and television co-production treaties between Canada and South Africa, and Canada and Singapore.  He currently heads a committee of the Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce seeking increased co-productions between Canada and India.

Further information about his work can be found on the Internet in the many articles that have been written about his work in using mass communications to better the human condition, including in such prestigious publications as The New Yorker (US), MacLean’s (Canada), the Independent (England), The Globe and Mail (Canada), De Telegraaf (Netherlands), Washington Times (US), The Nation (Thailand), The Times of India (India), ABC News (US), the Ottawa Citizen (Canada), the Toronto Star (Canada), Taipei Times (Taiwan), The Citizen (South Africa), Screen Africa and in wire stories by United Press International, Reuters and Associated Press and others.  He has also appeared on dozens of television shows and radio programs in every continent.

Mr. Kharas began creating media in 1995.  He established television production companies in Canada and in Asia (in partnership with the Royal Family of Malaysia, the News Corporation and UTV of India).

Current Work

Mr. Kharas is currently creating: an animated campaign to prevent domestic violence throughout the world entitled No Excuses; a behaviour change video on dementia, No Thanks, We're Fine; and a documentary on an unaccompanied child refugee claimant, A Child Without A Country: Pedro.

Current examples of his work are the acclaimed animated series of animated shorts or Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, The Three Amigos; a series of animated PSAs to prevent malaria infection, Buzz and Bite; a series of individual documentaries on Canadian children at risk, Six Within; the first animated pre-school series in Arabic, Nan and Lili; the first animated series based on African culture, Magic Cellar; and the early learning pre-school children’s series Honk, Toot and Swo-Swoosh.  All these media are currently in production and/or in distribution.

The Three Amigos is a series of purposely varied animated spots that use humour to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS.  The series, directed and produced by Mr. Kharas, was adapted under his supervision into 45 languages, thereby enabling a potential reach of over 5.5 billion people or approximately 80% of the world’s population in their own language. The Three Amigos has been used extensively in a wide variety of countries, ranging from liberal democracies to conservative theocracies, from countries in southern Africa where AIDS is rampant, to countries preventing an AIDS crisis in Asia and Eastern Europe.  Broadcasters have donated millions of dollars worth of free air time to air the series, in some cases up to 20 times a day.  Thousands of health clinics, hospitals, non-governmental organizations and universities across the world in over 150 countries use the series.

The series has received 30 international awards including a prestigious Peabody Award and hundreds of articles in many languages have been written on its creation and impact.  Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu is the principal supporter who has called the series in an open letter “a powerful communicating tool” and has written "in creating the The Three Amigos PSA's (you) have made an outstanding contribution to the campaign against HIV infection in providing material that can be easily understood by most people irrespective of language or culture".  Hundreds of testimonials from around the world have been received from every walk of life, from powerful government officials to AIDS educators to ordinary people who's behaviour has been influenced by the series.

Tapes and DVDs are sent out free of charge upon request by Mr. Kharas to any broadcaster, NGO, hospital, doctor, teacher or other user.

Buzz and Bite is an extensive series of animated spots to combat malaria infection.  So far, 30 animated spots have been created in 22 languages, with an additional 15 dialects for one country, Madagascar.  When completed in 40 languages, the campaign will consist of 1,400 animated and audio PSAs, making the series one of the world's largest PSA campaigns on any subject.  The series, created, produced and directed by Mr. Kharas, features two humorous animated anopheles mosquitoes to stress the importance of using bed-nets to prevent malaria infection.  The series was launched by Mr. Kharas in Ottawa and in New York (at the United Nations) in advance of World Malaria Day, April 25, 2008.  The series has the strong support of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Over half of the world's malaria prevalent countries are using the campaign in some way.  Tapes and DVDs are sent out free of charge upon request by Mr. Kharas to any broadcaster, NGO, hospital, doctor, teacher or other user.

Six Within is a series of six documentaries that offer personal, intimate portraits of those affected by the child protection system in Canada.  Mr. Kharas is associated with three of the six documentaries.  The series will tell the stories of six compelling individuals in order to raise awareness of the 76,000 children growing up in government care and the many other at-risk children in Canada.

Nan and Lili is the world's first animated pre-school series in Arabic.  Currently on air throughout the Middle East.  A highly educational series that is designed to be the first television program a young child sees. Winner of a CINE Golden Eagle and three Telly Awards.

Magic Cellar is the first animated series ever created on African culture, faithfully and beautifully replicating local folktales to reflect the rich story-telling tradition of Africa.  Magic Cellar is unique in many ways as it is the first animated series based on African culture and a series that seeks to preserve the tradition of African story-telling.  For the first time, African children see themselves reflected in animation, listen to characters that sound like them and watch stories that they are familiar with.

