

Impact BBDO's Sarah Berro on making a difference with socially-conscious campaigns

By  Maroefah Smith

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Waste Management Coalition's 'Toxic Flag' by Impact BBDO received the Dove Public Service Award at the 2019 Loeries.

Through the use of a large-scale art installation, the Toxic Flag campaign made a powerful statement about the damaging effects the construction of harmful incinerators would have on the major garbage crisis that has plagued Lebanon.



Sarah Berro backstage at the 2019 Loeries in Durban, South Africa. Image credit: Julian Carelsen/2019 Loerie Awards.

Impact BBDO's executive Arabic creative copywriter and 2019 Loeries judge, Sarah Berro – who accepted the award on behalf of Impact BBDO Dubai – lets us in on how the campaign managed to halt the incinerators' development, the response of the Lebanese people and other impressive socially-conscious campaigns.



Loeries 2019 Dove Public Service Award goes to the Toxic Flag in Lebanon

Loeries 4 Sep 2019



■ ***Congratulations on winning such a meaningful award! What makes this award significant to you?***

This award is very significant to myself and the whole team who put their heart into the work because it goes beyond recognising creativity. It recognises work that attends to real issues that come from a very real and perpetual pain and frustration.

■ ***What makes Waste Management Coalition's 'Toxic Flag' the most-deserving public service campaign?***

Thanks to the Waste Management Coalition, we were given the opportunity to actually make a difference in people's lives

and health. A very tangible one – which could decide the fate of future generations in a real place and moment.

The fact that the work created the urgency that was needed to halt the development of the incinerator is what we think makes it one of our proudest moments and ideas.



Q&A 2019 Loeries Africa and Middle East judges: Sarah Berro

20 Aug 2019



■ ***What led to the conceptualisation of the ‘Toxic Flag’?***

The garbage crisis in Lebanon and the life-threatening solutions proposed by the government are the reasons the Waste Management Coalition partnered up with us to raise awareness around the harms of incinerators.

The objective was to create a campaign with maximum impact at a minimum cost. That's how the ‘Toxic Flag’ was created.

■ ***And what was the response from the people of Lebanon?***

The response was massive and instant. Thousands of people signed the petition against incinerators within a few days only. And some communities took the matter to the street in protest.

TV and media coverage sparked a debate around the issue – and the focus shifted towards more sustainable,

environmentally-friendly and long-term solutions.

■ **How do accolades like the Public Service Award encourage socially-conscious work?**

We have many lovely minds in the business. Peers and friends who can do so much more. Sure, as creatives, we are oftentimes driven by the passion to win awards or to make famous work.

If awards like these can inspire even a fraction of these minds then that's a notable thing to do. These aren't organisations with big budgets and big teams, they cannot spend as a client would, but if recognising solutions to their most pressing issues is one way to get more people involved and work beyond the usual 9-to-6, then, well, that's just a wonderful thing.

■ **Beside 'Toxic Flag', what other socially-conscious campaigns have impressed you?**

The ones that come to mind right now are McCann's 'Generation Lockdown' and Monica Lewinsky's anti-bullying campaign.

“ [#BeStrong.#BeAnUpstander.#ClickWithCompassion https://t.co/b4qBvaux36](https://t.co/b4qBvaux36) pic.twitter.com/C98ku47jYc— Monica Lewinsky (@MonicaLewinsky) [October 31, 2017](#) ”

■ **What should we expect from you in the future?**

Hopefully, more work that takes a stance never before taken.

Stay tuned for more of Impact BBDO's stance-taking work on the agency's [website](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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