Directed and produced by Mr. Kharas, a co-production with South Africa, the series has received 29 international awards and 13 other international recognitions and has been showcased in many festivals and competitions.

Honk, Toot and Swo-swoosh is a pre-school educational series produced and co-written by Mr. Kharas. Designed to be the first series ever seen on television by a child, the animated series featuring a car, a boat and a helicopter encourages appropriate learning and instills desirable behaviour in young children.

Originally created without any financial support from a broadcaster, the series has been sold in over 100 countries with an estimated audience of 200 million children on channels like Disney, BabyTV, Nickelodeon, M-NET in Africa and Hungama TV in India.

Training, Speeches and Juries

Most of Mr. Kharas' projects have a strong component of training.  Over the course of the last 16 years, Mr. Kharas has built capacities by training thousands of media professionals in Asia and Africa in particular, directly and indirectly through his projects.  Mr. Kharas has personally conducted training in workshops and seminars up to ten weeks long and he has ensured that all of his projects train new people in the media industry free of charge.

Mr. Kharas is very interested in developing young people, which has been a constant theme throughout his career. Mr. Kharas sits on Algonquin College’s Animation Advisory Committee. He frequently meets with students and has lectured on mass communications to students at UCLA, Johns Hopkins, Kingston (England), Concordia, Ottawa, Algonquin, Thiel, Durban, Stellenbosch, Witwatersrand and Mandela universities/colleges and to several schools in every age group ranging geographically from the capital of Canada to townships in Africa.  Mr. Kharas has also spoken to several children’s festivals of film and television.

Mr. Kharas organized and led a multi-faceted program to train South Africans in producing, writing and animating.  This capacity-building training should assist Africa in creating a vibrant long-form animation industry capable of world-class story-telling. Mr. Kharas organized for a Canadian institution of higher education, Algonquin College, to issue diplomas to the African students.

Mr. Kharas often speaks at global events and makes dozens of public speeches annually.  In the last few months, Mr. Kharas gave to a TEDx talk,  spoke to the Lake Geneva Innovation Society in Geneva, Switzerland and gave the Commencement Speech at the Graduation Ceremony of the American InterContinental University in London, England.

In April, 2008 and in January, 2005 he gave Press Conferences at the United Nations in New York on using mass communications for malaria prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention respectively, which generated media attention around the world.

He has spoken at the International Emmy Television Conference, the Alliance for Malaria Prevention, Stanford University, Johns Hopkins University, World Summit on Media for Children, Ottawa Animation Festival, One World Festival, Commonwealth Broadcasting Association's General Conference, Museum of Television and Radio, MIP TV (Cannes), Banff Television Festival, United Nations Global Media AIDS Initiative, and the Chicago International Children's Film Festival.

Among other conferences he has chaired or spoken to are the XV International AIDS Conference, Bangkok AIDS Film Festival, Vue D’Afrique in Montreal, NATPE in Las Vegas, Sithengi in South Africa, Banff TV Festival, FICCI Conference on Media in India, One World Film Festival in Ottawa, Harvard University’s International Development Conference, Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB), World Television Conference in Los Angeles, General Conference of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) in Gibraltar and in Nassau, Pan Asia Satellite & Television Conference in Singapore, ASEAN Television Conference in Kuala Lumpur, MIP ASIA and CASBAA in Hong Kong.

Mr. Kharas often sits on international juries for academies and festivals.  Some of his recent activities include:  in 2010 Mr. Kharas headed the Animation Section Jury at the Banff Television Festival; he headed the International Jury at the 2009 Cairo International Film Festival For Children, where a retrospective of his work was shown; in 2008 and in 2007 he sat on the final selection International Jury for the International Emmy for the Children and Young People Programs category and in 2006 he sat on the regional jury for the International Emmy in the Documentaries category; in 2006/7 he was also on the jury for the Ontario Arts Council's grants to Established and Mid-Careers Professionals.

Mr. Kharas is a member of the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (that awards the International Emmys) and the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television (that awards the Genies and the Gemini’s).

Prior Work in Government

Prior to his present work in media content, Mr. Kharas was a senior executive in the Government of Canada.  From 1989 to 1994, Mr. Kharas was an Assistant Deputy Chairman of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), the largest administrative tribunal in Canada.  Mr. Kharas was one of the founding senior executives of the Board and was appointed by the Cabinet.

As head of the Refugee Backlog Sub-Division he had national responsibilities for an adjudicative process concerning 112,000 refugee claimants from 116 countries, which has been called the single largest movement of people in Canadian history.  He oversaw 50 Board members making decisions on individual claims in offices from Newfoundland to British Columbia.  After the clearing of the backlog of refugee claimants Mr. Kharas was appointed the Assistant Deputy Chairman in charge of the Ottawa/Atlantic Division of the Board. During his time on the IRB, Mr. Kharas also organized three national training conferences for Board members.

Prior to that appointment he was the non-partisan Policy Advisor to the Minister of Employment and Immigration of Canada, the Honourable Barbara McDougall.  Mr. Kharas advised the Minister on immigration and refugee policies, practices and law and took critical decisions on individual cases seeking Ministerial intervention.  He undertook a sensitive trip on behalf of the Minister to several Central American countries and assisted the Minister in shepherding two bills through Parliament that created a new refugee determination system.

The United Nations

For five years previously, he was the head of the staff as Executive Director of the United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC), having been appointed to the position at the age of 27.

For four years he was concurrently a member of the governing body of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), an international organization created by the UN General Assembly that is based in Geneva. In that capacity he attended several meetings in different countries of the world, including in Geneva, Berlin, Warsaw and New Delhi. He organized and hosted in Canada the global Plenary Assembly of WFUNA, attended by 60 countries’ delegations and opened by the President of the UN General Assembly.  He represented the UNA Canada at three global Plenary Assemblies and at two regional assemblies of the World Federation.

During this period Mr. Kharas participated in several international delegations, both governmental and non-governmental.  He was the Canadian representative to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the UN’s fortieth anniversary attended by over 80 Presidents and Prime Ministers, which the New York Times noted was the "largest gathering of world leaders in history".  He was also on the Canadian delegation to the Commemoration of the Signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco.

During this period the UN Secretary-General awarded the UNAC the Peace Messenger Award.

Mr. Kharas’ main goals in policy were to educate Canadians about international issues, strengthen the public image of the United Nations and maintain public pressure for Canadian support of multilateral institutions.

To further those objectives in a period of extraordinary public activism and pressure on international issues like disarmament and development within the context of the Cold War, Mr. Kharas organized and undertook nine intensive cross-Canada media and speaking tours with several Canadian Ambassadors and a former Prime Minister of Australia, speaking to both the general public and to educational institutions about current international issues.  Most tours touched every province in Canada and involved dozens of media and public appearances by Mr. Kharas and Canadian Ambassadors Stephen Lewis, Alan Beesley, Gerard Pelletier and Douglas Roche, among others.

He organized many conferences on global issues across Canada attended by leading world figures including former Heads of State, Nobel Laureates, UN Under-Secretaries-General, Ambassadors and globally renowned experts. He co-hosted the State visit to Canada of the UN Secretary-General and served as Secretary to a conference on disarmament and development attended by the Secretary-General.

Mr. Kharas served as Secretary to the prestigious Pearson Medal jury for five years, an award given each year to a prominent Canadian for his/her work in international affairs. He was also a founding and active member of an advisory committee to the government on international affairs that met regularly with the highest levels of government and diplomacy.

He organized the first three national model United Nations for over 1,000 university-level students to learn about international affairs and multilateral institutions. Mr. Kharas organized experts in international affairs such as the former President of Costa Rica and ambassadors to the UN to lead the week-long simulations.

He published over twenty widely-distributed papers and articles on international issues such as disarmament, development, international finance, and strengthening the UN system.

Mr. Kharas’ prior experience for three years involved international consulting to multinational corporations and to the governments of developing countries such as Togo on which he wrote a published book. He also wrote a widely-used manual on Canadian immigration.

Education and Background

Firdaus Kharas has earned degrees and certificates from American, Carleton, Harvard, Ottawa, Stanford, Thiel and Waterloo universities.

In 2010 he completed the Executive Program for Social Entrepreneurship at the Center for Social Innovation of the Graduate School of Business of Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

Sponsored by the Canadian Government, he completed the Program for Senior Managers at the Kennedy School of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass.

Mr. Kharas holds a Master of Arts in International Affairs from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario where his area of research was the international protection of human rights, specifically the creation of an international convention against the use of torture.

He has done additional graduate studies in International Business and in International Law at the MBA and law faculties respectively of the University of Ottawa.

He also holds a Bachelor of Arts from Thiel College in Greenville, Pennsylvania, graduating with Magna Cum Laude and Departmental Honors.

He completed the Foreign Policy Semester at American University in Washington, DC and the School of Peace Research at Waterloo University in Waterloo, Ontario.

He interned at the House of Representatives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and at the United Nations Information Center in Washington, DC.

Mr. Kharas received five scholarships at the graduate level and four scholarships at the under-graduate level.

Mr. Kharas was a United States national debating champion and student government president.

Mr. Kharas has been interested in the theatre throughout his life.  He began by writing a play acted out in front of friends and family at age 8 and continued writing, acting and directing plays throughout his schooling and university.

Mr. Kharas is a Canadian.  He was born in India and came to North America as a Rotary International exchange student at the age of 17.